

## PRESS RELEASE

**ERIKA VERZUTTI: YEAR**  
7 OCTOBER - 14 NOVEMBER 2020



Erika Verzutti, *Turtle and Seagulls*, 2020. © Erika Verzutti

Alison Jacques Gallery presents a solo exhibition of new work by Brazilian artist Erika Verzutti. This is Verzutti's first solo show in Europe since her major survey at the Centre Pompidou, Paris (2019) and is Verzutti's second solo show at Alison Jacques, anticipating her first UK museum survey at Nottingham Contemporary.

Erika Verzutti is an artist concerned with the abundance of the world: its shapes, colours and complexities; its existential anxieties and increasingly infrequent moments of respite. Working with freestanding sculptures and tactile clay reliefs, the artist gathers together an assortment of visual fragments—from politics, art history, nature and digital culture—in order to create sculptural collages that speak to both the many excesses of contemporary life and our tireless attempts to process them.

Verzutti's new exhibition at Alison Jacques entitled *YEAR*, comprises bronzes, an aluminium cast and a quartet of papier-mâché works, all made in the last year. *Lady with newspaper and coins (Crying?)* (2020), boasts deep hues with gilt-capped coins and bears resemblance to the sartorial brilliance of Edouard Vuillard's painting *Woman in a Striped Dress* (1895). Crucially, Verzutti's iteration is overlaid with the soft pink of the *Financial Times* newspaper, an allusion to both Verzutti's recent reacquaintance with the daily news cycle and the Cubists' fondness for incorporating newspapers and political commentary into their paintings. The completed bronze is, to borrow Verzutti's phrase, "a combination of art and something very mundane", itself an apt prologue for an exhibition that delights in unexpected unions and incongruous material quirks.

The process of compositional free association resonates with the Synthetic Cubists' particular ability to transform extant objects into something else, all the while ensuring that they remained exactly what they were in the first place. "Cubism is like standing at a certain point on a mountain and looking around", wrote Cubist sculptor Jacques Lipchitz, "it is a point of view". Verzutti borrows too, lifting pictorial details from the world around her and, via a process of material and compositional recontextualization, translates them into something both recognisable and altogether new. The title of one of these new works is *Cultured Meat with Yellow Highlights* (2020) alluding to this playful visual duplicity. Repeatedly, she alludes to the shapes and colours of such things as interchangeably mundane and bizarre as chocolate coins, puddles, eggs, ostriches, seagulls, churros, the paintings of Howard Hodgkin and the "milky blue" waters of Iceland, recombining them according to an unfamiliar and wholly unstable visual logic.

Built from clay and cast bronze yet retaining a relative flatness, the series of reliefs on view at Alison Jacques occupy a liminal space between sculpture and painting, something that, as critic José Augusto Ribeiro wrote, leads them to "call on tactile rather than inquisitive perception". This complex material indeterminacy is apt for a contemporary society that tirelessly navigates the dissociated lightness of digital space and the felt heft of the 'real' world.

Erika Verzutti (b. 1971, São Paulo) studied in London, completing her Postgraduate Diploma in Fine Arts at Goldsmiths College (1999) and remaining at Goldsmiths as an associate research student (2000). Recent solo museum exhibitions include *Venus Yogini*, Aspen Art Museum, Colorado, curated by Heidi Zuckerman (2019); Centre Pompidou, Paris, curated by Christine Macel (2019); *Swan, Cucumber, Dinosaur, Pivô*, São Paulo, curated by Fernanda Brenner (2016); *Erika Verzutti: Swan with Stage*, Sculpture Center, New York, curated by Ruba Katrib (2015) and *Mineral*, Tang Museum at Skidmore College, New York, curated by Ian Berry (2014). Major museums have acquired Verzutti's work including Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh; Centre Pompidou, Paris; Museu de Arte Moderna de São Paulo, São Paulo; Solomon R. Guggenheim, New York and Tate, London.

Erika Verzutti's first UK museum solo exhibition, curated by Nicole Yip at Nottingham Contemporary runs from 30 January until 3 May 2021.



Erika Verzutti, *Cultured Meat with Yellow Highlights*, 2020. © Erika Verzutti



Erika Verzutti, *Naked*, 2020. © Erika Verzutti

**VIRTUAL TALK: JOIN ERIKA VERZUTTI AND AMY SHERLOCK, DEPUTY EDITOR OF *FRIEZE* MAGAZINE, FOR A LIVE CONVERSATION ON WEDNESDAY 14 OCTOBER, 6 - 7.30 PM**

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