

# vik muniz

## HANDMADE

Exhibition September 8th - October 20th, 2018

Opening on Saturday September 8th, 2018, from 3 pm



Vik Muniz, *Vidigal*, 2018. *Handmade* series.  
Mixed media, 105 x 153 cm (framed).  
Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Xippas.

The Xippas Gallery is pleased to present *Handmade*, Vik Muniz's new solo exhibition.

In this new series, Vik Muniz explores the nature of perception, playing on the dichotomy between the object and its representation, and reinventing the possibilities of the construction of the photographic image.

The "handmade" works, as the title of the exhibition suggests, are the result of a hybrid process combining manual, or artisanal treatment - namely painting or collage - and high-resolution digital photography. The results are complex compositions, each unique pieces, combining different techniques: paper and cardboard are painted, cut out and superimposed on a surface, before being photographed in order to allow for manipulation, rearranging and further photographing, and so on.

By creating different planes which reveal underlying elements and their photographs, Vik Muniz invents real *trompe-l'œil* where the objects and their photographic representations are interlinked in a visual game.

Inviting the spectator on a quest to distinguish between the object and its image, the artist pursues his research on the mechanisms of perception, a common thread throughout his work. Unlike previous series, where images from the history of art or from collective memory were interpreted with unusual, but also daily, materials, *Handmade* attests to the recourse to artistic materials such as paper, cardboard or metal. Hence, this series refers to the fundamental principles of abstract art: colour, form and rhythm are used as the main components of composition.

In the manner of Malevitch paintings, the simple geometrical forms and primary colours create a tension and a dynamic. The splitting of lines and geometrical elements into patches of colour brings out a vibrant rhythm which echoes the compositions of Paul Klee, or minimalist musical partitions, with their infinite variations.

The works in this series, akin to geometric abstraction or Cubist paintings, play on volume and movement, transcending the two dimensions of the photographic image both symbolically and literally, in order to reconnect with its materiality. The artist therefore experiments

with photographic media and uses the technique of printing on aluminium to create compositions in three dimensions, where the layers of paint, shapes cut out in the metal, and the shadows duplicate each other and overlap, merging with their images. Like bas-reliefs, these volume works contain a simulation, hovering between “truth” and illusion, between reality and its double.

The material trace of the artistic gesture which is therefore present in each piece alludes to the creation process without revealing it. On the contrary, it becomes increasingly mysterious as the eye loses itself, compelled to travel over the different planes of the image.

The construction of the image thereby invites the viewer to deconstruct it by the gaze. The increasingly porous border between the object and its copy reveals the mechanism behind our ways of seeing and understanding the image. In the digital age, where images increasingly take the place of objects and their manipulation becomes an integral part of daily life, reproducibility becomes one of the legitimate principles of creation. As the artist says, “there is now hardly any difference between a piece of work and its image”. In his new series, he develops a reflection on the fleeting concept of material reality and its possible interpretations. The aim of the illusion created by Vik Muniz is therefore not simply to destabilise our perception, but to “reveal the architecture of our concept of truth”<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Vik Muniz, *Natura Pictrix. Interviews and Essays on Photography*, Edgewise, New York – Paris – Turin, 2003, p. 47

Vik Muniz was born in 1961 in São Paulo. He lives and works between Rio de Janeiro, Brazil and New York, USA.

He had solo shows in numerous international institutions, such as Chrysler Museum of Art, Norfolk, Virginia, USA (on view until October 14th, 2018), Belvedere Museum, Vienna, Austria (2018); Palazzo Cini, Venice, Italy, (2017); MARCO Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Monterrey, Mexico (2017), High Museum, Atlanta, USA (2016); Maurithuis, The Hague, The Netherlands, (2016), MUNTREF Contemporary Art Center, Buenos Aires, Argentina (2015); Tel Aviv Museum of Art, Israel, (2014), Les Rencontres d’Arles, France (2014); CAC Centro de Arte Contemporáneo de Málaga, Spain (2012), MoMA PS1, New York, USA (2007), Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art, Gateshead, UK (2007), Miami Art Museum, USA (2006), the Pinacoteca do Estado de São Paulo, Brazil (2004), Fundación Telefónica, Madrid, Spain (2004), Menil Collection, Houston, USA (2002), Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, USA (2001), Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, USA (1998) and International Center for Photography, New York, USA (1998).

His work is included in prestigious private and museum collections, such as Museum of Modern Art, New York; Guggenheim Museum, New York; Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Los Angeles Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; Tate Gallery, London; Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo; Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris; Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, Madrid, among others.

Vik Muniz represented Brazil at the 49th Venice Biennial in 2001.

His work is the subject of the film *Waste Land* (2010) premiered at the 2010 Sundance Film Festival and nominated for the Oscar for the best documentary in 2011.

In 2011, Vik Muniz was named UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador. In 2015, he founded *Morro do Vidigal*, visual arts school for children living in Vidigal favela in Rio de Janeiro.

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