

# VENUS

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## MANHATTAN

Ebony, David, "David Ebony's Top 10 New York Gallery Shows for November,"  
*Art Net News*, November 21, 2014.

**artnet**news

## David Ebony's Top 10 New York Gallery Shows for November

### **1.) Maurizio Cattelan at Venus Over Manhattan, through January 10, 2015; at Sotheby's S/2 Gallery, through November 26**

While Maurizio Cattelan is supposed to be retired, and hasn't shown anything new in a few years, his previously exhibited works never looked as fresh and new as they do recycled here in this smart and engaging two-part show, "Cosa Nostra." Organized by Venus Over Manhattan founder and sometime musician Adam Lindemann, the exhibition features 20 of Cattelan's greatest hits. The title's reference to the Sicilian mafia is a Cattelan-esque tongue-in-cheek allusion to the exclusive family that art-world insiders are often perceived to be, and the cut-throat business of blue chip art dealing that they apparently control. Cattelan's works are, after all, big business, selling for upwards of \$20 million.

For those who missed "All," Cattelan's over-the-top retrospective at the Guggenheim Museum (2011/2012), when the artist hung every work from the atrium ceiling, this show is a must. And even for those who had seen that impressive survey, "Cosa Nostra" offers an entirely unique and similarly unforgettable experience. The works at Venus Over Manhattan, including *Now* (JFK in a casket 2004), *Spermini* (1997), featuring 150 rubber self-portrait masks, and the head-standing cops, *Frank and Jamie* (2002), appear in an eerie and elaborate, dimly lit installation. Surrounded by foreboding, prison-like walls, the works can be viewed only through peepholes. It's a weird and enthralling effect, reminiscent of Marcel Duchamp's macabre and erotic installation *Étant Donnés* (1946-1966) in the Philadelphia Museum of Art, and it serves the works well.

In this highly unusual gallery-auction house collaboration, part II of the exhibition, at Sotheby's S/2, highlights works such as *Him* (2001), depicting a kneeling miniature Hitler, *Cheap to Feed* (1997), a taxidermied dog, and a small-scale version of *La Nona Ora* (2003), a cast plaster image of the Pope felled by a meteorite. The mood here is almost the exact opposite of that in Venus Over Manhattan. Brightly lit and set against mirrored walls, the works have a garish intensity. Nevertheless, despite the glare, Cattelan's dark and poignant humor comes through.