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*Pressroom for more information and/or downloadable images:*

*www.itvs.org/pressroom/photos*

*Program companion website: www.pbs.org/worstpossibleillusion*



**INDEPENDENT LENS KICKS OFF NEW SEASON  
WITH "WORST POSSIBLE ILLUSION:  
THE CURIOSITY CABINET OF VIK MUNIZ"  
MAGICAL, EXHILARATING FILM ABOUT RISING  
BRAZILIAN ARTIST**

*—Takes Inside Look at Brazilian-Born Sculptor,  
Photographer and Self-Proclaimed Magician—*

**Film by Anne-Marie Russell  
Premieres Nationally on "Independent Lens,"  
ITVS's Acclaimed Series on PBS  
October 14, 2003 at 10 P.M.  
(check local listings)**

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*"Vik Muniz might be billed as a photographer, and photographs are generally the end product of his work. But in another age he might have been an alchemist, transforming base lead into refined gold." —MARK MAGILL, *BOMB* MAGAZINE*

(San Francisco, CA)—It's not often that a documentary film leaves the viewer smiling, joyful—even inspired—but **WORST POSSIBLE ILLUSION: The Curiosity Cabinet of Vik Muniz** is just such a film. An intimate look at the life and work of one of the art world's rising young stars, the film reveals Brazilian artist Vik Muniz and his work to be fresh, witty and exhilarating. His recent one-man show at the Whitney Museum of American Art and his photography book, *Seeing Is Believing* (which made both *The New York Times* and the *Village Voice's* Top Ten lists of 1999), have further solidified his reputation. **WORST POSSIBLE ILLUSION** airs nationally on the PBS series *Independent Lens*, hosted by Don Cheadle, on Tuesday, October 14th at 10 P.M. in conjunction with Latino Heritage Month (check local listings).

**WORST POSSIBLE ILLUSION** follows Muniz on a whimsical, world-hopping journey from his studio in Brooklyn, New York, to his native Brazil to meet his grandmother; to Chicago, his first home in the United States where he worked as a gas-station attendant and pushed carts in a grocery store; to Arizona, where he creates a gigantic bone “excavation” in the desert and goes to extraordinary lengths to capture it on film.



Muniz, who grew up under harsh political regimes in Brazil, learned early on that the safest way to communicate was through coded language. As a child he became fascinated with image and perception, and the role of the magician. His work embodies the notion that appearances may be deceiving. Using every day objects and materials, he constructs works of art that fool the eye: sculptures of wire that look like line drawings of flowers; paintings made of thread that resemble charcoal drawings. Other favorite materials include chocolate syrup (Muniz waxes poetic about Bosco, the absolutely best brand with which to paint). In creating works of a particularly serious nature, he uses sugar on black paper to create haunting portraits of the faces of Caribbean children who work on plantations harvesting sugar cane.

The theatricality and technical virtuosity of Muniz’s photographs—and the charismatic personality of the man—make him a brilliant subject for a documentary. Muniz is now widely viewed in both photography and art circles as one of the most original and talented artists to emerge in the last decade. The film’s dynamic style and structure work to capture exactly why this irrepressible artist deserves our attention.

The program’s interactive companion website at [www.pbs.org/worstpossibleillusion](http://www.pbs.org/worstpossibleillusion) features detailed information about the film, including an interview with the filmmaker, cast and crew bios, as well as links and resources pertaining to the film’s subject matter. The site also features a “talkback” section for viewers to share their ideas, preview clips of the films, and more.



## WORST POSSIBLE ILLUSION Credits

DIRECTOR	Anne-Marie Russell
PRODUCER	Anne-Marie Russell
EXECUTIVE PRODUCER	Paige West
DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY	Aaron Woolf
EDITOR	Iris Cahn
CO-PRODUCER	Selina Lewis Davidson
CO-PRODUCER	Nancy Roth

### ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS

ANNE-MARIE RUSSELL (Director/Producer) combines a background in ethnographic film theory with a decade of experience in the art world as a scholar, curator and educator. She uses film and video to explore and communicate the ways in which cultural practices and objects circulate in the world. She is currently researching a film about the contributions that indigenous thinkers and artists have made to the world's cultural and intellectual heritage.

PAIGE WEST (Executive Producer) combines a background in finance with a life-long love of contemporary art and documentary films. She is determined to revolutionize the way we see and learn about contemporary art. She started Mixed Greens ([www.mixedgreens.com](http://www.mixedgreens.com)) in order to encourage others to support visual artists and documentary filmmakers. Paige's first documentary production was *Art & Racing: The Life and work of Salvatore Scarpitta*, directed by Aaron Woolf. Since founding Mixed Greens in 1999, she has continued to produce the work of many talented directors on a variety of topics. These titles include Sarah Price's *Caesar's Park*, George Ratliff's *Hell House*, Hannah Weyer's *Escuela*, Macky Alston's *Questioning Faith*, Bryan Gunnar Cole's *Boomtown* and Anne-Marie Russell's **WORST POSSIBLE ILLUSION**.

AARON WOOLF (Director of Photography) had his primary film education in Latin America, working for two years at Inca Films in Lima, Peru. He has an MFA in film from the University of Iowa. He directed the Mixed Greens production *Art & Racing* and recently completed a film for PBS called *Greener Grass: Cuba, Baseball, and the United States* that explores baseball as a conduit for Cuban-American relations, and examines the long history both nations have with the game. *Greener Grass* was awarded a Rockie Award at the 2001 Banff International Television Festival.

IRIS CAHN (Editor) has edited Emmy Award-winning television, independent films and feature documentaries, and chairs the film program at Purchase College/SUNY. Among the many projects she has edited are Godfrey Reggio's *Powaqqatsi* (music by Philip Glass); Emmy Award-winning *You Can't Grow Home Again*, a feature-length special about the rainforest that aired on PBS; and the Emmy Award-winning, *What Could You Do With a Nickel?*, a documentary about New York City's first domestic worker's union.



SELINA LEWIS DAVIDSON (Co-Producer) is director of programming at Mixed Greens. After working in television in Los Angeles, Davidson decided to pursue her desire to make documentaries by attending the New York University graduate film program. She went on to produce film, television, commercials and music videos for more than 10 years prior to joining Mixed Greens. Most notably, Selina produced the feature documentary *Family Name*, winner of the 1997 Sundance Film Festival's Freedom of Expression Award and a 1999 Emmy Award nominee. She also worked on several projects with the production company World of Wonder, including *LA Stories: From the Eye of the Storm*, commissioned by the BBC.

NANCY ROTH (Co-Producer) worked in feature film and commercial production for more than 10 years—primarily as a location scout and manager—where she ultimately found her passion for documentary film. Most notably, Nancy co-produced *Greener Grass: Cuba, Baseball and the United States*, which was produced in association with ITVS, had its national broadcast premiere on PBS in June, 2000, and received a Banff Rockie Award in 2001. Since then, she joined Mixed Greens and co-produced **WORST POSSIBLE ILLUSION**, which had its premiere screening in New York at the Independents Night Series at Lincoln Center in August 2002. She has produced more than 25 documentary shorts for the Mixed Greens website. Nancy was the supervising producer for Mixed Greens on three documentaries: *Slumming It*, *156 Rivington* and *The Federation of Black Cowboys*.

#### **ABOUT MIXED GREENS**

Mixed Greens sells original art by a select group of contemporary artists, and provides consulting services to architects, designers and corporations. Founded in 1999 on the theory that great, affordable art should and can be a part of everyone's life, the company currently represents and promotes more than 30 visual artists, and holds art events and exhibitions in cities around the country. The company also helps create opportunities for artists to reach non-traditional audiences and to find outlets for their creativity outside customary, established art world channels. Their web site, [www.mixedgreens.com](http://www.mixedgreens.com), is one of very few sites on the Web selling original artwork and limited edition photographs by established contemporary artists. They also sell original works of art at their New York City gallery.

#### **ABOUT INDEPENDENT LENS**

*Independent Lens* is a weekly series airing Tuesday nights at 10 P.M. on PBS. The acclaimed anthology series features documentaries and a limited number of fiction films united by the creative freedom, artistic achievement and unflinching visions of their independent producers. *Independent Lens* features unforgettable stories about a unique individual, community or moment in history, which prompted Nancy Franklin in *The New Yorker* to write "Watching Independent Lens ... is like going into an independent bookstore—you don't always find what you were looking for but you often find something you didn't even know you wanted." Presented by ITVS, the series is supported by interactive companion websites, and national publicity and community outreach campaigns. Further information about the series is available at [www.pbs.org/independent\\_lens](http://www.pbs.org/independent_lens). *Independent Lens* is jointly curated by ITVS and PBS, and is funded by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB), a private corporation funded by the American people, with additional funding provided by PBS.

## ABOUT ITVS

Independent Television Service (ITVS) funds and presents award-winning documentaries and dramas on public television, innovative new media projects on the Web and the weekly series *Independent Lens* on Tuesday nights at 10 P.M. on PBS. ITVS is a miracle of public policy created by media activists, citizens and politicians seeking to foster plurality and diversity in public television. ITVS was established by a historic mandate of Congress to champion independently produced programs that take creative risks, spark public dialogue and serve underserved audiences. Since its inception in 1991, ITVS programs have revitalized the relationship between the public and public television, bringing TV audiences face-to-face with the lives and concerns of their fellow Americans. More information about ITVS can be obtained by visiting [www.itvs.org](http://www.itvs.org). ITVS is funded by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, a private corporation funded by the American People.



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