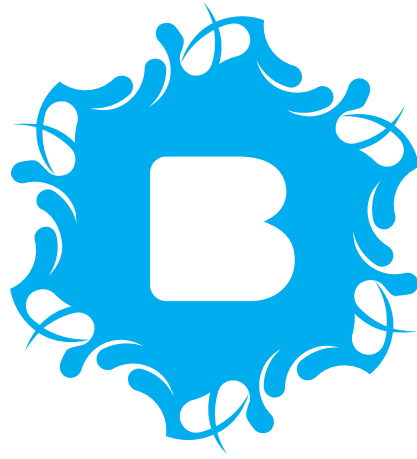


Press Release



March 2008

Takashi Murakami's *Oval Buddha* to Be Exhibited at the 590 Sculpture Garden in Manhattan In Conjunction with the Retrospective of His Work at the Brooklyn Museum

Takashi Murakami's monumental, platinum-clad *Oval Buddha*, 2007, will be exhibited in the 590 Sculpture Garden in Manhattan. This exhibition is in conjunction with the presentation of a major retrospective of his work, ©MURAKAMI, at the Brooklyn Museum from April 5 through July 13, 2008. Because of its enormous scale, it is not possible for the 6,613 pound, 18 1/2 foot-tall sculpture to be included in the Brooklyn exhibition, but arrangements were made for the 590 Sculpture Garden presentation to coincide with this largest survey to date of the work of the internationally acclaimed Japanese artist.

The towering work depicts a Janus-faced Oval, one of the artist's signature characters, seated in a meditative lotus position. Combining traditional Japanese techniques and imagery with several of Murakami's motifs, *Oval Buddha* reflects the artist's evolving body, mind, and spirit and his continuing exploration of his cultural, national, religious, and artistic reality.

First conceived in 1999 when Murakami was asked to create an iconic figure for a line of Issey Miyake t-shirts, the Oval character was subsequently utilized in a variety of different works. Like many of the artist's other creatures, it has metamorphosed in many applications, culminating in *Oval Buddha*, which combines the artist's distinct iconography with traditional Buddhist motifs. Wearing a goatee similar to that of the artist, *Oval Buddha* features a frog like mouth, round potbelly, sagging chest, and ghastly teeth. Bodily decay and destruction are constant themes throughout Murakami's oeuvre, as demonstrated in the distortions of his alter ego DOB, who in paintings and inflatable form has transformed from a simple, balloon-like form to a menacing creature.

©MURAKAMI, the most comprehensive retrospective to date of the work of the internationally acclaimed Japanese artist, was organized by The Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles, where it was recently on view. *Oval Buddha* was a part of that presentation. The Brooklyn Museum will be the only other United States venue before the exhibition travels to the Museum für Moderne Kunst, Frankfurt (October 27, 2008-January 4, 2009) and the Guggenheim Museum, Bilbao (February-May 2009).

Born in Tokyo in 1962, Murakami is one of the most influential and acclaimed artists to have emerged from Asia in the late twentieth century, creating a wide-ranging body of work that consciously bridges fine art, design, animation, fashion, and popular culture. His practice includes painting, sculpture, installation, and

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animation, as well as a wide range of collectibles, multiples, and commercial products. Navigating between Japanese and American culture, Takashi Murakami blends the bright palette of pop, the flatness of anime, and the ominous dreams of surrealism. Drawing upon Japan's traditional lack of hierarchical distinction between fine art and craft, he has moved toward creating a new paradigm, where synergies between fine art and pop culture create a new art form.

Paul Schimmel, chief curator of The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, has organized the exhibition. The Brooklyn presentation is coordinated by Deputy Director for Art Charles Desmarais and Associate Curator of Exhibitions Tumelo Mosaka.

©*MURAKAMI* is organized by The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles. The Brooklyn presentation is made possible by DLA Piper with additional support from the Barbara and Richard Debs Exhibition Fund, the Arline and Norman M. Feinberg Exhibition Fund and the Martha A. and Robert S. Rubin Exhibition Fund. New York Magazine is print media sponsor. Ovation TV is television media sponsor.

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Oval Buddha, 2007. Aluminum and platinum leaf. 223 5/8 x 125 9/16 x 122 1/16 inches. Courtesy of the artist, Blum & Poe, Los Angeles and Kaikai Kiki Co., Ltd. ©2007 Takashi Murakami/KaiKai Kiki Co., Ltd. All Rights Reserved.

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