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NGV Triennial 2023: Maurizio Cattelan's *Comedian*, 2019, added to blockbuster exhibition line-up

NGV International | 3 December 2023 – 7 April 2024 | FREE



9 October 2023: The National Gallery of Victoria (NGV) has announced that **Maurizio Cattelan's** work, *Comedian*, 2019, composed of a banana duct taped to a wall, will make its Australian debut as part of the institution's hugely popular NGV Triennial exhibition of contemporary art, design and architecture.

For the NGV Triennial, the NGV has loaned one of three editions of Cattelan's *Comedian*, 2019. The artwork requires staff to replace the real banana affixed to the gallery wall with duct tape every 3 to 5 days. The work made its premiere at the Perrotin gallery booth at Art Basel Miami in 2019 and was recently anonymously donated to the Guggenheim Museum in New York.

Comedian might be seen as a commentary on the arbitrary and capricious nature of the art market, where value is often 'ascribed' based on an artist's reputation or a prevalent trend. Similarly, the work could be a commentary on how society attributes value to certain objects, turning them into commodities. A humble banana is transformed and elevated by its placement in an art context. The work reminds us that art doesn't need to be complex to be meaningful or valuable. *Comedian* could be a return to basics in a hyper-consumerist world.

Of the work, Maurizio Cattelan said: '*Comedian* is exactly like an apple for

Cézanne: the minimum common denominator that everybody recognises. But you need to alter its condition. Cézanne does it with brush strokes, I do it with gaffer tape.'

Tony Ellwood AM, Director, NGV, said: 'Maurizio Cattelan is a leading global artist whose work encourages us to consider some of the contradictions and paradoxes of contemporary society. This Australian-exclusive iteration of *Comedian* will doubtlessly connect with visitors in different ways, including exploring the role of conceptual art in contemporary life and culture.'

Comedian builds upon Cattelan's body of work critiquing the art-world's economic structures and power dynamics. In one of Cattelan's earliest works, the artist rented out his allotted exhibition space at the 1993 Venice Biennale to an advertising company, and in 1999, Cattelan taped his gallerist, Massimo de Carlo, to the wall of his Milan gallery for a work known as "A Perfect Day".

Born in Padua in 1960, Cattelan takes freely from the real world of people and objects, his works are an irreverent operation aimed at both art and institutions. He first achieved notoriety on an international scale in New York with *La Nona Ora* (*The Ninth Hour*), a wax statue of Pope John Paul II hit by a meteorite, which was exhibited in Basel, London, Venice and Warsaw in 1999 and New York in 2011.

Solo exhibitions of Cattelan's work have been organized by The Museum of Modern Art, New York (1998); Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris (2000); Museum of Contemporary Art Los Angeles (2003); Musée du Louvre, Paris (2004); Museum für Moderne Kunst, Frankfurt (2008); Fondation Beyeler, Basel (2013); and 'We', Leeum Samsung Museum of Art, Seoul 2023.

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His work has also been featured in the Venice Biennale (1993, 1997, 1999, 2002, 2003, and 2011), L'hiver de l'amour at the Musée d'art moderne de la Ville de Paris (1994), SITE Santa Fe (1997), Manifesta 2 (1998), Istanbul Biennial (1998), Kunsthalle Basel (1999), Whitney Biennial (2004), Traces du Sacré at Centre Georges Pompidou in Paris (2008), and theanyspacewhatever at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York (2008). A retrospective of Cattelan's work opened in the fall of 2011 at the Guggenheim Museum, New York.

Opening on 3 December, the NGV Triennial 2023 is a powerful and moving snapshot of the world today as captured through the work of over 100 artists, designers, and collectives at the forefront of global contemporary practice. Uniquely bringing contemporary art, design, and architecture into dialogue with one another and traversing all four levels of NGV International, the NGV Triennial features more than 75 projects – including over 25 world-premiere projects commissioned by the NGV especially for this presentation.

The NGV Triennial is on display from 3 December 2023 – 7 April 2024 at NGV International, St Kilda Road, Melbourne. Entry is FREE. Further information is available via the NGV website: [NGV.MELBOURNE](https://www.ngv.com.au)

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IMAGES: <https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/gw5798c36shb6lnsz9ay1/h?rlkey=zwp11vov9si3f233tp60y9367&dl=0>

Image caption: Maurizio Cattelan *Comedian* 2019. Courtesy of Perrotin and Marian Goodman Gallery, New York © Maurizio Cattelan. Photo: Zeno Zotti

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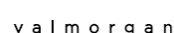
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