

Alex Prager

January 18—March 17, 2018

407 Pedder Building, 12 Pedder Street, Hong Kong

@lehmannmaupin | #alexprager

Press Preview: Thursday, January 18, 5 PM

Opening Reception: Thursday, January 18, 6-8 PM



Hawkins Street, 2017, archival pigment print, 12.97 x 24 inches (print), 32.9 x 61 cm. Courtesy of Alex Prager Studio and Lehmann Maupin, New York and Hong Kong.

Hong Kong, December 12, 2017—Lehmann Maupin is pleased to present an exhibition of new work by Alex Prager. The Los Angeles-based artist returns to Hong Kong with her signature style of theatrical and meticulously staged photography and film, as well as her first exhibited sculpture. In her most recent series, Prager manipulates scale and dimension to challenge our understanding of the boundary between fiction and reality. The gallery will host an opening reception on Thursday, January 18, from 6-8 PM, at the Pedder Building.

Those familiar with Prager's work will recognize elements that recall past series, such as *Face in the Crowd* (2013), in which her compositions highlighted the contrast between crowded public spaces and a lone heroine. These latest works push the theatrical narrative potential of her prior series. The imagery lays bare the artifice in its creation, achieved through impossible, contrived viewpoints, layering of incongruent scenes—such as a rainy day on top of a sunny one—and other formal and technical controls that challenge the assumed naturalism of photography and film.

One such formal device is scale—a major component in the production and installation of the work—with Prager varying the dimensions of the photographs according to the level of distortion she intends to achieve. In *Hand Model* (2017), a woman's outstretched hand is blown up larger than life, referencing the often unrealistic scaling and cropping of images in the advertising and fashion industries, a concept reinforced by the title. The same image of the hand also appears in miniature scale as a prop advertisement in *Star Shoes* (2017), and unexpectedly, as a sculpture protruding from the gallery wall in *Hand Model (detail)* (2017). In this multifold presentation of the same image, the meaning is conveyed in two radically different ways—as the emphasized subject and a trivial detail. Throughout the exhibition, Prager expertly guides the viewer to a predetermined end, using the play with proportion and form to question the assumption that a photograph faithfully represents reality.

With this new body of work, Prager realizes an ambitious formal approach to achieve the dynamic tension she previously created through more traditional storytelling devices. Prager removes the certainty of the omnipotent perspective of the viewer through scale, dramatic cropping, layering, and uncontextualized settings, replacing it with a disorienting awareness of the constructed nature of most "real world" imagery we encounter. Contemporary society is awash in visual information—we are presented with versions of reality in marketing, news, and social media, but we rarely pause to consider how our thoughts are guided in the process of looking. Prager's work calls this into question, and not only reveals the scene she intends to present, but makes the viewer aware of the psychological processes involved in their own observations.

About the artist

Alex Prager (b. 1979, Los Angeles, lives and works in Los Angeles) has had solo exhibitions of her work organized at Musée des Beaux-Arts Le Locle, Switzerland (forthcoming, 2018); Des Moines Art Center, IA (2017-2018); Saint Louis Art Museum, MO (2015); Galerie des Galeries, Paris (2015); Goss Michael Foundation, Dallas (2015); National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, Australia (2014); Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, DC (2013); SCAD Museum of Art, Savannah, GA (2013); and

Foam Photography Museum, Amsterdam (2012). Select group exhibitions featuring her work include *Telling Tales: Contemporary Narrative Photography*, McNay Art Museum, San Antonio, TX (2016-2015); *Open Rhapsody*, Beirut Exhibition Center, Lebanon (2015); *The Noir Effect*, Skirball Cultural Center, Los Angeles (2014); *No Fashion, Please: Photography Between Gender and Lifestyle*, Kunsthalles Wien, Vienna (2011); and *New Photography*, The Museum of Modern Art, New York (2010). Her work is in numerous international public and private collections, including The Museum of Modern Art, New York; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; Los Angeles County Museum of Art; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; Queensland Gallery of Modern Art, Australia; Kunsthaus Zürich, Switzerland, and Moderna Museet, Stockholm, Sweden.

Prager has received numerous awards, including the FOAM Paul Huf Award (2012), The Vevey International Photography Award (2009), and the London Photographic Award (2006). Her editorial work has been featured in prominent publications, including *Vogue*, *New York Magazine*, and *W*, and her film series *Touch of Evil*, commissioned by *The New York Times Magazine*, won a 2012 Emmy award. During the summer of 2017, her first major public commission, *Applause*, debuted for Times Square Arts: Midnight Moment, New York. In June 2018, a major monograph of her work, *Silverlake Drive*, will be published by Thames & Hudson.

About Lehmann Maupin

Founded in 1996 by partners Rachel Lehmann and David Maupin, Lehmann Maupin has fostered the careers of a diverse group of internationally renowned artists, both emerging and established, working in multiple disciplines and across varied media. With locations in New York, Hong Kong, and Seoul, the gallery represents artists from the United States, Europe, Asia, South America, Africa, and the Middle East. Known for championing artists who create groundbreaking and challenging forms of visual expression, Lehmann Maupin presents work highlighting personal investigations and individual narratives through conceptual approaches that often address such issues as gender, class, religion, history, politics, and globalism.

Current & Upcoming Exhibitions

Gilbert & George, *THE BEARD PICTURES*, through December 22, 2017, West 22nd Street & 201 Chrystie Street, NEW YORK

Teresita Fernández, *Rise and Fall*, through December 30, 2017, Pedder Building, HONG KONG

Robin Rhode, *The Geometry of Colour*, January 18—February 24, 2018, West 22nd Street, NEW YORK

OSGEMEOS, March 26—May 12, 2018, Pedder Building, HONG KONG

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For more information about Alex Prager or other Lehmann Maupin artists, please contact Marta de Movellan or Kathryn McKinney at +1 212 255 2923, or visit lehmannmaupin.com.

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