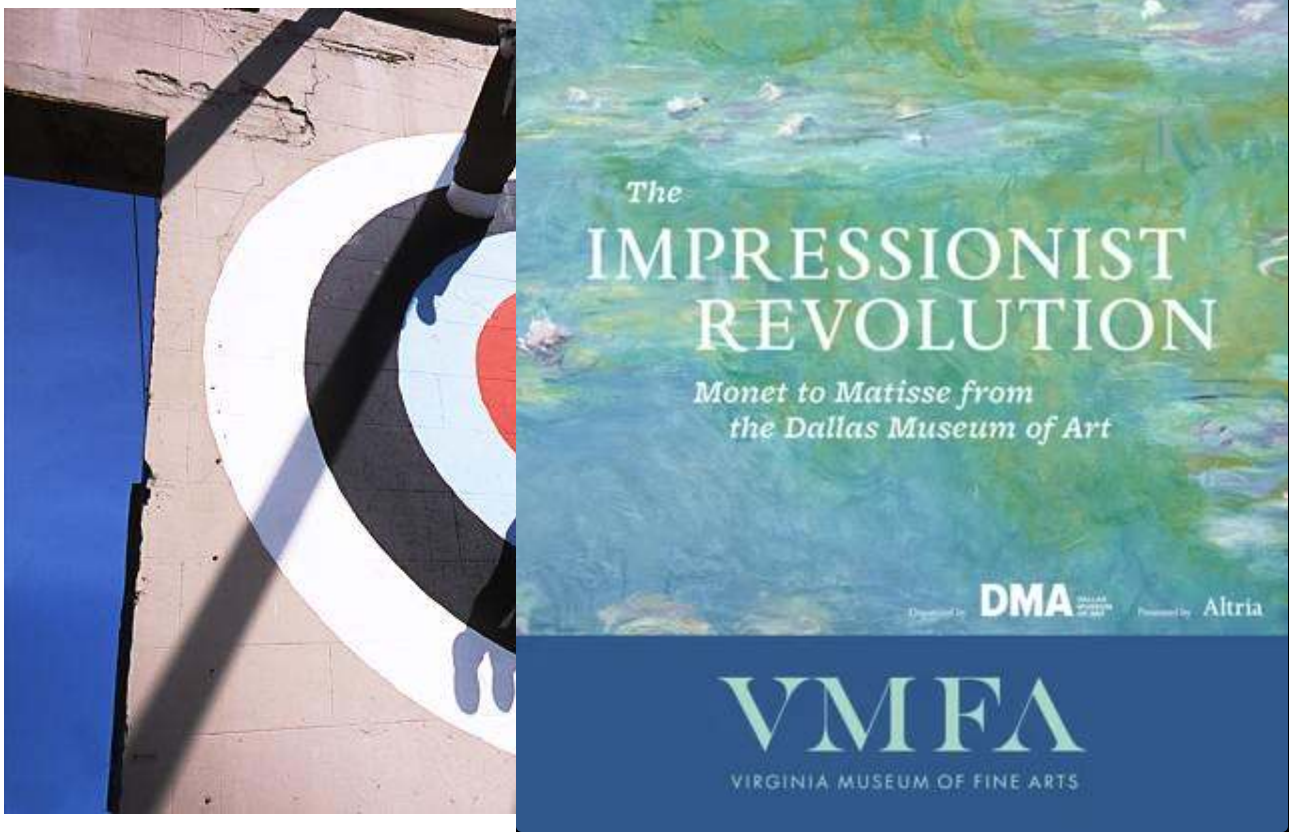

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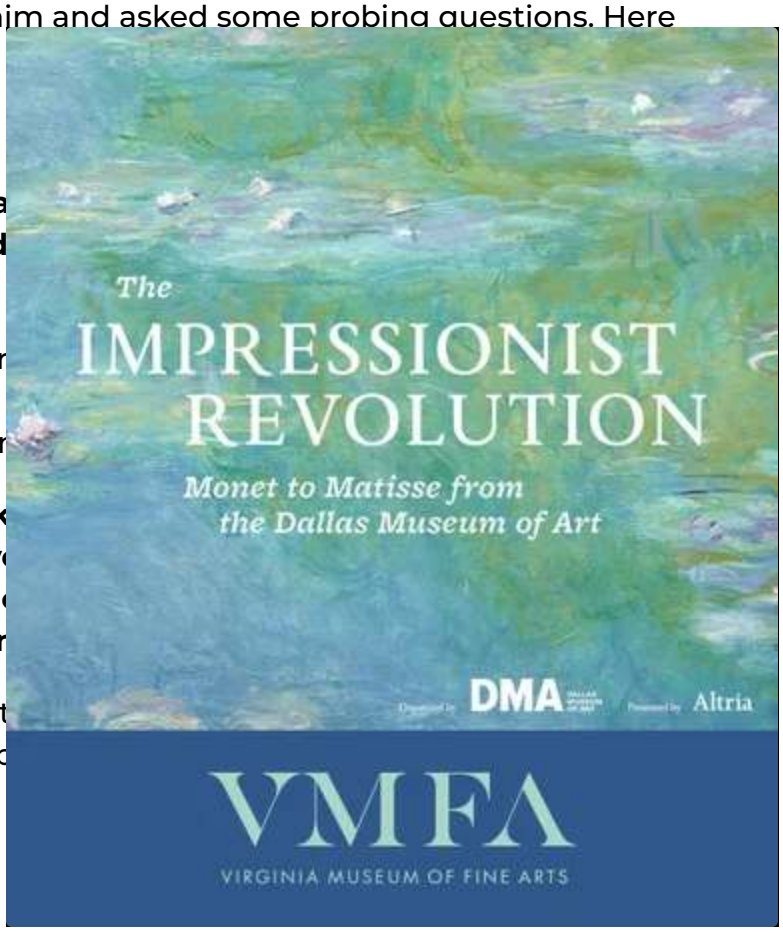

The
IMPRESSIONIST
REVOLUTION
Monet to Matisse from
the Dallas Museum of Art
DMA
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A FAKE HOMELESS MAN IN A POLAR BEAR SUIT: AN INTERVIEW WITH MARK JENKINS

by **Marilyn Drew Necci** | **May 29, 2012** | **ART**

Mark Jenkins is an American multimedia artist best known for street installations that he creates using packing tape. His humanoid figures in a variety of impossible positions have graced the streets of London, Rome, Barcelona, Seoul, and Washington DC, among many others. Earlier this year, Jenkins participated in the RVA Street Art Festival, contributing one of the most striking pieces installed on the Canal Walk, with his three-dimensional humanoid bodies projecting outward, feet-first, from a target. To find out more about this unique artist, his inspirations, and his working methods, David Kenedy got in touch with him and asked some probing questions.

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Are back to back gallery shows a
mixing it up from the off-the-rad
used to?

It's a lot of traveling, mostly to Eur
workshops, and other odd things
first outdoor project we've done ir

I know that you first started mak
in 2003 in Rio de Janeiro when y
been into this for a while now. H
compared to what you were doir

Early on, I was only working with t
dressing the figures. Clear tape ob
visual landscape. On a sunny day,

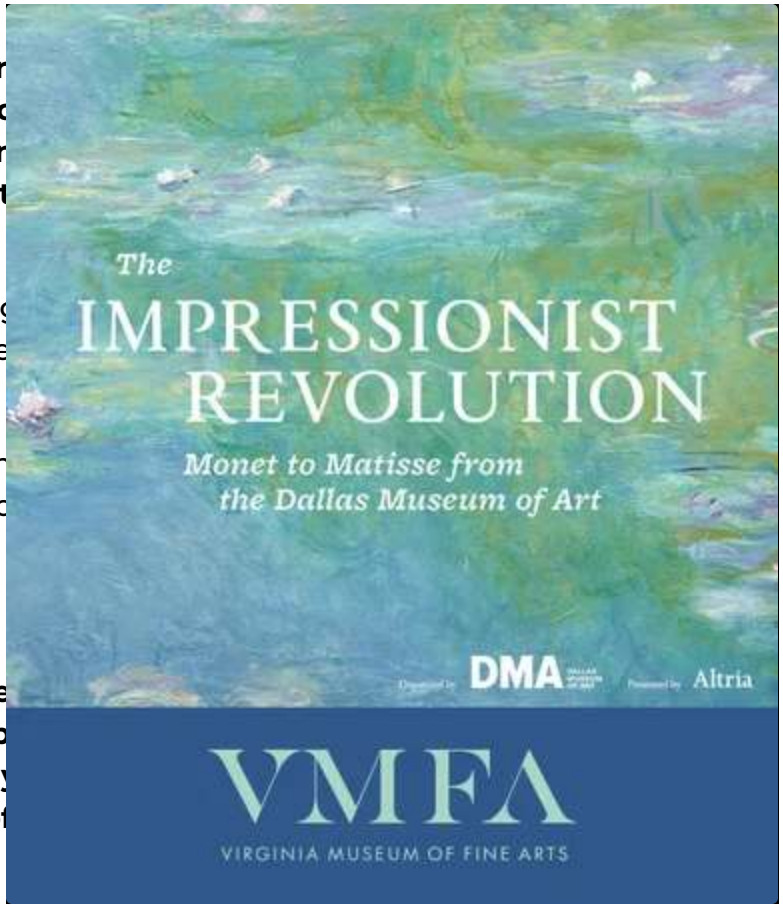
coming from behind. With the dressed works it's the opposite. The work camouflages itself as reality. It's something like a glitch in the Matrix.

I actually grew up in the Fairfax/D.C. area myself, so it's especially funny for me to see pictures of these things up there. Did you start working there by default because that's where you are originally from, or are there qualities about that area that you were specifically drawn to?

I started making tape sculpture in Rio. I was there teaching English when I'm met some visual artists and started playing around with packing tape. I returned to Fairfax to set up a studio in my parents backyard to experiment with resin and fiberglass. It took me about a year being back before I started putting stuff on the street again. It was hard to get a feel for DC.

Has your work ever been compared to the illustrations and cartoons of Charles Addams, the creator of the Addams Family? I think that his use of dark humor and social irony has a strange sort of parallel to your created situations. There is one cartoon of his where a man is walking down the street and he is turning over with this confused look on his face at a parking meter with a witch's broom "parked" on it. That was done back in the 40s, and here you are now out actually making those types of situations a reality...

It hasn't but I agree. Would have been nice to make a cast of Morticia in her prime.



Obviously there is a lot of humor
ridiculous, like that red carpet go
favorites. I would assume that or
hang back and watch people get
stories?

In the beginning it was interesting
much but to gather the data... like
enough.

Reactions range from dogs lungin
fire trucks. etc. It's crazy the havoc
cause, or a fake homeless man in

There also seems to be this unde
where the work challenges peop
and do a double take on life. Do y
side of things, or are you more of

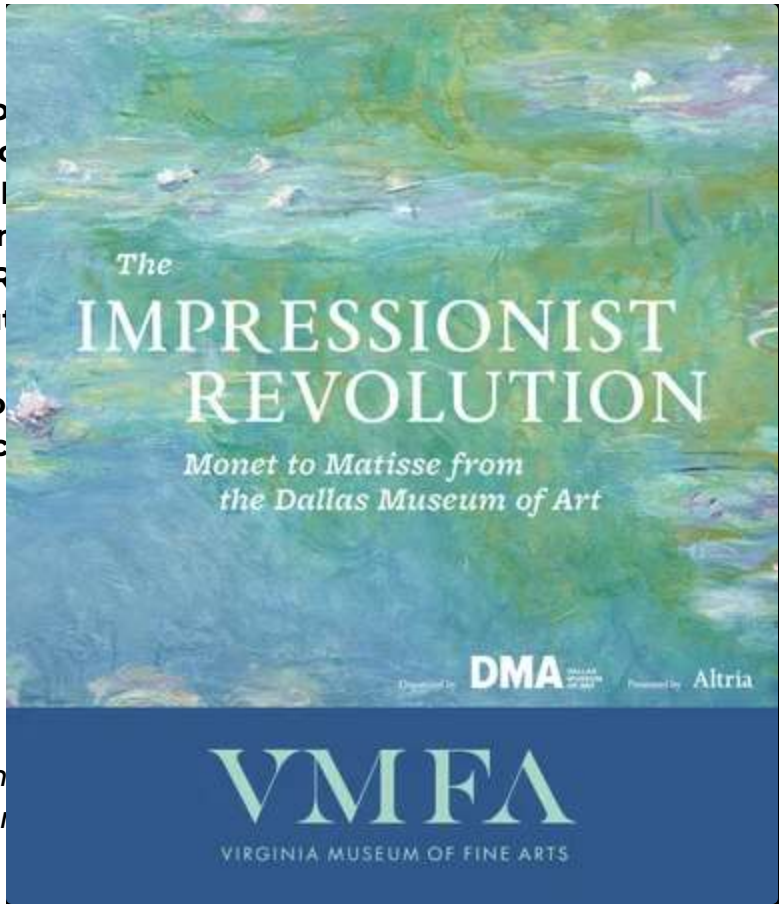
I like the deeper philosophy of it all, or even scientific. I like the narrative element as well. If I was that sort of guy doing it just for kicks it wouldn't sustain itself. I'd be doing something else.

Your Richmond jam got a lot of positive vibe from the locals, but did it feel a bit "staged" to you within the context of an organized art show? The element of surprise seemed sort of nullified, compared to something that is placed without any forewarning. Yet on the flipside, a lot of people who might not have normally seen it were able to go down and check it out. How do you feel about this?

More for me it was about doing my first mural. I've never painted a wall before and so I saw it as a challenge to share space with artists like Soto, even if it got mucked up a little by the piece under it. But I don't feel a need to always maintain this element of surprise.

Check THIS out–one of the "dart people" apparentely came off and ended up in the canal, and someone saw it and called the cops because they thought it was a dead body floating in the water! From what I understand the legs fell down by themselves, and I guess someone took matters into their own hands...

Not sure why everyone calls them darts. Don't you guys have dart boards in your city? It's an archery target and they're meant to be arrows. But I don't do shoddy work that falls down in the night and jumps in the river. My guess is that someone or something ripped them down.



OK, now I'm about to get really o
rather have the ability to leave yo
at will, but at the risk of getting l
would your rather be able to turn
know how long it would last? OR
allow you to see into both the fut
used it it would cause a random
a ball, or whatever–you really wo
it would be someting that they c
have a million dollars?

I'd rather have a french fry.

—

xmarkjenkinsx.com

Mark Jenkins will return to Richm
group show curated by Chad Nie

but be on the lookout!

Interview and Canal Walk Photos by David Kenedy
Introduction by Andrew Necci
Other Photos from xmarkjenkinsx.com



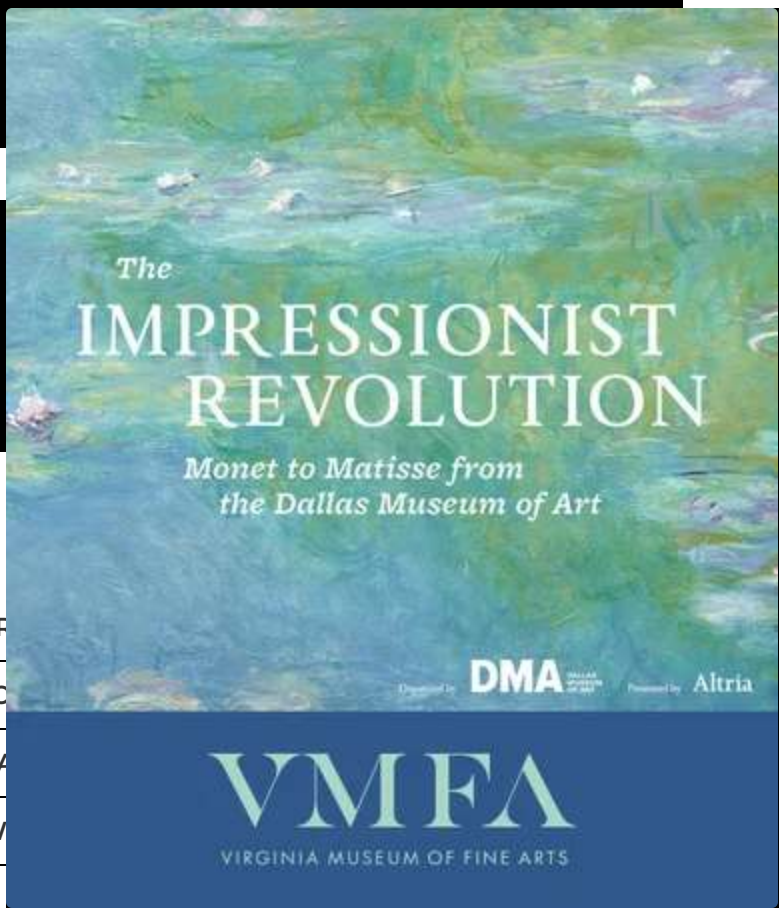
MARILYN DREW NECCI

Former GayRVA editor-in-chief, RVA Magazine editor for print and web. Anxiety expert, proud trans woman, happily married.

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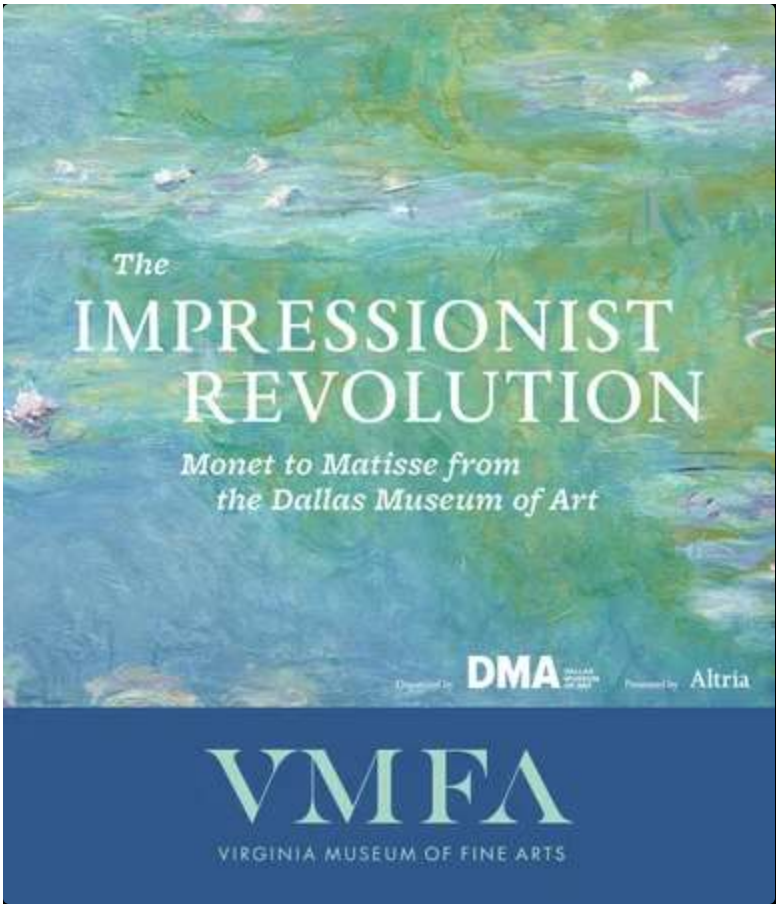
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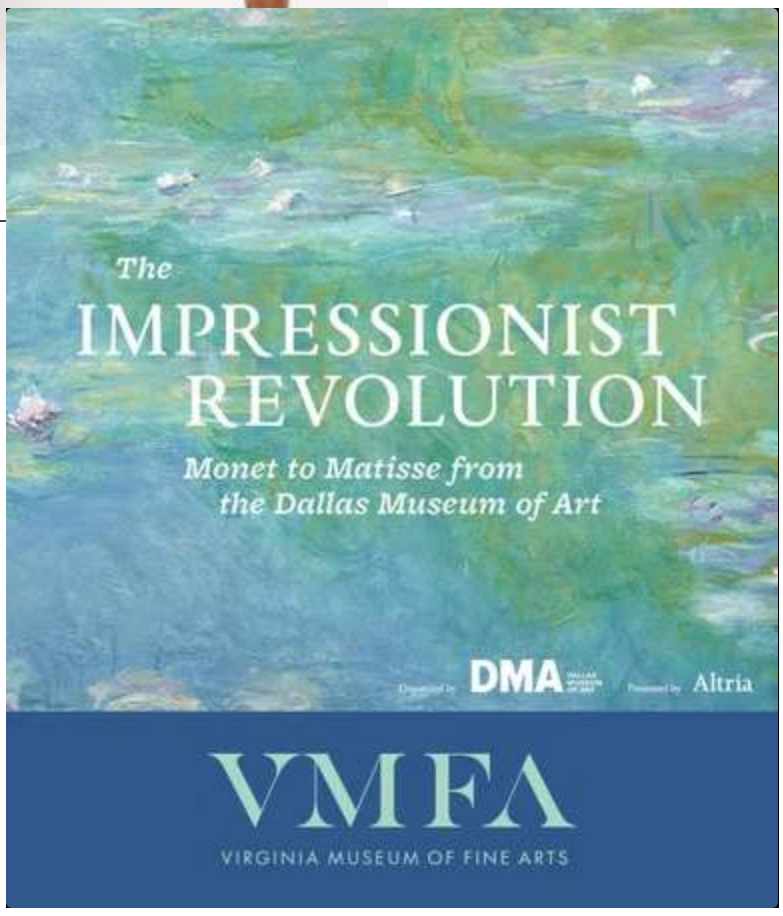
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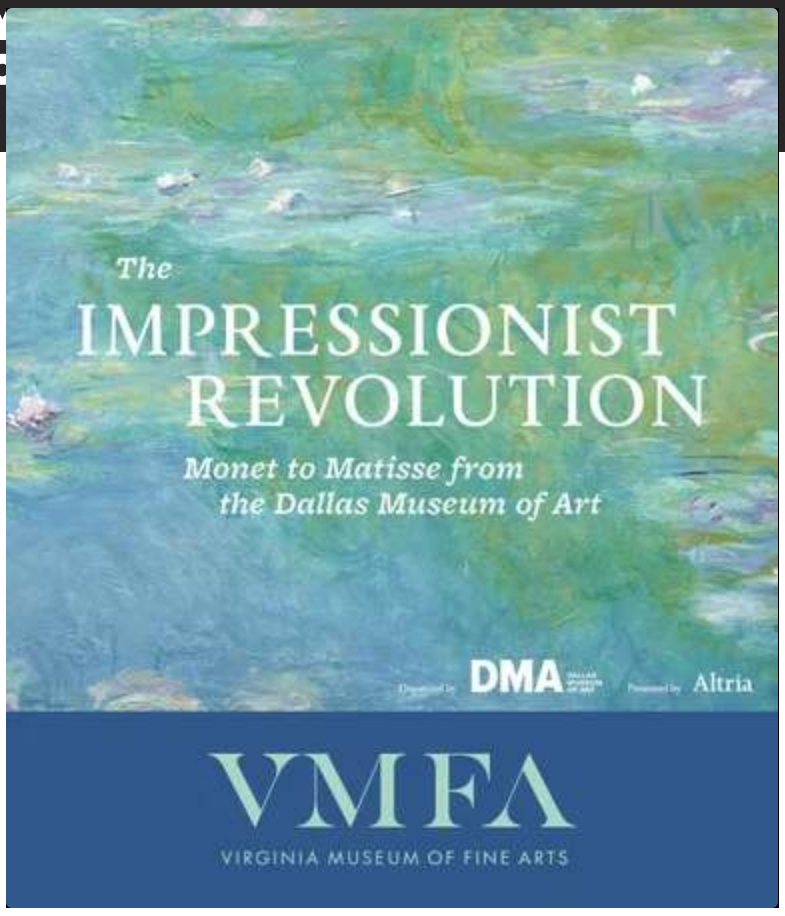

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