

Hernan Bas *Memphis Living*

26 April – 31 May 2014

Victoria Miro Mayfair, 14 St. George St, London, W1S 1FE

Victoria Miro is delighted to present *Memphis Living* a series of new paintings and works on paper by Hernan Bas that runs across our Wharf Road and Mayfair galleries.

For his fourth show with the gallery, Bas extends his long interest in and exploration of the decorative arts, in particular rethinking and examining unique interiors. In past paintings he has taken inspiration from design classics such as J.M. Whistler's renowned 19th century Peacock Room. For this new body of work Bas fast-forwards to the 1980s, the decade of the artist's youth. *Memphis Living* is an homage to the designs of the short-lived Memphis Group founded in Milan by architect and designer Ettore Sottsass, designs Bas first encountered predominantly through their pop cultural references and simulations, and which he only later came to know as an aesthetic movement. Memphis styles became firmly rooted in Bas' pre-teenage subconsciousness, attesting to the prevalence of the "Memphis look" on the big and small screen in films like Tim Burton's *Beetlejuice* or kids' TV show *Pee-wee's Playhouse*.

The strategy of the post-modern Memphis studio was to challenge and subvert Modernist conventions of good taste, with a visual language dominated by flamboyant pattern, bold colour, graphic sculptural form and, frequently, humour. It is not only the aesthetics of the movement that has drawn Bas to revisit this energetic period, but also the idea of the artificial versus the real, the notion of the false being more authentic than the actuality (concepts which Bas links to another early influence, Joris-Karl Huysmans' *Against Nature*). Memphis style prioritises form over function and, for Bas, the Group's work comes as close to sculpture as any design movement in recent times.

The paintings and works on paper in *Memphis Living* borrow from this sculptural aesthetic. The artist has said of this new series that, as with a previous body of work in which he articulated a fascination with Futurism, he is "exploring new ways of interpreting a definitive and somewhat overlooked period in cultural history, developing works centred around the kinds of characters who populate my practice, imagining who is the boy/man who would make this sort of space his own, what his home might look like... and what sort of psychosis would lead to this?" Bas expands this idea further, saying "In my opinion, living 'Memphis' means more than a love of bright colours, pattern and uncomfortable seating. It was an impassioned moment, a daring, bold-formed and wildly influential movement that is just catching our rear-view attention again".

Hernan Bas was born in Miami, Florida in 1978. He currently lives and works in Miami and in Detroit, Michigan. Bas has been the subject of two major institutional solo shows: *The Other Side* at the Kunstverein Hannover in 2012, and a major survey show that opened at the Rubell Family Collection, Miami in 2007 and toured to the Brooklyn Museum of Art in 2009. Bas' work has also been included in *Aquatopia: The Imaginary of the Ocean Deep*, Nottingham Contemporary, travelling to Tate St. Ives (2013-2014); *The Collectors*, curated by Elmgreen & Dragset at Nordic and Danish Pavilions, Venice Biennale (2009); the Busan Biennale (2008); *Like Color in Pictures* at the Aspen Art Museum (2007); *Ideal Worlds: New Romanticism in Contemporary Art* at the Schirn Kunsthalle, Frankfurt (2005); the Whitney Biennial (2004); and *It's Super Natural* at The Museum of Contemporary Art, North Miami (2002).

The exhibition coincides with the publication by Rizzoli, New York of HERNAN BAS: a lavish monograph that is the most comprehensive publication devoted to the artist's career to date. With over 200 colour plates and with texts by Christian Rattemeyer, Jonathan Griffin, and an interview with Nancy Spector. The book is available at reception, price £47.50

The exhibition continues with a series of new paintings at Victoria Miro, 16 Wharf Rd., London, N1 7RW

Gallery I
Clockwise from entrance



Partygoer, 2014
Watercolour monotype on paper
30.5 x 22.9 cm
12 x 9 in



Hand of the Spirit (after General Idea), 2014
Watercolour, acrylic, colored pencil and collage on vellum paper
35.6 x 27.9 cm
14 x 11 in



Spirit of the glove, 2014
Watercolour monotype, acrylic and collage on paper
30.5 x 22.9 cm
12 x 9 in



Feel the Spirit (lips), 2014
Watercolour monotype on paper
43.2 x 35.6 cm
17 x 14 in



The great orange boycott (Anita Sucks), 2014
Watercolour monotype and collage on paper
43.2 x 35.6 cm
17 x 14 in



Untitled (crouching), 2014
Watercolour monotype on paper
43.2 x 35.6 cm
17 x 14 in



This seasons go to look, 2014
Watercolor monotype on paper
30.5 x 22.9 cm
12 x 9 in



Avenge Oscar, 2014
Watercolour monotype, acrylic and collage on paper
30.5 x 22.9 cm
12 x 9 in



Memphis throne, 2014
Watercolour monotype on paper
30.5 x 22.9 cm
12 x 9 in



Manipulating the self (#2), 2014
Watercolour, acrylic, and graphite on vellum paper
35.6 x 27.9 cm
14 x 11 in



The great orange boycott of '78, 2014
Watercolour monotype, acrylic and collage on paper
30.5 x 22.9 cm
12 x 9 in



Design panic (pattern), 2014
Watercolour, acrylic, colored pencil and collage on vellum paper
35.6 x 27.9 cm
14 x 11 in



Spirit glove (after General Idea), 2014
Watercolour monotype on paper
30.5 x 22.9 cm
12 x 9 in



The 2014 Mr. General Idea Pageant, 2014
Watercolour monotype, ink and acrylic on paper
27.9 x 21.6 cm
11 x 8 1/2 in



The 2014 Mr. General Idea Pageant, 2014
Watercolour monotype on paper
30.5 x 22.9 cm
12 x 9 in



Touching without touching, 2014
Watercolour monotype on paper
30.5 x 22.9 cm
12 x 9 in



Feeling the spirit, 2014
Watercolour monotype on paper
30.5 x 22.9 cm
12 x 9 in

Gallery II



Memphis Living (invalid), 2014
Acrylic on linen
50.8 x 40.6 cm
20 x 16 in



Memphis Living (first chair, last chair), 2014
Acrylic and enamel on linen
50.8 x 40.6 cm
20 x 16 in

Window St. George St.



Feeling the spirit (#2), 2014
Watercolour monotype on paper
30.5 x 22.9 cm
12 x 9 in



Designer panic, 2014
Watercolour and colored pencil monotype
on paper
30.5 x 22.9 cm
12 x 9 in



Untitled (glove), 2014
Watercolour monotype on paper
43.2 x 35.6 cm
17 x 14 in



Untitled (crossed), 2014
Watercolour monotype on paper
43.2 x 35.6 cm
17 x 14 in