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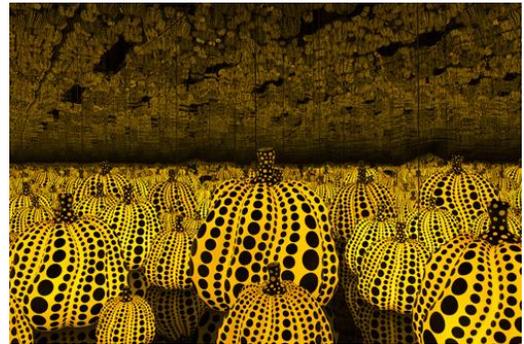
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BLOCKBUSTER EXHIBITION YAYOI KUSAMA: INFINITY MIRRORS OPENS AT SEATTLE ART MUSEUM JUNE 30

Tickets on sale May 30 for survey of celebrated artist's 65-year career, including five of her immersive Infinity Mirror Rooms



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SEATTLE, WA - The Seattle Art Museum presents *Yayoi Kusama: Infinity Mirrors* (June 30–September 10, 2017), exploring the contemporary Japanese artist's 65-year career. Organized by the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, the exhibition comes to Seattle—the city of Kusama's first North American solo show in 1957—after opening to record-breaking crowds in Washington, D.C. The in-depth survey of the artist's work offers an unprecedented opportunity for visitors to experience five of her iconic, immersive, multi-reflective Infinity Mirror Rooms, alongside more than 60 works on paper, sculptures, and large-scale paintings from the 1950s to the present, including the West Coast debut of vibrant works the artist recently created in her Tokyo studio.

ABOUT THE EXHIBITION

Infinity Mirrors traces Yayoi Kusama's development from the 1950s to the present. In her early work of the 1950s, the artist addressed her experiences growing up in Japan during World War II with dark, abstract forms in paintings and watercolors. By the 1960s, her interests evolved toward producing immaterial environments, such as *Accumulation* (1962), a soft sculpture of stuffed cylindrical fabric forms on a wooden chair frame.

Beginning in 1965, Kusama began introducing mirrors as reflective devices in her work with the Infinity Mirror Rooms. Initially motivated by an interest in the idea of "self-obliteration" and political liberation during the Vietnam War, the more recent examples see Kusama's interest turning more toward a cosmic social harmony. The five rooms presented in this exhibition were created at various times over five decades, with the most recent room created in 2016.

Four of the five Infinity Mirror Rooms on view allow visitors to enter the room, immersing themselves in various environments: large balloons, suspended LED lights, phallic stuffed objects, or Kusama's beloved pumpkins. The fifth room offers a voyeuristic experience: viewers look through a peep hole, seeing a flurry of flashing lights reflected off the mirrored walls.

The exhibition also marks the West Coast debut of *My Eternal Soul* (2016), a series of Kusama's most recent paintings, as well as the recently realized Infinity



Room, *All the Eternal Love I Have for the Pumpkins* (2016), featuring an infinite field of her signature pumpkins.

With *The Obliteration Room* (2002-present), visitors enter an all-white staged living room and are given multicolored dot stickers to adorn every surface. Growing out of Kusama's participation in the communal happenings of the 1960s, this interactive room casts visitors in the role of artist. By the closing of the exhibition, the room will be completely filled with a riot of colorful dots.

"This exhibition presents a unique opportunity to see the life's work of a true visionary," says Catharina Manchanda, SAM's Jon & Mary Shirley Curator of Modern & Contemporary Art. "Taken together, Kusama's drawings, paintings, sculptures, and infinity mirror rooms add up to a *Gesamtkunstwerk* [total art work]. Her web-like structures are reminiscent of both microscopic cell formations and macroscopic visions of outer space. My tip is to look closely at these works; they are the key to understanding the infinity mirror rooms."

The traveling exhibition opened at the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden (February 23–May 14, 2017). From Seattle, it will travel to The Broad in Los Angeles (October 21, 2017–January 1, 2018), the Art Gallery of Ontario (March 3–May 27, 2018), the Cleveland Museum of Art (July 7–September 30, 2018), and the High Museum of Art in Atlanta (November 18, 2018–February 17, 2019).

YAYOI KUSAMA - BIOGRAPHY

Yayoi Kusama was born in March 22, 1929, in Matsumoto, Japan. Growing up during World War II, she spent her formative years working at a parachute factory sewing military uniforms. Post-World War II, Kusama enrolled in the *Nihonga* program at the Kyoto Municipal Hiyoshigoaka Upper Secondary School. After graduating at the age of 20, she participated in regional and collaborative exhibitions in Matsumoto. In 1954, 25-year-old Kusama had her first big break with a solo exhibition at the Shirokiya Gallery in Tokyo.

In 1955, Kusama established a relationship with Georgia O'Keeffe, who gave her advice on how to start a career in the U.S. Eventually this relationship led her to debut her first solo exhibition in the U.S. of paintings and watercolors at the now-defunct Zoë Dusanne Gallery in Seattle, Washington in 1957.

At the age of 29, Kusama moved to New York City. She became very involved in activist art in opposition to the Vietnam War. Her work grew exponentially, exploring spatial installations and the concept of infinity in art. Through the 60s, Kusama was extremely active, showcasing her work alongside notable contemporaries such as Andy Warhol, Claes Oldenburg, and Allan Kaprow.

She continued this work through 1972, when she began to develop an interest in literature. By 1973, Kusama moved back to Japan due to health reasons. She has lived and worked in Japan ever since, achieving popular and critical success, including becoming the first woman to represent Japan at the Venice Biennale in 1993.

RELATED PROGRAMS AND EVENTS

SAM will present a series of related public programs and events, as well as programs for educators, with details to be announced at a later date.

EXHIBITION CATALOGUE

A 224-page exhibition catalogue (including 200 color illustrations) published by Prestel will be available for purchase in June in SAM Shop (\$49.95). Also titled *Yayoi Kusama: Infinity Mirrors* (ISBN: 978-3-7913-5594-8), it is edited by Mika Yoshitake, Associate Curator, Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden. It features the first catalogue raisonné of the Infinity Mirror Rooms and an interview with the artist.

TICKETING INFORMATION

Tickets go on sale to the general public Tuesday, May 30 at 10 am, following a SAM member pre-sale starting May 15. Due to limited capacity and anticipated high demand, timed ticketing will be in effect for the duration of the exhibition.

What to Expect

- Visitors should expect to spend at least 1-2 hours at the exhibition.
- Visitors should expect lines for each of the Infinity Mirror Rooms.
- Visitors will have 20-30 seconds in each room, per the artist's request.
- The Infinity Mirror Rooms allow for two to three people at one time.
- Visitors may be asked to enter the room with another visitor to allow as many people as possible the opportunity to experience all of the rooms.

Special Hours

- Monday 10 am-5 pm; SAM members ONLY 4-9 pm (beginning July 10)
- Closed Tuesday
- Wednesday 10 am-5 pm
- Thursday and Friday 10 am-9 pm (10 am-5 pm Friday June 30)
- Saturday and Sunday 10 am-5 pm
- Closed Independence Day; Open Labor Day

Daily Prices

- \$34.95 Adult
- \$32.95 Senior (65+)
- \$29.95 Military (with ID)
- \$24.95 Student (with ID), Teen (13-17)
- FREE for children (12 and under) and SAM members

EXHIBITION ORGANIZATION AND SUPPORT

Yayoi Kusama: Infinity Mirrors is organized by the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian Institution.



The presentation of the exhibition at SAM is made possible by

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Photo credits: Yayoi Kusama with recent works in Tokyo, 2016, Courtesy of the artist, © YAYOI KUSAMA, Photo: Tomoaki Makino. *Infinity Mirrored Room—All the Eternal Love I Have for the Pumpkins*, 2016, at the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Yayoi Kusama, Japanese, b. 1929, wood, mirror, plastic, black glass, LED, Collection of the artist, Courtesy of Ota Fine Arts, Tokyo/Singapore and Victoria Miro, London, © YAYOI KUSAMA, Photo: Cathy Carver.

ABOUT SEATTLE ART MUSEUM

As the leading visual art institution in the Pacific Northwest, SAM draws on its global collections, powerful exhibitions, and dynamic programs to provide unique educational resources benefiting the Seattle region, the Pacific Northwest, and beyond. SAM was founded in 1933 with a focus on Asian art. By the late 1980s the museum had outgrown its original home, and in 1991 a new 155,000-square-foot downtown building, designed by Robert Venturi, Scott Brown & Associates, opened to the public. The 1933 building was renovated and reopened as the Asian Art Museum in 1994. SAM's desire to further serve its community was realized in 2007 with the opening of two stunning new facilities: the nine-acre Olympic Sculpture Park (designed by Weiss/Manfredi Architects)—a “museum without walls,” free and open to all—and the Allied Works Architecture designed 118,000-square-foot expansion of its main, downtown location, including 232,000 square feet of additional space built for future expansion. The Olympic Sculpture Park and SAM's downtown expansion celebrate their tenth anniversary in 2017.

From a strong foundation of Asian art to noteworthy collections of African and Oceanic art, Northwest Coast Native American art, European and American art, and modern and contemporary art, the strength of SAM's collection of approximately 25,000 objects lies in its diversity of media, cultures and time periods.