

Eleven Rivington



APR '09

MATT DUCKLO ELEVEN RIVINGTON

Matt Ducklo's small but focused exhibition at Eleven Rivington consisted of eight large-scale (50-by-40-inch) photographs from his series "Touch Tour Pictures" (2007-08), for which he shot blind visitors to the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, the Tate Modern in London, and the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden in Washington, D.C., among other institutions. On the one hand, Ducklo's photographs would seem to be about a blind person's limited ability to experience works of art itself. *Broken Obelisk, Museum of Modern Art, 1963-69*, showing a woman standing at the foot of Barnett Newman's massive Cor-Ten steel sculpture, casts doubt on the idea that she could possibly perceive the scale of the piece, let alone its shape or the way it fills the gallery space (though she may have a better sense of the weight and strength of the material than sighted viewers).

On the other hand, some of Ducklo's subjects seem to be in states of such intense concentration—bliss, even—as they explore the works of art that there is nothing about their experience one could call limited. In *Young Girl with Flowers in Her Hair, 1865-70, The Dixon Galleries and Gardens*, a boy reaches up and gently caresses the face of a Rodin sculpture. His hands frame her face almost lovingly as he leans in, rapt.

Ducklo had spent a fair amount of time in New York City's Chelsea neighborhood when he discovered

Associated Blind Housing, a federally financed apartment building for blind and handicapped tenants, on 23rd Street. He originally photographed Seeing Eye dogs and their owners, a project that ultimately led him to the touch tours. Because he concentrates on people alone with a work of art, Ducklo's photographs are intimate, quite different from Thomas Struth's museum interiors, which also consider the way art is experienced in large institutions but typically feature crowds and big spaces. Ducklo's *Thutmose III, Dynasty 18, ca. 1504-1405 BC, Metropolitan Museum of Art*, in contrast, shows a pair of hands reaching around from behind the sculpture as the subject embraces the figure of the Egyptian king. The blind "viewer" is largely hidden, and our attention is drawn instead to an act of discovery.

--Jean Dykstra



Thutmose III, Dynasty 18, ca. 1504-1405 BC, Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2007, C-print, 50 by 40 inches; at Eleven Rivington

11 Rivington Street, New York, NY 10002
TEL 212 982 1930 FAX 212 982 1936
info@elevenrivington.com
www.elevenrivington.com