

Kaleidoscope

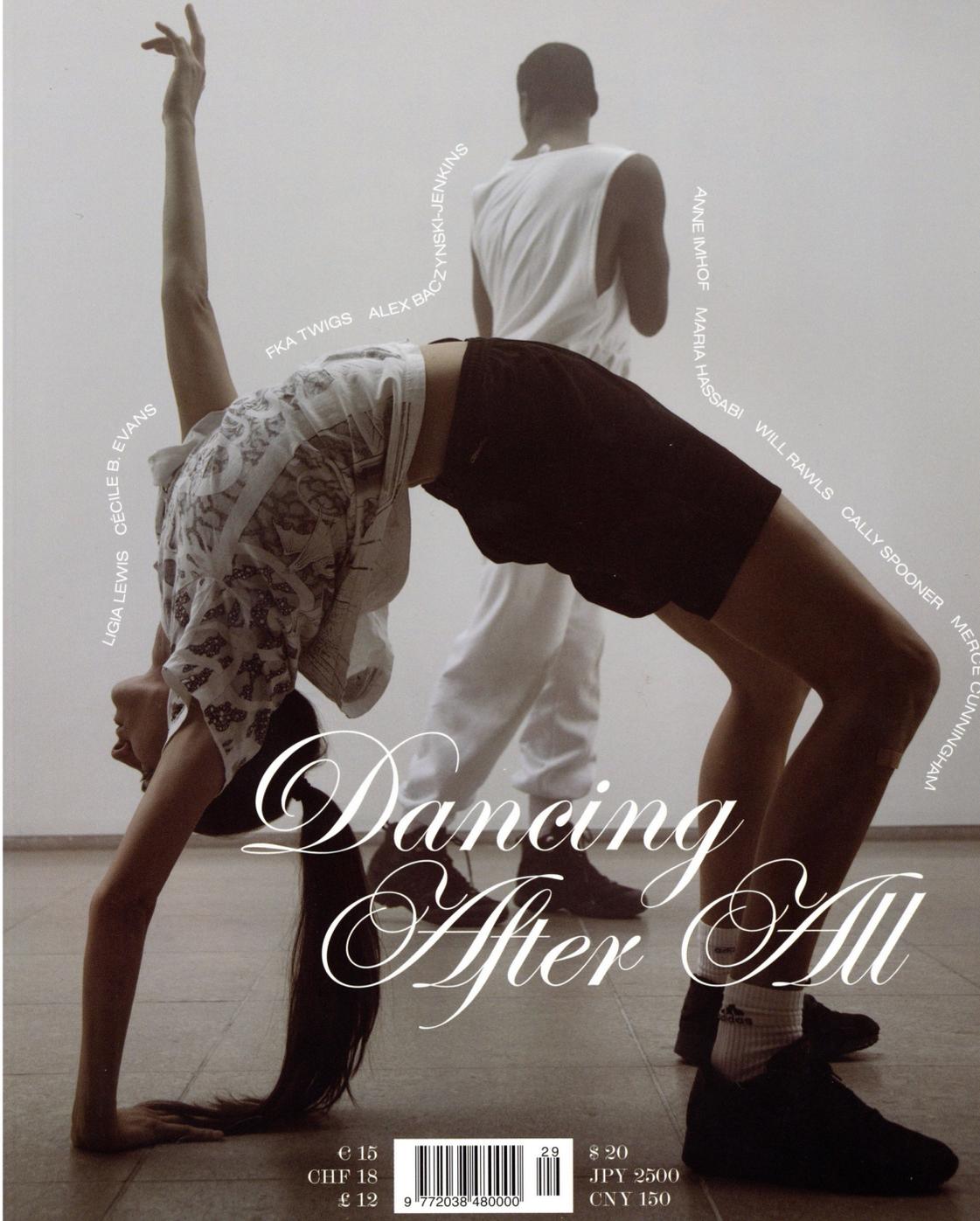
Spring 2017

By Maurizio Cattelan

ISSUE 29 SPRING 2017

**KALEIDOSCOPE**

VISUAL CULTURE NOW



LIGIA LEWIS CÉCILE B. EVANS

FKA TWIGS ALEX BACZYNSKI-JENKINS

ANNE IMHOF

MARIA HASSABI

WILL RAWLS

CALLY SPOONER

MERCÉ CUNNINGHAM

# *Dancing After All*

€ 15  
CHF 18  
£ 12



¥ 20  
JPY 2500  
CNY 150

G e o r g e

Photography by Tim Schutsky

C o n d o

While an exhibition in Berlin stages a confrontation between his paintings and masterpieces by old masters,

I n t e r v i e w

b

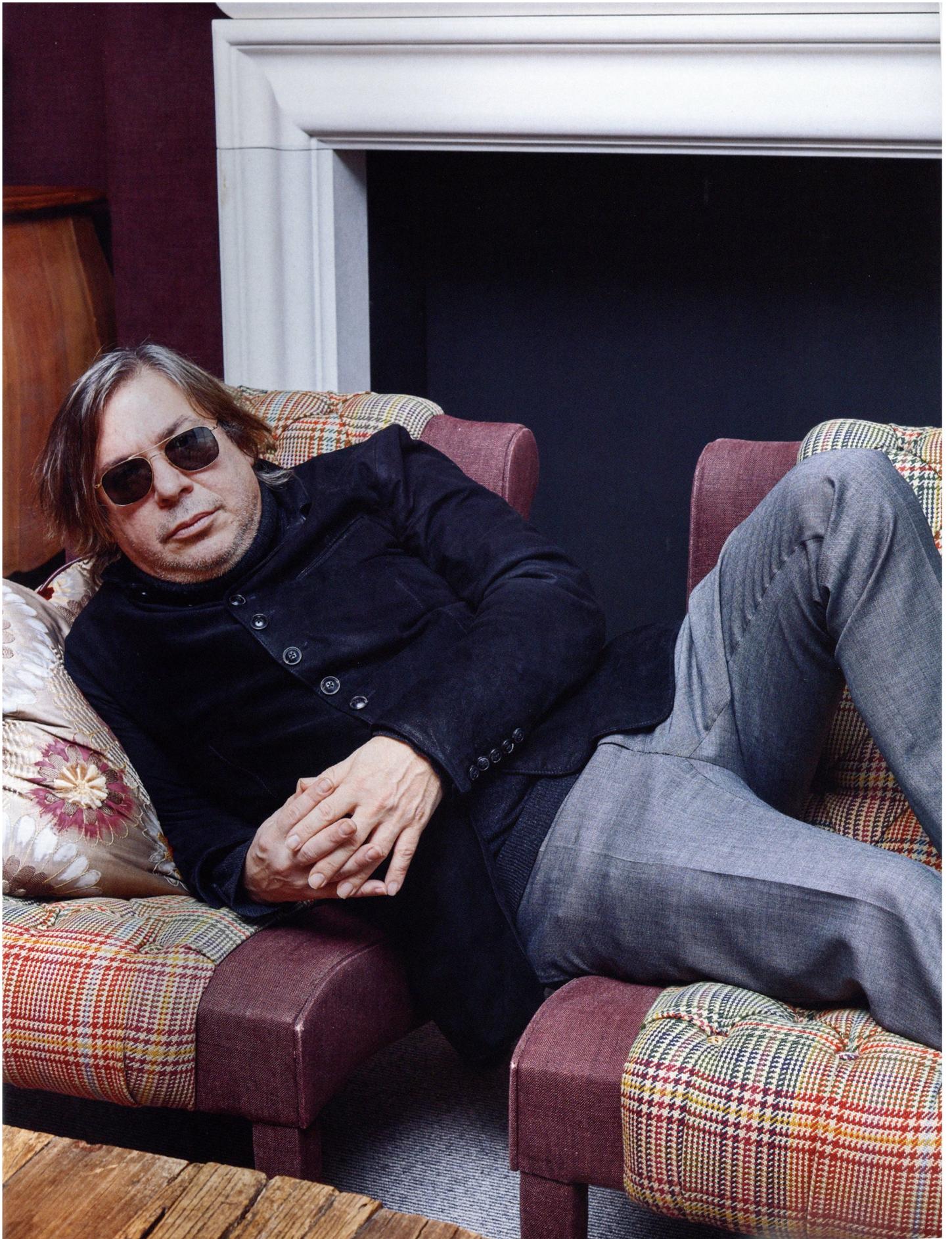


y

M a u r i z i o

the American artist meets his Italian colleague to talk about art, music and rebirth in his new West Village flat.

C a t t e l a n





Previous page: *Sister Antipod*, 1998  
This page: *Ohne Titel*, 1995



*Surprised Couple, 2009*

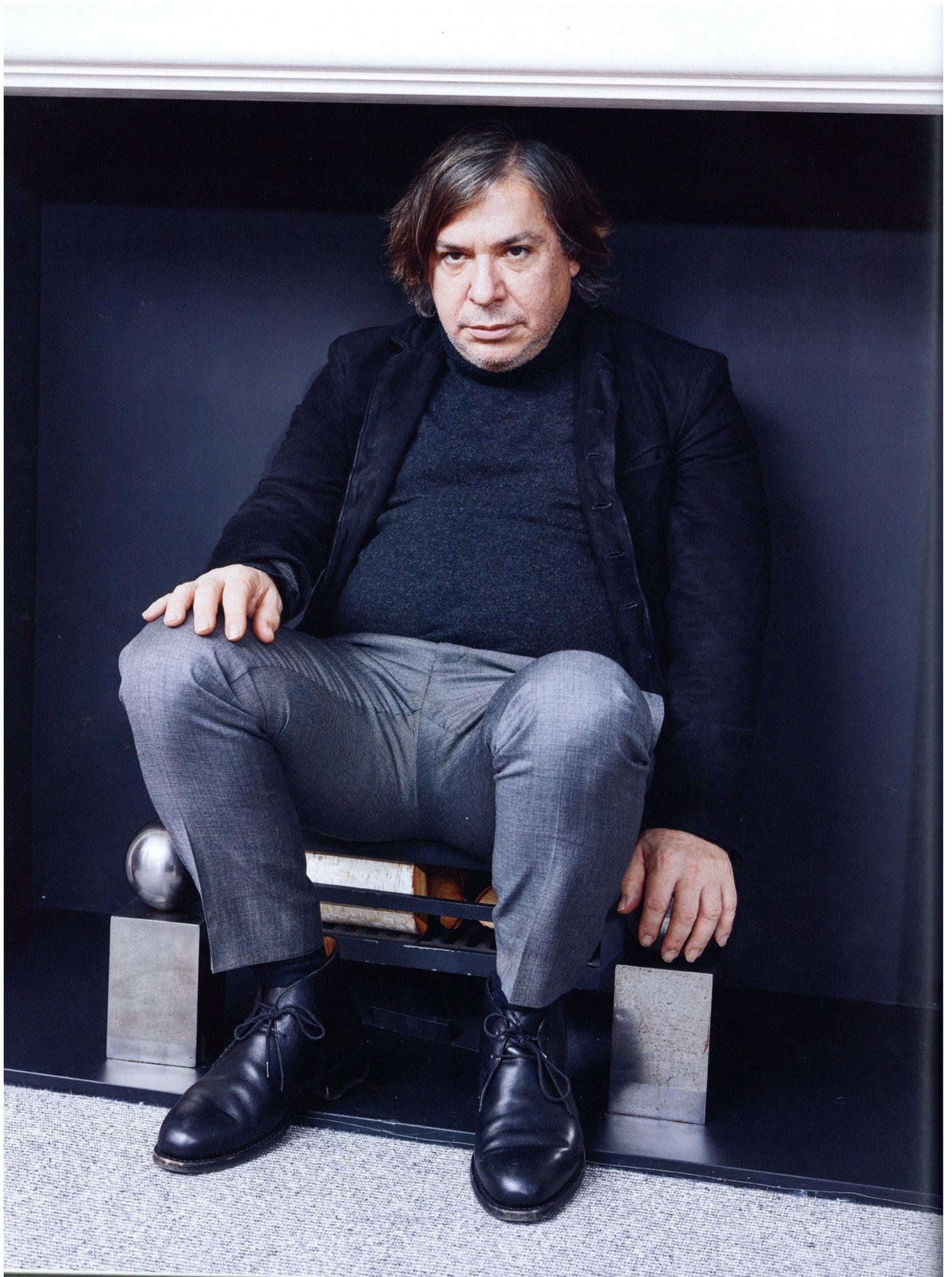


*Study for a Clown, 2009*



*Antipodal Dream*, 1996

All images courtesy Sprüth Magers und Skarstedt



**MC:** This apartment looks fantastic! When did you move in? Last time we met, you were living on in the Upper East Side.

**GC:** Has it been so long? I moved to the West Village because I like the gardens, it's less busy with cars, and overall, I just wanted to move out from a place I'd been living in for more than twenty-five years. I needed some distance to create new works.

**MC:** Is place part of your creative process?

**GC:** Beginning with the East Village back in 1980 and moving constantly, it became a way of life to create art wherever I could. Cologne in 1983, Milan and the Canary Islands in 1984, then Paris and back and forth to New York. But specific groups of work that I did for extended periods have been related to studios that I kept for long periods of time.

**MC:** You were art globetrotting before it was even a trend! I always thought of you as a cross-generational artist. This is why we met in the first place: I was really intrigued by your re-inventive nature, your constant rebirths.

**GC:** When I thought everybody forgot about me, Glenn Brown wrote a piece in *The Guardian* about my work, and John Currin and Cecily Brown all came to my last show at Pace Gallery in 1991 and told how much they appreciated my work. It was a very uplifting experience. It gave me a new life, and figurative painting was still very much alive.

**MC:** By then, I was just making my early steps into the art world, and I remember how reactionary and negative painting, specifically figurative painting, was considered by the end of the '80s. The funeral of Transavanguardia had already taken place; having one of their paintings on the wall was like having toxic waste in your apartment.

**GC:** When my friends Jean-Michel Basquiat and Keith Haring died, it was a very dark period of my life. It took years to meet new artists I could relate to, so family was my way to come out from this darkness and recover from the loss of my greatest friends. And I was working, working, working, I never stopped.

**MC:** Were those works memorable or just therapeutic? Personally, I'm always happy when the two of them mix together, so you can discover something about yourself and still deliver a good piece.

**GC:** Therapy has to do with mental health—it's not an artistic term. Painters paint because they want to create everlasting life. It gives them power over death.

**MC:** How do you relate to the Old Masters?

**GC:** I remember that Andy Warhol once asked his mother what he should paint; she said, "Paint what you like the most," and he said, "I like Campbell's soup." So that's what he did. I asked to myself the same question and said, "Old Master painters," so that's what I did.

**MC:** That explains a lot about the show curated by Udo Kittelmann in Berlin: a confrontation between you and artists from the great modernist period. But I wonder, who's winning?

**GC:** It's probably going to end up being some loser like Van Gogh, who won because he lost, or Rembrandt, who died in poverty even though his last self-portraits were probably some of the greatest painting ever made. One can see this in the late period of Picasso as well, specifically in his *Mosqueteros*.

**MC:** I see your old cello in the corner over there, but I also see a new entry: a jazz guitar. Are you getting into jazz now that you're living on the West Village?

**GC:** We're minutes away from the Village Vanguard, where Coltrane recorded, but also right down the street from Electric Lady Studios, which Jimi Hendrix built. It's so great to be near that kind of energy.

**MC:** I remember Kanye West being at your opening at the New Museum and performing live afterwards for your show in London at the Hayward. Was music looking for validation through the art world?

**GC:** Putting those notes of 'Trane and Hendrix solos into words is what I find hip-hop is all about. Trying to take it further is the struggle, and they know it. It's all very deep.

**MC:** I see music and art as two brothers, although the relationship between them hasn't always been smooth.

**GC:** This is so true, but it's the friction that creates the edge artists thrive on. We like that sharp line between understandable and impossible. It has to be that way—otherwise, people get bored. Particularly after the election in America, we are now on the edge of reality: who knows what it really truly means, or what really matters? It's all about good music and great art. How you do it is a mystery, and it will always be. ☺

George Condo (American, b. 1957) is an artist who lives and works in New York. He is represented by Sprüth Magers, Berlin/London/Los Angeles; Xavier Hufkens, Brussels; Simon Lee Gallery, London/Hong Kong; Massimo De Carlo, Milan/London; and Skarstedt Gallery, New York.

The exhibition "George Condo: Confrontation," which combines the artist's paintings with works by classical modernist artists from the collection of Berlin's Nationalgalerie, is currently on view at Museum Berggruen, Berlin, through 12 March.

Maurizio Cattelan (Italian, b. 1960) is an artist who lives and works in Milan and New York. He is represented by Galerie Perrotin, Paris/New York/Hong Kong/Seoul/Tokyo; Marian Goodman Gallery, New York/Paris/London; and Massimo de Carlo, Milan/London.