

JEFF KOONS: BIOGRAPHY

Jeff Koons was born in York, Pennsylvania in 1955. He studied at the Maryland Institute College of Art in Baltimore and the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. He received a BFA from the Maryland Institute College of Art in 1976. Koons lives and works in New York City.

Since his first solo exhibition in 1980, Koons emerged onto the art scene with a style that blended several existing styles—pop, conceptual, craft, appropriation—to create his own unique mode of expression. Since then his work has been shown in major galleries and institutions throughout the world. Koons is widely known for his iconic sculptures Rabbit and Balloon Dog as well as the monumental floral sculpture Puppy (1992), shown at Rockefeller Center and permanently installed at the Guggenheim Bilbao.

An “idea man,” Koons runs his studio as he would a production office, often using computer-aided design and hiring out the actual construction of his pieces to technicians who can bring to life his ideas with more precision than he himself could.

His work takes on, in usually unconventional ways, such hot-button subjects such as sex, race, gender and fame, and it comes to life in such forms as balloons, bronzed sporting-goods items and inflatable pool toys. His habit of elevating the stature of such items from kitsch objects to high art has made his name synonymous with the art of mass culture. The transformation from object to art object gives birth to unexpected psychological dimensions, as shifting colour, scale and representation take on new meaning, and the viewer can find something new in how humans, animals and anthropomorphized objects come to life.