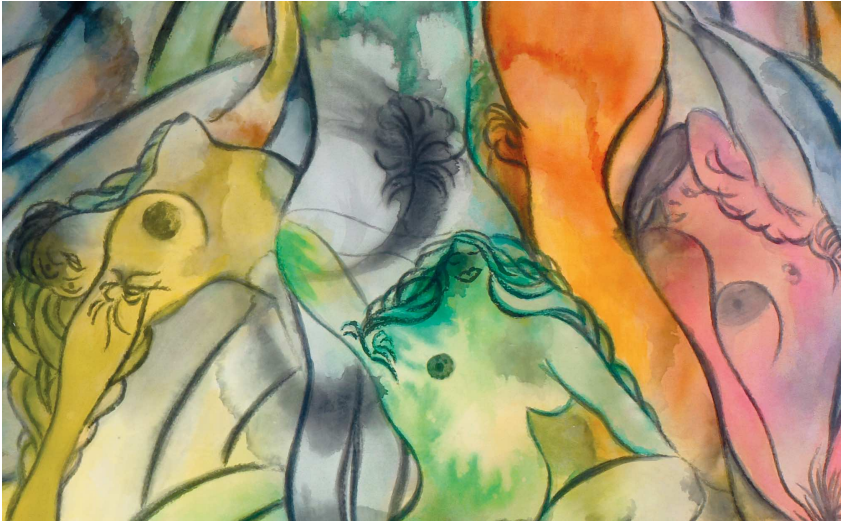


## Frieze New York

Booth A05, 2–5 May 2019



**Chris Ofili**, *to take and to give* (detail), 2012  
Acrylic on canvas  
519 x 880 cm  
204 3/8 x 346 1/2 in  
© Chris Ofili, courtesy the artist and Victoria Miro, London/Venice

**Victoria Miro participates in Frieze New York (Booth A05) with major works by Yayoi Kusama and Chris Ofili. Kusama's seminal installation *Narcissus Garden* will be on view alongside Ofili's *to take and to give*, the artist's largest canvas to date.**

Chris Ofili's *to take and to give*, 2012, is a large-scale painting inspired by Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. It derives from the artist's contribution to *Metamorphosis: Titian 2012*, a unique collaboration between the National Gallery and The Royal Opera House, London. At the National Gallery, Ofili responded to Titian's great mythological paintings, *Diana and Actaeon*, 1556–9, *Diana and Callisto*, 1556–9, and *The Death of Actaeon*, 1559–75, which depict stories from *Metamorphoses*; Ovid's story is of a hunter, Actaeon, who comes upon the chaste goddess Diana and her nymphs bathing in a sacred grove, the goddess punishes the voyeur by transforming him into a stag, and he is torn to pieces by his own hounds. Ofili produced a series of paintings for the National Gallery exhibition (11 July - 23 September 2012), in which the classical world is transposed to Trinidad. In addition, he worked alongside choreographers and dancers from The Royal Ballet on sets and costumes for a new ballet, *Diana & Actaeon*. This intense process – creating for the scale of the stage and for the human form – was a revelation to the artist and sparked a prodigious body of work, of which *to take and to give* is the most monumental example in his Ovidian series. The painting was exhibited in Ofili's exhibition, also titled *to take and to give*, held at Victoria Miro, 6 October–21 December 2012.

Taking Ovidian iconography as a starting point, in *to take and to give* Ofili brings the fluidity and luminosity of watercolour to a canvas nearly nine metres in length. In it, we see a dynamic pyramid of female figures, perhaps the nymphs in Diana's grove, who, oblivious to the male figure approaching them, seem to merge with an abstracted waterfall which cascades over and around them. Water, as subject and medium, becomes an agent of transformation – each luxuriant smudge and bleed of pigment further signifying the fleeting moment, erotic reverie, confluence and passion.

**Yayoi Kusama's** installation *Narcissus Garden* originated in 1966, when the artist first participated, albeit unofficially, in the Venice Biennale. This expansive and immersive work comprises mirrored spheres displayed en masse to create a dynamic reflective field. In Venice, Kusama installed the spheres on a lawn in front of the Italian Pavilion. Signs placed among them were inscribed with the words 'Narcissus Garden, Kusama' and 'Your Narcissism for Sale'. During the vernissage, Kusama, dressed in a kimono, remained with the installation, offering individual spheres for sale (at \$2, or 1,200 lira a piece). This succès de scandale was both revolutionary – a comment on the promotion of the artist through the media and a critique of the mechanisation and commodification of the art market – and deeply connected to history, evoking the Greek myth of Narcissus, who fell in love with his own reflection (and paid the price for doing so).

Regarded as a pivotal in Kusama's career, *Narcissus Garden* anticipates many of the radical performances that would become a focus of her time in New York during the late 1960s, while encapsulating key aspects of Kusama's wider practice – allusions to microscopic and macroscopic worlds, a preoccupation with the infinite and sublime – that remain compelling in her art to this day. It is one of the first works by the artist to explore the optical and psychological potential of the mirrored surface as a means of transcending the limits of the physical world and creating a participatory experience in which the viewer is cast as the subject of the work. Connecting profoundly with global audiences, iterations of *Narcissus Garden*, each with their own distinct character, have subsequently been presented, both indoors and outdoors, on land and water, at venues around the world, including Central Park, New York City, as part of the 2004 Whitney Biennial, The Glass House, New Canaan, Connecticut in 2016, and, most recently, at Fort Tilden, New York, for *Rockaway! 2018* presented by MoMA PS1.

**Additionally, the gallery will have works available to view by Jules de Balincourt, Stan Douglas, Ilse D'Hollander, Isaac Julien, Alice Neel and Stephen Willats.**