KING COBRA
HEATHENS
03.27–05.02.26

Sikkema Malloy Jenkins is pleased to present *Heathens*, a solo exhibition by KING COBRA, on view in the back galleries from March 27 through May 2, 2026. *Heathens* is COBRA's first exhibition at the gallery. A public reception with the artist will be held on Friday, March 27, from 6–8pm.

KING COBRA's visceral sculptural and performance works confront the dimensions of consumption and perversion that underscore histories of colonial violence and racial subjugation. Utilizing synthetic and organic materials, COBRA produces corporeal forms that bear the condition of whiteness as a festering wound—one often sugarcoated or concealed but ultimately sustained through the spiritual and physical cannibalism of bodies deemed "other," and the Black body in particular. Melding medical pathologies and abject imagery with BDSM and kink cultures, COBRA's work interrogates not just how power is constructed, but also how it may be dissected, subdued, and debased.

Heathens features an installation of sculptural objects and a kink film screened on a reclaimed vintage television set. COBRA's new series of bondage hoods developed from an interest in kink, BDSM, and the role of masks within contexts of pleasure and pain. The anonymizing power of masks is, and historically has been, central to the condition of whiteness in America: a cloak for its perverse psychologies and a license to enact violence and destruction with impunity. It is the same hegemonic veil donned by white Christian institutions that enable systems of empire and abuse while simultaneously branding kink practitioners and non whites as heathens. In contrast to the opaque black leather of conventional bondage gear, COBRA's masks are cast in a light Caucasian pink. By making the hoods with white "skin," COBRA displaces the assumption of Blackness as the target of punishment and submits white flesh in its place.

The bondage hoods are composed of cast silicone fabric stuffed with raffia palm. Each hood is designed to embody a specific white American persona, signified by an accessory or distinguishing feature: a lace bonnet atop the head of a genteel lady; a necktie around the white collar of an American Psycho; and a red-lipped gag puckering the mouth of a platinum-blonde bimbo, mounted on an undulating hobby-horse pole. The surfaces of the hoods ripple with discoloration and disease, including tattooed pustules and smallpox blisters in varying stages of infection. They are no longer protective shields of white skin, but self-contained objects of degeneracy, stimulated by sexual greed and consumptive desire. In COBRA's hands, the impulse of white Christian America to publicly condemn and privately indulge is laid bare in its hypocrisy, inverted and exposed as vessels of perversion.

The bondage hoods are displayed with a red gingham picnic blanket mounted on the wall—a place setting for an impending ritual of consumption. The kink film compiles scenes from a Femdom session utilizing the hoods on view in *Heathens*. Clad in red leather latex, the Domme punishes, degrades, and tenderizes her white pig sub, whose flesh-toned body melds with the pale pink of COBRA's hoods. Playing alongside the sculptural works, the film activates the perversion they hold, bringing it to life and to its knees.

SIKKEMA
MALLOY
JENKINS

530 West 22nd Street
New York NY 10011

gallery@smjny.com
212-929-2262

KING COBRA (born 1986, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania) holds a BFA from the Tyler School of Art at Temple University and an MFA from the Rhode Island School of Design. COBRA's monumental sculpture *When You Are Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea* is currently installed at MOCA Cleveland, Ohio, on view through August 2026. Selected solo exhibitions include *White Meat* at JTT, New York (2023); *Revolted* at the New Museum, New York (2022); *Pale in Comparison* at the SCAD Museum of Art, Savannah, Georgia (2022); *Doreen Lynette Garner* at the Perlman Teaching Museum, Carleton College, Northfield, Minnesota (2022); and *Steal, Kill and Destroy: A Thief Who Intended Them Maximum Harm* at Halle für Kunst Steiermark, Graz, Austria (2021).

COBRA was most recently an Artist-in-Residence at the Joan Mitchell Center in New Orleans (2025). Other awards and fellowships include a Joan Mitchell Foundation Grant (2018); the Socrates Sculpture Park Emerging Artist Fellowship (2017); Pioneer Works Artist-in-Residence (2016); and a Franklin Furnace Fund Grant (2016). COBRA's work is included in the public collections of the Baltimore Museum of Art, Maryland; the Hessel Museum of Art, Annandale-on-Hudson, New York; and the Studio Museum in Harlem, New York.

PRESS CONTACT
Laura Weinthal
laura@smjny.com