

## THE STORY



# STATE of the ART

*Louis Vuitton adds another artist collaboration to its long history with a series of reimagined bags (and logos) by Jeff Koons*

Words **Bibby Sowray**

Fashion's most iconic and artistic moments are born from acts of joyful rebellion. When Marc Jacobs defied convention by enlisting artist Stephen Sprouse to graffiti on the Louis Vuitton monogram in 2001, amid the shockwaves he formed an unbreakable bond between the Parisian fashion house and the art world, which helped generate £234m in sales\*. Many more collaborations followed, each in their own way adding a new line of thought to the conversation around art and commerce. The latest sees the American pop artist Jeff Koons transpose his famed *Gazing Ball* paintings (hand-painted oil reproductions of works by da Vinci, Rubens, Titian and more) on to Louis Vuitton classics such as the Speedy, the Keepall and the Neverfull. 'I hope somebody who sees or acquires the



TAKASHI MURAKAMI

bag can emotionally feel this sense of union,' he says. 'If they have the Van Gogh bag, [that connection] is not just with Van Gogh. Van Gogh loved Gauguin; there's all this interconnectivity.'

Koons has reworked the Louis Vuitton monogram to incorporate his own initials, a first for the fashion house and a twist in the brand's long history of art collaborations. Here, we revisit its highs.

### WHEN ART MEETS FASHION THE STORY SO FAR

**STEPHEN SPROUSE SS 2001** Marc Jacobs defies resistance from Vuitton's corporate heads and asks New York artist Sprouse to print a graffiti logo over the classic monogram. Sprouse also modifies patterns from his own archives, including a mock leopard-print made from the letter U that goes on to appear on an iconic scarf. His prints are still used to this day.

**TAKASHI MURAKAMI SS 2003** The Japanese artist reimagines the traditional brown



YAYOI KUSAMA

and gold palette of the monogram print in rainbow hues, while also adding smiling cherry blossoms, cartoonish eyes and anime animals – and creates a plethora of 'It' bags in the process. The line remains in production until 2015.

**RICHARD PRINCE SS 2008** American painter and photographer Richard Prince transfers his *Mancrazy Jokes* series of paintings on to Vuitton bags and dresses models in nurse outfits and monogrammed lace surgical masks inspired by his *Nurses* paintings.

**DAMIEN HIRST 2009** Hirst transforms two unique trunks into medical cabinets as part of Vuitton's fundraiser for the Red Cross. Studded with the artist's signature butterflies, the leather pieces feature 10 drawers filled with surgical instruments.

**YAYOI KUSAMA SS 2012** Six years after first meeting in Tokyo – and Kusama showing Marc Jacobs a Louis Vuitton Speedy bag she had hand-painted – Jacobs asks her to rework her trademark dot paintings for his bags, accessories and clothes. She also turns Louis Vuitton windows across the world into art installations, complete with lifelike waxworks of herself.

**CINDY SHERMAN 2014** For *The Icon and the Iconoclasts* project, Sherman creates a fully fitted vanity trunk and messenger bag embellished with embroidered travel patches of her own design.

**JAKE AND DINOS CHAPMAN SS 2017** Four years after first collaborating with Louis Vuitton, the Chapman brothers lend their haunting illustrations to the fashion house's menswear. Four prints depicting twisted animals adorn bags, accessories and clothing.

**JEFF KOONS 2017** Koons places images from his *Gazing Ball* series of works on to some of Louis Vuitton's most iconic bags, including the Speedy, the Keepall and the Neverfull, emblazoning each with the name of the original artist. Miniatures of Koons' iconic inflatable rabbit feature as the tag. *Leather bag (top left), £2,240, available in store at Louis Vuitton New Bond Street, and London's Harrods and Selfridges*



RICHARD PRINCE

Photography: Elliot Kennedy. Styling: Felicity Kay. Manicure: Jessica Thompson at Frank Agency using Chanel Le Vernis in Beige and Body Excellence Hand Cream. Model: Claudie at The Squad. Nylon-mix top, stylist's own. \*Louis Vuitton: Art, Fashion and Architecture (Rizzoli, 2009)