

PRESS RELEASE
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Exhibition

Vik Muniz: Reflex

at the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal
October 4, 2007 to January 6, 2008

Montréal, September 19, 2007. Peanut butter and jam, chocolate, sugar, wire, dirt and diamonds are just a few of the astonishing range of materials used by artist Vik Muniz in the images he produces and then photographs. In a Québec and Canadian first, the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal presents **Vik Muniz: Reflex** from October 4, 2007 to January 6, 2008.

Since the mid-1990s, Brazilian artist Vik Muniz has earned an international reputation for the photographic pieces he creates out of everyday materials. These images, inspired by current events, art history or famous figures, are familiar yet enigmatic. Initially taking the form of witty visual statements, his works question the way visual information is constructed, presented and then perceived by the viewer.

THE EXHIBITION

The exhibition contains 110 photographs, from 1988 to the present, from 27 series, including:

- *Best of Life* (1988-1990) – famous pictures from *Life* magazine drawn from memory and then photographed and reprinted
- *Equivalents* (1993) – simulations of cloud formations, made with lumps of cotton, inspired by Alfred Stieglitz' cloud studies
- *Pictures of Thread* (1995-1999) – landscapes by Corot, Constable, Ruisdael and others, reproduced using thousands of metres of thread
- *Sugar Children* (1996) – portraits of children of Caribbean sugar cane workers, drawn in sugar
- *Pictures of Chocolate* (1997-2001) – re-creations, in chocolate syrup, of well-known images such as Hans Namuth's portrait of Jackson Pollock working on a drip painting
- *Earthworks* (2002-2005) – large-scale line drawings in the earth or tabletop replicas, inspired by land art
- *Pictures of Color* (2001) – arrangements of Pantone paint chips to create the illusion of digital images with a pointillist look
- *Pictures of Magazines* (2003-2005) – portraits and famous artworks reproduced with millions of circular pieces of paper punched from magazines
- *Monads* (2003) – images created from figurines and plastic toys
- *Pictures of Diamonds* (2004) – portraits of stars from Hollywood's "golden age," like Elizabeth Taylor, produced out of diamonds
- *Pictures of Junk* (2005) – large-scale reconstructions of famous paintings, such as Caravaggio's *Narcissus*, made with recycled materials
- *Pictures of Pigment* (2005) – masterpieces by Monet and Gauguin re-created in bright coloured pigment and blown up to monumental scale

VIK MUNIZ

Vik Muniz was born in 1961 in São Paulo, Brazil. He attended art classes in high school but did not go on to college. Instead, he plunged into the world of advertising, which left him with a lingering interest in the power and manipulation of images. He moved to the United States in 1984, and settled in New York in 1986. In 1988, having lost his copy of the book *The Best of Life*, he began drawing his favourite images from memory, and then photographing them. The questions this exercise raised about the nature of perception and the role of photography prompted him to focus on what the well-known art historian Ernst Gombrich termed the “art of illusion.” Muniz has worked in photography ever since, producing an incredible body of work that probes the nature of visual representation and allows him to create, as he says, “the worst possible illusion.” After an initial moment of recognition, the viewer quickly realizes that the images are not what they first seemed.

Since 1989, Muniz has exhibited widely, with solo exhibitions in highly prestigious institutions in New York, São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, Barcelona, Houston, Santiago de Compostela, Rome, Madrid and Dublin. He took part in the 24th Bienal de São Paulo in 1998, and represented Brazil at the 49th Venice Biennale in 2001. He now divides his time between Rio de Janeiro and New York.

Muniz’ “illusions” have won over critics and public alike. *Time Magazine* rated the artist as one of the “Leaders of the New Millennium” and *The New York Times* recommended his work as a sure-fire antidepressant, describing it as “an idea wrapped up in surprise and laughter”! Come see if it’s infectious...

Vik Muniz: Reflex was organized by the Miami Art Museum, Florida, with support from MAM’s Annual Exhibition Fund. Additional support was provided by Duggal Visual Solutions. Peter Boswell, Assistant Director for Programs and Senior Curator at the Miami Art Museum, curated the exhibition. Sandra Grant Marchand, curator at the Musée d’art contemporain, organized the Montréal presentation.

The Musée d’art contemporain is a provincially owned corporation funded by the Ministère de la Culture, des Communications et de la Condition féminine du Québec. It receives additional funding from the Department of Canadian Heritage and the Canada Council for the Arts, as well as from Lichen Communications.

In connection with the exhibition **Vik Muniz: Reflex**

A major work in the Musée Collection

The Vik Muniz exhibition provides an opportunity to show a masterly work now in the Musée Collection. *Irises, after Van Gogh (from Pictures of Magazines)*, 2004, was acquired in 2006, through the generosity of the Fondation du Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal. It will be on public display throughout the exhibition.

Publications

A 204-page book, published by the Miami Art Museum in partnership with the Aperture Foundation, accompanies the exhibition. Unusually, this work, titled *Reflex: A Vik Muniz Primer*, was written entirely by the artist. Over the course of its 16 chapters, he describes his creative process and the sources that inspired him. It is a fascinating journey into artistic creation and the history of contemporary visual culture. The catalogue also includes a bibliography and reproductions of works by Muniz and by many other artists and photographers. It may be purchased for \$52.95 at the museum's Olivieri Bookstore or from your local bookseller.

The current issue of *Le Journal du Musée* also features an essay by Sandra Grant Marchand, curator at the Musée and organizer of the exhibition's presentation in Montréal.

Exhibition tour

The exhibition *Vik Muniz: Reflex* was first presented in 2006 at the Miami Art Museum. It then travelled to the Contemporary Art Museum, University of South Florida, and to the Seattle Art Museum. This year, before coming to the Musée d'art contemporain, it was presented at the Museum of Contemporary Art, San Diego.

Meet the artist

Vik Muniz will take advantage of the Montréal presentation to meet the public just before the opening, on Wednesday, October 3, 2007, at 5:30 p.m. The meeting will take place in English.

Point[s] of View Series

In conjunction with the exhibition *Vik Muniz: Reflex*, curator Sandra Grant Marchand will meet the public on Wednesday, October 10, 2007 at 6 p.m. The tour will be conducted in French.

Art video

A documentary on Vik Muniz' work will be screened throughout the exhibition in the Famille Guy Angers & Rougier Inc. video room at the entrance to the Muniz galleries. *Worst Possible Illusion: The Curiosity Cabinet of Vik Muniz* invites the public into the artist's life, work and thoughts. Dir.: Anne-Marie Russell, New York: Mixed Greens, 2004 (56 min). The film will also be shown in the

Gazoduc-TQM Room from November 5, 2007 to January 6, 2008.

Art workshops and tours

New on the art workshop schedule is *Vikifetti*, a workshop inspired by Vik Muniz' *Pictures of Magazines* series, where participants (aged six and up) will turn a finely detailed collage into a fascinating image. For all, with family or friends, on Sunday November 4, 11, 18 and 25, and December 2, at 2 p.m. and 3 p.m. Free with Musée admission and for children under 12 (must be accompanied by an adult). The workshop is also offered as part of *Creative Tuesdays* held for adults on Tuesday, November 6, 13 and 20 from 1:30 to 4 p.m. Cost: \$10 per workshop. Registration: (514) 847- 6266.

Tours of the exhibition are given on Wednesday evenings at 6, 7 and 7:30 p.m. in French and 6:30 p.m. in English, as well as on Saturdays and Sundays at 1 and 3 p.m., and French and English.