

Italian Artist's Banana Artwork Sells for \$6.2 Million

今回は、1本のバナナが数億円で落札されたという、NYのユニークなアート作品の話題です。テーブルで壁に貼られただけのこの作品は、「概念アート」と言われ、形よりもアイデアや発想が重視される作品を指します。conceptualは「概念的な」「アイデア重視の」という意味で、conceptual art（概念芸術）や a conceptual approach（概念的なアプローチ）などの形で使われ、具体的な形や見た目よりも、背後にある考えや意味に重きを置く場面で使われます。意味やコンセプトに価値が置かれる現代アートに、あなたはどんな魅力を感じますか？講師と話してみましょう。



1. Article

Read the following article aloud.

A much-publicized art piece made up of a single banana taped to a wall has sold for \$6.2 million.

The sale happened Wednesday night during an auction in New York City at famous art seller Sotheby's. The work, called Comedian, was sold to cryptocurrency businessman Justin Sun. He is a Chinese collector and founder of the cryptocurrency company Tron. Sun placed the winning bid over the phone and the sale was completed in cryptocurrency.

Before the auction, Sotheby's said the unusual art piece was expected to bring in at least \$1.5 million. But the price quickly started rising after the auction began, with people bidding inside the auction room, as well as on the phone and online.

The art piece had already sold three times for prices between \$120,000 and \$150,000, The Associated Press reported.

Sun said in a statement after the auction that Comedian "is not just an artwork." He added that the piece "bridges the worlds of art, memes, and the [cryptocurrency](#) community."

Sun said he planned to eat the banana, as at least two onlookers did when the artwork was presented at places around the world. Sotheby's says the fruit was always meant to be replaced repeatedly, along with the duct tape.

The work was created by Italian artist Maurizio Cattelan. It was first presented in 2019 at the Art Basel Miami Beach show in Miami, Florida. The piece quickly led to much public discussion about what should be considered art.

Comedian belongs to a kind of art known as [conceptual](#) artwork. A conceptual piece is one in which the idea or meaning behind the work is more important than the finished object itself.

The head of contemporary art at Sotheby's is David Galperin. He told the AP he understands the piece's popularity because it is highly [provocative](#). Provocative describes something likely to produce a strong reaction and much public debate.

"What Cattelan is really doing is turning a mirror to the contemporary art world," Galperin said. He added that he thinks Comedian can cause people to question what values should be attached to artworks and what can be defined as artwork.

"What you buy when you buy Cattelan's Comedian is not the banana itself, but a certificate of [authenticity](#)," Galperin said. That document, he added, gives the owner permission to [reproduce](#) the banana and duct tape on their own wall as an original artwork by the artist.

The sale of Comedian came shortly after Sotheby's auctioned off a famed artwork in the Water Lilies series by French painter Claude Monet. That piece sold on Monday for \$65.5 million.

When asked to compare Cattelan's simple wall art to major works like Monet's, Galperin said that form of art, called impressionism, was not taken seriously when that movement first began.

"No important, profound, meaningful artwork of the past 100 years or 200 years, or our history for that matter, did not provoke some kind of discomfort when it was first unveiled," Galperin said.

I'm Bryan Lynn.

The Associated Press reported this story. Bryan Lynn adapted the report for VOA Learning English.

2. Key phrases and vocabulary

First repeat after your tutor and then read aloud by yourself.

1. cryptocurrency (n.) digital money using encryption technology

Some stores now accept [cryptocurrency](#) as a method of payment.

2. reproduce (v.) to make a copy of something

This printer can [reproduce](#) photos in high quality.

3. conceptual (adj.) related to ideas or concepts

The designer explained his work with a very [conceptual](#) idea.

4. authenticity (n.) the quality of being real

The museum checks the [authenticity](#) of every painting before displaying it.

5. provocative (adj.) causing strong reaction or debate

Her speech was [provocative](#) and got people talking about the issue.

3. Questions

Read the questions aloud and answer them.

1. What unusual material did the Italian artist use in his artwork?
2. Why did the artwork become famous around the world?
3. How did the museum deal with the fact that bananas decay over time?
4. If you could create a conceptual artwork using something from your home, what would you use and why?
5. Do you think the price of art should depend more on its idea than how it looks? Why or why not?