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COMOX VALLEY ART GALLERY - PRESS RELEASE - FOR IMMEDIATE DISTRIBUTION

What Happens In The World's Largest Trash City Will Transform You

Filmed over nearly three years, WASTE LAND follows renowned artist, illusionist and innovator Vik Muniz as he journeys from his home base in Brooklyn to his native Brazil and the world's largest garbage dump, Jardim Gramacho, located on the outskirts of Rio de Janeiro. There he photographs an eclectic band of catadores, self-designated pickers of recyclable materials. His collaboration with these inspiring characters as they recreate large-scale photographic images of themselves out of garbage reveals both the dignity and despair of the catadores as they begin to re-imagine their lives.

Muniz quickly befriended and collaborated with a number of catadores, including Irma, a cook who sells food in the dump; Zumbi, the resident intellectual who has held onto every book he's scavenged; and 18 year old Suelem, who first arrived there when she was seven. Muniz rented four tons of junk and a warehouse, and together they arranged the trash on the ground to replicate photographs of themselves that Muniz had taken earlier. Then they would climb up to the ceiling and take photos of the compositions from 22 meters high.

An estimated three to five thousand people live in the dump, 15 thousand derive their income from activities related to it and some, that Muniz met in Jardim Gramacho, come from families that had been working there for three generations. Catadores, like the trash heaps they call home, are shunted to the margins of society and made invisible to the average Brazilian. Established in 1970 as a sanitary waste facility, the landfill became home to an anarchic community of scavengers during the economic crises of the 70's and 80's. These catadores lived and worked in the garbage, collecting and selling scrap metal and recyclable materials. They established a squatter community (the favela of Jardim Gramacho) surrounding the landfill that is now home to over 20 thousand people and entirely dependent on an economy that revolves around the trade of recyclable materials.

Muniz and the catadores take an emotional journey from a giant garbage dump to the most prestigious art auction houses and museums in the world. Ultimately, the alchemic transformation of trash into art also transforms the artist and his collaborators, taking them to entirely new worlds.

WASTE LAND has won over 15 awards at international film festivals including Sundance Film Festival, Berlin Film Festival and Vancouver International Film Festival and has received rave reviews from movie critics all over the world. It has been nominated for Best Documentary Feature for the 2010 Academy Awards.

Tickets are \$11 each, available at the CVAG Gift Shop, 580 Duncan Ave, Courtenay and Video's N More, 264 Anderton Road, Comox. WASTE LAND will be shown on Sunday, January 16, 2011 at 5:00pm at the Rialto Theatre, 2665 Cliffe Ave, Courtenay (at Driftwood Mall). For more information call 250-338-6211 or visit www.comoxvalleyartgallery.com for a complete listing of films in the CVAG Winter/Spring 2011 Film Series.