

handmade

vik muniz

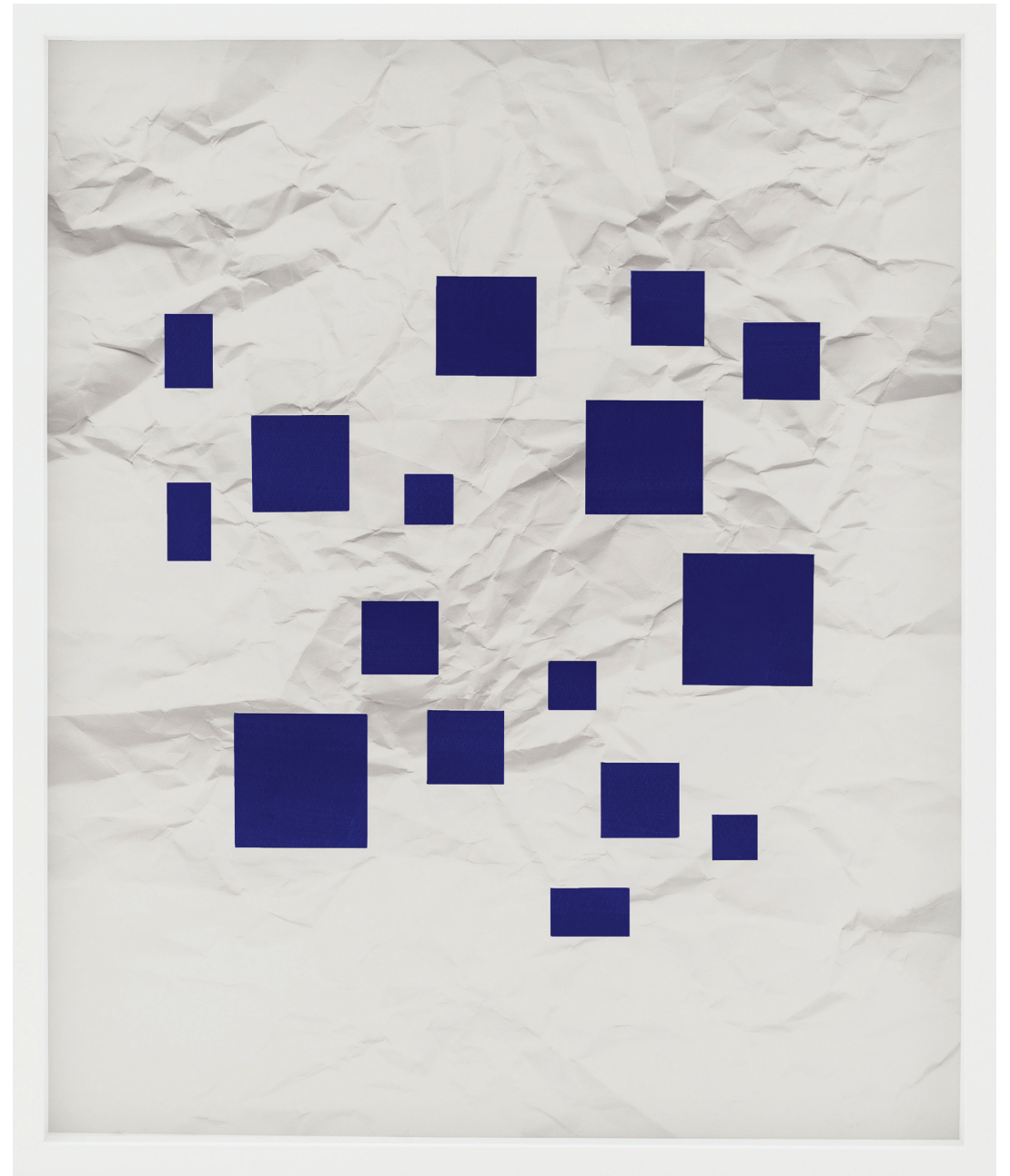
galeria

nara roesler



handmade: untitled (circles & newspaper), 2016
mixed media on archival inkjet print -- 75 x 55 cm

cover image
two nails, 1987/2016
gelatin silver print and nail -- 25,2 x 20,4 cm
collection the museum of modern art - new york



handmade: untitled (crumpled paper ultramarine blue squares), 2016
mixed media on archival inkjet print -- 60 x 50 cm



handmade: untitled (colored tears), 2016
mixed media on archival inkjet print -- 157 x 320 cm

Galeria Nara Roesler | São Paulo is pleased to announce *Handmade*, the new exhibit by Vik Muniz, curated by Luisa Duarte. This third show at the Gallery sees the artist revisit past avenues and procedures with renewed strength in an acute, concise inquiry into the thin line between reality and representation, original object and copy. Featuring more than 70 works, Muniz casts aside all narrative tools as he lays bare the skeleton of his art-making process, all the while toying with viewers’ certainties.

“It always goes both ways. What you expect to be a photo isn’t, and what you expect to be an object is a photographic image,” Muniz ironizes. “In a time when everything’s reproducible, the different between the artwork and its image is all but nonexistent,” he adds.

During the research leading up to his recently released catalogue *raisonné*, Muniz realized how he’d relinquished a recurring procedure from early on in his career, when he wasn’t as involved in photography: the manipulation of the photographic surface after the capturing of the image. He then proceeded to reembrace those strategies, redoing and adding to the photographs. The result is an anthology-of-sorts comprising old and recent projects alike – one that’s rather stimulating in these Biennial times. “It’s like a menu of the ideas that I’ve drawn on, a compendium of strategies exposed in a very simple way,” sums up Muniz, who is also working on the opening ceremony of the Rio 2016 Paralympic Games, of which he is one of the directors.

The audience will not see, in *Handmade*, artworks created from familiar images, nor references to mundane materials – both of which are staples of his output. Here, Muniz references the vast tradition of abstract art as he distills its basic formulae to create unexpected ways to meditate on the image and the object, the ambiguity of the senses, and the importance of illusion. *Handmade* outlines the artist’s constant concern with transcending the symbolic dimensions of image.

An instance of an investigation that does not culminate with the action of photographing is *Two Nails* (1987/2016), which is in a way a pivotal piece within *Handmade*, and one whose first version belongs to the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) Collection, in New York City. Stripped-down to a fault, the composition shows a sheet of paper hanging from two nails, one real, the other a photograph, creating a picture so ambiguous that it becomes impossible to tell the difference in a photo reproduction. “One must be facing the actual artwork. And even then, you won’t be sure,” Muniz stresses.

Apart from the paradoxical image-object relationship and the recurrent use of illusionist strategies – “Illusion is a key prerequisite in any type of language,” he ponders –, these artworks flirt with concept art and engage in intense dialogue with abstract, kinetic, and concrete art. Above all things, Muniz says, due to their shared interest in Gestalt theories, more specifically in the fields of psychology and science.

Repetition, rhythm, depth, spacing, the use of primary colors, or of subtle grey and black gradations are some of the central questions to abstraction that compose the alphabet that Muniz deals with in *Handmade*. But that’s not all he does. He taps into the constructive vocabulary to once again call into question the statute of image in the contemporary world. “The exhibition shows a different artist that’s me nonetheless,” he concludes

about vik muniz

Vik Muniz (b. 1961, São Paulo, Brazil; lives and works between Rio de Janeiro and New York) is distinguished as one of the most innovative and creative artists of the 21st century. Renowned for creating what he describes as photographic illusions, Muniz works with a dizzying array of unconventional materials – including sugar, tomato sauce, diamonds, magazine clippings, chocolate syrup, dust and junk – to painstakingly create images before recording them with his camera.

His resulting photographs often quote iconic images from popular culture and the history of art while defying easy classification and playfully engaging a viewer’s process of perception. His more recent work utilizes electron microscopes and manipulates microorganisms to unveil both the familiar and the strange in spaces that are typically inaccessible to the human eye. Vik Muniz began his artistic career upon arriving in New York in 1984, holding his first solo exhibition in 1988. Muniz has since exhibited at such prestigious institutions as the International Center of Photography, New York; Fundació Joan Miró, Barcelona; Museo d’Arte Contemporanea, Rome; Museu de Arte Moderna, São Paulo; Museu de Art Moderna, Rio de Janeiro; Tel Aviv Museum of Art; and Long Museum, Shanghai.

His recent exhibitions and projects include *Vik Muniz* (High Museum of Art, Atlanta, EUA, 2016); *Vik Muniz: Verso* (Mauritshuis, The Hage, Netherlands, 2016); *Escola Vidigal - 15 Mostra Internazionale di Architettura* | La Biennale di Veneza (Venice, Italy, 2016); *Une Saison Brésilienne | Vik Muniz at the Géraldine e Lorenz Bäumer Collection* (Maison Européenne de la Photographie, Paris, France, 2016); *Lampedusa, 56th Venice Biennale*, (Naval Environment of Venice, Italy, 2015) and *Vik Muniz: Poetics of Perceptions* (Lowe Art Museum, Miami, 2015).

In December 2008, Muniz was the guest artist in the MoMA exhibition series *Artist’s Choice: Vik Muniz, Rebus*. Muniz was also a guest artist at the *49th Venice Biennial*, the *2000 Whitney Biennial* at the Whitney Museum of American Art, the 24th Bienal Internacional de São Paulo, and the 46th Corcoran Biennial Exhibition: *Media/Metaphor* at the Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, DC. In 2011, Muniz was named a UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador.

His work is included in major public collections such as the Museum of Modern Art, New York; Guggenheim Museum, New York; Tate, London; and the Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo. In 2001 Muniz represented the Brazilian Pavilion at the 49th Venice Biennale. Muniz is the subject of an Academy Award-nominated documentary film entitled *Waste Land* (2010).

