

Six well-known figures from the cultural world selected an image that has recently been on their minds...

ON MY MIND...



Matt Ducklo, *Thutmose III, Dynasty 18, ca. 1504–1405 BC, Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2007*
Courtesy of Eleven Rivington, New York, NY

Vanessa Kramer

At the Volta Art Fair in Basel this past June, I was intrigued by Matt Ducklo's *Thutmose III, Dynasty 18, ca. 1504–1405 BC, Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2007*. This work is one from a series titled 'Touch Tour' that shows blind people touching works of art in museums. Looking at the subject tactilely experiencing sculpture, the photograph portrays the act of discovery and demonstrates Ducklo's interest in alternative forms of communication where touching can function as seeing.

For me, this work is reminiscent of Thomas Struth's 'Museum' series that I have always admired for capturing the timelessness of the works of art together with the colorful characters that visit these institutions. In Struth's series, I enjoy viewing the faces of the people in the presence of monumental works of art and their subsequent reactions. I find Ducklo's work more subtle but equally powerful as I look at the hands as an indicator of the subject's reaction to the art. I appreciate the fact that Ducklo's series is not staged, which allows for a raw sense of feeling, emotion and context. I love the way the face is obscured by this massive sculpture which further highlights the sense of touch. Also, I often have the urge when viewing sculpture to feel the texture of the material. I wonder if the

subject is carefully noting each little chisel and the incredible smoothness achieved by the artist in the form of the body.

Context versus content is a recurring debate throughout the discourse of fine art but it was only through my experience with this photograph that I began to fully understand its resonance in contemporary photography. For me, the context of demonstrating tactility through the medium of photography instantly makes the work far more interesting and elevates the photograph from one I could easily pass by to one I am excited about and inclined to discuss. Reflecting Ducklo's own interest in the blind, I find the strength of his work lies in his ability to share his experience with us and to have our responses reveal more about ourselves. +

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