



Shoeshine Boy, after Lewis Hine-Rebus series, 2004

Vik Muniz

絵をよーく見てください！

Pictures of Magic

上/20世紀初頭、NYパワリーの靴磨き少年を撮った有名な写真をオモチャで再現。右/どこかで見た写真。素材はチョコシロップ。

LEFT/As a rebus uses unrelated symbols to spell out a message, Muniz uses thousands of plastic toys to build the famous photo of a child shining shoes on the Bowery in 1910.

RIGHT/Familiarity thwarts the impulse to look closer.




記憶に印画する、ヴィック・ムニース。

「Seeing is believing.」という英語の諺がある。日本では「百聞は一見に如かず」と訳されるが、直訳は「見ること、即ち信じること」。しかし見ているものの正体を、果たして私達は正しく把握しているのだろうか？

ヴィック・ムニースのアート为例に取ろう。右ページのモナリザをよく見れば、そこにはピーナッツバターとゼリーで描いた“モナリザの形”。前ページの『人々 (Individuals)』は群衆をなぞったチョコシロップだ。目が捉えているのはチョコ、それとも群衆？ ちなみに『人々』の絵柄は一見報道写真のようだが、実は“歴史が動いた瞬間”でも何でもなく、たまたまヴィックが何かで見つけてきたものである。有名そして無名。両者を隔てるものは、私たちの“思いこみ (believing)”の中にしか存在しない。

そんな“段差付き”の視点を共有させるヴィックは、ブラジル出身。NYで80年代に彫刻家として活躍し、90年代には一転、写真家として高い評価を得る。そして今やアート界のスーパースター。天文学的な超高値がつくその作品を、世界中のコレクターが次々競って買い求める。

食品や日用品など身近なモノを画材に、彼は既視感を誘う写真や名画を再構築する。前々ページの『靴磨きの少年』は何千個ものオモチャを一つ一つ、根気よく配置したものだ。できあがった絵を写真に収めたものが、最終作品となる。地上絵のように巨大な場合は何百メートルも上空から撮影する。その後はオモチャもチョコもすべて払いおとし、モノとしての作品は残さない。砂マンダラのように跡形もなく消し去るのである。

ヴィックは「現代美術につきものの“何々についての作品”という考え方が苦手だ」と言う。「何かについて、では全然足りない。作品自体が一度に“世界全て”を表現するものでなければならない」とも。そんな彼は、貧困家庭の子供が負のスパイラルから脱け出る道を、とサンパウロに彼らのための美術学校を設立した。一方、世界最大のゴミ処理場で働く人々と共にゴミで作った巨大アートを制作、その売り上げを彼らにすべて還元している。その過程で社会最下層に生きる彼らは人としての尊厳を取り戻す。同プロジェクトはドキュメンタリー映画『Waste Land (邦題：ヴィック・ムニース/ごみアートの奇跡)』として克明に記録され、各国で大絶賛を浴びた。そして何と、今年のアカデミー賞ドキュメンタリー部門にノミネート！ ヴィックが変えてみせるのは私達の視点だけじゃない。アートは社会すらも変革できる、彼は体を張ってそう教えてくれるのだ。


Pictures of Magic

When Vik Muniz took up photography as a young man to propel himself from the grim milieu of poverty, violence, and corruption that described São Paulo Brazil, where he worked in advertising during the 1970s, it was an unforeseen model for the direction his art would take. Traditional film is a flat plane slathered with chemical paste. Light strikes this paste, causing its grains to vary in color. Processed, the plane recreates the light interference that changed it, and we see an image. Beyond that, it records an event – what in the tangible world produced the interference. In photos we see the photographic plane and the event that left its mark. That's photography's duality, and the profound, yet feather-light lesson Vik Muniz delivers by often naming his protean output “Pictures of...”: Pictures of Paper, ...of

Clouds, ...Chocolate, ...Earth, ...Garbage.

He came to New York in 1983 without a plan, unknown in advertising outside Brazil. A free concert in Central Park, watching fireworks accompany Gershwin against the night sky, caused new root to take, and he's made his primary home there since. Theatre was then his focus where, he says, “you've an actor and character in the same place trying to negotiate each other in front of an audience.” For Vik Muniz a medium's fertility is in containing both itself and “the other”. The term conceptual is most often applied to his work. But the artist notes that it's as hard to say that without a scholarly frown as it is to view his art with one. The artist's prodigious drafting skill makes his audacious rendering of da Vinci's “Last Supper” in chocolate syrup look more like a sepia-toned photograph than a painting. And like a photograph it's emulsion spread in varying density to form gradient tones on a paper plane. The format is unstable, so to give the work life he photographed it. We're left with a photograph of something like one, depicting something else entirely – a painting that few have actually seen first-hand. How we know what it is, a separate narrative altogether. We arrive at experience mainly by way of representations, through illusion and allusion. Fittingly, the show in which his “Last Supper” first appeared was called *Seeing is Believing*. When he rendered the Whitney Museum's Minimalist art collection in dust he collected from its walls and floors, he reminded us that ambient dust is mostly composed of dead skin. Here was the DNA of the Whitney's visitors, reconstituted into images of the works they witnessed, forming altogether new art to be viewed again elsewhere. Out of darkness he produced light. Out of dormancy, vitality, and a gauge of history forged practically from thin air.

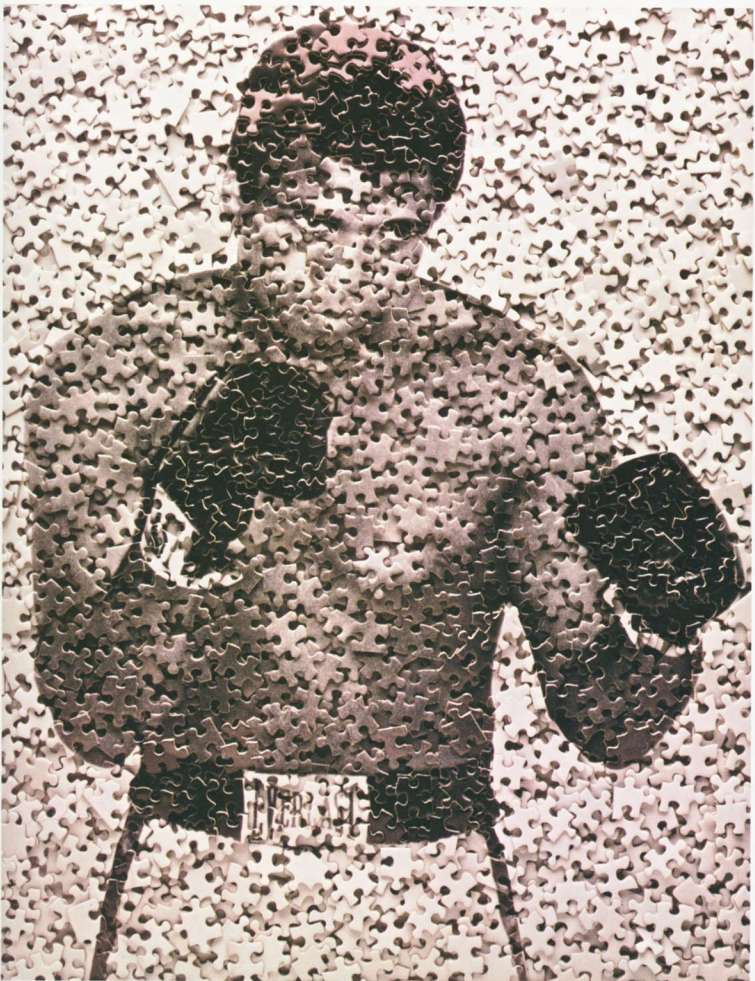
While his art avoids politics, Mr. Muniz is deeply devoted to positively affecting the lives of the disenfranchised. Since '06 he's been building a school, a “laboratory for visual literacy” to serve the poor children of Rio's *favelas*, providing them rare support to express themselves. His work for high profile sponsors like Lancome, Louis Vuitton, and others supports this and similar projects. “Art,” he likes to say, “is the only place where luxury meets the third world...the new luxury is a clean conscience.”

His art employs the discarded and overlooked, particles of things that possess little or narrowly defined meaning, or none, like the grains of emulsion on film. He piles, stacks, and arranges them - his mind as the camera - to form images we recognize from elsewhere in history, or our own memory. Vik Muniz embraces the title illusionist because his work surpasses the threshold of “wow” to speak of how the world is received. He calls it a “measure of one's own belief, how much one *wants* to be fooled.” That, he says, is the real reason people go to magic shows. 

Vik Muniz

1961年サンパウロ生まれ。地元の広告代理店勤務後、演劇の世界を目指して83年にNYへ。彫刻家を経て90年代、MoMAの『注目の新人写真家』展で大ブレイク。ブルックリンとブラジルをW拠点に精力的な活動を続けている。

Vik Muniz (b. 1961, São Paulo, Brazil) “Waste Land” a film about the artist and his most recent and arguably breathtaking work, has won numerous awards worldwide, learn more at: www.wastelandmovie.com



(右から時計回り) 米国式サンドイッチの定番、ピーナッツバター&ゼリーでモナリザを。/ 往年の女優をフィギュアで描くヴィック。ブルックリンの自宅兼アトリエにて。/ モハメッド・アリはジグソーパズルで。/ 産業廃棄物で描いたシジフォスの岩。タイヤの大きさから全体のスケールを推測できる。

Clockwise from bottom left: Muhammad Ali (Cassius), Gordian Puzzle, 2010 / Sisyphus, after Titian, Pictures of Junk, 2005 / Double Mona Lisa (Peanut Butter and Jelly) After Warhol, 1999/ The artist working on portrait of Sarah Bernhardt - Rebus Series.