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The Museum of Modern Art

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART TO PRESENT SITE-SPECIFIC WORK BY MAURIZIO CATTELAN

Projects 65: Maurizio Cattelan
November 6-December 4, 1998

The Museum of Modern Art will present a site-specific work by conceptual artist Maurizio Cattelan, from November 6 through December 4, 1998. The piece, his first solo museum presentation in the United States, will use the image of Pablo Picasso, the central figure of twentieth-century art. Maurizio Cattelan and Assistant Curator Laura Hoptman will discuss the work at a press viewing on Friday, November 6, from 4:00 to 5:00 p.m.

Cattelan's project consists of an actor, elaborately masked and costumed as a caricature of Picasso in his later years. Wearing a three-foot mask, French sailors' sweater, pants, and sandals in the style Picasso favored, the actor will mingle with Museum visitors, silently greeting and shaking hands with them.

By using Picasso's likeness in effigy, Cattelan elevates the artist to a position that in European *carnevale* celebrations is most often reserved for world leaders. His caricature is an homage to Picasso, a pointed comment on museums' roles in the creation of art-world icons, and an acknowledgement of the special relationship between Picasso and MoMA, the institution whose support has had much to do with Picasso's prominence and fame.

Maurizio Cattelan (Italian, b. 1960, lives in Milan), one of Italy's best-known contemporary artists, makes sculpture and site-specific work that takes as its subject the triangular relationship between artist, viewer, and institution. Exhibition organizer Laura Hoptman, Assistant Curator, Department of Drawings, The Museum of Modern Art, notes, "In the grand tradition of Italian comedy that stretches from the *commedia dell'arte* to Fellini movies, Cattelan's work is irreverent, self-deprecating, and sharply satirical. His relationship to both his public and his patrons resembles that of a court jester; his work amuses but it also goads. At its best, it reveals the delicate relationships and motivations of those involved in the creation, exhibition, and consumption of art."

Under the direction of Jonathan Brown, a participating director at LaMama Experimental Theater, an actor will perform as the Picasso figure in the Museum galleries and public spaces, on Saturdays through Tuesdays, and Thursdays, from 1:00 to 4:30 p.m.; and on Fridays from 4:00 to 8:30 p.m. During the hours the work is not being performed, the Picasso costume will hang in the Garden Hall.

The Projects series is sponsored by Peter Norton.

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