

For immediate release

## YAYOI KUSAMA

### Festival of Life

525 & 533 West 19<sup>th</sup> Street, New York

### Infinity Nets

34 East 69<sup>th</sup> Street, New York

November 2 – December 16, 2017

Opening reception at 525 & 533 West 19<sup>th</sup> Street: Thursday, November 2, 6 – 8 PM

Opening reception at 34 East 69<sup>th</sup> Street: Thursday, November 2, 5 – 8 PM



Yayoi Kusama, 2017  
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Courtesy of Yayoi Kusama Inc., Ota Fine Arts, Tokyo/Singapore/Shanghai

David Zwirner is pleased to present two major concurrent exhibitions of recent work by Yayoi Kusama on view across three gallery spaces in New York: *Festival of Life* at 525 and 533 West 19th Street in Chelsea and *Infinity Nets* at the recently opened space on 34 East 69th Street on the Upper East Side. The exhibitions will feature sixty-six paintings from her iconic *My Eternal Soul* series, new large-scale flower sculptures, a polka-dotted environment, and two *Infinity Mirror Rooms* in the Chelsea locations, and a selection of new *Infinity Nets* paintings uptown.

Kusama's work has transcended some of the most important art movements of the second half of the twentieth century, including Pop art and Minimalism. Born in 1929 in Matsumoto, Japan, she briefly studied painting in Kyoto before moving to New York City in the late 1950s. She began her large-scale infinity net paintings during this decade, and went on to apply their obsessive, hallucinatory qualities to three-dimensional work. In a unique style that is both sensory and utopian, Kusama's work—which spans paintings, performances, room-size presentations, sculptural installations, literary works, films, fashion, design, and interventions within existing architectural structures—possesses a highly personal character, yet one that has connected profoundly with large audiences around the globe. Throughout her career she has been able to break down traditional barriers between work, artist, and spectator.

Presented in a tight grid in one of the largest configurations ever executed by the artist, here covering the entirety of four walls, the recent *My Eternal Soul* paintings on view are part of a highly celebrated, ongoing series begun in the late 2000s. Conveying the extraordinary vitality that characterizes Kusama's oeuvre, each composition is an innovative exploration of form, subject matter, and space, in which abstract and figurative elements combine to offer impressions of both microscopic and macroscopic universes.

Placed within the vibrant, immersive environment created by the paintings, Kusama's new stainless steel sculptures depict fantastically scaled, individual flowers featuring the artist's distinctive bold palette. Made from stainless steel and covered with urethane paint, their exaggerated features and horizontal orientation echo the dualism found throughout her work between the organic and the artificial. This is also evident in *With All My Love For The Tulips, I Pray Forever* (2011), a sculptural installation—shown for the first time in the United States—in which oversized flower-potted tulips in fiberglass-reinforced plastic are painted with the same red polka dots as the floor, ceiling, and walls, creating an all-enveloping viewing experience while at the same time diminishing the appearance of depth.

The exhibition debuts two new *Infinity Mirror Rooms*, one which invites the viewer to look inside through two peepholes, and another which can be experienced from within. In the former, miniature light bulbs in changing colors reveal a hexagonal pattern that is mirrored endlessly. The latter envelops the visitor inside a large mirrored room with stainless steel balls suspended from the ceiling and arranged on the floor; an enclosed column within the room offers yet another mirrored environment accessible through peepholes. A sense of infinity is offered through the play of reflections between the circular shapes and the surrounding mirrors. The balls recall Kusama's installation *Narcissus Garden*, first shown outdoors at the 33rd Venice Biennale in 1966 with over 1500 reflective spheres and recently presented in the United States at The Glass House in Connecticut.

The *Infinity Net* paintings on view at the gallery's uptown location are the latest works in a series begun in New York in the 1950s, when Abstract Expressionism was still the dominant style. These canvases embodied a radical departure, featuring minutely painted

nets across monochrome backgrounds. Donald Judd was an early admirer of these works and an exhibition currently on view at Judd Foundation on 101 Spring Street in New York presents four recent, white paintings from the series as part of a program that explores Judd's relationship with his contemporaries in the 1960s through the 1980s (through December 9).

The exhibition will be accompanied by a fully illustrated catalogue published by David Zwirner Books.

**Yayoi Kusama** (b. 1929) presented her first solo show in her native Japan in 1952. Her work has since been featured widely in both solo and group presentations. In the mid-1960s, the artist established herself in New York as an important avant-garde artist by staging groundbreaking and influential happenings, events, and exhibitions. Her work gained widespread recognition in the late 1980s after a number of international solo exhibitions, including shows at the Center for International Contemporary Arts, New York and the Museum of Modern Art, Oxford, England, both taking place in 1989. She represented Japan in 1993 at the 45th Venice Biennale to much critical acclaim.

Major touring surveys include those organized by the Los Angeles County Museum of Art and The Museum of Modern Art, New York (1998); Le Consortium, Dijon, France (2000); National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo (2004); and the Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam (2008). Her work was the subject of a large-scale and well-received retrospective, which traveled from 2011 to 2012 to the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid; Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris; Tate Modern, London; and the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York. From 2012 through 2015, three major museum solo presentations of the artist's work, *Eternity of Eternity*, *A Dream I Dreamed*, and *Infinite Obsession* simultaneously traveled to major museums throughout Japan, Asia, and Central and South America—all of which all drew record-breaking attendances at every venue. In 2015, the Louisiana Museum of Modern Art in Humlebæk, Denmark organized a comprehensive overview of Kusama's practice, including works that span the full length of her career. The show traveled to Henie-Onstad Kunstsenter, Høvikodden, Norway; Moderna Museet, Stockholm; and Helsinki Art Museum. In 2017, The National Art Center in Tokyo hosted *My Eternal Soul*, a solo exhibition featuring over 130 paintings from the artist's series of the same title, which she began in 2009, as well as works that span her entire career.

Opening October 21, 2017 at The Broad, Los Angeles will be *Infinity Mirrors*, a major survey of Kusama's work. The show was first on view at the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, D.C., followed by the Seattle Art Museum, and will tour through 2019 to Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto; The Cleveland Museum of Art, Ohio; and High Museum of Art, Atlanta, Georgia.

The National Gallery of Singapore recently hosted *Yayoi Kusama: Life is the Heart of the Rainbow*, marking the artist's first major survey of her work in Southeast Asia. The exhibition is organized in collaboration with Queensland Art Gallery | Gallery of Modern Art, Brisbane, Australia, where it will open November 4, 2017.

A museum dedicated to the artist's work, Yayoi Kusama Museum, opened October 1, 2017 in Tokyo with the inaugural exhibition *Creation is a Solitary Pursuit, Love is What Brings You Closer to Art*.

The gallery's inaugural exhibition in 2013 with the artist, titled *I Who Have Arrived In Heaven*, spanned all three spaces at West 19th Street in New York. Her second gallery solo show was held at David Zwirner, New York in 2015.

Work by the artist is held in museum collections worldwide, including the Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris; Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, D.C.; Los Angeles County Museum of Art; The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; The Museum of Modern Art, New York; National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo; Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam; Tate Gallery, London; Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, Minnesota; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; amongst numerous others. In 2016, Kusama was the first woman to receive the Order of Culture, the highest honor bestowed by the Japanese Imperial Family. She lives and works in Tokyo.

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