

# GAGOSIAN

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## DAMIEN HIRST

### Forgiving and Forgetting

July 6–October 23, 2021

Via Francesco Crispi 16, Rome

Damien Hirst, *Minnie*, 2020, pink marble, 39 5/8 × 22 7/8 × 22 7/8 inches (100.5 × 58 × 58 cm), edition of 3 + 2 AP © Damien Hirst and Science Ltd. All rights reserved, DACS 2021. Photo: Lucio Ghilardi/Prudence Cuming Associates

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June 17, 2021

*It's all about what you want to believe.*

—Damien Hirst

Gagosian is pleased to present *Forgiving and Forgetting*, an exhibition of sculptures and new paintings by Damien Hirst. The presentation coincides with *Archaeology Now*, on view from June 8 to November 7, 2021, which intersperses more than eighty paintings and sculptures by Hirst among the historical collections of the Galleria Borghese in Rome.

*Forgiving and Forgetting* includes works from Hirst's *Treasures from the Wreck of the Unbelievable*, a project that presented sculptural relics from a fictional shipwreck off the coast of East Africa, playing fast and loose with linear time, cultural origin, and perceptions of relative status and value. Foregrounding these sculptures against an intricately woven tale of seafaring exploits, marine excavation, and laborious research, Hirst aimed to invoke feelings of wonder at their meticulous physical and conceptual fabrication.

The series debuted in 2017 with a suite of *Treasures*—ranging from pastiches of ancient and classical busts, masks, and statues to representations of iconic Disney cartoon characters—rendered in an extraordinary array of materials, many encrusted with colorful blooms of skillfully painted barnacles, as if salvaged from the ocean floor. *Forgiving and Forgetting* marks an ambitious phase in Hirst’s body of work; these sculptures are carved out of pink Portuguese marble and white Carrara marble, immortalizing each figure in one of the most storied materials in Western art history.

Each subject in its monochrome marble assumes the same gravitas; the playful wave of a coral-laden Minnie Mouse is echoed elsewhere in the gallery by the outstretched hand of the female centaur Hylonome, whose statuesque form conjures both Baroque corporeality and the stately symmetry of French Neoclassical sculpture. Sparking unexpected interactions between ancient and modern, Hirst’s *Treasures* exemplify the idea of mythmaking that lies at the core of culture, both high and low.

Hirst will also reveal his latest series, the *Reverence Paintings*. Originally seeking to reimagine the vibrant *Cherry Blossoms* in allover white, he began to overlay shifting dabs of color and flecks of gold leaf across the otherwise monochrome canvases, allowing them to take on a vivid and shimmering dynamism. Covered with bright impasto dots that add both perspectival grounding and visual haze to each composition, the *Reverence Paintings* underscore Hirst’s acute sense of color, expanding upon the expressionistic and pointillist impulses that have inspired his recent bodies of work.

**Damien Hirst** was born in 1965 in Bristol, England, and lives and works in London and Devon, England. Collections include the Museo d’Arte Contemporanea Donnaregina, Naples, Italy; Museum Brandhorst, Munich; Museum für Moderne Kunst, Frankfurt am Main, Germany; Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam; Centro de Arte Dos de Mayo, Madrid; Tate, London; Israel Museum, Jerusalem; Astrup Fearnley Museet, Oslo; Gallery of Modern Art, Glasgow, Scotland; National Centre for Contemporary Arts, Moscow; Museum of Modern Art, New York; Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, DC; Art Institute of Chicago; The Broad, Los Angeles; Museo Jumex, Mexico City; and 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa, Japan. Exhibitions include *Cornucopia*, Oceanographic Museum of Monaco (2010); Tate Modern, London (2012); *Relics*, Qatar Museums Authority, Al Riwaq (2013); *Signification (Hope, Immortality and Death in Paris, Now and Then)*, Deyrolle, Paris (2014); Astrup Fearnley Museet, Oslo (2015); *The Last Supper*, National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC (2016); *Treasures from the Wreck of the Unbelievable*, Palazzo Grassi and Punta della Dogana, Venice (2017); *Damien Hirst at Houghton Hall: Colour Space Paintings and Outdoor Sculptures*, Houghton Hall, Norfolk, England (2019); and *Mental Escapology*, St. Moritz, Switzerland (2021). Hirst received the Turner Prize in 1995.

#DamienHirst

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