

# Victoria Miro



**PRESS RELEASE**

## Yayoi Kusama

23 June – 25 July 2009

**Three new giant dotted pumpkins by Yayoi Kusama are to be installed in Victoria Miro's canalside garden to mark the 80th birthday of Japan's most revered contemporary artist**

Yayoi Kusama - whose legendary career spans six decades - celebrates her 80th birthday this year. To mark the occasion Victoria Miro is delighted to present, for the first time in London, three new pumpkin works. Situated in the gallery's canalside garden the sculptures will be presented alongside her permanently installed iconic piece *Narcissus Garden* (1966-).

Kusama's acclaimed presentation in the Japanese pavilion at the Venice Biennale in 1993 - which consisted of a mirrored room filled with tiny pumpkin sculptures in which she sat in colour coordinated magician's attire - marked the beginning of the artist's preoccupation with the pumpkin motif. Following the Biennale she went on to produce a huge, yellow pumpkin sculpture covered with an optical pattern of black dots. This pumpkin came to represent for her a kind of alter ego or self-portrait and remains one of her signature series of works.

Kusama has completed several major outdoor commissions, some giant pumpkins and other sculptures in the form of brightly coloured grotesque plants and flowers, for public and private institutions including the Kirishima Open Air Museum, Japan; Fukuoka Municipal Museum of Art and Matsumoto City Museum of Art in Japan; Euroville in Lille, France; and recently, the Beverly Hills City Council in Los Angeles. Alongside these monumental works, she has produced smaller scale outdoor pieces including *Key-Chan* and *Ryu-Chan* a pair of dotted dogs, which will be installed in the Gallery's garden alongside the pumpkins. All the outdoor works are cast in highly durable fiberglass-reinforced plastic, then painted in urethane to glossy perfection.

This presentation coincides with *Walking in My Mind* at the Hayward Gallery (23 June - 6 September). The Southbank Centre will be transformed into a vision of her signature polka dots with visitors able to immerse themselves in *Dots Obsession* (2009), a large mirrored corridor filled with red spotty balloons, and walk through a dot-covered landscape on one of the gallery's outside sculpture terraces. Twenty-five trees along Queen's Walk will also be covered in Kusama's red and white polka dots as part of the exhibition.

### **Biographical details**

Yayoi Kusama was born in Matsumoto City, Japan in 1929. Her work is in the collections of leading museums throughout the world including Tate Modern, London; the Museum of Modern Art, New York; LACMA, Los Angeles; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; Walker Art Center, Minneapolis; Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam; Centre Pompidou, Paris; and the National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo. Major exhibitions of her work include Kitakyushu Municipal Museum of Art, Fukuoka, Japan (1987); Center for International Contemporary Arts, New York (1989); *Love Forever: Yayoi Kusama, 1958-1969*, LACMA, 1998 (traveling to Museum of Modern Art, New York, Walker Art Center, Minneapolis and Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo), 1998-99; *Serpentine Gallery*, 2000; *Le Consortium*, Dijon, 2000 (traveling to selected venues in Europe and Korea), 2001-2003; *KUSAMATRIX*, Mori Museum of Art, Tokyo, 2004 (traveling to Art Park Museum of Contemporary Art, Sapporo Art Park, Hokkaido); *Eternity - Modernity*, National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo (touring Japan), 2004-2005; and *The Mirrored Years*, Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, 2008, which toured to Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney and then to the City Gallery, Wellington, New Zealand later in 2009.

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