

Hernan Bas

TIME LIFE

November 7, 2019-January 4, 2020

501 W 24th Street, New York

@lehmannmaupin

Opening reception: November 7, 2019, 6-8pm



New York, October 9, 2019—Lehmann Maupin is pleased to announce *TIME LIFE*, Hernan Bas' fifth solo exhibition with the gallery. This exhibition will include seven large-scale paintings and one decorative room screen that feature a series of strange and seemingly obscure or forgotten moments that have influenced American culture. This body of work illustrates Bas' innate ability to highlight cult phenomena from the past that offer insight into the political and social concerns of today. Rather than focusing on a singular subject matter, as Bas has done previously, this series

spans time periods and themes, providing a unique perspective on American subculture and a contemporary version of History Painting. The artist will be present for an opening reception at the gallery on Thursday, November 7 from 6-8 PM.

Bas is best known for his narrative paintings that weave together adolescent adventures and the paranormal with classical poetry, religious stories, mythology, and literature. His subjects are often young men, typically in the transitional moment between boyhood and manhood. While the young male figure remains prominent in this body of work, each individual painting becomes an in-depth investigation into a singular critical subject, addressing topics such as LGBTQIA+ activism and desire, politics, news, conspiracy theories, and the occult. The title of the exhibition, *TIME LIFE*, is inspired by the Time-Life Book series *Mysteries of the Unknown*. Published between 1987 and 1991, each book focused on a different paranormal topic, such as ghosts, UFOs, psychic powers, and dreams. For *TIME LIFE*, Bas has similarly produced a series of paintings, each focused on a singular topic, that navigate the boundaries between pop culture and history, fiction and reality, and the artist's personal interests and curiosities.

For the large-scale painting, *The Sip In* (2019), Bas drew inspiration from a photograph that was recently featured in *The New York Times* for the 50th anniversary of Stonewall. The image depicts the 1966 "sip in" at Julius' bar, where three young men, dressed in suits, were refused service for being openly gay. The bar still exists today and is now known as the oldest gay bar in New York City. Bas was intrigued by this irony and hidden piece of New York history, as well as by the compositional similarity to Leonardo da Vinci's *The Last Supper* (1495). Bas' interpretation highlights this formal similarity by removing the body of the bartender, leaving only his apparition in the form of a white glove hovering over a glass, making the young men the primary subjects of the painting. This representation of 1960s gay activism through the formal likeness to an iconic religious painting depicting Christ just prior to his death emphasizes the violence the LGBTQIA+ community continues to endure, especially as their rights are increasingly at risk due to the current presidential administration's discriminatory language and policies.

In *The Pundit* (2019), Bas illustrates the ubiquitous image of daily news through a portrait of a news pundit who is caught frozen as he looks up from his phone at the "Breaking News" that has interrupted his segment. Bas has cropped the "Live Breaking News" alert to read "LIVE AKING EWS," conjuring a tone as fragmented as daily news coverage has become. The pundit holds both a pen and a cell phone, illustrating the investigative journalism of the past and the minute-by-minute updates of the present. In a nod to Cubist Geometric Abstraction, the figure is also surrounded by lines and layered blocks of color in an abstracted representation of the highly stylized sets of contemporary newsrooms. Together, *The Sip In* and *The Pundit* address critical issues such as freedom of speech, activism, discrimination, and objective truth through the complicated lens of journalism today.

In other works in the exhibition, Bas takes seemingly banal topics and infuses them with cultural or universal significance. In *A Moment Eclipsed #1* and *A Moment Eclipsed #2* (both 2019) Bas depicts the common image of young men presenting their trophy catch for a photo. Growing up in Florida, Bas encountered endless images in restaurants and bars of men proudly, often arrogantly, displaying their prowess through their ability to catch a big fish. In Bas' work, the grand moment of triumph for both young men is overshadowed (literally and figuratively) by solar and lunar eclipses. In *A Moment Eclipsed #2*, for example, the display of power of the young man wearing a Moby Dick t-shirt and holding his Hammerhead kill is ironically and unknowingly interrupted by the incredible magnitude of the earth through the lunar eclipse. This depiction of Man vs. Nature, as with all great Bas paintings, creates an ominous feeling that something sinister is about to happen.

The works in *TIME LIFE* are spaces of inquisition, desire, and obsessions that invite the viewer to recognize their own curiosities and oddities, which we perhaps prefer keep to ourselves. They allow us to consider the relevance of seemingly inconsequential moments in the past and the present, and offer a space for critical reflection. As with all of Bas' paintings over the past 20 years, the works in this exhibition navigate the liminal space between reality and fiction, the grotesque and the beautiful, the odd and the mundane.

About the Artist

Hernan Bas (b. 1978 in Miami, lives and works in Detroit and Miami) has had solo exhibitions at the Centro De Arte Contemporáneo Málaga, Málaga, Spain (2018); Colby College Art Museum, Waterville, ME (2018); SCAD Museum of Art, Savannah, GA (2017); Bass Museum of Art, Miami, FL (2013); and the Rubell Family Collection, Miami, FL (2007). Bas has participated in a number of important group exhibitions, including *Them*, Perrotin, New York, NY (2019); *Wild n Out*, PKM Gallery, Seoul, South Korea (2017); *Future Seasons Past*, Lehmann Maupin, New York, NY (2015); *The Collectors*, curated by Elmgreen & Dragset for the Nordic and Danish Pavilions at the 53rd Venice Biennale (2009); *Triumph of Painting: Part III*, Saatchi Gallery, London, United Kingdom (2005); *Ideal Worlds – New Romanticism in Contemporary Art*, Schirn Kunsthalle, Frankfurt, Germany (2005); and the Whitney Biennial (2004). His work is part of the permanent collections of New York's Brooklyn Museum of Art, Museum of Modern Art, and Whitney Museum of American Art; as well as the Detroit Institute of Arts; Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, D.C.; Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; Museum of Contemporary Art, North Miami; and San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, among others.

About Lehmann Maupin

Rachel Lehmann and David Maupin founded Lehmann Maupin in 1996. The gallery represents a diverse range of contemporary artists and estates from around the world. Since inception, Lehmann Maupin has been instrumental in introducing international artists in new geographies. This mission has resulted in historic first exhibitions in New York, Hong Kong, and Seoul. For more information on the gallery and its artists, visit www.lehmannmaupin.com

LEHMANN MAUPIN

Current & Upcoming Exhibitions

Alex Prager, *Play the Wind*, September 5–October 26, 536 West 22nd Street, NEW YORK
Kader Attia, *Mirrors of Emotion*, September 10–October 26, 501 West 24th Street, NEW YORK
Jennifer Steinkamp, *Still-Life*, September 19–October 30, 2019, HONG KONG
Liza Lou, *The River and the Raft*, September 26–November 9, 2019, SEOUL
Lee Bul, *Interlude: Perdu*, November 7–January 18, 536 West 22nd Street, NEW YORK
Helen Pashgian, November 14

For more information about Hernan Bas or other Lehmann Maupin artists, please contact Kathryn McKinney at +1 212 255 2923 or kathryn@lehmannmaupin.com.

IMAGE: *The Sip In*, 2019, 84 x 108 inches, 213.4 x 274.3 cm. Courtesy the artist and Lehmann Maupin, New York, Hong Kong, and Seoul.