

# ROBILANT+VOENA

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*MAT COLLISHAW: NIGHT HUNTER*

10 FEBRUARY 2018-11 MARCH 2018

*Mat Collishaw works from exhibition at Galleria Borghese to go in view at Robilant+Voena*

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St. Moritz – The celebrated contemporary British artist, Mat Collishaw, will display four of his mirror works in the exhibition *Night Hunter*, which opens at Robilant + Voena, St. Moritz on the 10<sup>th</sup> of February and continues until the 11<sup>th</sup> March 2018.

Three of the works were conceived by Collishaw for the 2014/2015 exhibition *Black Mirror* at the Galleria Borghese, Rome. The exhibition was curated by the director of the Galleria Borghese, Anna Coliva, together with curator Valentina Ciarallo and engaged Collishaw's works with paintings by Caravaggio in the Galleria's permanent collection. Robilant+Voena, a gallery that specializes in old and modern masters, has long-established themselves as experts in Caravaggesque art.

It is not surprising that Collishaw, an artist recognized for his candid approach to the grim realities of life and death, chose to dialogue with the paintings of Caravaggio (1571-1610), who was a revolutionary master of Baroque painting known for using live models, creating dramatic effects through the contrast of dark with light, and manifesting powerful, often gut-wrenching, narratives.

Collishaw has been inspired by Caravaggio throughout his artistic career and is convinced of Caravaggio's continued relevancy. He explains that in these works, "I wanted to go back to the moment when Caravaggio was immortalizing the humble models in front of him – turning them from living, breathing human beings into icons of Western painting." Moreover, Collishaw found that Caravaggio's dark backgrounds and single light sources, were especially conducive to achieving his desired effect.

*Night Hunter* at Robilant + Voena consists of four ornate black Murano-glass picture frames encasing dark silver, two-way mirrors, which reflect the viewer and their surroundings. Between the mirrors Collishaw has created a purgatory-like space where the figures in the paintings appear to move like apparitions. Three are inspired by Caravaggio's paintings from the Galleria Borghese exhibition: the *Madonna dei Palafrenieri* (1605/6), *St. Jerome* (1606), and *David with the Head of Goliath* (1606). The fourth work is based on a painting by Caravaggio's greatest French follower, Georges de La Tour (1593-1653), in the collection of the Metropolitan Museum

of Art: *The Penitent Magdalene* (ca. 1604). According to Collishaw what emerges “from behind the mirror is this shimmering image of a man or a woman holding a slightly jittery pose, a chimerical spirit-presence coming back to haunt you through the mirror.”

Collishaw believes that Caravaggio is “one of those artists you don’t need to read about and study because, as a painter, he’s so visceral: he just hits you right there,” he explains. “When Caravaggio was painting, the common people weren’t going to church looking for lessons in aesthetics and art history. They just wanted a relationship with God. And Caravaggio gave it to them in a language they could understand. He’s so brutally real. He doesn’t embellish or decorate things, but gives you life as it is – with dirty feet right in your face.”

Collishaw’s works are both reflections of the instinctual human attraction to images of mortality or death and are studies in manipulating the viewer’s experience. Like Caravaggio, Collishaw achieves dramatic engagement with the viewer in his art, but Collishaw has seized the emotive opportunities presented by modern technology.

### **About the Artist**

Mat Collishaw (b. 1966) is a key figure in the important generation of British artists who emerged from Goldsmiths, University of London in the late 1980s. He participated in *Freeze* (1988) and since his first solo exhibition in 1990 has exhibited widely internationally.

Recent solo exhibitions include *Thresholds*, Somerset House, London; Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery; Lacock Abbey, Wiltshire, UK, (2017); *The Centrifugal Soul*, Blain|Southern, London (2017); *folly, Fountains Relief*, Fountains Abby & Studley Royal, North Yorkshire (2016); *Mat Collishaw*, The New Art Gallery Walsall (2015), *In Camera*, Library of Birmingham (2015), *Black Mirror*, Galleria Borghese, Rome (2014), *This Is Not An Exit*, Blain|Southern, London (2013), Bass Museum of Art, Florida (2013); Pino Pascali Museum Foundation, Bari (2013); *Mat Collishaw: Afterimage*, Arter, Istanbul (2013) and *Magic Lantern* at the Victoria and Albert Museum, London (2010).

Collishaw’s work is in several public collections including Arter Foundation, Istanbul; British Council Collection, London; Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris; Galleria Civica di Arte Moderna , Turin; Museum of Contemporary Art, San Diego; Museum of Old and New Art, New South Wales; Olbricht Collection, Berlin, and Tate, London.



*Black Mirror, Hydrus, 2014, Black Murano Glass, surveillance mirror, steel, wood, lacquer, ultra-HD screen and hard drive, 260 x 160 x 40 cm, Edition 1 of 2 + 1 AP*



*Black Mirror, Antlia, 2014, Black Murano Glass, surveillance mirror, steel, wood, lacquer, ultra-HD screen and hard drive, 96 x 140 x 33 cm, Edition 1 of 2 + 1 AP*



*Black Mirror, Leo Minor, 2014, Black Murano Glass, surveillance mirror, steel, wood, lacquer, ultra-HD screen and hard drive, 250 x 130 x 35 cm, Edition 1 of 2 + 1AP*

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