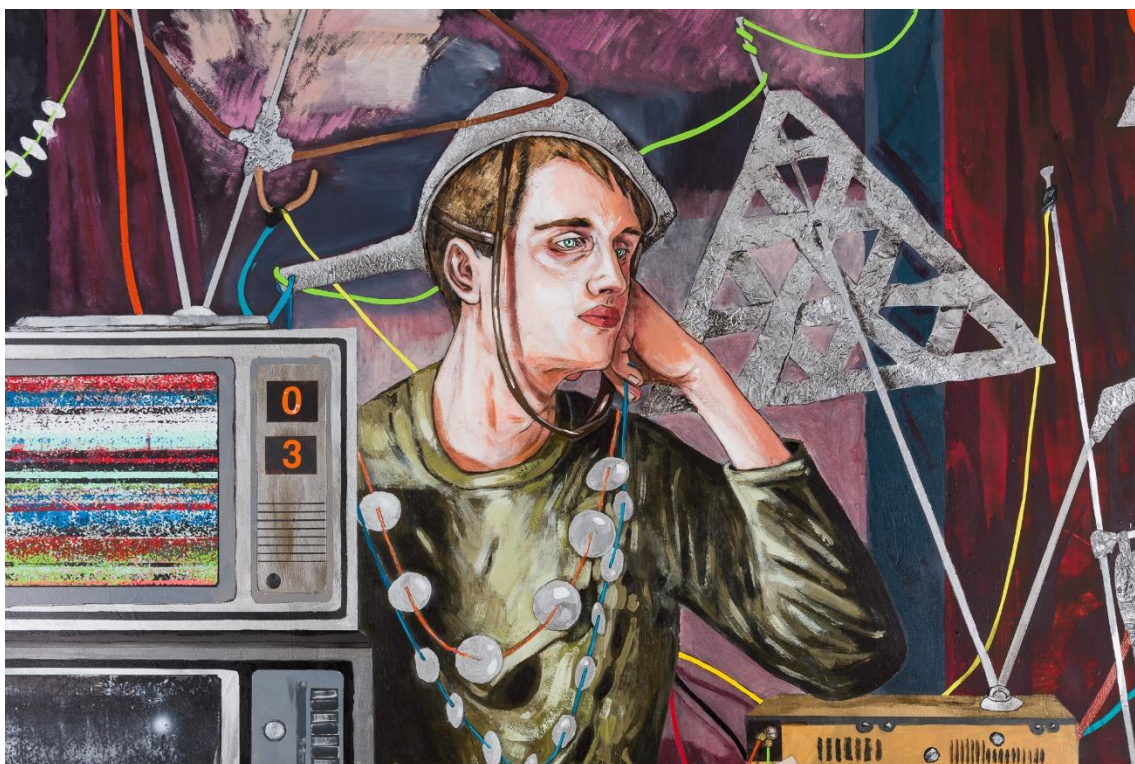


HERNAN BAS:  
*THE CONCEPTUALISTS*  
DEC 4, 2023 – MAY 5, 2024  
AT THE BASS, MIAMI BEACH



MIAMI BEACH, FL (July 10, 2023) – The Bass announces Hernan Bas: *The Conceptualists*, opening December 4, 2023 and on view through May 5, 2024, an exhibition of paintings that explore conceptual art as a permissive realm for creative behavior and an inviting space for queerness.

Hernan Bas: *The Conceptualists* will feature 35 paintings, many never previously exhibited at museums, including the artist's largest canvas to date measuring some 9 by 21 feet.

In his paintings, drawings and installations, Miami-based artist Hernan Bas (b. 1978) creates intricately detailed scenes that invite viewers to decipher an astounding number of visual references. His works often involve a single male or group of male figures caught in moments of stasis, in apparent introspection or still repose. All other action surrounding the character is seemingly suspended for the artist's and viewers' thoughtful study.

Mining literary sources, like the aesthetic decadence and queer eroticism of such nineteenth-century writers as Oscar Wilde and Joris-Karl Huysman, Bas incorporates visual cues into a range of narratives. From poetry, religion, mythology and literature to the histories of gay struggle, youth culture, news media and television, Bas's detailed vignettes symbolically reference the peculiarities of cultural identities.

While earlier works show male characters linked to specific stories, each painting in *The Conceptualists* depicts a single protagonist deeply engaged in an obsessive, idiosyncratic

pastime. Bas' subjects freely exercise the unique activities that give sustenance and meaning to their lives: carving objects that hold ice, fabricating roadside memorials for hitchhikers, chewing gum every waking hour of the day, or gilding the leaves of dying house plants, among other personal idylls.

Bas' detailed depictions substantiate quirky behaviors under the generous categorization of "conceptual art." These tales are *queer*, where queerness refers not necessarily to sexual orientation but to a pillar of conceptual art—an incomprehensible permissiveness and liberating space for a society grounded in conformity.

*The Conceptualists* is a featured exhibition as The Bass commemorates its 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary season of sharing powerful contemporary art that excites, challenges and educates audiences, bringing new perspectives to Miami Beach's diverse cultural context.

For more information, please visit [www.thebass.org/art/](http://www.thebass.org/art/)

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#### ABOUT HERNAN BAS

Hernan Bas (b. 1978, Miami, FL, lives and works in Miami, FL) creates paintings, works on paper, videos and installations that weave together adolescent adventures with classical poetry, religious stories, mythology, the paranormal and literature. Influenced by the Romantic era of the 18th century that glorified the sublime beauty of nature and the Decadent movement of the 19th century that evoked romantic nihilism, skepticism, excess and artificiality, Bas' early work often portrayed nearly hidden adolescent male figures, deep in contemplation amidst vast otherworldly landscapes. As the figure and the interiors they occupied became more and more prominent throughout Bas' work, so did the social and cultural context within which they were living. Spanning a wide range of time periods and themes, Bas investigates inquisition, desire and obsessions and invites the viewer to recognize their own curiosities and oddities.

While the young male figure remains prominent throughout Bas' *oeuvre*, in his more recent work of individual paintings become an in-depth investigation into a singular critical subject, addressing topics such as LGBTQIA+ activism and desire, politics, news, conspiracy theories and the occult. Providing a unique perspective on American subculture and a contemporary version of History Painting, they allow us to consider the relevance of seemingly inconsequential moments in the past and present and offer space for critical reflection. For his November 2019 exhibition with Lehmann Maupin, *TIME LIFE*, Bas used the Time-Life Book series "Mysteries of the Unknown" as his inspiration. Published between 1987 and 1991, each book focused on a different paranormal topic, such as ghosts, UFOs, psychic powers and dreams. Navigating the liminal space between reality and fiction, the grotesque and the beautiful, the odd and the mundane, Bas highlights cult phenomena from the past that offer insight into the political and social concerns of today.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Hernan Bas: *The Conceptualists* is part of the Knight Art Commissions Program funded by the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation. This exhibition is curated by Dr. James Voorhies.

The Bass is generously funded by the City of Miami Beach, Cultural Affairs Program, Cultural Arts Council, the Miami-Dade County Department of Cultural Affairs and the Cultural Affairs Council, the Miami-Dade County Mayor and Board of County Commissioners, the State of Florida, Department of State, Division of Arts and Culture and the National Endowment for the Arts, the Florida Council on Arts and Culture, and The Bass membership.

#### ABOUT THE JOHN S. AND JAMES L. KNIGHT FOUNDATION

Knight Foundation is a national foundation with strong local roots. We invest in journalism, in the arts, and in the success of cities where brothers John S. and James L. Knight once published newspapers. Our goal is to foster informed and engaged communities, which we believe are essential for a healthy democracy. For more, visit [KF.org](http://KF.org).

#### ABOUT THE BASS

The Bass is Miami Beach's contemporary art museum. Its mission is to create connections between international contemporary art and its diverse audiences. The museum shares the power of contemporary art through experiences that excite, challenge and educate. Recognized for organizing major exhibitions and commissioned art projects by mid-career and established contemporary artists, its exhibition and education programs encompass a wide range of media and artistic points of view, that bring fresh perspectives to the diverse cultural context of Miami Beach, as well as to international audiences.

Founded in 1964 by the City of Miami Beach, the museum was established after the donation of a private collection of Johanna Bass and opened in what was formerly the Miami Beach Public Library and Art Center, a 1930s Art Deco building designed by Russell Pancoast. It is currently housed in this historic building, which later added an Arata Isozaki/David Gauld expansion. The exhibition program encompasses a wide range of media and artistic points of view, bringing fresh perspectives to the diverse cultural context of Miami Beach. The Bass is a nonprofit, tax-exempt organization accredited by the American Alliance of Museums.

#### UPCOMING & CURREN EXHIBITIONS AT THE BASS

Kerry Phillips: *Between the mundane and the miraculous*  
August 17 – October 22, 2023

Nam June Paik: *The Miami Years*  
October 4, 2023 – August 16, 2024

*Selections from The Collection*  
Opening October 4, 2023

Etel Adnan: *Painting into Space*  
November 24, 2023 – March 17, 2024

*Social Assembly*  
Opens November 24, 2023

Hernan Bass: *The Conceptualists*  
December 4, 2023 – May 5, 2024

Anne Duk Hee Jordan: *I will always weather with you*  
December 4, 2023 – June 23, 2024

Carola Bravo: *Between Absence and Presence*  
On view through January 2024

*Phraseology*  
July 30, 2022 – July 30, 2023

*Open Storage: Selections from the Collection & Works on Loan*  
On view through August 27, 2023

*Art Outside*  
On Long Term View

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[Caption: Hernan Bas, detail of *Conceptual artist #20 (Performance based; acting as his own receive, He's been seeking a signal from the airwaves for over a decade)*, 2023. Acrylic on linen. 72 x 60 in. Photography by Silvia Ros. Image courtesy of the artist and Lehmann Maupin, New York, Hong Kong, Seoul, and London.]