

Alec Soth's Archived Blog

September 19, 2006

Vik Muniz vs. Gabriel Orozco

Filed under: [sculpture](#) — alecsothblog @ 9:21 pm

Muniz and Orozco should probably never meet in the ring. While both mix photography and sculpture, most people consider Muniz (b.1961) a heavyweight and Orozco (b.1962) a featherweight. Muniz is fun to watch (kids and grandparents love him), but swings too hard:



Vik Muniz, Self Portrait (Golden Boy) 2004, C-Print 100 x 80 cm

After awhile his work starts to feel like those corny digital [photomosaics](#):



For me Gabriel Orozco is the champion. He floats like a butterfly and stings like a bee:



GABRIEL OROZCO, Cats and Watermelons, 1992, Cibachrome, 16 x 20"

16 Comments

1. I agree 100% on that one...Orozco has a knack for finding/creating moments that are on the surface very simple, almost whimsical, but on further digestion leave you scratching your head. KO.

Comment by [Brett Kallusky](#) — September 19, 2006 @ [9:41 pm](#)

2. Ok, yes – Orozco has those quirky moments. He is sometimes successful at arranging props to make what should be a blah photo more interesting. And...And...? That's it for me. For me, his photos are just....bad. They are sketches to a larger, more cohesive idea. (One where the end product is not a poorly shot/printed c-print). Well, I don't like Muniz either!

Love the blog btw.

Comment by [kathleen](#) — September 20, 2006 @ [7:15 am](#)

3. I love the cats and watermelons photo, but I want to think he found it that way rather than setting it up. I suspect he set up the shot. I guess that shouldn't matter, but for some reason it does. I like to think the photographer is recoding what he finds out there in the world.

Comment by [Bill](#) — September 20, 2006 @ [9:23 am](#)

4. I've always enjoyed Orozco's supermarket scenes, particularly the watermelon cats. Great choice!

Comment by [shane lavalette](#) — September 20, 2006 @ [10:26 am](#)

5. ...and? I think the larger more "cohesive" ideas are in themselves not the end, but rather the means for further investigation. I agree not all of his images are successful (Whose are?) I think for me there are some that stick out...for example "Dog Circle, 1995" or "Melted Popsicle, 1993". He seemed to have drawn on techniques pioneered by Baldessari (tongue in cheek) and to a lesser extent the intimate investigations of Aaron Siskind.

In relation to Vik Muniz' work, I think Orozco is much more direct in his approach. It seems he is interested in finding/making descriptions for physical mechanics (body memory for example). Muniz' precision (drawing) leaves me cold.

3 rounds max, Orozco still a KO.

Comment by [Brett Kallusky](#) — September 20, 2006 @ [10:30 am](#)

6. Orozco's a sculptor with a camera. Then again, isn't Goldsworthy?
<http://www.vimeo.com/clip:95062>

Comment by [Michael David Murphy](#) — September 20, 2006 @ [2:21 pm](#)

7. To answer Kathleen... (please excuse the mistakes I do in english)
Do we still need "good" pictures? It's true that shots/prints of Orozco are poor, as poor as his sculptures in fact. Do those cats on watermelon make a beautiful sculpture? What makes Orozco a genius is his incredible sense of the uncanny, the bizarre, the poetic poverty... very close to the arte povera in fact. And finally the poverty of his shoots reinforces his sculptures. In the same idea you should have a look on the work of Jean-Luc Moulene
: http://www.crousel.com/artists/moulene_jl/index.html
Best

Comment by [Alexandre Guirkinger](#) — September 20, 2006 @ [7:05 pm](#)

8. You're the second blog to post that Orozco photo this week. Your Daily Awesome (<http://yourdailyawesome.com>) also ran that one. Is something in the air? Are you on Orozco's payroll?

Comment by Jennifer — September 21, 2006 @ [1:51 am](#)

9. I'm the lead art preparator at Microsoft, and Muniz is always an easy artist to hang, almost always liked, as are Wegman, Gaal, and Christopher Rauschenberg. I saw Muniz's last show in San Francisco, I was left feeling shorted, but he knows how to play tricks, but as Sonic Youth once said, "Hits are for kids!"

Comment by [Harold Hollingsworth](#) — September 21, 2006 @ [3:41 am](#)

10. Fowl!

Both very creative artists...

But, The "Golden Boy" image is not one of Vik's more provocative works. His "Pictures of Chocolate" and new Junk series are much stronger.

I'm sure every popular photographer/artist has their weak moments from pressure to produce.

Example.. Interesting photomosaic... did you ever see Joan Fontcuberta's "GoogleGrams," shown last spring at the Zabriskie Gallery?

<http://www.produccionesorganicas.org/rwandasmiles/q3.htm>

Yikes!

Comment by [Mike](#) — September 21, 2006 @ [11:50 am](#)

11. [...] Und nun hat Alec Soth in seinem Blog diesem Bild einige Worte gewidmet: [...]

Pingback by [Jazznrhythm's corner](#) » [Dieses Bild mag ich seit vielen Jahren... \(Cats and Watermelons by Gabriel Orozco\)](#) — September 21, 2006 @ [1:58 pm](#)

12. apples and oranges. . . but have you ever played ping-pong on Orozco's Ping-Pond Table?

Comment by [Martin Buday](#) — September 21, 2006 @ [3:59 pm](#)

13. [...] In my post on Vik Muniz vs. Gabriel Orozco, Kathleen writes of Orozco: "For me, his photos are just....bad. They are sketches to a larger, more cohesive idea. (One where the end product is not a poorly shot/printed c-print)." [...]

Pingback by [alec soth - blog](#) » [Blog Archive](#) » [Surviving refinement](#) — September 22, 2006 @ [12:13 am](#)

14. I really had a lot of fun with this thread. You guys sound like people who hang on barbershops discussing who would be the winner of a bout between Mike Tyson and Mohammed Ali. I love Gabriel's work specially for the fact that it has absolutely nothing to do with what I do. Gabriel is a sculptor who works with a camera, I am a photographer who works with matter (matter, not corny computer programs). My work does not reproduce well on the internet because of its scale, so if you never seen my work physically, that must be the reason for the unfortunate pairing. Now, if the bout was planned on the easy fact that we both come from latin america, why don't you try Kara Walker against Lorna Simpson next time. By the way, why Am I answering to you article? because I care about children and grandmothers.

Comment by [Vik Muniz](#) — October 2, 2006 @ [8:22 pm](#)

15. I am neither a child nor a grandmother, but I think Vik Muniz is a genius. Until today, I had never even heard of him. After flipping through a catalogue from the Seattle Art Museum that came in the mail and seeing some of his photos, I googled him and spent hours looking at his work on-line. So here I am, obsessed with an artist, finding myself reading your blog, and discover that Vik Muniz (or someone portraying himself as the art-god Vik) has replied. Is that really you?

As for all of you arm-chair quarterbacks (or in this case, arm-chair artists), can you create a work of art with chocolate syrup, or dust, or sugar...collages from junk or toy soldiers, or my personal favorite...holes punched out of magazines?

As for the Gabriel Orozco photo (I'd never heard of him before, either), although I found it interesting, it did not inspire me.

But apparently others of you have a different view. Perhaps these two artists should fight it out on "Celebrity Death Match!"

Comment by Annelies — October 7, 2006 @ [10:02 pm](#)

16. **Mevqqvir...**

Mevqqvir...

Trackback by [Mevqqvir](#) — September 22, 2007 @ [4:50 pm](#)