

Ashley Bickerton Nicolas Pol

New York, 20 March 2013 – Lehmann Maupin is pleased to collaborate with Vladimir Restoin Roitfeld on a two-person exhibition pairing long time gallery artist Ashley Bickerton and Nicolas Pol together for the first time. The exhibition presents a dialogue between two distinctive and wildly imaginative artists, born of different generations, who draw upon a similar reactive nature to construct vibrant, fantastical, and often times, otherworldly images of apocalyptic proportion.

A public reception will be held at 201 Chrystie Street on Friday, 22 March from 6 to 8 PM.

Ashley Bickerton's work from the late 80s and early 90s was fueled by a critical assessment of America's obsession with consumerism; created in reaction to the sleek packaging, corporate branding, and growing reliance on technology that dominated the cultural landscape at the time. His object-based sculptures, or "Culture-scapes," from this period were angry, defiant constructions covered in logos and seemingly built to withstand apocalyptic devastation. Bickerton's move to Bali in 1997 paralleled a dramatic visual shift to figurative painting and sculpture. As an expat, he found the "idyllic" paradise to be "riddled with corruption, greed, snarling Third-World traffic and a booming 21st century economy." His new work depicting scenes of modern-day hedonism, carried out by fictional characters of a surreal and hallucinatory nature, portray a world lacking in morality, one that has moved beyond redemption. Five works by Bickerton, spanning a twenty-year period, will be featured in the exhibition, including four paintings and an early sculpture from 1992 entitled *Seascape: Floating Costume to Drift for Eternity III (Elvis Suit)*.

A similar sense of absurdity and dark humor plays into **Nicolas Pol's** paintings of obscure visions where sin and forbidden fantasies run wild. Six new canvases reveal a vast array of historical references, ranging from medieval times to modern scientific advancements, as well as artistic styles, dating from the Renaissance to present day. Like Bickerton, Pol constructs allegorical fictions rife with sexual innuendo, disillusionment and malevolence. His central characters are often skeletal depictions of the fallen man struggling for salvation. In *Grey Martus*, a group of overly stimulated island inhabitants attempt to exorcize themselves from surrounding evil. Pol also returns to his fictional world *Neverlodge*, half brothel, half adult amusement park, in the painting *Fat Man and Little Boy on NL Map*, where scenes from a nuclear disaster are juxtaposed against a map of the artist's sinister play land.

Ashley Bickerton (b. 1959, Barbados, West Indies) graduated from the California Institute of the Arts in 1982 and continued his education in the Independent Studies Program at the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York. Over the last twenty-five years, Bickerton's work has been exhibited extensively in nearly every major museum around the world. Recent exhibitions include *The Living Years: Art after 1989*, Walker Art Center, Minneapolis (2012); *This Will Have Been: Art, Love & Politics in the 1980s*, Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston (2012); and *Postmodernism: Style and Subversion 1970-1990*, Victoria and Albert Museum, London (2011), among others. His work was featured in the 9th Biennale of Sydney, Australia (1992) and the 1989 Whitney Biennial at the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York. Bickerton's work is part of numerous public collections worldwide, including the Museum of Modern Art, New York; Hara Museum of Contemporary Art, Japan; and Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, among others. He will be the subject of his fourth solo exhibition at Lehmann Maupin in September. Bickerton lives and works in Bali, Indonesia.

Nicolas Pol (b. 1977, Paris, France) spent much of his childhood in Africa before relocating to France, where he earned his degree from the prestigious École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts, La Sorbonne. Following two successful solo shows at Alsopp Contemporary in London, Vladimir Restoin Roitfeld presented Pol's work in three large-scale international exhibitions: *The Martus Maw*, New York (2009); *The Mother of Pouacrus*, London in (2010); and *Sick Atavus of the New Blood*, New York (2011). Pol has participated in numerous group exhibitions organized by prestigious institutions, including *J-en Rêve*, Fondation Cartier, Paris; *Plus Que Vrai*, École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts, Paris; *Salle des Quais*, Paris; and the *Loic le Gaillard*, London. Pol lives and works in Paris, France.

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