

# Beatriz Milhazes

29.01. – 25.04.2011

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The Brazilian artist Beatriz Milhazes (b. 1960 in Rio de Janeiro) is one of the most respected women artists on the international scene. After numerous exhibitions in major institutions, the Fondation Beyeler is devoting the first exhibition ever held in Switzerland to her. It revolves around four new, large-scale paintings on the theme of the four seasons, executed expressly for the present show. A selection of Milhazes's compelling collages, a graceful mobile, and a spectacular floor work round off the solo presentation.

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The basic motifs in the artist's oeuvre derive from the diversity of the tropical environment and the history of Brazilian culture. Her art is characterized by vivid compositions of abstract ornaments, arabesques, flower motifs, geometric forms, and rhythmical patterns in strong, luminous colors. Apart from the evident influence of Henri Matisse and his use of decorative elements in flat spaces, her geometric structures recall such artists as Piet Mondrian, Bridget Riley and Sonia Delaunay. Another key contribution is made by Brazilian modernism, a movement active in the 1920s to 40s that challenged the dominance of Western art and championed a merger of European and Brazilian cultures.

Though painting represents the focus of her art, from the start of her career Milhazes has devoted herself to collage as well. The unique painting technique she has developed is based on collage and recalls transfers or decals. Paint is applied to transparent plastic foil and, when the paint is dry, the foil is affixed to canvas. Then the foil is lifted off, leaving the paint application as a smooth layer on the canvas. Used over and over again, the foil elements leave traces that can reappear in the same or a different work. Each painting is thus suffused with the flux of time, like a palimpsest.

In 2007, Beatriz Milhazes developed a set design for the Marcia Milhazes Dance Company. One of the mobiles this included was subsequently expanded by the Imperatriz Leopoldinense samba school in Rio de Janeiro. The materials comprised simple decorative elements of the kind used to adorn floats in the Carnival parade. The present exhibition concludes with a spectacular floor work employing, for the first time, handpainted white, gold and platinum ceramic tiles designed by the artist.

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## Biography

Solo Exhibitions: *Beatriz Milhazes*, Ikon Gallery, Birmingham, 2001; *Mares do Sul*, Centro Cultural Banco do Brasil, Rio de Janeiro, 2002; *Coisa Linda*, Artist's Book Project, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, 2002; *Beatriz Milhazes*, Domaine de Kerguéhennec, centre d'art contemporain, Bignan, 2003; *Beatriz Milhazes, Pintura, Colagem*, Estação Pinacoteca, Sao Paulo, 2008; *Beatriz Milhazes*, Fondation Cartier pour l'art contemporain, Paris, 2009

Group Exhibitions: *Carnegie International*, Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh, 1995; *24ª Bienal Internacional de São Paulo*, Sao Paulo, 1998; *Versiones del Sur: F(r)icciones*, Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, Madrid, 2000; *Urgent Painting*, Musée d'Art moderne de la Ville de Paris, Paris, 2002; *Dreams and Conflicts – The Dictatorship of the Viewer*, 50<sup>th</sup> Venice Biennale, Venice, 2003; *Flower Myth. Vincent van Gogh to Jeff Koons*, Fondation Beyeler, Riehen/Basel, 2005; *Shanghai Biennale*, Shanghai Art Museum, Shanghai, 2006; *What Is Painting?*, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, 2007; *When Lives Become Form: Dialogues with the future – Brazil, Japan*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo, 2008