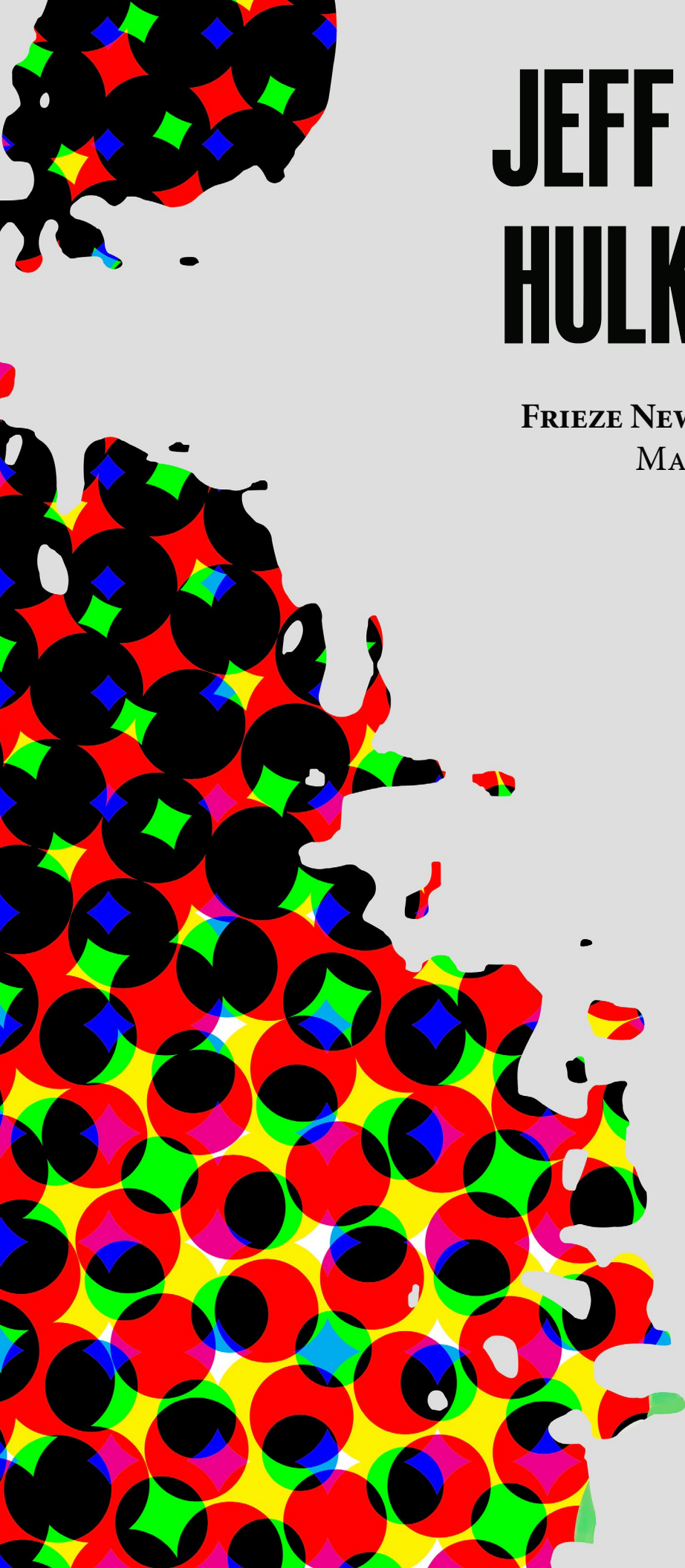


JEFF KOONS HULK ELVIS

FRIEZE NEW YORK, BOOTH B5

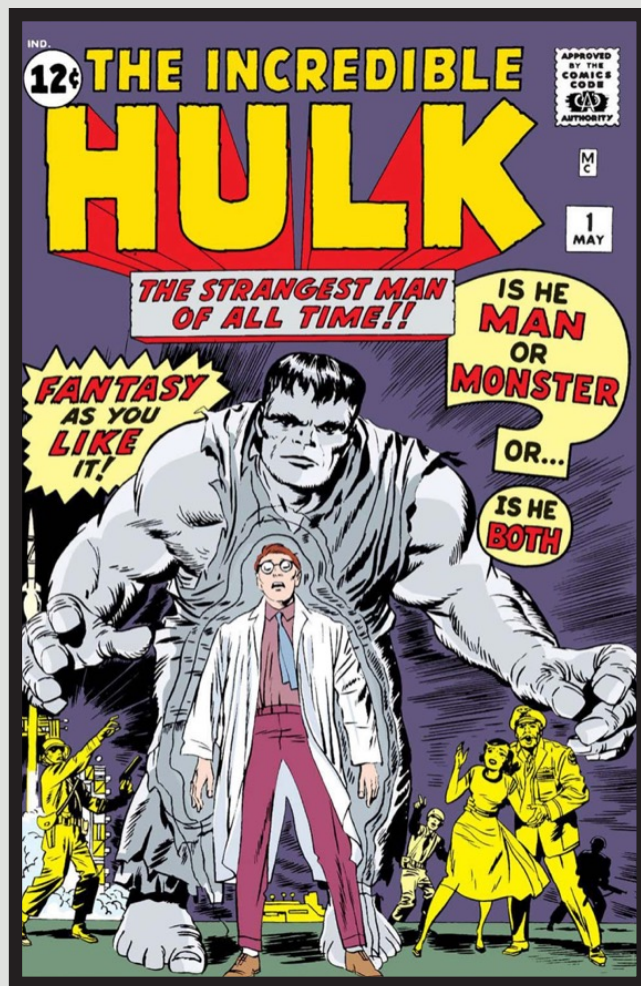
MAY 7 - MAY 11, 2025

GAGOSIAN



HULK ELVIS REPRESENTS FOR ME BOTH WESTERN AND EASTERN CULTURES, A SENSE OF A GUARDIAN, A PROTECTOR, THAT AT THE SAME TIME IS CAPABLE OF BRINGING THE HOUSE DOWN. I HAVE TRIED TO BLEND THESE CULTURAL HISTORIES TOGETHER. THE HULK REPRESENTS A DUALITY THAT SHIFTS FROM A SUPERHERO TO A DIVINE BEING.

-JEFF KOONS



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JEFF KOONS: HULK ELVIS

FRIEZE NEW YORK 2025

THE SHED, BOOTH B5

HOURS AND ACCESS

Wednesday Preview, May 7: 11am – 7pm

Thursday Preview, May 8: (Members and invitation only preview 11am – 1pm)
1pm – 7pm general admission tickets

Friday, May 9: 11am – 7pm

Saturday, May 10: 11am – 7pm

Sunday, May 11: 11am – 5pm

ABOUT THE ARTWORK

Gagosian is pleased to announce a solo presentation of works by Jeff Koons at Frieze New York 2025, nearly twenty-five years since the first collaboration between the artist and the gallery. Three sculptures—*Hulk (Organ)* (2004–14), *Hulk (Tubas)* (2004–18), and *Hulk (Dragon and Turtle)* (2004–21), all from the *Hulk Elvis* series—are on view against a specially produced immersive vinyl backdrop. All the sculptures are from Koons's own collection, and the artist participated in every stage of the exhibition process, from the initial selection to the design of the booth and the layout of the installation.

Drawing on sources including figures from classical antiquity, everyday objects, and contemporary icons, Koons explores the conjunction of the readymade and the sublime in lavishly realized artifacts and tableaux. Identifying commonalities throughout cultural history, he confronts fundamental aspects of the human psyche by working through such unifying concepts as the new, the banal, and the sublime. Koons continues to produce highly polished—but nonetheless accessible—objects and images that exude beauty, sexuality, spirituality, and even happiness.

For Koons, the Hulk embodies both a current in Western popular culture and the Eastern figure of the “guardian god.” Endowed with protective abilities, the character’s capacity for violence also renders him a fundamentally human animal. Philip Tinari, writing in the catalogue for *Hulk Elvis* at Gagosian Hong Kong (2014), observes that the Hulk first appeared in 1962, and was thus “a creature of the Cold War and of Camelot.” In these works, its wide-legged stance also refers to that of Elvis in Andy Warhol’s images of the iconic rock ‘n’ roller. By now, however, Bruce Banner’s alter ego has largely shed such national and cultural associations, coming to symbolize instead something primordial and universal.

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THE HULK ELVIS SERIES TRIES TO DEAL WITH THE VISCERAL BUT ALSO TO CONNECT PEOPLE USING REFERENCES TO ART HISTORY. ART HISTORY HAS A WAY OF CONNECTING PEOPLE WITH HUMANITY... IT GIVES US A SENSE OF OUR PAST, BUT ALSO OUR FUTURE

- JEFF KOONS



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ORGAN

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Jeff Koons

Hulk (Organ), 2004–14

Polychromed bronze and mixed media

99 ½ × 50 ¼ × 31 ⅝ inches (252.7 × 127.6 × 80.3 cm)

AP from an edition of 3 plus 1 AP

KOONS 2014.0104

\$3,500,000

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Jeff Koons

Hulk (Organ), 2004–14

Polychromed bronze and mixed media

99 ½ × 50 ¼ × 31 ⅝ inches (252.7 × 127.6 × 80.3 cm)

AP from an edition of 3 plus 1 AP

KOONS 2014.0104

PROVENANCE

Collection of the artist

EXHIBITION & LITERATURE HIGHLIGHTS

Scott Rothkopf, *Jeff Koons: A Retrospective* (New York: Whitney Museum of American Art, 2014), no. 1, p. 190, illustrated in color (rendering); p. 289 (dimensions listed as 93 ½ × 48 ⅞ × 27 in. (237.5 × 123.5 × 70.8 cm)) (another example).

Rebecca Sternthal, ed., *Jeff Koons: Hulk Elvis* (New York: Gagosian Gallery, 2015), p. 17; p. 44; p. 45, illustrated in color (installation photo); pp. 46–47, illustrated in color (detail); p. 49, illustrated in color (installation photo); p. 51, illustrated in color (installation photo) (another example)

Joanne Heyler, ed., *The Broad Collection* (Los Angeles: The Broad; New York: DelMonico Books, 2015), p. 95, illustrated in color (installation photo) (another example)

ABOUT HULK (ORGAN)

Since their creation, the *Hulk Elvis* works have become iconic within Koons's oeuvre. Paintings and sculptures from this series have been included in several important exhibitions, such as the artist's celebrated 2014 retrospective at the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York—in which another edition of *Hulk (Organ)* featured prominently, which then traveled to the Centre Pompidou, Paris, and the Guggenheim Bilbao the following year. As evidence of this particular sculpture's importance within the Hulk Elvis series, one of the three editions of *Hulk (Organ)* is in the permanent collection of The Broad in Los Angeles.

In *Hulk (Organ)*, Koons combines this memorable character with a musical component, one that is represented both literally and symbolically. Here, he has affixed the modified organ's many pipes, keys, and pedalboard to the Hulk's lime-green body, creating a kind of super-instrument that is actually playable. This interactive element is quite special within the *Hulk Elvis* series, and Koons's work more generally. Koons has described the *Hulk Elvis* series as a "body of work which tries to deal with the visceral." *Hulk (Organ)* embodies this point in its expression of utter power—emitting both visual and auditory strength that commands its audience.

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I THINK THIS WORK HAS A POWERFUL SENSE OF ENERGY. WHEN YOU LOOK AT IT YOU CAN FEEL IT...WHEN YOU LOOK AT THESE IMAGES YOU CAN REALLY FEEL A SENSE OF POWER.

JEFF KOONS



Model for *Hulk (Organ)*, 2004–14 in Jeff Koons's New York studio, 2014
Photo by Jason Schmidt

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TUBAS

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Jeff Koons

Hulk (Tubas), 2004–18

Polychromed bronze and brass

97 1/4 x 82 11/16 x 48 1/8 inches (247 x 210 x 122.2 cm)

AP from an edition of 3, plus 1 AP

KOONS 2018.0095

SOLD

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Jeff Koons

Hulk (Tubas), 2004–18

Polychromed bronze and brass

97 ¼ × 82 ⅛ × 48 ⅞ inches (247 × 210 × 122.2 cm)

AP from an edition of 3, plus 1 AP

KOONS 2018.0095

PROVENANCE

Collection of the artist

EXHIBITION & LITERATURE HIGHLIGHTS

Florence, Fondazione Palazzo Strozzi, *Jeff Koons: Shine*, October 2, 2021 — January 30, 2022, no. 23, p. 128, illustrated in color; no. 23, 129; p. 189, illustrated in color

ABOUT HULK (TUBAS)

Hulk (Tubas) (2004–18) exemplifies Koons's signature ability to transform familiar objects into alluring, rarified artworks that revel in their seductive uncanniness. A key sculpture belonging to the artist's *Hulk Elvis* series, *Hulk (Tubas)* centers on a large-format polychromed bronze replica of an inflatable toy depicting the comic book character the Hulk, who is carrying a full-functional, five-bell brass tuba that encircles his body. Both in the Hulk's bulging muscle tone and the customized instrument, *Hulk (Tubas)* is pumped up and amplified, bigger and louder than ordinary man or tuba. In so doing, Koons effects a powerful visual presence that is only outrivaled by the fact that the instrument is itself playable, capable of erupting with an enormous sound befitting its colossal player.

The multi-headed tuba that features in this work has a unique genesis, stemming from a harmonica the artist found at an airport. The small instrument, later identified as a trumpet harmonica, had five horn-like ends emerging from its base. Koons has compared the five ends of the harmonica to a hydra, a multi-headed beast from Greek mythology famously defeated by Hercules.

Created in an edition of three with one artist's proof (the present work), the immaculately rendered *Hulk (Tubas)* is bold, brash, and awe-inspiring—much like the character from which Koons drew inspiration.



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THE TUBA HAS ALWAYS REMINDED ME OF HERCULES FIGHTING THE HYDRA, WHERE YOU HAVE ALL THE DIFFERENT HEADS OF THE HYDRA, AND YOU HAVE THE DIFFERENT HEADS OF THE TUBAS.

- JEFF KOONS



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DRAGON AND TURTLE



GAGOSIAN



Jeff Koons

Hulk (Dragon and Turtle), 2004–21

Polychromed bronze

69 ⁷/₈ × 51 ⁷/₈ × 65 ¹/₄ inches (177.5 × 131.8 × 165.7 cm)

AP from an edition of 3, plus 1 AP

KOONS 2021.0001

\$3,500,000

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Jeff Koons

Hulk (Dragon and Turtle), 2004–21

Polychromed bronze

69 ⁷/₈ × 51 ⁷/₈ × 65 ¹/₄ inches (177.5 × 131.8 × 165.7 cm)

AP from an edition of 3, plus 1 AP

KOONS 2021.0001

PROVENANCE

Collection of the artist

EXHIBITION & LITERATURE HIGHLIGHTS

Los Angeles, Marciano Art Foundation, *Transmissions: Selections from the Marciano Collection*, April 2022 – ongoing (Edition 3)

ABOUT HULK (DRAGON AND TURTLE)

A key sculpture from the Hulk Elvis series, *Hulk (Dragon and Turtle)* (2004–21) centers on a large-format polychromed bronze replica of an inflatable toy depicting the American comic book character the Hulk. In a witty and rather playful gesture, Koons depicts him wearing two additional inflatable pool toys, also rendered in bronze, around his torso. Created in an edition of three with one artist's proof (the present work), the immaculately rendered *Hulk (Dragon and Turtle)* is bold, brash, and awe-inspiring—much like the character from which Koons drew inspiration.

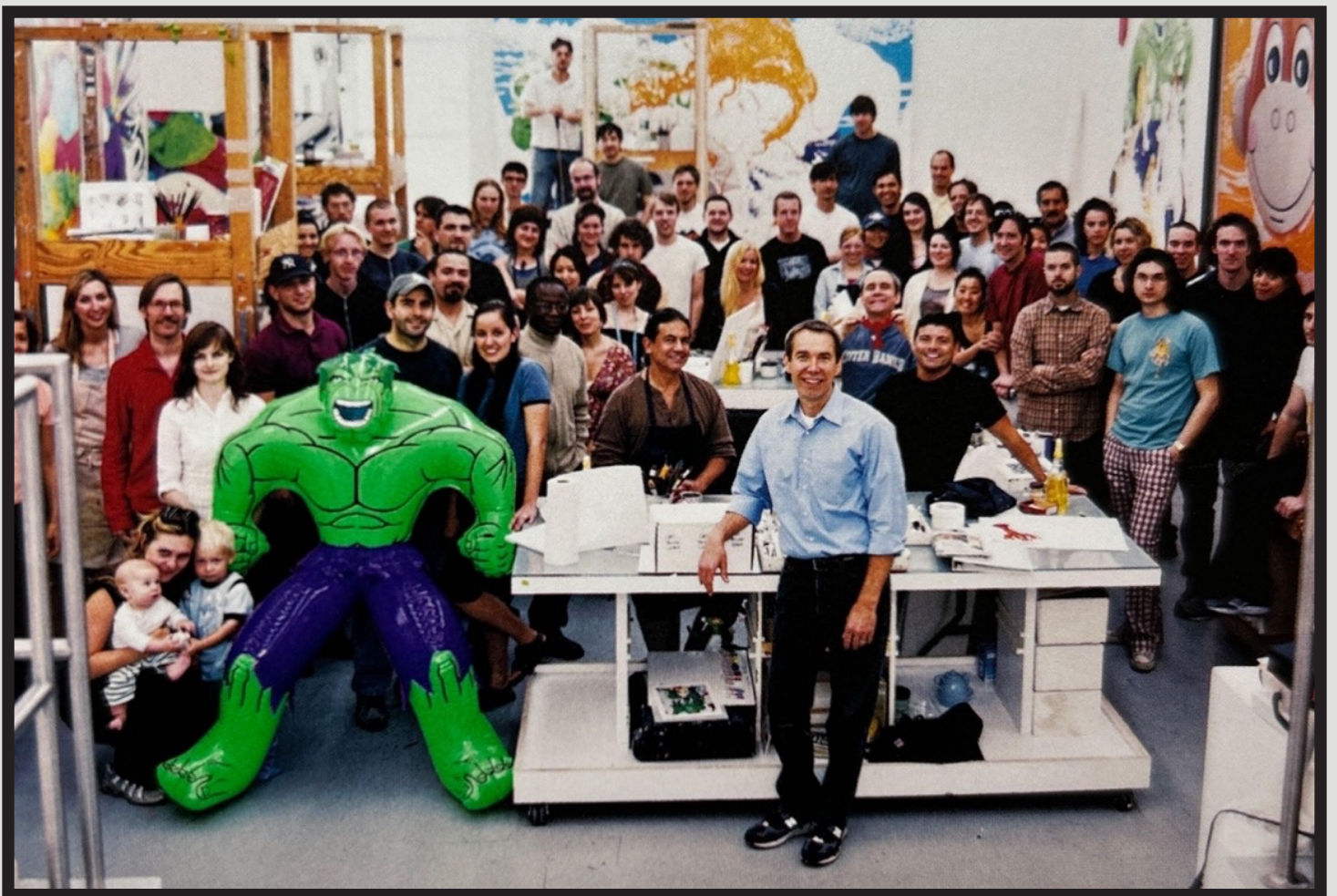
Unlike many of the other sculptures from the Hulk Elvis series that combine readymade components with bronze elements, *Hulk (Dragon and Turtle)* rather exceptionally is only one of two Hulks completely fabricated in bronze. Another example of *Hulk (Dragon and Turtle)* is on view in the ongoing exhibition *Transmissions: Selections from the Marciano Collection*, which opened in Los Angeles at the Marciano Art Foundation in April 2022.



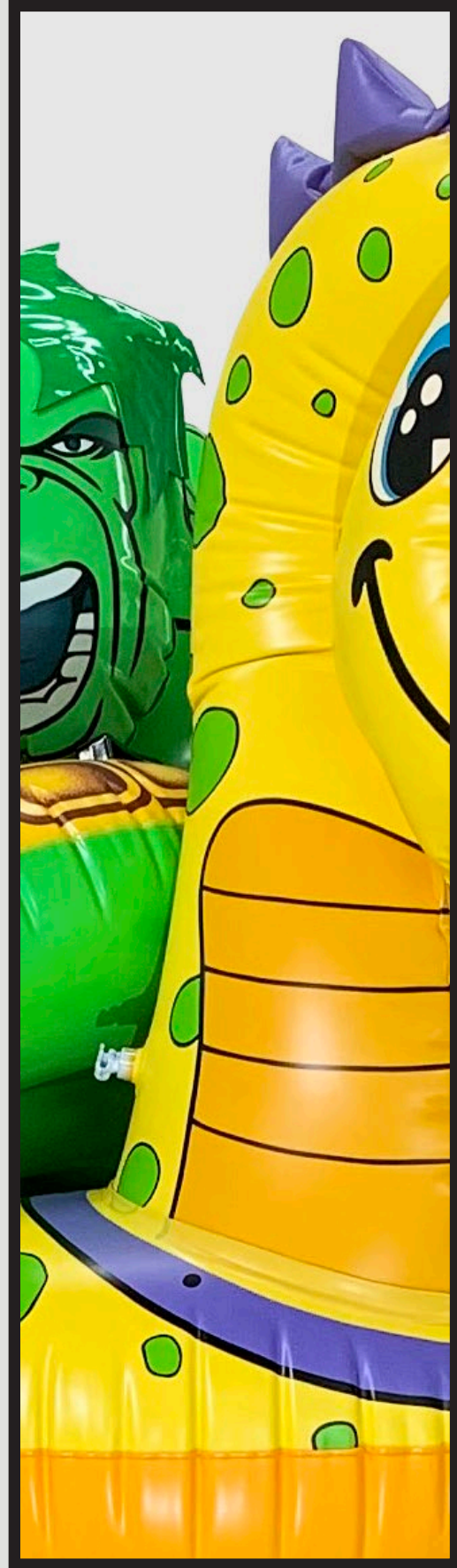
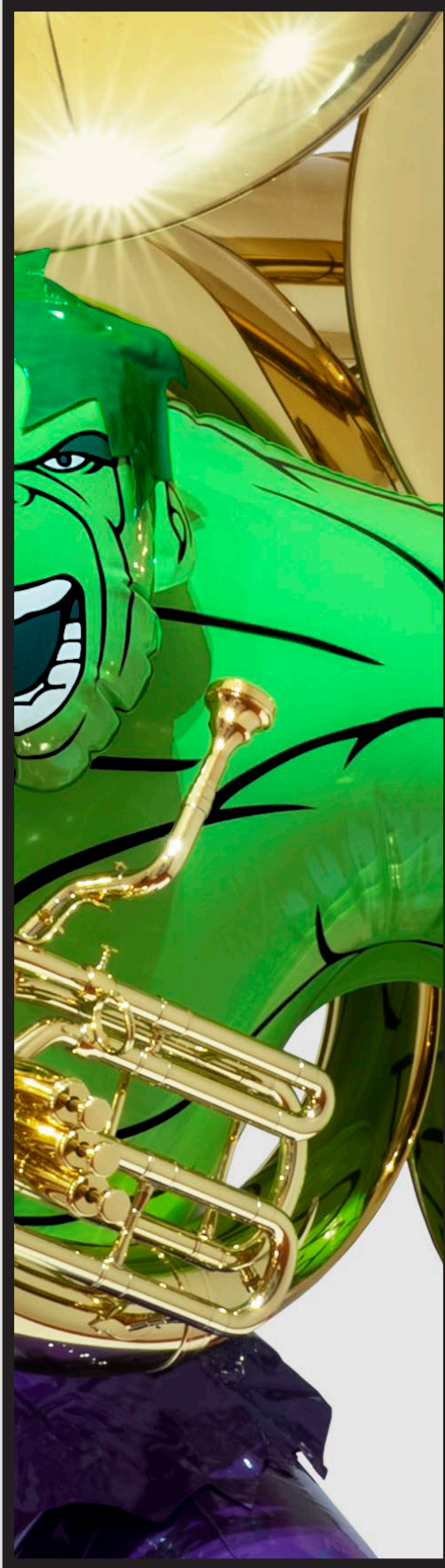
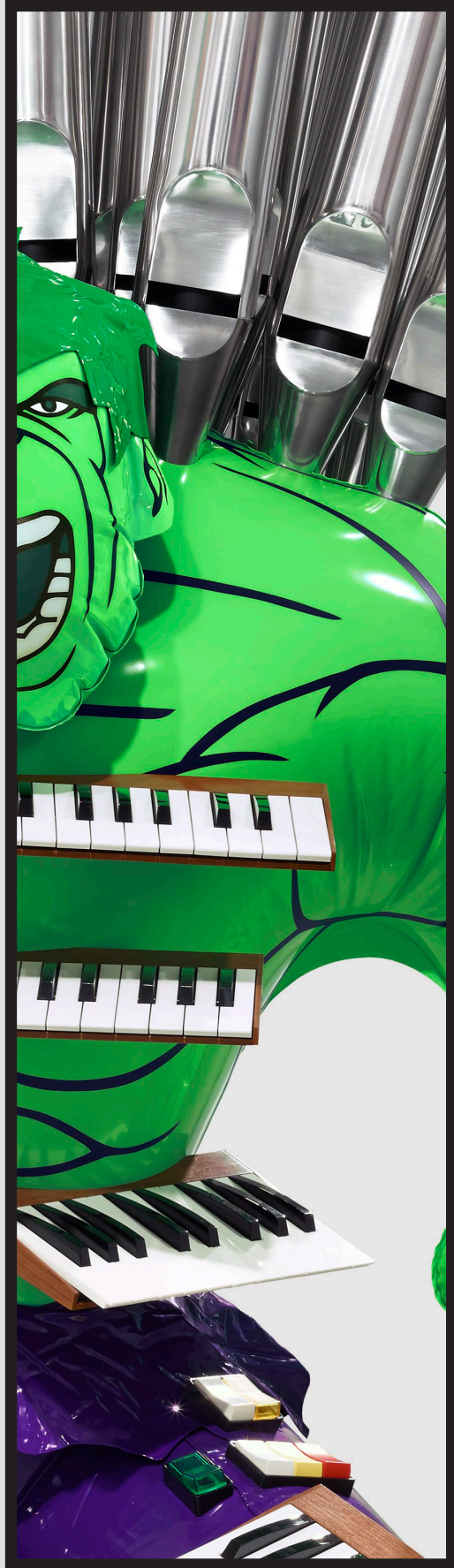
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I LOVE ELVIS, LED ZEPPELIN AND THE BEATLES - ALL WERE A PHENOMENON. CERTAIN PEOPLE AT A CERTAIN MOMENT CAPTURE US, AND I'M MOVED BY THAT CULTURE. AND COMING INTO CONTACT WITH THE GESTURES OF OTHERS GIVES US AN ESSENCE OF OUR OWN POTENTIAL, OUR OWN ABILITY TO FEEL.

- JEFF KOONS



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