

ARTIKA presents *Vía Crucis*, the new art book by Fernando Botero: the master's grand homage to Colombia and his origins.

In 2012, Fernando Botero donated his *Vía Crucis* series to the Museo de Antioquia in Medellín. Now, to mark his 90th birthday, the artist wanted to turn his masterpiece into an edition that pays tribute to the people of Colombia. This is the art book that connects the history of art with the master's memories.

ARTIKA presents a limited and numbered edition of *Vía Crucis*, a major work in Fernando Botero's career. The art book includes the complete series of drawings and paintings featuring the master's personal interpretation of the Stations of the Cross.

The scenes that evoke Jesus's journey from his arrest to his crucifixion have inspired a host of masterpieces over the centuries. Yet Botero's take offers a completely original twist on a classic iconography.

With his unmistakable signature style, Botero offers a journey through European painting, from the year 1200 to the advent of the Baroque, through references to masterpieces by artists including Giotto, Piero della Francesca, Michelangelo and Velázquez.

Vía Crucis is thus a synthesis of the influences that have shaped Botero's artistic evolution, a perspective on the biblical story that also has multiple readings.

First, the artist looks inward with references to his homeland. For example, some of the pieces incorporate details that refer to the landscapes and streets of his childhood.

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Second, *Vía Crucis* brings an understanding of the universality of suffering: the representation of Jesus's final hours illustrates how human emotions transcend cultures, times and beliefs.

Through the scenes of *Vía Crucis* we understand the suffering of a victim of torture, in this case a flesh-and-blood Jesus. His journey to Calvary evokes the pain of any human being anywhere in the world.

***Vía Crucis*, a masterpiece with roots**

Colombia has always played a central role in Botero's art. As a boy he would gaze at the paintings and sculptures on display in churches, this first contact with art leaving its mark on his creative personality.

His commitment to his homeland was made even more evident through his donation of *Vía Crucis* in 2012, a gesture that includes the transfer to the Museo de Antioquia of the profits from publication of the work, which also applies to this edition.

Botero's personal involvement is felt in every detail of this book, crafted in collaboration with the Museo de Antioquia. *Vía Crucis* is presented in a display case that includes the Art Book and the Study Book.

The Art Book: a personal language for a universal theme

This bilingual edition, in Spanish and English, includes all the artwork in the *Vía Crucis* series. The prints, bound to the Art Book with three dots of glue, faithfully reproduce the original drawings in pencil and watercolour on paper.

The cover of this edition is a never-before-published image printed on canvas: a silhouetted detail of the oil painting *Cerca de la Cruz* (2010), from the artist's private collection.

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Each print is paired with a quote from the Bible, printed on semi-transparent red paper, the images depicting the Passion of Christ through a range of classic scenes that the master explores and reinterprets through his signature style: "Boterism".

The result is a suggestive scenography in which, for example, Jesus carries the cross through the streets of a Colombian village or a 20th century soldier who appears among the Roman centurions and soldiers surrounding Christ.

This creates a series in which references from artists like Titian, Antonello da Messina and El Greco are interwoven with Botero's childhood memories.

Study Book: the keys to Botero's work

All the elements of *Vía Crucis* are analysed in detail in the articles compiled in the Study Book, authored by the most renowned voices in Botero's oeuvre.

Federico Mayor Zaragoza, former director general of UNESCO, discusses the artist's enormous contribution to the universalisation of culture and art.

María del Rosario Escobar, Director General of the Museo de Antioquia, offers a broad overview of the transformation of Medellín and, by extension, all of Colombia. Many of these changes stem from the fact that, for decades, Botero's goal was to make art part of his fellow Colombians' everyday life.

David Ebony, American critic, reviews the characteristics that make "Boterism" a globally recognisable and admired style.

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Camilo Castaño, curator of the Museo de Antioquia, discusses the themes that underpin the painter's visual identity and traces his major influences, which are seamlessly woven into his artistic persona. He then offers an in-depth analysis of each of the 34 drawings included in the Art Book, as well as all the oil paintings included in the series.

Finally, the volume is rounded off with an extensive timeline, illustrated with posters for Botero's exhibitions.

As front and back covers, the volume has a special feature that instantly expresses Botero's personality: two striking portraits of the artist, captured in two previously unpublished, high-quality photographs.

A case for showcasing a masterpiece

A distinctive case is a must for an edition that has been painstakingly crafted down to the last detail. The design, elegant and contemporary, incorporates two transparent methacrylate sheets on the front and back.

The front is a window that displays the front cover of the Art Book, while the back displays the back cover of the Study Book.

The side frame is made of red lacquered wood. It features the artist's signature in relief, is removable and allows access to the two volumes included in the volume.

ARTIKA is home to unique editions

ARTIKA is a publishing house that specialises in art books. What sets our work apart is that each copy is unique. These are volumes that provide an intangible value: they can be read like a book or admired like a sculpture, but they always provide an exclusive, never-before-seen insight into the history of art.

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Our editions are works of art on their own. At ARTIKA we choose designs that no one has ever imagined before to present our editions. Each design is the result of an exhaustive research process, the editions reflecting the personality of a great artist, both in terms of content and the choice of materials.

At ARTIKA, we carefully and meticulously take care of every detail, driven by a desire to innovate. Only this way do we ensure that our art books are one-of-a-kind pieces.

Fernando Botero

Painter, sculptor and illustrator, he has made his way into the annals of art history through a signature style known as "Boterism". His work is a combination of volume, colour, irony and tenderness through the gaze of an artist who knows how to express the sensuality of forms.

He went to Florence in the 1950s, where he studied the fresco painting technique of the Renaissance masters and particularly those of Piero della Francesca, who taught a young Botero how to use colour to express volume. It was his first step towards originality.

The Mexican muralists as well as paintings by Pablo Picasso were among those who influenced Botero's work, but he has always managed to retain an essence that can be traced back directly to his homeland. This is what makes him a universal artist.

Botero belongs to a handful of artists who can create a personal visual language that is instantly recognisable and crosses any cultural barrier.

His work is admired in museums and public spaces around the world, from New York to Hiroshima. He celebrated his 90th birthday in 2022 and is still active.

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**ARTIKA presents *Vía Crucis*, the new art book by
Fernando Botero**

Vía Crucis is at once the work of an artist who fully grasps the human condition, a journey through the history of painting, and a ground-breaking look of a classic theme in art.

- The 34 prints in the Art Book are bound together with three dots of glue.
- The Study Book is a collection of previously unpublished articles, written by experts in the artist's career
- Numbered edition limited to 2998 copies, presented in a modern and exclusive display case.
- Fernando Botero was involved in every phase of the project.
- The master hand-signed 200 copies of the edition.

Visit www.artikabooks.com or contact info@artikabooks.com to see all ARTIKA editions.

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Information withheld for publication until 21 September 2022.

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