

**FOSSIMO**

**ARTIST**



# BIO

Cosimo Cavallaro was born in Montreal in 1961. The son of Italian immigrants, he was raised both in Canada and in Italy. A moment that marked young Cosimo's life was the response his mother gave him when he asked for a toy that the other neighborhood children had. She told him to draw the toy until it became real, and only then could he have it. That idea bit him—that a flat image or amorphous material could become more real than reality—and it became his focus.

Cavallaro attended art school at Dawson College and then at Concordia University, both in Montreal. He had left Dawson when he met Gerald Roach, who became his mentor, and who took him to Nova Scotia to paint with him. After school, Cosimo began working in the art department on movie sets. During this time, he met Director Max Fischer (*The Lucky Star*), and he soon became Max's Art Director on several feature films.

In 1984, Cosimo transitioned into a successful career as a Commercial TV Director in Canada, working for Boardwalk Pictures and for Derek Van Lint (*Alien*) in Toronto. Le Verseau and Cinelaund Montreal. By 1988, he was in demand and directing in Europe and America for various production companies. He soon joined Emerald Films in the states, and set up his own production company—Figaro Films—in Montreal, and his directing career thrived throughout the 90s.

Cavallaro has won directing awards ranging from the Juno Award for Best Music Video (*Boomtown*—Andrew Cash) to the BESSIE for Best TV Commercial Campaign, to the Gold Cox. International Advertising Award, to an award from the Ministry of Communications and a Governor General's Award in Canada.

In the midst of all this, in 1995, Cosimo planted his feet in New York and began sculpting with perishables. His art installations quickly attracted mass media coverage—including CNN (Anderson Cooper), CBC, BBC, CBS, CNBC, FOX, NBC (*Dateline*), and PBS—and also generated buzz in art magazines, educational and religious journals, major national and international newspapers, and pop culture publications.

His sculptures are now exhibited in museums, galleries, and art festivals across the continent and globe, including at Wilhelm-Morgner-Haus in Germany, the Open Air Museum in Vancouver, the DeCordova in Massachusetts, the Lumiere in St. Louis, Real Art Ways in Connecticut, and the Cedarhurst Center in Illinois.

Cavallaro has also written five feature-length screenplays and one TV series that are currently in various stages of development in Canada and the U.S. (*The Killer's Dance*, *Slap*, *Magic Melody*, *Jesus Is Where?*, *Gun Down* and *Jimmy Can Do*).



<https://abc7.com/politics/mexican-cheese-wall-going-up-at-us-mexico-border-/5220801/>



[https://youtu.be/xtIV\\_XK2YRY](https://youtu.be/xtIV_XK2YRY)

Cheese wall at the border



<https://www.foxnews.com/food-drink/artist-constructing-cheese-wall-feet-from-us-mexico-border-to-make-a-point>

<https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/2019/03/27/artist-cosimo-cavallaro-building-wall-cheese-us-mexico-border/3295991002/>

<https://www.latimes.com/local/lanow/la-me-ln-los-angeles-artist-makes-cheese-border-wall-20190327-story.html>

<https://www.telemundo.com/noticias/2019/03/26/un-muro-de-queso-mexicano-contra-donald-trump>

ARTIST

# ON THE EDGE

Cosimo Cavallaro challenges social conventions through his art  
by Julia Teeluck



CHEESE CHAIR



KETCHUP

Cosimo Cavallaro's unconventional approach to art has inspired, bewildered, angered, and intrigued his spectators. His primary medium is installation art.

Cavallaro's last installation entitled I Was Here was performed in 2009 at ORANGE - Il Nastro Giallo, a contemporary art event in Saint-Hyacinthe, Quebec. He completely covered a room in ketchup—the walls, the floor, a table and chair. Every inch of the room was splattered in the thick red substance. In a candid interview with MOCA, Cavallaro described his artistic process, why he gravitates towards art that "cannot be framed," and his fondness for incorporating food into his work.

Indeed, the Montreal native has a penchant for covering spaces and objects with food. He incorporates food into many of his performances. This is sometimes met with uncertainty and disgust. Cavallaro believes this is the attitude of a society that has been conditioned to view food primarily as nutrition—using food in any other way is considered wasteful. Perhaps one of the most interesting aspects of Cavallaro's art is that he uses food as a representation of life, a malleable form that engages the senses.

As part of the 1999 Downtown Arts Festival in New York City (where he is based), he covered fashion icon Twiggy in cheese. Twiggy stood on the rooftop patio of a restaurant, surrounded by media, with her arms outstretched while Cavallaro grayed a can of cheese on her clothing. (A video of the event can be seen on the artist's official website.) Again, in 2001, he covered an abandoned house in Powell, Wyoming with cheese. This particular installation, however, triggered a slew of negative criticism (mostly from local residents who complained about the distraction and commotion caused by the press). Others were unable to wrap their minds around the concept of a cheese-covered house. The question that lingered is, "Is this art?"

<http://cosimocavallaro.com/html/Press/mud.pdf>

[http://cosimocavallaro.com/html/Press/Daily\\_news.pdf](http://cosimocavallaro.com/html/Press/Daily_news.pdf)



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1gcNtYviAA&t=26s>

<https://www.foxnews.com/story/cheese-artist-turns-to-ham>

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## Cheese Artist Turns to Ham

By | Associated Press



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NEW YORK – An artist best known for decorative cheese has broadened his palette, or palate, to ham.

**Cosimo Cavallaro** ([search](#)), who once repainted a New York hotel room in melted mozzarella, has covered a bed in processed ham.

"I feel like I am back in my mother's deli," the artist said Thursday.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e\\_UYXjUBYuc&t=262s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e_UYXjUBYuc&t=262s)



<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/entertainment/3775957.stm>

## Cheese artist creates bed of ham

**A US artist who once painted a house with tonnes of mozzarella cheese has covered a bed with slices of processed ham for his latest work.**



Cosimo Cavallaro sliced 140kg of ham for the artwork

Artist Cosimo Cavallaro unveiled the piece at a gallery at the Roger Smith Hotel in Manhattan on Thursday.

Mr Cavallaro sliced 140kg of ham and placed it on the bed. The ham will be kept in the air-conditioned gallery for two days.

"I feel like I am back in my mother's deli," Mr Cavallaro said.

The installation took three-and-a-half hours to build.

Mr Cavallaro, 41, said he was not concerned about attracting a pest problem. "They are welcome," he said. "Imagine what this looks like from the point of view of an insect."



<https://vimeo.com/297364919>  
RIPLEY'S BELIEVE IT OR NOT



<https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-2001-oct-17-mn-58291-story.html>

Los Angeles Times

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Wyo. Home Gets Dairy Make-Over

OCT. 17, 2001 | 12 AM  
FROM ASSOCIATED PRESS

POWELL, Wyo. — New York artist Cosimo Cavallaro aims the hose connected to the heated vat of pepper jack cheese and—whoosh!--sprays the bedroom in a vacant little house with yellow splotches.

<https://www.cbsnews.com/news/the-house-built-of-jack/>

CBS NEWS

NEWS IMPEACHMENT INQUIRY SHOWS LIVE

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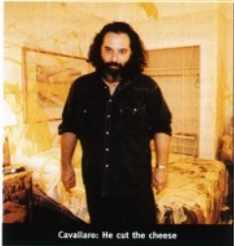
The House Built Of Jack

BY CBSNEWS.COM STAFF CBSNEWS.COM STAFF  
NOVEMBER 1, 2001 / 2:08 AM / CBS

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Behold the power of cheese!



Cavallaro: He cut the cheese

20 STUFF

Art and Kraft  
**Cheese Whiz**

Installation art is sooo cheesy these days. New York City artist Cosimo Cavallaro recently melted 1,000 pounds of Swiss cheese, mixed it with alcohol for better consistency and flung it all over Room 114 at Manhattan's Washington Jefferson Hotel. Even hotel-demolition expert Johnny Depp doesn't trash rooms with Gouda.

While such "art" may be appropriate for a man whose ambition is to exhibit bales of garbage, you'd think the hotel would be

concerned about marauding armies of monster roaches. "Actually, there was no problem with bugs, and the smell wasn't bad—except for the really hot, humid days," says the hotel's *grand fromage* and general manager, Bob Lindenbaum, who gave the artist permission to slime the room for the \$100-a-night rate. Cavallaro switched off the room's AC during the three-week installation so that condensation wouldn't ruin the goo. Eventually, it just had to go. "Four

<https://www.nytimes.com/1999/05/09/nyregion/neighborhood-report-new-york-up-close-when-melted-cheese-isn-t-simply-sandwich.html>

**People**

<https://people.com/archive/cheese-whiz-vol-51-no-21/>

# Page Six™

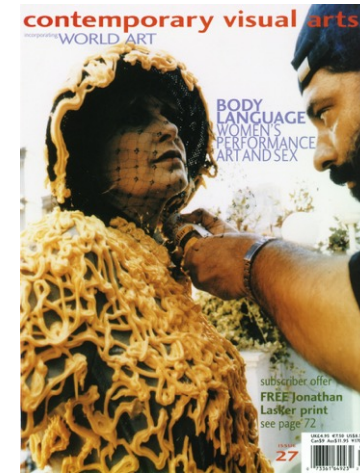
By RICHARD JOHNSON  
with Jeane MacIntosh  
and Kate Coyne

## Say cheese

RENOWNED cheese artist **Cosimo Cavallaro** — who covered an entire room at the Washington-Jefferson Hotel on West 51st Street in microwaved Swiss, fondue and mozzarella over the summer — will be employing the same technique to '60s icon **Twiggy** on Sept. 18. The cheesy event is part of the SoHo arts festival. "It's a statement about how we consume both food and fashion," the artist told *The Post's* Gersh Kuntzman. "And who better to demonstrate that than Twiggy?"

<http://cosimocavallaro.com/html/Press/BBook.pdf>

<http://cosimocavallaro.com/html/Press/Stuff.pdf>



<https://vimeo.com/101304670>



## OUR NATION'S ARTISTS AT WORK

New York artist **Cosimo Cavallaro**, whose most noted creation was lining a hotel room with a concoction of microwaved Swiss fondue and mozzarella cheese, has gone on to his next masterpiece—covering actress/model **Twiggy** with a coating of the same. "It's a statement about how we consume both food and fashion," he says.



<https://www.lapresse.ca/arts/arts-visuels/200909/12/01-901122-levenement-orange-a-saint-hyacinthe-art-ketchup-et-agroalimentaire.php>



<https://vimeo.com/217922843>



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