

Banana Splits, Spoiled by its own success, the \$120,000 fruit is gone

The banana that consumed the art world has taken early retirement.

Artist Maurizio Cattelan — whose fruit pinned to the wall with gray duct tape was sold three times at Art Basel Miami for \$120, 000 to \$150, 000 each time — and his gallery Perrotin announced Sunday, the last day of the fair, that the banana had been removed from its booth because of the Mona Lisa-like attention it was getting.

The announcement followed an incident in which a New York City-based performance artist, David Datuna, pulled the banana off the wall and ate it.

The disruption caused by the piece, titled “Comedian, ” became serious business, requiring special security guards dedicated to the banana and stanchions to manage the lines.

According to the gallery, Datuna’s *stunt* did not actually destroy the artwork or whatever monetary value it might have had at that moment. The three buyers who collectively spent about \$390, 000 on the taped fruit had bought the concept of the piece, which comes with a certificate of authenticity from the artist, along with installation instructions. It is up to the owners to secure their own materials from hardware and grocery stores and to replace the banana, if they wish, whenever it rots. After Datuna consumed the banana, the gallery taped another one to the wall.

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Cattelan, an Italian artist known for his satirical takes, first conceived of the work as a banana-shaped sculpture. But after testing several materials, including resin, bronze and painted bronze, he decided to use a real store-bought banana.