

PRESS

vik muniz

Exhibition from December 12th, 2009 – February 13th, 2010

Opening Saturday, December 12th at 3pm

Vik Muniz's photographs appear to be made by a magician or a virtuoso, where the manipulations seem at first to have nothing to do with the medium of photography. Working with incongruous materials—thread, jam, chocolate syrup, ketchup, dust, toys, pigment, etc—chosen for their relationship to the image that they depict, Vik Muniz reconstructs images taken from art history or the media, images that belong to our visual collective history and that always resemble the memory we have of them. These images are then photographed in order to renounce the origins from which they spring and thus creating an illusory representation: from the best-known 19th century landscapes recreated with thread, to the fetishized images by Warhol recreated in chocolate, from the "Pictures of Dust" made for Vik's exhibition at the Whitney Museum, to the "Pictures of Color" and the "Pictures of Air" shown at the Venice Biennale, to the images in diamonds and caviar of the series "Diamond Divas" and "Caviar Monsters"... the allusions are varied, the illusions are complete.

For his fifth solo show at the Galerie Xippas, Vik Muniz will present two series of photographs: for the *Gordian Puzzles* series, Vik has chosen emblematic paintings such as the *Mona Lisa* by Leonardo da Vinci, the *Grande Jatte* by Georges Seurat, and the *Guernica* and *Demoiselles d'Avignon* by Picasso, that he recomposes with puzzle pieces. Each image is made using several different puzzles printed with the image but cut differently, so while the puzzles remains unsolved, the image is "solved."

In the *Pictures of Paper* series, Vik revisits the cultural and emotional relationship our society has with black and white photography. Inspired by the photographs of Brassai, André Kertész, Robert Frank, Margaret Bourke White, Weegee, Andreas Feininger, O. Winston Link, Dorteia Lange..., Vik recreates these images with superpositions of paper ranging from black to white and passing through shades of gray. Up close, the resulting effect is somewhat grotesque, but from a few steps back, the images are identical to the originals by which they are inspired.

Through the process of the creation of his images, Vik Muniz plays several roles: mischievous and imbued with irony, he is painter, sculptor, photographer and theoretician all at once.

Vik Muniz's artworks offer an image that is sensual and ambiguous, but that interrogate the process of visual perception. He encourages doubt, and our ability to look at things and to analyze them: "vision is above all else a form of intelligence and recognition or identification is a comfort of sorts." Vik's artworks are comforting in their sense of familiarity, but they allows us to supercede the process of identification.

Vik Muniz was born in São Paulo in 1961. He moved to New York in 1984. His first sculptures are “trompe l’oeils”: a deflated football cast in bronze and painted to look like the real football, or the plastic cast “Clown Skull” fitted out with a round nose as if an object found in an archaeological dig. In 1988, Vik’s book *The Best of Life*, went missing and he thus began to redraw the images from the book from memory and then photograph them. The issues raised by this series on the nature of looking and the role of photography are intrinsic to Vik’s practice, and if Vik has since constructed a body of work exclusively photographic, he nonetheless plumbs the nature of visual representation.

Numerous international solo-shows have been consecrated to Vik, among them: International Center of Photography, New York (1998); Museu de Arte Moderna, São Paulo and the Museu de Art Moderna, Rio de Janeiro (2001); the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York (2001); the Fundació Joan Miró, Barcelona (2002); The Menil Collection, Houston (2002); the Centro Gallego de Arte Contemporanea, Saint-Jacques de Compostelle, Spain(2003); the Museo d’Arte Contemporanea, Rome (2003); the Fundación Telefonica, Madrid (2004) and the Irish Museum of Contemporary Art, Dublin (2004). In 2001, Vik Muniz represented the Brazilian Pavilion in the 49th Venice Biennale.

A retrospective of Vik Muniz’s oeuvre entitled *Vik Muniz: Reflex* has been traveling to many venues between 2006 and 2009 including: Miami Art Museum, University of South Florida, Seattle Art Museum, PS1,Queens, New York, Museum of Contemporary Art, San Diego, Museum of Contemporary Art, Montréal, Antiguo Colegio de San Ildefonso, Mexico, MASP, São Paulo, MAM, Rio de Janeiro, Brésil....