



VIK MUNIZ :: *FOOD FOR THE SOUL*



The well-known Brazilian artist **Vik Muniz** has often used food or, to be more precise, food leftovers to realize his amazing works. We had a chat with him focused on the theme of food and we have discovered, among other things, that he is a big admirer and creator of homemade pasta...

DROME: *Food has often been a main component in your work. I think for example about your series Caviar Monsters, Pictures of Chocolate or Sugar Children. Why have you started creating with food and what does it represent for you?*

VIK MUNIZ: First of all, I always live where I work, and my studio is very close to the kitchen! Secondly, the fact that I work with photography enables me to have to do with any kind of material, as long as I take a picture of it. Sometimes people think that I work with unusual materials, but they forget that what's most unusual than food is paint. In fact, you know what there is in certain types of food, for example in chocolate, in beans, in jelly, but you don't know what's in paint. Paint is just made out of different components, like food, it only has a different consistency. When you work with something that has a taste, immediately you evoke a different sense and it is interesting to create pictures that work in many sensory levels. Generally, I'm more

concerned with taste, rather than food. In fact, I don't really use food, but I use things that spoil, because that justifies the photographic act.

D: *What about the cooking of your country, Brazil?*

VM: It's "massive". Brazil is a very complex fusion of many cultures, so when you mix up different elements sometimes you have good things and sometimes not so good ones! It's also a very intense cuisine, because it reflects the appetite we have for life.

D: *In your Twitter page you present yourself as a "maker of delicious pasta"...*

VM: Ah, ah! [laughing] It's ironic. Yes, I can cook all kind of pasta. I usually make it from scratch, from flour and semolina. I find it's a very therapeutic activity, and also sculptural.

D: *Which is your best recipe?*

VM: My favorite one is ravioli with dried tomatoes, mascarpone and prosciutto... unbeatable!

D: *Many artists have been fascinated by the rituals of cooking and dining, like for example Gordon Matta-Clark or Rirkrit Tiravanija, just to name a few. If you decide to open a restaurant, how would it be?*

VM: My father was a waiter during his entire life and I grew up around restaurants. I think cuisine is a complete art like cinema: it has a visual component, narrative, taste and smell. I'm really fortunate to be friend with really good cooks: one of them is Alex Atala, he's considered one of the best chef in Brazil. If I were a chef, I'd be very similar to him, because he draws on experience and on the local. I usually travel for food with my wife. For a long time, I've been every year in Japan because I'm very fascinated by Japanese food. I think that the food experiences that I had in Japan and in San Sebastian are at the same time creative and authentic, because they are not just based on process, but also on materials, products. This is the kind of food I like to eat and probably the one I'd like to serve.

D: *"Art as food for the soul", do you agree?*

VM: As Marshall McLuhan said: «Food for the mind is like food for the body: the inputs are never the same as the outputs». On my opinion, it's good to consume good things but it doesn't necessarily imply that you're going to produce good things, whereas sometimes eating bad things can produce more interesting effects!

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