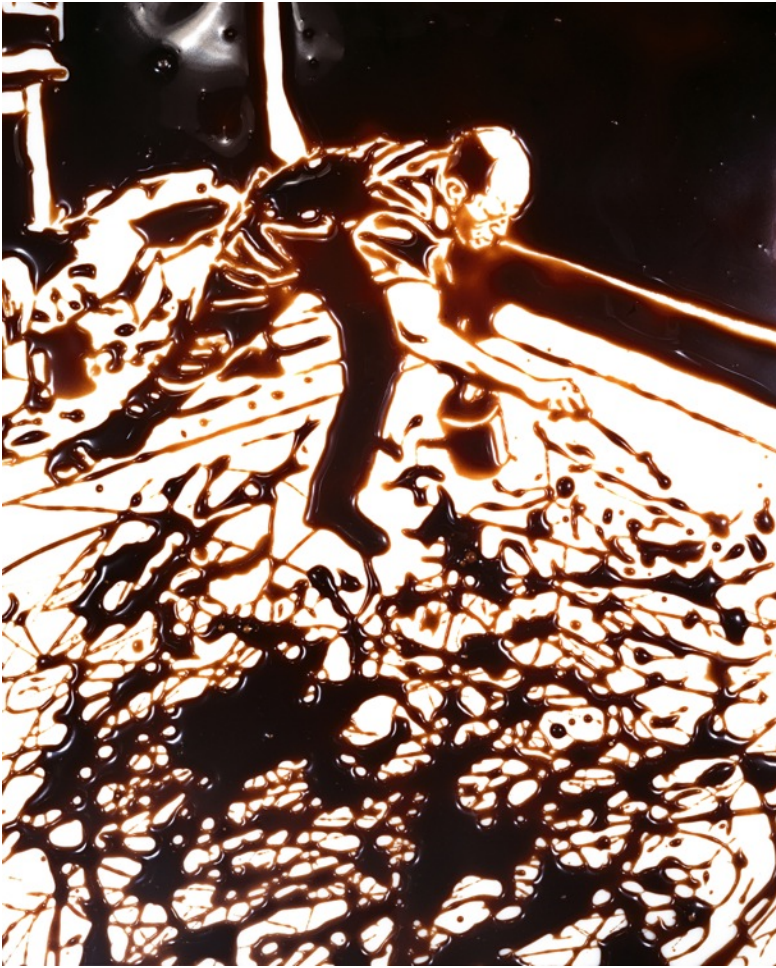


## UNDERSTANDING PHOTOGRAPHS: Example #6



Vic Muniz, *Action Photo after Hans Namuth from Pictures of Chocolate*. 1997



Hans Namuth, *Jackson Pollock at work in his studio*, 1950

### VISUAL

This is a **photographic document** of a kind of painting (made with chocolate sauce) which, in turn, is based on an **iconic photograph** of a painter making a painting (which is also an important **historical document**). In both cases the photograph is evidence of an **ephemeral activity**. It is **well lit**, presumably by **artificial studio lights**, emphasising the **glossy quality** of the chocolate sauce and its **rich brown colour**. The **high viewpoint** of the original image has been retained. There are **fewer mid tones** than the original but Muniz has exploited the **translucency** of the chocolate to suggest a **limited tonal range** (especially on the face).

### CONTEXTUAL

Muniz is a **contemporary** Brazilian artist. Originally a **sculptor** he now creates a variety of art objects which he **documents with photography**. He is best known for **transforming ordinary materials** (sugar, chocolate sauce, thread, rubbish etc.) into **ironic** and often **deceiving imagery** taken from the pages of **pop culture** and **art history**. His practice is **conceptual** in the sense that the **idea** behind the work is at least as important as the work's **aesthetic** qualities. Muniz often **collaborates** with non artists in the creation of **large scale** projects.

### TECHNICAL

This is a **colour cibachrome** print delivering image **clarity, stability** and **colour purity**, ideal for **exhibition display**. The image was shot of **positive transparency** (slide) film in a **studio** environment presumably using a **copy stand** to position the camera accurately above the image. Controllable **studio lighting** (visible in the reflections) would ensure the best possible **image quality**.

### CONCEPTUAL

- Art about art - a photo of a painting of a photo of a painting
- Conceptual photography - importance of the idea
- Humour - irony and wit - cultural cross-referencing
- Photography as a document of an ephemeral activity/performance
- The quotidian - everyday/mundane materials