

Joana Vasconcelos

Viriato



NATIONAL MUSEUM of WOMEN *in the* ARTS

Viriato, 2005

## Off the Hook

**Joana Vasconcelos (b. 1971)** explores consumer culture, collective identity, and our assumptions about what constitutes art. This Portuguese artist is known for enveloping everyday items, such as pianos, laptops, or commercially produced decorative objects, in crocheted and knitted material.

## Take a closer look

In *Viriato*, Vasconcelos cloaks a lawn ornament in elaborate needlework, contrasting mass-produced with hand-crafted. The lacy covering invites us to peer at the details beneath, while also competing for our attention with the figure it masks.

## Something to talk about

Because handmade textiles are universally rich with associations, Vasconcelos incorporates them in many of her works to encourage multiple interpretations. How do your associations with crochet and similar techniques affect your response to *Viriato*?

## Who knew?

Viriato was a first-century leader in the area of present-day Portugal. He is credited with turning back an invasion of his homeland by the ancient Romans.

Joana Vasconcelos, *Viriato*, 2005; Ceramic and cotton yarn; 29½ x 17¾ x 15¾ inches; National Museum of Women in the Arts, Gift of Heather and Tony Podesta Collection, Washington, D.C.; © Luís Vasconcelos, Courtesy Atelier Joana Vasconcelos

