

BlackBook



Jeff Koons on His Spectacular New Installation ‘The Seated Ballerina’

By June Badi | May 16, 2017



Seated Ballerina 2017 © Jeff Koons

Last Friday, Saks Fifth Avenue hosted a reception to celebrate the unveiling of Jeff Koons’ first large-scale stationary inflatable in New York, *The Seated Ballerina* – a 45-foot high nylon sculpture installed at Rockefeller Center, co-presented by Kiehl’s and the Art Production Fund.

The evening began with a prompt staging of remarks by Kiehl’s President Chris Salgado: “giving back is not only good for the community, it’s good for your soul.” He then presented a \$100,000 check to the International Centre for Missing & Exploited Children, an organization Koons and Kiehl’s have been involved with since 2011.

Salgado’s grand gesture earned a significant round of applause from the assembled, which included notables such as Marc Metrick, President of Saks Fifth Avenue; Maura Harty, President & CEO of the ICMEC, Art Production Fund Co-Founders Yvonne Force Villareal and Doreen Remen, Fort Gansevoort’s Carolyn Angel and Adam Shokorn, Warby Parker CEO Neil Blumenthal, musician Betty Who, and Whitney Biennial artist Raul de Nieves.

“There’s so much value in coming together,” said Casey Fremont, Executive Director of the Art Production Fund, “to make a project that’s not only public artwork, but also has a deeper context, which is to raise awareness and support for ICMEC and their child protection efforts.”

Still, the attention centered on The Seated Ballerina, and the bird's eye view guests were afforded by the outdoor deck at Saks. Although according to Koons the true gift of his giant-sized ballerina, his third Rockefeller Center installation, is the spectacular presence that will strike all those who encounter her delicate beauty in person.

“When people look at it they come into contact with their own potential and their own optimism for their future,” said Koons. “I think that’s why people enjoy it.”

In a vernacular cadence convincing enough that he could run for a political office if he so wished, Koons made it clear that his ballerina, “once conceived, in the scale of you and I, for the Antiquity series, is actually a part of a larger conversation at hand.”

“I think the ballerina shares the values I find relevant. I’m always trying to communicate the removal of judgement, or of any form of segregation and hierarchy. She communicates a sense of acceptance and optimism for the future.”

Koons also furthered the evening’s dialogue on the ethereal, saying that the soul of his Seated Ballerina “is quite strong and affirmed in her own kind of power and the essence of her protection.”

And while she still goes nameless, as she slides down our Instagram feeds at the speed of our rolling thumbs, one thing is certain: that regardless of your stature, you can only stay seated for so long.

“It’s a wonderful time for art,” closed Koons.

The Seated Ballerina will be on display through June 2nd bringing awareness to National Missing Children’s Month this May.



L to R: Jeff Koons ; Seated Ballerina 2017 © Jeff Koons / Photos courtesy BFA