

Definition: **Koons, Jeff** from *Philip's Encyclopedia*

US sculptor. He burst onto the art scene in the 1980s with a series of sexually explicit pieces. Other exhibits, such as his vacuum cleaners in perspex cases, were intended as a comment on modern consumer society and have their roots in the pop art movement of the 1960s.

Summary Article: **Koons, Jeff**

From *The Columbia Encyclopedia*

1955–, American artist, b. York, Pa., studied Maryland Institute College of Art (B.F.A., 1976), Art Institute of Chicago. He moved to New York City in 1977 and has lived and worked there since. Koons has been damned and praised with equal fervor by critics, called shallow, cynical, and the bad boy of American art by some and post-ironic, awesome, and a post-pop superstar by others. His work may be characterized as an updated postmodern synthesis of surrealism, Dada, pop art and good old-fashioned American kitsch.

Inspired by Marcel Duchamp's ready-mades, Koons's early works consisted of actual toys and household appliances backed with mirrors and enclosed in plastic vitrines. He has often produced works in series, including "Statuary" (1986), stainless-steel versions of novelty-item sculptures; "Banality" (1988), sculptures resembling large-size dime-store gimcracks, notably a life-sized gold-plated porcelain figure of pop star Michael Jackson and his pet chimpanzee; "Made in Heaven" (1989–91), mainly sexually explicit paintings, sculpture, and photographs of himself and Italian porn star "La Cicciolina," whom he subsequently married and soon divorced; "Celebration" (1994–2006), large paintings and sculptures of toys, food, and other things that delight children, among them *Rabbit* (2003) and other huge stainless-steel balloon animals in deeply saturated colors; "Hulk Elvis" (2007), brilliantly colored, collagelike oil paintings, many featuring cartoon superheroes. One of his best-known sculptures, *Puppy* (1992), is a 43-ft-high (13-m) seated terrier pup blanketed with thousands of flowering plants.

Koons makes a point of avoiding all traces of the artist's hand. Much of his work is conceived on computer and executed by squads of craftsmen. Something in Koons's works, perhaps their appeal to mass culture or the ease with which they can be understood, has struck a chord with certain collectors, and his works have fetched multimillion-dollar prices in galleries and and set auction records. His stainless-steel *Hanging Heart* (1994–2006) was sold at auction in 2007 for \$23.6 million, and an orange-colored stainless-steel balloon dog was auctioned in 2013 for more than \$58 million, a record for a living artist. A large retrospective of his work was held at New York's Whitney Museum in 2014.

See his *Jeff Koons Handbook* (1993);

Rothkopf, S. , ed., *Jeff Koons: A Retrospective* (museum catalog, 2014);

studies by T. Krens et al. (2000), T. Kellein, ed. (2003), S. Canarutto (2006), I. Sischy et al. (2008).

**APA**

Chicago

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MLA

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## APA

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## Chicago

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## Harvard

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## MLA

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