

# VENUS MANHATTAN

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## Venus Over Manhattan Brings Maryan Personnage Paintings to Art Basel in Miami Beach

November 26, 2018 by Marion Maneker



Venus Over Manhattan announce their Art Basel Miami Beach exhibition of Maryan's "Personnage" paintings from his time in New York in the 1960s:

Venus Over Manhattan is pleased to announce its inaugural presentation at Art Basel Miami Beach, with a solo presentation of important paintings by Maryan. The exhibition will be on view from December 5th through 9th, 2018, at booth S5 at the Miami Beach Convention Center.

Venus' presentation at ABMB will be a focused survey of Maryan's "Personnage" paintings from 1967-

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1972. They include large-scale works on canvas and an important suite of works on paper. Maryan began exploring the “Personnage” series while living in Paris in the 1950s. Characterized by a centrally located figure dominating the composition, the works quickly established Maryan’s reputation for using abstract techniques to render boisterously figurative subject matter. The paintings made in Maryan’s Paris years feature somber characters cast against subdued color palettes. It wasn’t until Maryan’s relocation from Paris to New York in 1963, that the “Personnage” works transition from dark to color and action filled: a clear reflection of the artist’s renewed outlook.

At a moment when non-representational painting dominated popular tastes, Maryan’s work rejected total abstraction, and helped to reintroduce the figure into contemporary painting, alongside his peers Karel Appel, Enrico Baj, and Jean Dubuffet. The works on view, produced in New York between 1967 and 1972, feature a group of lurid and fleshy characters, adjoined with extra legs, strange appendages, and slobbering tongues. Various depicting anonymous tangles of excess limbs, bestial figures, and salivating animals, the works attest to Maryan’s abiding interest in disassembling familiar features of the human form to produce confrontational and often violent compositions.

Born Pinchas Burstein to a Jewish family in Nowy-Sącz, Poland, Maryan was the only member of his family to survive the Holocaust. He lived in Israel for two years after the war, and moved to Paris in 1951, where he enrolled at the École des Beaux-Arts, and studied under Fernand Léger. Though he denied the reduction of his work to his trauma as a Holocaust survivor, Maryan’s private life and artistic practice were deeply influenced by his experience of the war: his works from the “Personnage” series often make reference to an unnamed violence, whose source remains hidden. The “Personnage” works collectively represent the most striking realization of Maryan’s unprecedented fusion of abstraction and figuration, and with little exception, the series consumed the artist until his death at the Chelsea Hotel, in 1977.

In conjunction with the presentation, Venus Over Manhattan will also publish a small catalogue featuring images of the works on view, as well historical writings about Maryan’s work.