

# VOLKER HERMES

## Eyes on Time

Düsseldorf-based artist Volker Hermes (\*1972) has achieved worldwide recognition in recent years with his series "Hidden Portraits". Leading art museums such as the Metropolitan Museum in New York and the National Gallery in London support his conceptual approach and feature his masterful photographic works. The Suermondt Ludwig Museum has invited Volker Hermes to reinterpret six works from its own collection and to veil their faces in accordance with his art.

Hermes immerses himself both artistically and intellectually in the portraits, which he modifies digitally. With great respect for the originals, he acquaints himself with the artists' idiosyncrasies and works with forms, colours and brushstrokes of the original. He intentionally blocks our access through the gaze, he provokes by covering the faces. Instead he focusses on dresses and accessoires, uncovers symbolic objects and messages of the portraits, which sometimes seem more important than the one depicted. All pictorial elements are sourced from the paintings and recombined in unexpected ways, he doesn't add anything what already wasn't. Volker Hermes is an artist, considers himself as the colleague of the Old Masters, a fellow painter, who respectfully engages into a dialog. "Time talks to me," he says himself about his communication with the artworks.

The results are profound, yet humorous variations with a recognisable reference to the present. They confront us with current issues such as equality, diversity or the understanding of sexual identity and build a bridge to our times.