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Hungry like the wolf

Vik Muniz project set to highlight the wolf

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Brazilian artist Vik Muniz's creation comes to life.

Renowned artist Vik Muniz wants to bring the wolf back to Squamish.

The Brazilian born sculptor and photographer was in town last week working with the Vancouver Biennale group and the Squamish Nation to help create a land mosaic to represent the community. An idea came to him after conversations with Squamish Nation members.

“I started talking to people at Totem Hall during my screening and they were always talking about animals,” Muniz said. “They talked about the importance of animals and no matter the culture

animals are something that everyone can relate to.”

After Muniz settled on animals as the theme to the piece, he talked with local elders and other Squamish residents about the proper animal for the project to highlight.

“I asked an elder what animal would represent union and working together and he chose a wolf,” he said. “He explained they work together and this truly is wolf land.”

Muniz said another reason why he likes the wolf idea is it’s a more mysterious and elusive animal compared to those more associated with Squamish.

“Being an outsider to here, the wolf is something I would have never picked to represent Squamish,” he said.

“In my hotel there are brochures about how to deal with bears and cougars – they’re almost too familiar. There was nothing to do with wolves. I thought of an eagle, but it’s more associated with America. In Western stories the wolf kind of has a bad reputation, characters like the Big Bad Wolf or Peter and the Wolf – it’s kind of unfair.”

Muniz and his group have also selected a final location for the finished product and Squamish residents will be able to witness the progress first hand at the new Lot 1 municipal park beside the Mamquam Blind Channel. A large tower has been erected and work is expected to be completed on Aug. 8.

There was discussion about the project occurring near the new Sea to Sky Gondola but Muniz said it wouldn’t have made logistical sense.

“We originally wanted it to be able to be seen from the lookout at the gondola but the distance was too great and the image would have been too small,” he said.

“And at that site the process would have been primarily mechanical and the amount of material we would have needed to come up with a drawing would have been massive. We didn’t want to lose that relationship between the material, the image and the social interaction so the new site will be more ideal.”

It was a busy week for Muniz, as he had a screening of his movie *Wasteland* in both Squamish and Vancouver and he spent time exploring Squamish and learning more about what locals are passionate about.

“People are drawn to the outdoors here,” he said.

“It feels like whenever you’re inside you’re missing out on something and just the beauty here is amazing.”

Muniz said the goal of the project is to create interesting art and engage the public.

“Art doesn’t translate from mind to matter in a straight line,” he said.

“We often elect artists to make things but we forget that other art forms – everyone sings together and dances in a group – and art can be like that too. It’s a good feeling and allows me to share with my audience the pleasure I have when something is created. Human participation makes a human mosaic and it makes art richer, and gives it more depth.”

Next up for Muniz are exhibitions in Israel, Shanghai and Rio de Janeiro followed by more work in New York. For more information on Muniz and his work, visit www.vikmuniz.net.

Locals wanting to help out on the wolf project can do so by contacting Krisztina Egyed at krisztinakegyed@gmail.com. There will be plenty of work, as artists will be doing their thing from

8 a.m. to midnight every day until Aug. 8.

For more details about the outdoor art exhibit, Vancouver Biennale, visit www.vancouverbiennale.com.



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