



Cecilia Hock **From the inside out:  
Tracey Emin's illuminating messages**

Tracey Emin's larger-than-life handwriting glows in iridescent pink like a light-immersed thought. The artwork is instantly compelling because it touches on existential issues, yet there is also an element of discord between its intimacy and universal relatability, and between the deeply personal message and the communication medium. Tracey Emin presents us with a poignant open-ended sentence lit up in neon, like the signs that once adorned town centre façades. Is the artist addressing a loved one? All of us? Is she expressing resignation or confidence? Do her words make us feel anxious or comforted? Are they a command or a spiritual promise?

Tracey Emin was part of the Young British Artists (YBA) movement in the late 1980s. It was during the nineties that she started developing her radical, unfiltered autobiographical and confessional artwork style. Love and relationships, but also sexual abuse, abortion, loss, illness and mental crises are frequently cited with brutal directness in her work. Her artistic oeuvre is inextricably linked with her life, and each work reveals a different facet of her personal experiences and emotions. Emin's iconic works include an unmade bed after a break-up (*My Bed*, 1998), a tent embroidered with the names of all people she had ever shared a bed with (*Everyone I Have Ever Slept With 1963–1995*, 1995), as well as her most intimate thoughts cast in neon. Emin's artworks are not representations, but rather unflinching revelations that reference inner and outer worlds. They are fragile, vulnerable manifestations of her life experiences translated into art.

Emin uses words to express and communicate her personal universe. Fascinated by the power of language, the written word is the first stage in the creative process that she, as the artist, is at liberty to mould and form: from intimate monotypes on paper to paintings and her monumental neon sculptures. The bending and twisting neon tubes follow the contours and flow of Emin's handwriting. Versatile neon technology, once a symbol of high-street advertising, thus becomes a poetic vehicle for intimacy and recollection, enabling the artist to transform an industrial material into a deeply human gesture. "Neon is emotional for everyone," commented Tracey Emin, playing around artistically with the universal relatability of the big illuminated messages. 'Meet Me in Heaven I will wait For You' is an outstanding and literally illuminating example of her work.

Tracey Emin's unique autobiographical approach to art is currently being honoured in a major solo exhibition at the Palazzo Strozzi in Florence.

## 83 Tracey Emin

London 1963 – lives in London

"Meet me in Heaven I will wait For You". 2004/2011  
Neon (fluorescent rose pink). 110 × 359 cm (43 1/4 × 141 3/8 in.). Signed on the accompanying certificate.  
One of 3 copies numbered on the certificate from a total edition of 3 + 2 AP. [3225]

### Provenance

White Cube Gallery, London / Private Collection,  
London / Private Collection, Spain

EUR 100,000–150,000

USD 112,000–169,000

We would like to thank Harry Weller, creative director at Tracey Emin Studio, London, for kindly providing additional information.

