

# JEFF KOONS

Dirty, pervy, bright and beautiful

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Taschen; £39.99

**AMERICAN POP** artist Jeff Koons is a lesson in the art of contradictions. He's the ex-broker

with a scrubbed face and immaculate suit. He's also the man who married Italian porn star and MP La Cicciolina, and created an incredibly explicit series of paintings,

photographs and sculptures of them having sex. And he's the man who made the world's sickliest and cutest gigantic sculpture, 'Puppy', a West Highland terrier made out of flowers. His pieces sell for vulgar amounts of cash; in 2007 his sculpture 'Hanging Heart' sold for \$23.6m, making it the most expensive piece by a living artist at the time.

Like Andy Warhol before him, Koons carefully cultivates his reputation. During the 1980s he employed an image consultant and created a hyper-real super-slick businessman persona. And like Warhol, he mixes high art with

low – he once appeared on low-budget UK TV show *Eurotrash* trying to track down Michael Jackson's chimp, Bubbles.

Taschen's enormous compilation of Koons' work is as much a piece of pop art as some of the artists' pictures. Heavy, chunky and sporting a blow-up lobster on its cover, it's a startlingly bright comprehensive round-up of Koons' work accompanied by essays and analysis. Porno fans will be glad to see Koons' rudest pictures given acres of space, his spunk splashed across La Cicciolina in full colour. And the large format suits the kitsch but lonely essence of his gaudy blow-up animal sculptures. If you can't afford a Koons original, this is the next best thing.

Kate Hodges

