

YAYOI KUSAMA

Dots Obsession

September 15th – November 18th

For its second exhibition, Wiels has invited one of the most important contemporary artists: Yayoi Kusama. Her works, which have been exhibited from MOMA in New York to the Venice Biennial and which have deeply influenced contemporary art, will be installed in Belgium for the very first time.

At this event, the artist will adapt a monumental project originally conceived for the Haus der Kunst in Munich. Made of giant inflatable balloons, into some of which the visitors can enter, the installation makes use of the dot pattern which variety the artist has explored for over 40 years. With this formal tool, Yayoi Kusama weaves a fairy-like yet frightening landscape, which absorbs the space as much as the spectator.

For Kusama, dots are initially the subject of her childhood hallucinations in which her environment and herself were submerged by a proliferation of dots. With time she has transformed these threatening experiences into a powerful means by which she de- and reconstructs the world.

Kusama's work has sometimes absorbed and sometimes anticipated the most important art trends of the last 40 years: Minimalism, Pop Art and Fluxus. Still today still she continues to give new forms to her aesthetic universe. These last years she has created installations which not only take up the space they occupy, but also have the ambition to alter the experience of the visitors by integrating them into her work.

By playing with different levels of scale, reflection and repetition, Kusama provokes a feeling of vertigo and disorientation both disturbing and liberating.

For Wiels, this show thus represents the opportunity to pay homage to one of the most important artists of our time and to share the "Kusama" experience with the Belgian public for the first time. The exhibition will be accompanied by a programme of historic films directed by the artist.

Biography

Yayoi Kusama was born in 1929 in Matsumoto, prefecture of Nagano, Japan.

She created her first artworks in the early 50's, initiating a prolific production of drawings and watercolours. The sexual metaphors, persisting through her art artistic career, were already present, as well as other recurring motifs which she has obstinately repeated and accumulated.

In 1957, Kusama left Japan for the United States and settled in New York where she lived until 1972. The artist, quickly assimilated by the New York avant-garde, as well as the European art scene, appeared as one of the precursors of Pop art, Minimalism and Installation – art. At the beginning of the Sixties she moved in the circles of and exhibited with emblematic artists such as Jasper Johns, Joseph Cornell, Claes Oldenburg or Andy Warhol in the United States, and Piero Manzoni and Yves Klein in Europe. At the same time radical and eager for publicity, eccentric and always in step with her time, Kusama managed to transform her neuroses and anguishes into one of the most influential works of the Sixties. During ten years, she produced an astounding number of paintings, sculptures, photo-collages, installations and performances; she also made a film and wrote novels. In 1960, she published the Liberation Manifesto: “My life is a dot lost in between millions of other dots...”. In 1964, she created her first environmental installation “Aggregation: One Thousand Boats Show”. Then came *Infinity Mirror Rooms*, rooms covered with mirrors accentuating even more the feeling of accumulation. Along with numerous other artists Kusama participated in the political fights of in the late Sixties. She presented happenings where provocation met a pacifist and libertarian message.

In 1973, mentally ill, exhausted, and short of money, Kusama returned to Japan where she destroyed over 2000 of her artworks. Since 1977, she has lived in a private psychiatric institution known for its art therapies in the treatment of atypical neuroses. She now lives in an apartment located inside the same hospital, where she is undoubtedly the only patient to pay her rent thanks to the artworks she produces there. Recently she has built a studio to which she commutes daily in order to work on her numerous exhibitions.

Since the beginning of the Nineties and the opening of a less formatted modern lifestyle, Kusama's work has benefited from a renewed international recognition. She represented her country at the Venice Biennale in 1993 and many institutions as prestigious as MOMA in NY, MOCA in Los Angeles, the Kunsthalle of Vienna or the KunstMuseum of Basel have dedicated retrospectives to her work.

Yayoi Kusama – Exhibitions (selection)

2007

Yayoi Kusama - dots obsession, HDK - Haus der Kunst - Munich

2006

Real Utopia - Stories of the Unlimited, 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa

The Gold Standard, P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center, Long Island

The Painted World, P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center, Long Island

Metamorfosi, Galleria Civica di Modena, Modena

2006 *Singapore Biennale*, Singapore

Berlin-Tokyo/Tokyo-Berlin. Die Kunst zweier Städte, Neue Nationalgalerie, Berlin - Mori Art Museum, Tokyo

Strange I've Seen That Face Before - Kunst, Design, Architektur im Kopf, Museum Abteiberg, Mönchengladbach

Zero: International Avant-garde of the 50s and 60s, Museum Kunst Palast, Dusseldorf

Fiction@Love, MOCA Shanghai

2005

Summer of Love Art of the Psychedelic Era, Tate Liverpool, Liverpool - Schirn Kunsthalle, Frankfurt a/M

Les Grands Spectacles - 120 Jahre Kunst und Massenkultur, Museum der Moderne Salzburg

Chikaku Kunsthhaus Graz

Kiss the Frog - The Art of Transformation, The National Museum for Art, Architecture and Design, Oslo

Yayoi Kusama - Sailing the Sea of infinity, Contemporary Art Museum, Kumamoto

2004

Kusamatrix, Mori Art Museum, Tokyo

Yayoi Kusama Nets 1959-1999, MOMA Contemporary, Fukuoka

Yayoi Kusama, Zacheta National Gallery of Art, Warsaw

Yayoi Kusama: Eternity-Modernity, The National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo - The National Museum of Modern Art, Kyoto

2004 *Whitney Biennial*, New York

2003

7e Biennale de Lyon – C'est arrivé demain, Lyon

Happiness - A Survival Guide for Art and Life, Mori Art Museum, Tokyo

Yayoi Kusama – Beyond the Labyrinth, Marugame Genichiro-Inokuma Museum of

Contemporary Art, Kagawa
Yayoi Kusama, Kunstverein Braunschweig, Braunschweig
Uneasy Space, Site Santa Fe, Santa Fe
Dada and Surrealism, Bildmuseet, Umeå
Loud & Clear, Stedelijk Museum Bureau Amsterdam, Amsterdam

2002

Yayoi Kusama, Matsumoto City Museum of Art, Nagano
Asia-Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art 2002, Brisbane, QLD
Dot Paradise in Shangri - La Kirishima Open-Air Museum, Kagoshima
Yayoi Kusama, Kunsthalle Wien Vienne

2001

Yokohama 2001 - International Triennale of Contemporary Art, Yokohama
Viedeo Vibe - art, music and video in the UK, Contemporary Art Center Vilnius (CAC), Vilnius - Argos, Bruxelles
Hypermental - Wahnhafte Wirklichkeit 1950 - 2000 - Von Salvador Dali bis Jeff K, Hamburger Kunsthalle, Hambourg

2000

Yayoi Kusama, Serpentine Gallery, London
Yayoi Kusama Silkscreen-Lame, Museum Haus Kasuya, Kanagawa
Yayoi Kusama, Le Consortium, Digione; Maison de la culture du Japon, Paris ;
Kunsthallen Brandts Klaedefabrik, Odense ;Les Abbatoirs, Tolosa : Kunsthalle
Wien, Wien; Artsonje Center, Seoul; Artsonje Museum, Gyeongsangbuk-do
Biennale of Sydney 2000, Sydney

1999

Beyond my Illusion, MOMA Contemporary, Fukuoka
The 7th Yayoi Kusama Exhibition, Bunkamura Gallery, Tokyo
Yayoi Kusama, Jears in Japan, Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo
Mirror Images: Women, Surrealism, and Self-Representation, San Francisco
Museum of Modern Art

1998

Love Forever: Yayoi Kusama 1958-1968, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, LA -
The Museum of Modern Art, New York
Self Obliteration, MOMA Contemporary, Fukuoka
Taipei Biennial 1998 - Site of desire, Taipei Biennial
Out of Actions: Between Performance and the Object, 1949-1979, MOCA The
Geffen Contemporary, Los Angeles

1997

Yayoi Kusama, The Arts Club of Chicago, Chicago

1996

A Panorama of my Youth, MOMA Contemporary, Fukuoka

1993

Venice Biennale, Japan Pavilion, Venice