

THE SCHIRN KUNSTHALLE, IN COOPERATION WITH GALERIA KAUFHOF, FRANKFURT,
PRESENTS A WORK COMMISSIONED FROM YAYOI KUSAMA

DOTS OBSESSION/LOVE FOREVER

BY YAYOI KUSAMA

11 October–7 November 2005

In advance of the exhibition *Summer of Love. Art of the Psychedelic Era*, which will be held from 2 November 2005 to 12 February 2006, the Schirn Kunsthalle Frankfurt, in cooperation with the Galeria Kaufhof, Frankfurt, is presenting a large-scale work by Yayoi Kusama on the facade and in the display windows of the Galeria Kaufhof on Frankfurt's Hauptwache. Yayoi Kusama's *Dots Obsession/Love Forever* is the second cooperation between the Galeria Kaufhof and the Schirn, following Barbara Kruger's monumental work in the context of the exhibition *Shopping: A Century of Art and Consumer Culture*. Yayoi Kusama is one of Japan's most versatile and successful artists internationally. She has caused a sensation since the 1960s with her installations and objects with bright dots. The artist, who became known in Europe as the Polka Dot Princess, covers her world with colorful dots: whole rooms, furniture, and people dissolve in a whirl of polka dots.

In the work she developed for Frankfurt, *Dots Obsession/Love Forever*, she covers the entire outer surface of the department store with her colorful dots, producing a painting on a scale larger than anything she has done before. The spectacular presentation continues in the Galeria's display windows. Inflatable balloons that recall oversized fly agaric mushrooms float above the main entrance behind multistory windows, bringing the ecstatically scattered dots inside the building. In the windows some of the mannequins are hidden behind a dot pattern that monopolizes the entire space. The shop window dummies only return just under two weeks later, wearing the new fall collection at the Galeria Kaufhof.

Another part of Yayoi Kusama's work *Dots Obsession/Love Forever* will be shown in the rotunda of Schirn in parallel with the exhibition *Summer of Love*, from 2 November 2005 to 12 February 2006.

Yayoi Kusama was born in Japan in 1929. After studying classical Japanese *nihonga* painting, in 1958 Kusama left the confines of her parental home and Japanese society and settled in New York to pursue her artistic work. With painting as her point of departure Kusama works to combine artwork, artist, and life and develops her conception of the environment from the principle of the serial allover painting. Infinite network structures, dots, and spots are already found in the early paintings and drawings, establishing an expanding and pulsating visual universe whose origins, as Kusama herself has indicated, are to be found in the visions and hallucinations of her childhood. Their passionate power of expression quickly bursts the boundaries of painting, and the characteristic polka dots and

infinity nets of her imagination grow rampantly like phallic growths, noodles, or simply dots, objects, furniture, and ultimately entire rooms. In the mid-1960s Kusama produced her first environments, in which she used repetitive patterns, serial structures, countless dots, and a wide variety of materials to pursue the illusion of wiping out objects, rooms, and people.

The idea of “self-obliteration” is also central to the nude performances described as “body and love festivals” that Kusama organized from the mid-1960s onward, usually in public squares in New York. These actions responded to politically explosive themes like the Nixon affair and the Vietnam War or referred to developments in the politics of culture like the increasing commercialization of the art market. In 1974 Kusama returned to Japan, where she wrote autobiographical stories and poems about her experiences in New York that were read by a growing fan community in Japan and received literary prizes. Not only the late 1980s was her significance as a visual artist rediscovered for later generations of artists and by art historians and appreciated in numerous exhibitions.

Kusama is one of the central artist figures in the exhibition *Summer of Love*. It is a groundbreaking exhibition on psychedelic art that sheds light on the unique connections between contemporary art, popular culture, and political protests in the 1960s and early 1970s. It demonstrates that the psychedelic phenomenon was one of the most interesting and yet also one of the most overlooked of the twentieth century. The dialogue between psychedelic art and political revolution and the counterculture found expression in a unique aesthetic that was expressed in social, political, ethnic, and sexual liberation. The search for an ecstatic art called for the expansion of consciousness and the desired sensory overstimulation. Not infrequently these things were achieved with the help of hallucinogens, which were an essential aspect of the psychedelic movement. The presentation of more than 350 paintings, photographs, films, light shows, environments, posters, album covers, and documentation material from Europe, the United States, South America, and Japan in a sensational exhibition design by UN Studio (Ben van Berkel, Caroline Bos) emphasizes the movement’s international character.

DOTS OBSESSION/LOVE FOREVER BY YAYOI KUSAMA

LOCATION: Galeria Kaufhof, Frankfurt, An der Hauptwache, 60313 Frankfurt, and Schirn Kunsthalle Frankfurt, Rotunde, Römerberg, 60311 Frankfurt. **DATES:** 11 October 2005–7 November 2005 (Galeria Kaufhof, Frankfurt), 2 November 2005–12 February 2006 (Schirn Kunsthalle Frankfurt). **CURATOR:** Matthias Ulrich (Schirn). **PROJECT COORDINATION:** Hidenori Ota, Ota Fine Arts, Tokyo. **PROJECT DIRECTION:** Beate-Ina Bender (Galeria Kaufhof).

**SUMMER OF LOVE
ART OF THE PSYCHEDELIC ERA**

LOCATION: SCHIRN KUNSTHALLE FRANKFURT, Römerberg, D-60311 Frankfurt.
DATES: 2 November 2005–12 February 2006. **HOURS:** Tues, Fri.–Sun. 10 AM–7 PM, Wed. and Thurs. 10 AM–10 PM. **INFORMATION:** www.schirn.de, E-Mail: welcome@schirn.de, Telephone: (+49-69) 29 98 82-0, Fax: (+49-69) 29 98 82-240. **ADMISSION:** 7 €, reduced 5 €, family ticket 15 €. **CURATOR:** Christoph Grunenberg, Tate Liverpool. **PROJECT DIRECTION:** Matthias Ulrich. **EXHIBITION ARCHITECTURE:** UN Studio (Ben van Berkel, Caroline Bos). **PROMOTION:** Saatchi & Saatchi. **MEDIA PARTNERS:** Frankfurter Rundschau, plan.F – Das Stadtmagazin für Frankfurt und Rhein-Main, AD – Architectural Digest, hr2-kultur, Neue Digitale: Kreativagentur für digitale Markenführung, RMV – Rhein-Main-Verkehrsverbund

PRESS OFFICE: Dorothea Apovnik (head), Simone Krämer
SCHIRN KUNSTHALLE FRANKFURT, Römerberg, D-60311 Frankfurt,
phone: (+49-69) 29 98 82-118, fax: (+49-69) 29 98 82-240, e-mail:
presse@schirn.de, www.schirn.de (texts and images for download
under PRESSE)