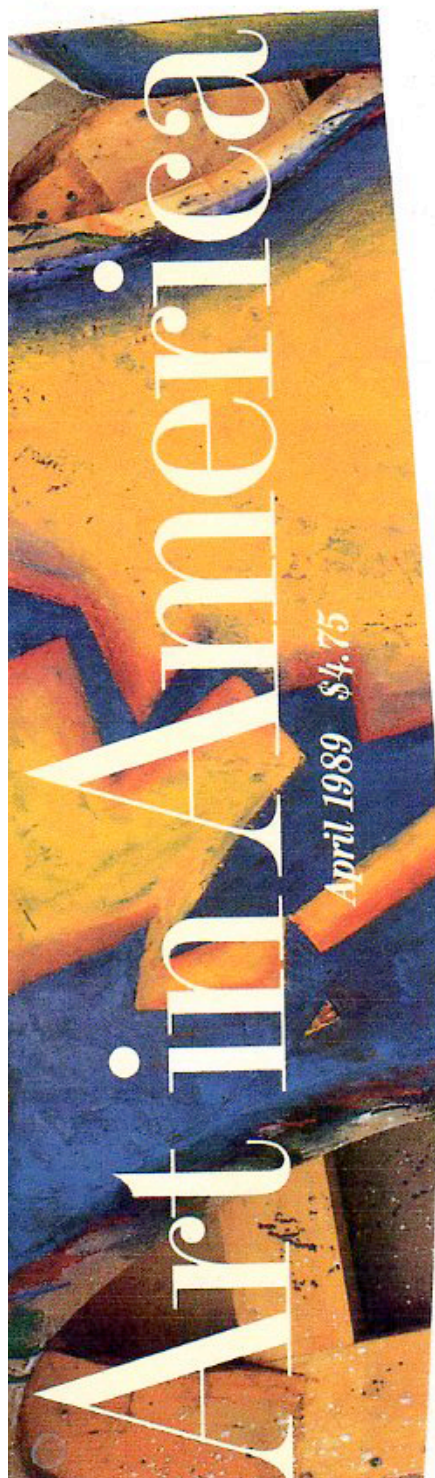


Vik Muniz at Stux and William Stone at Tom Cugliani

Vik Muniz, for whom this was a first solo show, was born in Brazil in 1961. Placed prominently near the entry of the gallery was *Dualizer*, an iron-framed glass vitrine of the same design as those that hold Jeff Koons's submerged basketballs. The piece's glass

266 April 1989



chamber is divided in two, and the fan that separates the compartments blows air from one side to the other. If this seems rather an obvious image of unrelieved futility, other sculptures in the show were somewhat more resonant. Two of them are oblong lead boxes, each containing a concealed light bulb—one incandescent, the other fluorescent. Because of the difference in the way these two kinds of lights burn, only the box in which the incandescent bulb is sealed is warm; when it eventually burns out, the single clue to the difference between the contents of the boxes is lost. *Ens Originarium (Hot)* and *Ens Originarium (Cold)*, as these two pieces are called, ask us to meditate on the life span of a work of art, on its metaphoric energy (or "aura") and on the deductive measures that constitute interpretation. In other words, they ask for a good deal, compared to what they deliver in return, which is merely a pair of rather undistinguished Minimalist forms.

Caginess of this sort tends to prevail in Muniz's show. *Tug of War* shows two rope-pullers in framed photographs, one photo per contestant. Between them a real rope hangs slack, warning us, perhaps, that photos lie. *Constellation* is a collection of darts thrown into a wall, each throw magically transformed, ex post facto, into a bull's-eye by crossed lines penciled around their points.

San Diego-Tijuana, perhaps

the most appealing piece in the show, is a map of a trip between the two cities in which everything has been obliterated with black ink except the route itself and the map's extreme margins, where longitude and latitude are indicated. Only a little wavering line curling at both ends remains. Despite the sea of black and the insubstantiality of what's left visible, this piece avoids the shortcoming of the artist's other work: i.e., too many circuits too fixedly closed. Here, at least, the viewer is left some loose ends to play with. Judging by this body of work, Muniz's first working principle seems to be a somewhat academic conceptual problem-solving.

William Stone, 17 years older than Muniz, has been exhibiting since 1975, though his first solo show was only five years ago. Stone, like Muniz, constructs assemblages from objects both mass-produced and custom-made. But Stone's large works have an elegant, personal sense of materials that separates them from the run of Neo-Conceptual sculpture. In *Vicious Circle*, a circle of brass pipes is housed in handsome oak stands; *Trade Winds* features four little metal fans turning the blades of a big wooden one. While the image is a bit silly, it successfully evokes balmy, tropical climes. Two fans flutter a framed American flag in *Wind Case*, suggesting a joke about the clunky machinery of patriotism, and in *Six Wind Cabinet*, a half-dozen exceedingly

loud blowers turn a set of revolving doors.

Muniz loves crafty visual puzzles which hark back to Duchamp; Stone prefers a more poetic kind of conundrum. He's interested in ineffability rather than paradox. His *In Dreams Begin Responsibilities*, which is composed of a truncated, carpeted staircase barred at both ends with the end pieces of a brass bedstead, confounds our conventional understanding of the function of everyday objects in a way that recalls Surrealism. Though these artists share a certain cleverness and occasionally use the same materials (fans, for example), Stone's works are exercises in dream logic, as opposed to the logical disjunctions favored by Muniz.

—Nancy Princenthal