

handmade

vik muniz

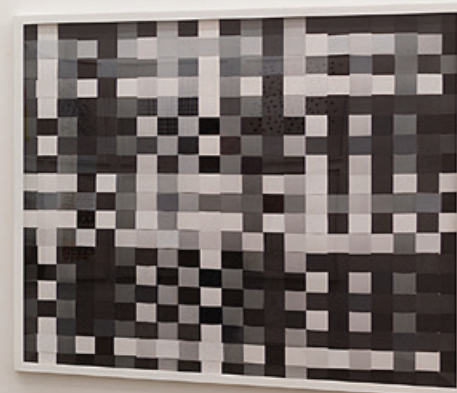
galeria

nara roesler



vista da exposição, galeria nara roesler | são paulo, 2016







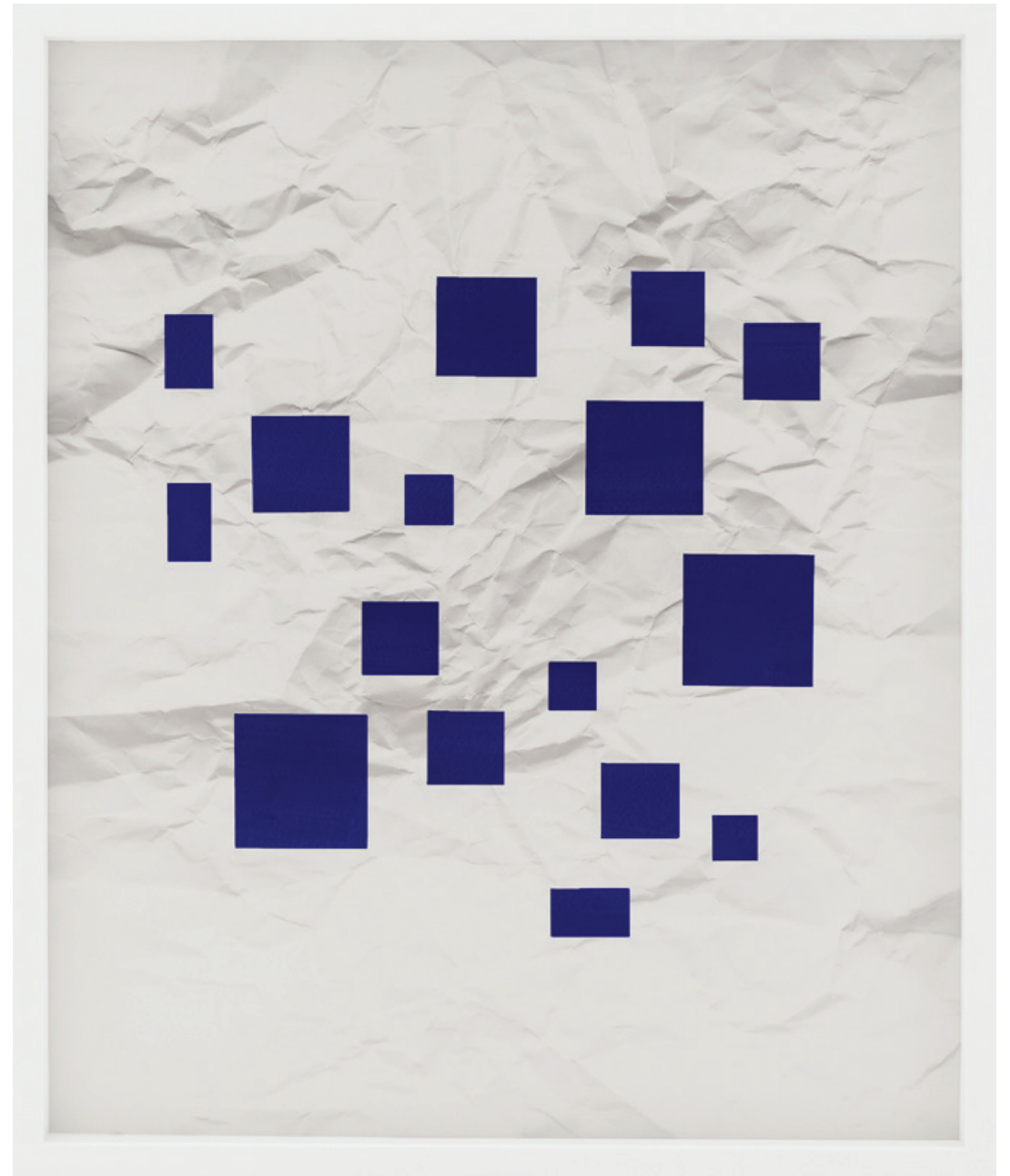






handmade: untitled (circles & newspaper), 2016
mixed media on archival inkjet print -- 75 x 55 cm

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

vik muniz: handmade
luisa duarte

Handmade is an updated take on nearly 30 years’ worth of experimentation with the simultaneous perception of images and objects in the work of Vik Muniz. Here, an artist known for conflating the history of iconography with the perception of matter purposely narrows down his field of action to work on the basic dynamics between real and virtual stimuli. As a result, abstraction becomes the primary tool for a brand of experimentation that is at once radical and varied.

In *Handmade*, the public won’t see artworks based on translations of known images using mundane materials – a staple of the artist’s work. Here, Muniz references the vast tradition of abstract art as he distills strategies as complex as they are simple to create unexpected meditations on image and the object, the ambiguity of senses, and the importance of illusion. Thus, *Handmade* outlines the artist’s constant concern with transcending the symbolic dimensions of image.

Throughout vast array of artworks shown here, including early pieces from the late 1980s and a majority of previously unseen works, is the artist’s investigation, with its unique combination of formal eloquence and conceptual thoroughness. *Handmade* is a step forward in Vik Muniz’ long-standing research into the ways of the gaze in contemporaneity, into the possibility of a new relationship with the world that’s afforded by the training of one’s sight. In a hyper-media-oriented world where our senses and feelings are gradually replaced by images – touch, taste, desire all begin with an image –, the artist strives to remind us that we’re facing image-based constructs that need interpreting.

Handmade thereby comes as a bold new provocation from Vik Muniz to each and every one of us regarding our ability to see and discern the statute of image, as he resorts to interventions unlike any he had employed thus far. Each of the pieces being exhibit ed here is unique in its own right. All combine reproduction and handwork. But it’s hard to tell where the copy ends and the artist’s manual intervention begins. And this limbo of certainties is exactly where the artist wants us to be.

Not by chance, the exhibition begins with earlier work, from when the conflation of object and photograph marked Muniz’s output. All of the dozens of pieces brought together for *Handmade* are somehow at once images and objects; the artist handles them so that we can’t tell which. He seems to convert everything into images, ultimately leaving only the minutest trace of handiwork, and thus enshrouding the pieces in a nimbus of ambiguity.

Note that the exhibition title hardly conceals its ironic undercurrents. Here’s a type of handmade where one can’t find the artist’s handiwork. The title is *Handmade*, but what’s at stake here is the dissolution of the unicity commonly evoked by the expression, and a questioning of the notion of artwork aura in contemporary times. What’s left of fetish in the face of a unique art piece, one upon which the artist intervened, if there are no telltale signs of the operation? Where’s this handiwork, interwoven with the machine-made in such a way that we can’t tell them apart? What does it mean to literally place, in a single, hierarchy-free space, that which is technically reproduced, and that which can never be repeated because a subject’s gesture bred it?

We get asked all of these questions by the artworks featured in this exhibit. Note that this chasm between unicity and replica has been a part of the artist’s poetics since always. A self-taught US-based artist, Vik realized very early on that in a consumption-oriented, hyper-media-based society such as ours, the aura of the artwork was not only doomed to crumble, but the images spun out by this society are encircled by a new brand of aura. By stepping back from figure-based images and delving into abstraction, the artist somehow managed to introduce an art form that’s often aloof from worldly noise, secure in its autonomy, the ambiguity between simulacrum and the real thing that defines the contemporary gaze, lending a pop streak to abstract work.

If friction between image and reality has always been at the core of the artist’s poetic project, in *Handmade* we witness a new, sophisticated step along this journey. The questions that the artworks pose will stay with us, but we are surely witnessing the apex of complex research into the ways of seeing in contemporary days, in the quest for educating th

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).

