

## **SOTHEBY'S NEW YORK TO OFFER JEFF KOONS' "MICHAEL JACKSON AND BUBBLES" FOR THE FIRST TIME AT AUCTION**

**— Estimated at \$ 3 - 4 Million —  
Auction of Contemporary Art May 15, 2001**



New York, NY, April 3, 2001 – Jeff Koons can say more in a single piece of art than most writers could say in a novel. Pop culture and high art collide in his artwork to reveal the truths of modern culture – especially its emphasis on materialism, celebrity, and consumerism. Nowhere is his genius for subverting reality more apparent than in his groundbreaking 1988 porcelain sculpture, “Michael Jackson and Bubbles.” Taking as his subject the undisputed King of Pop and his chimpanzee companion, Koons created a work that comments not only on Jackson’s unique celebrity, but on the very issues of identity and idolatry. The medium is very much the message in this sculpture, as porcelain’s slick and seamless surface mimics the impenetrable public image that Jackson created for himself. Koons has created a commentary on the pop star that is at once impenetrable and inherently fragile, an icon made of clay, glazed and gilded to perfection.

Koons sculpture was produced in an edition of three, and the current example is the only one in a private collection. The other two sculptures are held in a public collection in Athens and at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. The single artist’s proof is the property of the Broad Art Foundation.

Since “Michael Jackson and Bubbles” burst onto the art scene in 1988, the work has caused sensational interest wherever it was exhibited, drawing crowds and the attention of art critics worldwide. Laura Paulson, Sotheby’s New York Director of Contemporary Art, has remarked that “Koons’ ‘Michael Jackson and Bubbles’ is arguably the single artwork which epitomizes the 1980s.”

The sculpture is considered by many to be Koon’s most magnificent work, a triumph both technically and conceptually. Koons himself has stated that he identified personally with Michael Jackson, saying in 1988 that “If I could be one other living person, it would probably be Michael Jackson.” Like Jackson, Koons rose to worldwide prominence in the “excessive, decadent” 1980s, taking the art world by surprise with his sculptures that elevated the commonplace to the level of the devotional. This sublime example of Koons artistic vision will be offered in Sotheby’s May 15 sale of Contemporary works of art. The entire sale will be on view to the public in New York from May 11 – 14, 2001. The sculpture carries an estimate of \$3-4 million.

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