

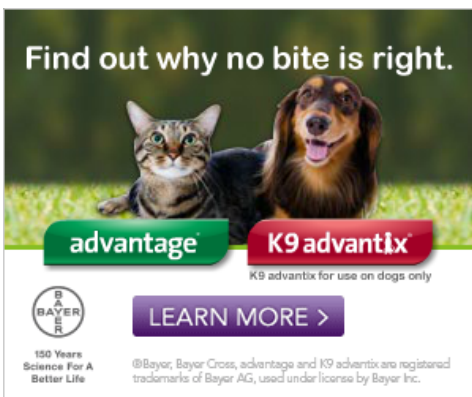
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Artist's work Muniz-ficent



OCTOBER 31, 2013

EDITOR,

I am writing in response to a recent article in The Chief ("Muniz bringing his palette to Squamish, Sept. 26) regarding the planned expansion of the Vancouver Art Biennale to include Squamish. I wish to congratulate and thank Krisztina Egyed and the local businesses who are supporting this ambitious initiative. It is a major coup for a city of any size to have an artist of the calibre of Brazilian Vik Muniz creating an installation in its community.

I grew up in Squamish and the local Rotary Club sponsored my going to Brazil as an exchange student in 1975-'76. Since that time I have returned many times to visit. I still closely follow the country's politics and culture. Consequently I have seen Vik Muniz's film Waste Land. (I understand the Squamish Public Library also has lending copies). The film brilliantly documents the artist's collaboration with the workers who make their livelihood from salvaging materials in Latin America's largest landfill in Rio de Janeiro.

What the film leaves clear is that not only is Vik Muniz a genius, he is also a humanist. His work in Waste Land is imaginative and compelling. If his work in Squamish accomplishes 50 per cent of what his work in Rio did, it would be amazing. There, his work was transformational on a number of levels. Undoubtedly, he forever changed the lives of some of the workers that he collaborated with, in the same way that a chance event in Muniz's own life transformed his fate years earlier. Further, his film widened public interest in his art and TED talk (available on YouTube) by allowing viewers to experience and participate in his artistic imagination and humanism. Finally, on the most concrete level, Muniz used recycled materials – in effect, junk – to create beautiful photographic portraits of those who earn meager livings from the landfill. The resulting photos eventually sold of tens for thousands of dollars at auction in London.

Never in my wildest imagination did I think that a Brazilian artist would one day be creating an art installation in Squamish, never mind one with the gifts of Muniz. The world has come a long way since I first went to Brazil nearly 40 years ago, and with it, Squamish has come along as well.

My best wishes to the organizers and sponsors. I cannot wait to see the results.

Jane-Anne Manson

Vancouver

(formerly Squamish)



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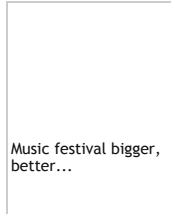
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- Definitely
- Probably
- Probably not
- No

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