



| nara roesler |

vik muniz
photocubism
nara roesler são paulo

opening
november 10

exhibition
nov 11 – dec 18, 2021

Cubism is the apogee of one of so-called Modern art's greatest achievements, namely the destruction of the naturalistic representation of space, which for about five hundred years had been continuously perfected through intellectual and aesthetic efforts aimed at giving art—and, consequently, artists—a prominent position in Western society.

The rupture between pre-modernity and modernity in art not only has a temporal, but also a spatial effect upon the construction of a narrative. Alberto Tassinari notably concluded that space in Modern Art is a space under construction, whereby “what is already done can still remain in progress,”¹ due to the fact that artists renounced illusion in their elaboration of pictorial spaces. Instead, Modern Art assumed the canvas as a surface and broke with hierarchically structured compositions, proposing a simultaneous space where all planes are equally relevant.

In this sense, collage is at the core of such new spatiality. Rather than a radicalization of the understanding of composition as an assembly, collage allows the viewer to decipher the way in which the work is constructed, while also engaging ideas related to the space of representation—in art—and that of action—or, real space.

Vik Muniz's solo exhibition at Nara Roesler São Paulo, titled *Photocubism*, presents the most recent developments of the artist's series *Superfícies* [*Surfaces*]. In this body of work, Muniz immerses himself in paintings by masters of European avant-garde movements, particularly Cubists, including Juan Gris, Pablo Picasso, Fernand Léger, Diego Rivera, Marcel Duchamp, and Georges Braque, engaging with the artists' legacies in terms of modern spatiality, while proposing yet another spatial form that entwines the illusion of Renaissance painting and the analytical pictorial spaces of modern production.

In order to better understand this proposition, one must analyze the processes embedded in Muniz's process of creation. His production begins with an initial gesture: a choice. Muniz first selects a painting to cite, referencing a composition in a process of homaging the achievements of his predecessors and intertwining both authorships, thus revealing that the creative process is a palimpsest of references that feed back into each other.

Muniz's images are not only built unto pre-existing works, but also seek to achieve and elicit a new form of perception, somewhat renewing them. After

reproducing the works, he recreates them without seeking exactitude. It is not about equating himself to those masters, but rather about making the uniqueness of each image visible, foregrounding the originality of each piece, and fostering a new gaze, different perspectives.

Muniz makes use of a variety of methods and materials that differ from those originally employed by the artists, creating a collage that is subsequently photographed and printed. The copy is then cut, placed on top of the previous image, and the process is repeated thereon: photographed, printed, cut, superimposed, and photographed again. The final work is the juxtaposition of multiple copies arranged into three actual and distinct planes.

In *Superfícies* [*Surfaces*], Muniz produces continuations and ruptures between lines on different planes, proposing a disjunction that generates noise and demonstrates that what is perceived is not necessarily the reality, while also creating a work that functions on numerous physical planes.

Muniz's *Nude Descending a Staircase* has little resemblance with Duchamp's work, yet one recognizes the piece through similar dynamics in

the lines and colors. We are impelled to discover the process of creation, to note the minor differences, and, as one comes closer to the work, one becomes seduced by the mystery of entangled planes. To seduce, as Muniz seems to understand well, is to constantly challenge the eye. To be seduced is to continually gaze at something that has already been seen, yet feel like every time is the first.

Superfícies [*Surfaces*] developed from the series *Handmade*, which Muniz first began in 2016, and was characterized by a return to a hand-made production after having used photography alone for decades. The artist's interest in photography lies in the medium's ability to create images from three-dimensional elements. It is worth noting that Muniz's early works were sculptures. *Dois pregos* [*Two Nails*] (1988) was the result of the artist's first use of photography—the work consisted of a nail holding a sheet of paper on the wall, while the paper itself was imprinted with a photograph of the same nail on the wall. Instead of making the differences between the actual object and its representation explicit—in both image and language—Muniz creates a rhetorical maneuver, typical of Conceptual Art, that seems to conflate representation and reality, revealing a certain lack of distinction, or perhaps, a porosity between them.

Handmade demonstrates an entanglement of actual and photographed interventions, which has become more radical in *Superfícies* [*Surfaces*]. Using different types of papers, tapes, and threads, among other materials, the artist intervenes in the work in an abstract way. Looking at the different resulting textures, the volumes created by creased surfaces, and the porosity of torn paper, one is led to believe that all planes are real. It is only after close examination that one realizes, however, that what appears to be present on the surface, is in fact, often absent. The actual interventions are entwined with previous ones, which have been subsequently photographed. His past actions are pristinely printed creating a play with surfaces that have been created manually and mechanically, in turn, prompting shrewd reflections on the status of art and vision.

In recent years, Muniz's interests have come to focus on the relationship between artisanal and technical images. *Superfícies* [*Surfaces*] intertwines painting and photography into its process of creation, resulting in photographic images that include interventions, and thus, are unique, undermining the medium's traditional use for mechanical reproduction.

The contemporary circumstances of image saturation have trained the gaze with a certain agility, now constantly seeking to experience new shapes and colors. To provide images with depth, as Muniz does, is not to aim for a restructuring of the illusionist space but to reveal the illusions that exist within that very space. Both are fictional, as is *Superfícies*' ambiguous spatiality.

The works in *Photocubism* evoke the importance of challenging what perception understands with too much ease. Though surface is usually understood as existing in opposition to what is profound, it is worth remembering that it is only genuinely superficial when one is not able to perceive the complexity and density of the subject that lays beyond the surface.

Surfaces: Three Musicians,
after Pablo Picasso, 2021
archival inkjet print
127 x 146,1 cm
50 x 57.5 in





Surfaces: The Reservoir, Horta de Ebro,
after Pablo Picasso, 2021
archival inkjet print
130,2 x 109,2 cm
51.25 x 43 in



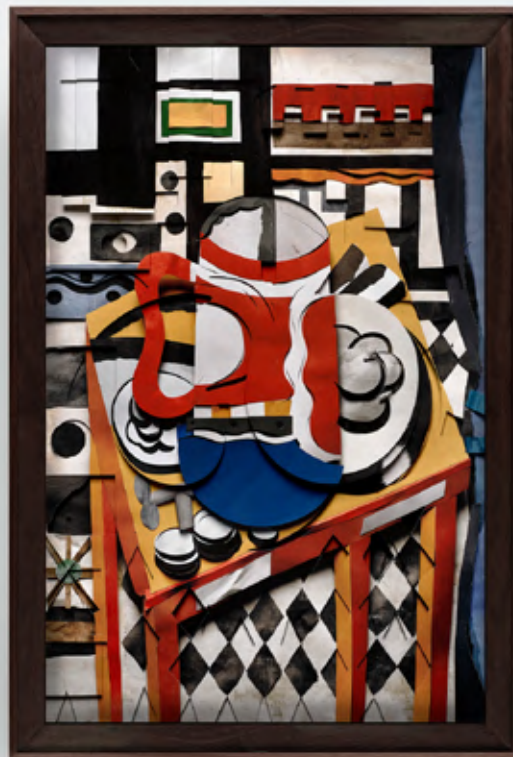


Surfaces: Still Life,
after Pablo Picasso, 2021
archival inkjet print
91,4 x 123,2 cm
36 x 48.5 in





Surfaces: Still Life with Beer Mug,
after Léger, 2021
archival inkjet print
109,2 x 76,2 cm
43 x 30 in





Surfaces: Woman with Black Glove,
after Albert Gleizes, 2021
archival inkjet print
128,3 x 101,6 cm
50.5 x 40 in







Surfaces: Girl with Mandolin,
after Pablo Picasso, 2021
archival inkjet print
105,4 x 76,2 cm
41.5 x 30 in





Surfaces: Soldier at a Game of Chess,
after Joel Metzinger, 2021
archival inkjet print
137,2 x 101,6 cm
54 x 40 in



Surfaces: *Composition (The Typographer)*,
after Fernand Léger, 2021
archival inkjet print
151,6 x 109,2 cm
59.7 x 43 in







Surfaces: Red Tablecloth,
after Georges Braque, 2021
archival inkjet print
76,2 x 90,9 cm
30 x 35.8 in



*Surfaces: Guitar, Glasses
and Bottle, after Juan Gris, 2021*
archival inkjet print
112,4 x 76,2 cm
44.3 x 30 in





Surfaces: Nude Descending Staircase, 2021
archival inkjet print
151,1 x 91,4 cm
59.5 x 36 in







*Surfaces: Sailor at Breakfast,
after Diego Rivera, 2021
archival inkjet print
154,3 x 91,4 cm
60.7 x 36 in*



Surfaces: Glass and Pipe,
after Juan Gris, 2021
archival inkjet print
105,4 x 76,2 cm
41.5 x 30 in





Surfaces: The Musicians,
after Georges Braque, 2020
archival inkjet print
181,6 x 91,4 cm
71.5 x 36 in







Surfaces: *Still Life with Fish*,
after Picasso, 2020
archival inkjet print
76,2 x 90,4 cm
30 x 35.6 in



Surfaces: The aficionado,
after Pablo Picasso, 2021
archival inkjet print
153,7 x 91,4 cm
60.5 x 36 in





Surfaces: Still life with Menu and
Seltzer Bottle, after Louis Marcoussis, 2021
archival inkjet print
111 x 76,2 cm
43.7 x 30 in







*Surfaces: Portrait of Josette Gris,
after Juan Gris, 2021*
archival inkjet print
148,8 x 91,4 cm
58.6 x 36 in



Surfaces: Three Women,
after Picasso, 2021
archival inkjet print
152,4 x 134,6 cm
60 x 53 in





Surfaces: Harlequin 1918,
after Picasso, 2021
archival inkjet print
129,5 x 101,6 cm
51 x 40 in





Surfaces: Mallorca, after Rivera, 2021
archival inkjet print
114,3 x 76,2 cm
45 x 30 in







*Surfaces: Portrait of Mikhail Matyushin,
after Kazimir Malevich, 2021*
archival inkjet print
110,5 x 109,2 cm
43.5 x 43 in



vik muniz

b. 1961, São Paulo, Brazil

lives and works between Rio de Janeiro, Brazil and New York, USA

Vik Muniz' body of work explores the limits of representations within visual arts, twinning his production with an urge to grasp the world's current state of affairs. Using raw materials such as thorn paper, cotton, sugar, chocolate or waste, the artist meticulously composes landscapes, portraits or other depictions offering alternative representations and understandings of these materials and the images they render.

According to the critic and curator Luisa Duarte, 'his work demands a retrospective gaze from the public. In order to 'read' his photos, one must question and analyse the process of making, the materials used, as well as identify the original image, so as to attain the meaning of the image. Vik's work brings into play a series of questions for our 'regard' and creates a space for doubt, which is where we build our understanding.'

In tandem with his artistic practice Vik Muniz has headed social projects that rely on art and creativity to aid low-income communities in Brazil and has also produced artworks that aim to give visibility to marginalized groups in society.

selected solo exhibitions

- *Vik Muniz*, The Sarasota Museum of Art (SMOA), Ringling College of Art and Design, Sarasota, USA (2019)
- *Imaginária*, Solar do Unhão, Museu de Arte Moderna de Salvador (MAM-BA), Salvador, Brazil (2019)
- *Vik Muniz: Verso*, Belvedere Museum Vienna, Vienna, Austria (2018)
- *Afterglow – Pictures of Ruins*, Palazzo Cini, Venice, Italy (2017)
- *Relicário*, Instituto Tomie Ohtake (ITO), São Paulo, Brazil (2011)

selected group exhibitions

- *Naar Van Gogh*, Vincent van GoghHuis, Zundert, Netherlands (2018)
- *Troposphere – Chinese and Brazilian Contemporary Art*, Beijing Minsheng Art Museum, Beijing, China (2017)
- *Look at Me!: Portraits and Other Fictions from the "la Caixa" Contemporary Art Collection*, Pera Museum, Istanbul, Turkey (2017)
- *Botticelli Reimagined*, Victoria & Albert Museum, London, United Kingdom (2016)
- 56th Venice Biennale, Italy (2015)
- 24th Bienal de São Paulo, Brazil (1998)

selected institutional collections

- Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, France
- Guggenheim Museum, New York, USA
- Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía (MNCARS), Madrid, Spain
- Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo, Japan
- The Tate Gallery, London, United Kingdom
- The Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, USA

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