

vik muniz

Exhibition June 6 – July 31, 2015

Opening starting at 3 pm on June 6

« *When people look at my images, I don't want them to see the things that are represented. I prefer that they see how one thing can represent another.* »

The Xippas Gallery is happy to present three recent series by Vik Muniz. A magician of images, Vik Muniz uses unlikely materials – copper wire, chocolate, caviar, ketchup, dust, toys, diamonds, and trash – to construct images that are part of our collective visual memory. These images are then photographed, in order to create distance between themselves and the original items, and to bring us face to face with the illusions of representation.

In the series *Pictures of Magazine*, shown by the Xippas Gallery in 2012, Vik Muniz recreated 19th century masterpieces from pages torn out of magazines, newspapers, and comic books. Continuing his research on recycling images, he created the series *Album* and *Postcards from Nowhere*. Exploiting the plethora of family photo albums he has collected over the years, the artist recreates a common album. The creative process consists of tearing up black and white photographs and using fragments of them to form images that are found in all albums (snapshots from weddings, school, and family vacations). These intimate moments gain a universal dimension.

Starting with this notion of individual memory, Vik Muniz continues his reflection on the collective memory. In *Postcards from Nowhere*, the artist reconstructs the most stereotypical representation of a certain place using hundreds of fragments of postcards depicting this specific place. Rich with symbols and information concerning the reconstructed place, these fragments function similarly to hypertext and allow the viewer to weave his own narrative.

Imbued with nostalgia, *Albums* and *Postcards from Nowhere* evoke the fragmentation of contemporary visual experience all the while highlighting the materiality of photography. The democratization of digital photography has created a rarefaction of postcards in the same way that it did away with the uniqueness of negatives.

Muniz created *Colonies* with artist and MIT researcher Tal Danino. This series, never before shown in France, illustrates the potential malleability of our cells. Intrigued by the complex and diverse forms that these organisms undergo during the course of their development, the artist creates patterns in bacteria and virus cultures. He intervenes using sticky surfaces, like collagen, as a supportive structure for the bacteria and cells to adhere to as they multiply, enabling them to recreate a pattern. This process allows for the concrete visualization of the infinitely small – alive inside us – and therefore alters our relationship with bacteria and viruses. These organisms, which originally frighten us, evoke abstract and fascinating forms that inspire contemplation.

Vik Muniz was born in São Paulo in 1961. He moved to New York in 1984. His first sculptures are “trompe l'oeil”. Then he began to redraw images from memory and photograph them.

Numerous international solo shows have been consecrated to Vik, among them: International Center of Photography, New York (1998); the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York (2001); The Menil Collection, Houston (2002); the Irish Museum of Contemporary Art, Dublin (2004) and, more recently, the Berardo Collection, Lisbon (2011); the Museum of Contemporary Art (MAC), Lima, Perou (2014), Quito in Equador (2014); Museum of Contemporary Art, Tel-Aviv, Israel (2014) and Long Museum West Bund, Shanghai (2014).

Current exhibitions:

Muntref, Museo de la Universidad de Tres de Febrero, Buenos Aires, Argentina (until September 13)

Vik Muniz: Poetics of Perceptions, Taubman Museum of Art, Virginia, USA (until September 12)

Lampedusa, floating installation, Venice, Italy (on view during the Biennale)