

# Vik Muniz

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Press release



Vik Muniz  
Seated woman in Garden, 2022  
Archival inkjet print and collage  
136,9 × 101,6 cm  
© Galerie Xippas

Xippas Geneva

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Tuesday to Friday:  
10am to 1pm and 2pm to 6.30pm  
Saturday: 12h à 17h

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Press Preview September 14th at 5pm

Opening on September 15th from 6pm to 9pm on the occasion of the Nuit des Bains

Xippas gallery in Geneva is pleased to present a solo exhibition of unique works from Vik Muniz's latest series entitled Surfaces. In recent years, the Brazilian artist has focused on the classical paintings of the Cubist masters. We are talking about Pablo Picasso, Albert Gleizes, Maria Blanchard, George Braque or Juan Gris to name but a few. This fascination has been expressed, through extensive research and observation, in the production of new, unpublished works, composed of photographs and collages, which alone embrace the artist's complex reflection on the fragility of the images we retain in our memory, the strength of reminiscence and the ambiguity of its representation in the art that forms the basis of his production.

After moving to the United States in 1983 and being in close contact with artworks he had known only in reproductions, Muniz realized the enormous difference between interacting with artworks physically and engaging with them via replicas. These two distinct ways of experiencing art have informed the artist's practice throughout his career that spans three decades. His work invites the spectator to explore ambiguous territories loaded with dualities: between the image and its physical counterpart, between mind and matter, between perception and phenomenon. According to the artist, this 'metaphysical exercise' challenges our senses and perceptions by breaking new ground through a reality that is constantly changing, forcing us to acknowledge the

fragility of our certainties. The constant need to reconfigure the reality that emerges with the advent of new media is seized by Muniz as a way of breaking the paradigms that traditionally polarize painting and photography, reviving the relationship between the material and the pictorial, which recurs in his work since the start of his career. In one of his first series, "Best of Life", the artist drew famous photographs by memory then photographed the drawings and exhibited the resulting images.

Painted surfaces – which are traditionally an epistemological field reserved exclusively for painters – have been repeatedly viewed and reproduced throughout history, weakening their material aura. Their colors, context or compositions are easily remembered rather than the texture of their surface or physicality. Here, the artist once again removes the concrete element that differentiates a painting from a photograph by representing it via a layered image.

The artworks presented in *Superficies* explore two approaches that are recurrent in Muniz's artistic vocabulary: a material in search of meaning or an image in search of physical renovation.

Even though the artworks use painting both in their process and concept, they are not paintings. Yet, as photographic images or artworks that exist in an autonomous and physical way, they are also not abstractions. The results are non-reproducible photographic images, which, in an ambiguous way, simultaneously value the material and conceptual surfaces of painting and require the observer's physical presence in order to be successful. This entropic negotiation between material loss and virtual gain encourages viewers to question their relationships with the physical experience of the work of art, within a context where images and the idea of reality itself are mediated by digital technology, which is currently omnipresent in our day-to-day.

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

He has had numerous international solo exhibitions, including the Brigham Young University Museum of Art (2021), ArtScience Museum in Singapore (2020), Sarasota Art Museum (2019-2020), Collection Lambert in Avignon, France (2019), Figge Art Museum, Davenport, Iowa, USA (2019), El Paso Museum of Art, El Paso, Texas, USA (2019), Foam Museum, Amsterdam, The Netherlands (2018), Chrysler Museum of Art, Norfolk, Virginia, USA (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, 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), 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 (1998) and International Center for Photography, New York (1998). His work is included in prestigious private and public collections, including MoMA (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) and Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía (Madrid) among others.

In 2001, Vik Muniz represented Brazil at the 49th Venice Biennale. Vik Muniz's work is the subject of the film *Waste Land* (2010) which received an award at the Sundance Film Festival 2010 and was nominated for an Oscar for Best Documentary in 2011. In 2011, Vik Muniz was appointed UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador. In 2015, he founded Escola Vidigal, a visual arts school for children from the Vidigal favela in Rio de Janeiro and presented his work *Lampedusa* in Venice, alongside the Art Biennale. In 2019, Vik Muniz signs a collaboration with Ruinart during his artistic residency at the Maison Ruinart in Reims (France).