

Press Release

Victoria Miro

Yayoi Kusama

7 February – 20 March 2008

Victoria Miro 14 & 16

Private View, Wednesday 6 February 6 – 8pm

Victoria Miro is pleased to announce the second of a two-part exhibition by revered Japanese artist, Yayoi Kusama. For the first time the gallery will present an exhibition which spans both buildings at 14 & 16 Wharf Road offering a substantial presentation of the artist's work.

For this exhibition, Kusama has conceived a new installation *Dots Obsession – Infinity Mirrored Room* (2008) especially for the upper gallery and in the lower galleries will install 45 new silkscreen works that will be shown alongside two significant sculptural pieces from the early nineties. The artist will present a series of new dot paintings and an environmental installation *I'm Here, but Nothing*, (2000-2008). The exhibition will continue outside the gallery where Kusama will install one of her most infamous works, *Narcissus Garden* in Regents Canal - a work which has never before been exhibited in the UK.

Kusama's work is instantly recognisable for her signature use of obsessively repeated forms – dots, nets & phallic protrusions – which can be traced back to childhood hallucinations in which multiplying forms encompassed the universe so that she and everything else was obliterated. The new installation in the upper gallery *Dots Obsession – Infinity Mirrored Room* (2008) comprises giant polka-dot inflatable sculptures arranged in tent-like forms. The installation invites the viewer to completely immerse themselves in the work and to share in the isolation and disorientation experienced by the artist.

In the lower galleries Kusama will present a new suite of silkscreen works on canvas. Like the renowned Infinity Net and Dot Paintings, these works are also characterised by the obsessive repetition of certain motifs. Her visual language is here predominantly figurative and is replete with identical female profiles, outlines of lips or eyes, dotty organisms, serpentine forms and doll-like figures. Exhibited en masse their effect is akin to a stream of consciousness, as is reflected in titles such as *A Dream I Dreamed Yesterday*, *Infinity Cosmos* and *Women in a Dream*. Also installed in the lower galleries will be *Infinity Mirrored Room – Love Forever* (1994), a freestanding box that uses mirrors facing each other to produce an infinite number of reflections. Like all of Kusama's mirrored environments this work is much more than a simple optical device, rather serving to embody the artist's monomaniac fears.

A recurring motif in Kusama's practice is a phallic-like form that has colonised many found objects including frying pans, teapots & ironing boards. Here, multiple phallic forms are rendered in fabric and silver paint with in a grid framework in a work entitled *Prisoner's Door*, (1994). Broadly known as *Accumulations*, these sculptures are often identified as an attempt by the artist to confront her deep-seated sexual fears by giving them physical embodiment.

Narcissus Garden will be installed on the galleries canal side terrace and in Regents canal and will link the two parts of the exhibition. The work dates back to 1966, when Kusama first participated in the 33rd Venice Biennale. The work comprised hundreds of mirrored spheres outdoors in what she called a 'kinetic carpet'. As soon as the piece was installed, Kusama began selling each individual sphere for \$2, until the Biennale organisers put an end to her enterprise. Perhaps one of Kusama's most notorious works, *Narcissus Garden* was as much about the promotion of the artist through the media as it was an opportunity to offer a critique of the mechanisation and commodification of

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the art market. Various versions of *Narcissus Garden* have been presented worldwide at venues including Le Consortium, Dijon, 2000; Kunstverein Braunschweig, 2003 and Central Park, New York in 2004 and now in the UK.

In a departure from her largely monochromatic canvases, Kusama will install a new series of multi-coloured dot paintings and *I'm Here, but Nothing*, (2000-2008). This installation is a simply furnished room consisting of table and chairs, place settings and bottles, armchairs and rugs, however its walls are tattooed with hundreds of fluorescent polka dots glowing in the UV light. The result is an endless infinite space where the self and everything in the room is obliterated.

Born in Matsumoto City, Japan in 1929, Kusama now lives and works in Tokyo. In a career that spans more than fifty years, she has also made forays into writing, filmmaking and fashion design. Kusama represented Japan at the Venice Biennale in 1993 and has been the subject of many major international museum exhibitions, including *Yayoi Kusama*, National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo (touring Japan), 2004-2005; *Kusamatrix*, Mori Museum of Art, Tokyo, 2004; *Yayoi Kusama*, Le Consortium, contemporary art center, Dijon (touring France, Denmark, Korea), 2001-2002; *Love Forever: Yayoi Kusama 1958-1969*, Museum of Modern Art, New York, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Walker Art Center and Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo, 1998-99. In 2006 she was awarded the 18th annual Praemium Imperiale Award for painting.

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open Tuesday to Saturday
10am to 6pm, admission free
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