

Vik Muniz explores the ambiguities of image representation in “Photocubism” at Nara Roesler São Paulo in november

The exhibition will feature works inspired by Cubist masters, such as Pablo Picasso, Georges Braque, and Juan Gris.

nara roesler são paulo | november 10 – december 18, 2021



Vik Muniz, *Surfaces: Still Life with Guitar, after Juan Gris*, archival inkjet print, 2020.

On November 10, Vik Muniz will open the exhibition “Photocubism” at Nara Roesler São Paulo. Based on extensive research on classic works by Cubist masters, such as Pablo Picasso, Georges Braque, and Juan Gris, Muniz’s new series of works reveals how aspects related to memory, ambiguities in image representation, and a rich interconnection between different means of expression constitute the basis of his production. Following that, on December 8, the book “Epistemas” will be launched. The publication focuses on the artist’s recent production, shedding light on connections between different moments of his trajectory. Richly illustrated and featuring texts by Vik Muniz himself, the critic Luísa Duarte, and the English scientist and writer Phillip Ball, the book addresses critical aspects of the conceptual and formal research by Muniz, who has been investigating contradictions between visual perception and the physical world for almost four decades. Edited by Nara Roesler Books and sponsored by Turim, the publication is part of the series “Recortes,” which focuses on specific aspects of an artist’s work or career.

The insightful observations of what he calls the “visual ambiguities” of our time and his keen interest in dismantling technical and theoretical convictions of the contemporary visual world are probably at the center of Vik Muniz’s leading role in the Brazilian and international art scene and the reason for his works to be included in the major institutional collections around the world. As Luisa Duarte summarizes, his works “deal at the same time with the hyper-definition characteristic of our time and a sense of

doubt that is dismissed or even despised in this same historical period.”

The process developed by the artist in these recent works is profoundly complex. Whether dealing with something trivial like a nail or a hole (“I have always liked to photograph holes,” he confessed) or revisiting fundamental works from art history like “Nude Descending a Staircase,” painted by Marcel Duchamp in 1912, Muniz’s approach attempts to accentuate the relationship between photography—a medium associated with objectivity—and a mental image, related to one’s memory or imagination. Muniz explores works that belong to this great museum of iconic images from art history, which he has repeatedly come back to throughout his career, and that, at this moment, serve as motives and themes for a poetic and visual investigation on spatiality, repetition, and media diversity.

The making process of works from the series “Superficies” (Surfaces), which will be presented in the show, and the pieces gathered under the general title of “Handmade,” which are featured in the book, involves several stages. It starts with the election—often through subjective criteria—of a seminal Cubist image, which is then painted, photographed, and reprocessed through collages and prints until it reaches a difference from the original as desired by the artist. As he explains, “massive amounts of layers” are created, prompting the viewer to question where the original surface is amidst all the overlapping interventions in different media.

The titles in Vik Muniz’s works add relevant meaning to his poetics. Not by chance, this process of exploring and revealing apparent contradictions between space and plane—an essential space for Cubist experiments—is associated with the idea of “Superficies” (Surfaces) in a clear and ironic reference to the overlapping of media, analysis, and visual layers. Likewise, the title of the exhibition, “Photocubism,” proposes a sharp wordplay, relating the term “club”—associated with classic photography—to “cubism” in a direct reference to the masters who, at the beginning of the 20th century, sought to address one of the greatest artistic challenges of that period: overcoming the classical paradigms of mimetic art in search of an analytical and synthetic representation of reality.

If revisiting masterpieces or specific art history periods is recurrent in Muniz’s trajectory, mapping techniques, approaches, and tendencies common to Cubism have an extra allure to the artist. After all, this movement is at the center of the clash between languages, providing the artist with rare and unlimited freedom of experimentation. “Photography has freed painting from a descriptive function; we were certain that the world is not a fixed thing,” explains Muniz, who in the past five years has dedicated himself to elaborate conceptually and technically this creative universe that proposes a new space for painting. In his deep and broad research on Cubism, the artist has engaged with various works, from the more synthetic and abstract ones—such as those presented at Nara Roesler two years ago—to his most recent investigations, marked by greater complexity in spatial and temporal terms. “I consider the work to be the whole series and the relationship that one piece has with the next and the previous ones,” he explains, indicating how the connections between the individual works go far beyond formal or thematic similarities.

about the artist

Born in São Paulo in 1961, Vik Muniz is the Brazilian artist most included in institutional collections worldwide. He currently lives and works in New York and Rio de Janeiro. His works are held in the collections of 165 institutions, including the Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, France; the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, Madrid, Spain; the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, United States; the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, United States; the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, United States; the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, United States; Tate Modern, London, England; the São Paulo Museum of Modern Art (MAM-SP), São Paulo, Brazil; and the Museu de Arte Moderna do Rio de Janeiro (MAM Rio), Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

about Nara Roesler

Nara Roesler is a leading Brazilian contemporary art gallery, representing seminal Brazilian and Latin American artists who emerged in the 1950s as well as preeminent mid-career and emerging artists who dialogue with the currents put forth by these historical figures. Founded by Nara Roesler in 1989, the gallery has consistently fomented curatorial practices while upholding the utmost quality in art production. This has actively been put into practice through a select and rigorous exhibitions program created in close collaboration with its artists; the implementation and fostering of the Roesler Curatorial Project, a platform for curatorial projects; and continued support to artists beyond the gallery space, working with institutions and curators in offsite shows. In 2012, the gallery doubled its São Paulo exhibition space, in 2014 it expanded to Rio, and in 2015 it opened in New York City, continuing its mission to provide the best platform for its artists to show their work.

service

vik muniz | photocubism

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exposição

november 9 – december 18, 2021

timetable

monday – friday, 10am to 7pm

saturday, 11am to 3pm

press inquiries

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