

MAURIZIO CATTELAN

Smoke

Smoke is an episodic exhibition that takes place in the ArtBasel | Basel booths of Maurizio Cattelan's galleries: **MASSIMODECARLO**, **Marian Goodman Gallery**, and **Perrotin***.

Each individual gallery will present a part of the exhibition; each presentation is autonomous (and shown alongside the galleries' other artists) and yet indissolubly bound to the other two parts.

While commenting on the global art world, and challenging a new post-Covid identity, the exhibition intends to question the very nature of how we display art. By dispersing his work throughout the fair in three separate parts, Maurizio Cattelan creates a new, dynamic and emotional experience in which the moments of silence become as significant as the spoken word.

Smoke premieres a series of new works born from the tragic memories of September 11th, as we reflect upon its 20th anniversary. These memories also form the basis of *Breath Ghosts Blind*, the exhibition of his work at Pirelli HangarBicocca in Milan, curated by Roberta Tenconi and Vicente Todoli, and on view until February 20th, 2022.

Through an unprecedented visual language, *Smoke* is an experiment in collective writing and an exercise in shared mourning. *Smoke* is an act of rebellion against the rules of the global art system, and by extension a very universal challenge to the rules that govern our actions. Reflecting upon memory, love, and loss, the exhibition is at once a declaration of love and a funeral march.

One of the most celebrated artists working today, Maurizio Cattelan depicts reality through its collective image, its icons and symbols. The artist unveils humanity by revealing its untold dreams as well as its scariest nightmares.

MASSIMODECARLO presents *Night*, an all-black American flag punctuated by bullet holes. Flags can act as discordant emblems, often symbolizing divisive culture and political conflicts. This new work by Maurizio Cattelan alludes to the Black Lives Matter movement, as well as questioning the power of national pride and identity. But *Night* isn't merely an acknowledgement, a critique, or a monumental symbol of a disturbing act of violence: its bullet holes in fact can also be

associated to pinholes, revealing the secrets and mysteries that lie behind its frame. They also reference the practice of artist Lucio Fontana by overcoming the concept of space and moving art from its playground to a more universal approach.

Marian Goodman Gallery presents *Ghosts + Found Work*, a contemplative new work that combines symbolic and communal elements from September 11th and New York. *Found Work*, embodies the city's iconic symbol, the I ♥ NY logo, in close dialogue with *Ghosts*, a new, yet historical series by the artist, of taxidermied pigeons in observation. As silent, yet omnipresent New Yorkers, pigeons have and continue to be onlookers and witnesses to the changes in the city. The artist obtained *Found Work* in a market in New York City, inscribed with thousands of personal reactions to the tragedy of September 11th. Part ready-made, and part collective lamentation, *Ghosts + Found Work* is a powerful tool that reminds us that history is written by the people and memory can only exist when shared.

Perrotin presents *Brother*, 2021, a new site-specific sculpture that reflects upon the role of the individual in the public realm: when are we truly present; when can or shall we disappear? This new sculpture is an anti-monumental golden portrait of the artist himself emerging – or maybe fading out – from one of the walls of the booth. *Brother*, 2021, is an ambiguous declaration of the power of the individual in today's world, trapped between the uncontrollable human desire for appearance and the unavoidable attraction to quietness, loneliness, and sorrow.

The three booths are visually linked with *Ghosts*. These taxidermied pigeons appear to be overseeing the other works of art, the galleries, or in fact, the whole of the art fair. Like uniformed guards, the pigeons of *Ghosts* look and control us from above, ready to find their way back home.

*Please note: The three galleries are not presenting solo booths by Maurizio Cattelan. The works by the artist part of *Smoke* are presented among a selection of other artists of the galleries, chosen independently.

For further information and materials

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