

The Third Hand

Maurizio Cattelan and Moderna Museet's Collection

24 February 2024–12 January 2025

Who has the power over art, society, life, and death? Using satire and humour, provocation and seriousness Maurizio Cattelan, one of the most prominent and irreverent artists of our times, questions the conventions of society in general and the art world in particular. The exhibition "The Third Hand" includes several of Maurizio Cattelan's most iconic works alongside pieces that he has chosen from Moderna Museet's collection.

Born in Italy in 1960, Maurizio Cattelan has been living in Milan and New York for the past thirty years. The scrutiny of power and belief systems is a theme that runs through his entire body of work but he leaves the interpretation of his artworks to the viewer:

A pope is struck down by a meteorite, pigeons watch us from above, a shrunk Sistine Chapel lets us see all the amazing details at eye level, a dictator becomes a pathetic figure, perhaps asking for forgiveness, a monumental fascist greeting is nullified by missing fingers, a man and a dog seem to share a common dream or death...

The exhibition's title is open to interpretation. Perhaps it is Maurizio Cattelan himself who is the third hand, who inserts himself between the institution Moderna Museet and its collection to interrogate and shine a critical light: Which art should be part of a collection? Which works should be exhibited? What or who decides what is important art?

Maurizio Cattelan's encounter with and selection from Moderna Museet's collection extends over six galleries, in which works by Swedish and international artists are shown together with his own.

Power has an expiration date

Maurizio Cattelan believes in the power of art, not authorities. He has been quoted as saying that "power, whatever power, has an expiration date, just like milk".

The Third Hand comprises six exhibition rooms in which Maurizio Cattelan's work meets artworks by Swedish and international artists from Moderna Museet's collection, including Eva Aeppli, Eija-Liisa Ahtila, Cecilia Edefalk, Lena Svedberg, Rosemarie Trockel and the editorial staff of the underground magazine *PUSS*.

In each exhibition room, art takes on a new perspective on power. Positions are turned around and power relationships shift: between art and religion, art and politics, art and military force, art and power as an abstract, subtle phenomenon. Last but not least, Maurizio Cattelan points at conditions and beings that find themselves both furthest down and beyond the food change of society and power – avenging them in this quiet and timeless way.

The exhibition's curator, Museum Director Gitte Ørskou, says:

"This is the second time that we have invited an artist to delve into our vast collection. Maurizio Cattelan's practice is rooted in conceptual art, asking questions about and of our reality. As a curator and founder of art magazines, he has been in constant dialogue with art. His critical and insightful view of our collection gives art back its power."