

BEN BROWN FINE ARTS



VIK MUNIZ, *Shanghai Postcard (Postcards from Nowhere)*, 2014, Digital C-print, 180.3 x 256.3 cm (edition of 6) & 101.6 x 144.3 cm (edition of 6)

VIK MUNIZ: ALBUM

16 JANUARY - 4 MARCH 2015

CHAMPAGNE RECEPTION WITH THE ARTIST

THURSDAY 29 JANUARY, 6 - 8.30 PM

Ben Brown Fine Arts is honoured to present the second solo exhibition in Hong Kong of new works by Vik Muniz. The exhibition features his recent *Album* and *Postcards from Nowhere* series for which the artist obsessively collected vintage photographs and postcards and then shredded and collaged these highly intimate relics to create bold new imagery magnified to a staggering scale. The works offer a meditation on the personal versus the collective, the precious versus the ephemeral, nostalgia and modernity. Muniz is renowned for his ingenious employment of unusual materials, including dust, sugar, chocolate, diamonds, caviar, toys, paper hole-punches, junk, dry pigment and magazine shreds, to reconstruct images that tap into the viewer's subconscious visual repository and beg for further investigation.

A compulsive collector, Muniz has been amassing a trove of anonymous vintage family photographs and albums for many years. He is fascinated by the highly personal value of these

objects depicting life's milestones, yet finds a universal narrative that makes them formulaic and thus impersonal and interchangeable. Throughout the early 20th century, family and personal photographs were taken with formality and precision, becoming tangible objects preserved for posterity. With the advent of digital technology, albums and printed photographs have become increasingly obsolete, while photographic imagery is often impermanent, simulated and easily manipulated. Muniz embraces these dualities of photography over the last century in the *Album* series by allowing the viewer to fully appreciate the intricate details of the collaged vintage photographs as well as the overall image achieved through the feats of technology. In *Over There*, *Boxer* and *Summer* (all 2014), Muniz has amalgamated his black and white or sepia-toned found photographs to create his own universally nostalgic snapshots.

In the *Postcards from Nowhere* series Muniz similarly explores ideas of memory, nostalgia and intimacy through his collection of vintage postcards repurposed to create vibrant vistas of iconic cities and landmarks around the world, including the Hong Kong and Shanghai skylines, the Great Wall of China, and Piccadilly Circus in London. Muniz is interested in the history of sending and collecting postcards as a recollection of one's travels and a form of communication, which has since been replaced by the instantaneous nature of modern technology. The thick format of the vintage photographs collaged together, coupled with the studio lighting used to photograph them, result in a three-dimensional, tactile quality in these monumental photographs. In addition to the cityscapes, *Hula Dancer*, *Waterskiing*, and *West Palm Beach* (all 2014), are recreations of cheerful postcard imagery suggesting the idyllic vacation, with exotic animals and smiling women in festive garb.

ABOUT VIK MUNIZ

Vik Muniz was born in São Paulo, Brazil, in 1961 and currently lives and works in both New York City and Rio de Janeiro. His work has been exhibited in prestigious institutions worldwide. These include the International Center of Photography, New York; Museu de Arte Moderna São Paulo; Museu de Arte Moderna, Rio de Janeiro; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; Fundació Joan Miró, Barcelona; Menil Collection, Houston; Museo d'Arte Contemporanea, Rome; Irish Museum of Contemporary Art, Dublin; Tel Aviv Museum, Israel; and Long Museum, Shanghai. His work also features in the collections of the Museum of Modern Art, New York; Art Institute of Chicago; Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Museu de Arte Moderna de São Paulo; Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo; Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; Tate Gallery, London; Victoria and Albert Museum, London; Walker Art Center, Minneapolis; and the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York. In 2001, Muniz represented the Brazilian Pavilion at the 49th Venice Biennale.

Vik Muniz is the subject of an Academy Award-nominated documentary film entitled *Waste Land* (2010) and serves as a UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador.

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