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**IN-SIGHT:
VIK MUNIZ
VERSO**

Upper Belvedere
21 March to 17 June, 2018



Vik Muniz, *Verso* © Vik Muniz Studio

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Vik Muniz looks at the other side. The first exhibition of the new series IM BLICK in the Upper Belvedere presents replicas of famous artworks from an unusual perspective: In *Verso*, the artist, who lives in New York and Brazil, presents faithful replicas of the back views of works like da Vinci's *Mona Lisa* and van Gogh's *Starry Night*. With Klimt's *The Kiss* and Schiele's *The Embrace*, two key works from the Belvedere have now been incorporated into his series.

What is art? What is an exhibition? These are questions to which Brazilian artist Vik Muniz has dedicated himself for the past 15 years with his series titled *Verso*. It is made up of accurate, detailed replicas of the reverse sides of some of art history's greatest masterpieces. By steering towards the seemingly insignificant side of a painted canvas, the artist shifts the focus to the current state of the work – the tale told via traces of time that manifest in such forms as customs stamps, labels, and other vestiges of how it has been literally handled. He thereby questions the value of these images, both as originals and reproductions.

The exhibition scheme of the Upper Belvedere is able to do his concept justice, as the room is modelled after a studio environment or one in which an exhibition is in the process of being installed. The setting of the special exhibition rooms of the Upper Belvedere does not resemble a finished exhibition space, rather it captures the spirit of the moment just before its completion. Muniz thus encourages one to reflect on the nature of an exhibition itself. What constitutes such a thing and when is it actually 'finished'? The answer is left to the viewers themselves. The fronts of the canvases are always hidden and can only be awakened as a memory prompted by the reverse side's suggestion. Visitors are given insight into processes of which they would otherwise be unaware. Nevertheless, it soon becomes evident that Muniz's sculptural works should be regarded as independent works in their own right.

According to Stella Rollig, artistic director of the Belvedere: *'The Verso series is a perfect contemporary addition to the collection of masterpieces at the Belvedere. Much like the*

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redisplaying of our collection, Muniz's works encourage one to not only look at the paintings but also ponder their circulation in the art scene and the way they are displayed.'

Works by Vik Muniz in this series include three-dimensional reproductions of masterpieces such as da Vinci's *Mona Lisa*, van Gogh's *Starry Night*, Fabritius's *The Goldfinch*, Rembrandt's *The Anatomy Lesson of Dr Nicolaes Tulp*, and Picasso's *Les Demoiselles d'Avignon*. Now two more works will be presented within the current IM BLICK [A New Look] exhibition in the Upper Belvedere: the reverse sides of the Belvedere masterpieces *The Kiss (Liebespaar)* by Gustav Klimt and *The Embrace* by Egon Schiele, added to the *Verso* series.

The exhibition series IM BLICK [A New Look] in the Upper Belvedere presents temporary exhibitions three times a year that are designed with the collection in mind, such as the series *Verso* that reflects on key works from the Belvedere collection. *Verso* will be shown at the Belvedere in its second time in connection with an exhibition culled from a collection. In 2016, the Mauritshuis in The Hague presented the series, augmented by the reproduction of the back of Vermeer's *Girl with the Pearl Earring* from the museum's collection. In order to accomplish his works, Muniz must work intimately with the original works and must therefore be afforded considerable access to museums and their staff.

Curator of the exhibition, Harald Krejci, had the following to say about this extraordinary project: *'The collaboration with Vik Muniz was a challenge for the institution. A Verso work can only come about through the artist's close collaboration with the museum. While the front of a painting is a historical fact, the back covers the cultural history of a work and extends itself into the present.'*

Vik Muniz was born in São Paulo in 1961 and lives and works between New York and Rio de Janeiro. His work is characterized by the processing of various materials, ranging from diamonds and caviar to dust and garbage. From them, he makes collages, which only become finished works of art by way of their being photographed. Crucial to his work is always the question of interpretation and the value of art, which is likewise reflected in the series *Verso*. Muniz's works have been shown worldwide in institutions such as the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York, the Fundació Joan Miró in Barcelona, the Museo d'Arte Contemporanea in Rome, the Tel Aviv Museum, and the Long Museum in Shanghai. His works can be found in the collections of institutions such as the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) and the Tate London. In addition to his art, Muniz is also involved in educational and social projects in Brazil and the United States. His

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documentary *Waste Land* was nominated for an Oscar and, since 2011, he has been a UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador. He set up an art and technology school called the Escola Vidigal for low-income children from the Vidigal favela in Rio de Janeiro. With his project *Colonies*, he was invited to the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation's initiative The Art of Saving a Life, and, in 2016, he was the Artistic Director of the opening ceremony of the Paralympic Games in Rio de Janeiro.

LIST OF WORKS

Vik Muniz, Verso (The Kiss), 2017

Object made from different materials
184 × 184 × 5,2 cm

Vik Muniz, Verso (The Embrace), 2017

Object made from different materials
109 × 179 × 8 cm

Vik Muniz, Verso (Anatomy Lesson), 2016

Object made from different materials
203 × 256,5 × 17,8 cm

Vik Muniz, Verso (View of Delft), 2016

Object made from different materials
127 × 147,5 × 15,5 cm

Vik Muniz, Verso (The Girl with a Pearl Earring), 2016

Object made from different materials
127 × 99 × 20,5 cm
Sikkema Jenkins & Co. Gallery, New York

Vik Muniz, Verso (La Gioconda), 2012

Object made from different materials
104 × 81,5 × 13 cm

Vik Muniz, Verso (A Sunday on La Grande Jatte), 2008

Object made from different materials
216 × 320 × 13 cm
Sikkema Jenkins & Co. Gallery, New York

Vik Muniz, Verso (Les Demoiselles D'Avignon), 2008

Object made from different materials
264,5 × 256,5 × 10 cm
Sikkema Jenkins & Co. Gallery, New York

Vik Muniz, Verso (Starry Night), 2008

Object made from different materials
102 × 122 × 13 cm
Sikkema Jenkins & Co. Gallery, New York

Vik Muniz, Verso (Woman With Parrot), 2008

Object made from different materials
124,5 × 99 × 6 cm

Vik Muniz, Verso (Woman Ironing), 2008

Object made from different materials
150 × 110 × 8 cm

Vik Muniz, Verso (Lucretia), 2012

Object made from different materials
150 × 133 × 26 cm

Vik Muniz, Verso (The Goldfinch), 2016

Object made from different materials
94 × 76 × 18 cm

Egon Schiele, The Embrace

Oil on Canvas
100 × 170 cm

GENERAL INFORMATION

Exhibition title	VIK MUNIZ. VERSO
Exhibition duration	21 March to 17 June, 2018
Venue	Upper Belvedere
Ehibits	14
Curator	Harald Krejci
Catalogue	<i>Vik Muniz. Verso</i> Editors: Stella Rollig, Harald Krejci Authors: Harald Krejci, Stefan Lehner, Monika Mayer, Vik Muniz, Stella Rollig Graphic design: Willi Schmid Publishing: Verlag für Moderne Kunst, Vienna 78 pages, 230 x 290 mm, 53 pictures, EUR 19,- German & English Edition ISBN 978-3-903114-50-0
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Opening hours	daily 9am to 6pm Friday 9am to 9pm
Regular Entry	EUR 15,- (Upper Belvedere)
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