

PRESS

vik muniz

HANDMADE

Exhibition from September 13 to November 2, 2019
Opening on Thursday September 12, from 6 to 9pm
Rue des Bains 61, 1205 Geneva

Xippas Geneva is pleased to present *Handmade*, a solo exhibition by the Brazilian artist Vik Muniz.

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, combining different techniques, making each work unique. 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.

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 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. 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 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"¹

Vik Muniz was born in 1961 in São Paulo. He lives and works between Rio de Janeiro, Brazil and New York, USA. Many international solo exhibitions have been dedicated to him, notably by the Collection Lambert in Avignon, France (until September 29, 2019), Figge Art Museum, Davenport, Iowa, USA (until September 29, 2019), El Paso Museum of Art, El Paso, Texas, USA (until December 31, 2019), Foam Museum, Amsterdam, Netherlands (2018), Chrysler Museum of Art, Norfolk, Virginia, United States (2018), Belvedere Museum, Vienna, Austria (2018), Palazzo Cini, Venice, Italy (2017), MARCO Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Monterrey, Mexico (2017), High Museum, Atlanta, United States (2016), Maurithuis, The Hague, Holland (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, Great Britain (2007), Miami Art Museum, United States (2006), Pinacoteca do Estado de São Paulo, Brazil (2004), Fundación Telefónica, Madrid, Spain (2004), Menil Collection, Houston, United States (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 part of prestigious private and public collections, including 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 2010 Sundance Festival and was nominated for an Oscar for best documentary in 2011. In 2011, Vik Muniz was appointed the UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador. In 2015, he founded Morro do Vidigal, a visual arts school for children in the Vidigal favela in Rio de Janeiro. In 2019, Vik Muniz signed a collaboration with Ruinart during his artistic residency at the Maison Ruinart in Reims (France).

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