

Hernan Bas
赫尔南·巴斯

Choose Your Own Adventure

选择你自己的冒险





青年与海 *The Young Man & the Sea*

2020

布面丙烯 Acrylic on linen

213.4 × 182.9 cm

私人收藏, 韩国

Private collection, Korea



赫尔南·巴斯以复杂纷繁的叙事绘画为人熟知。他常常阶段性地围绕特定主题展开深入研究和细节考证，并在后续不断延展。基于广泛的调研，他将与自身相关的素材和样本并置重组，如同一幅视觉拼贴，形成独树一帜的个人语汇和美学风格。童年时期在迈阿密及佛罗里达州北部的丛林探险经历，浸淫于当地的异闻怪志、神话传说并对着迷的故事展开截然不同的想象和解读，都对其创作产生深远的影响。对恐怖电影、电视节目、超自然现象、神秘学、时尚潮流、亚文化等领域的兴趣，也赋予他源源不断的灵感。巴斯在画布上构建的异想奇境不仅脱胎于个体经验、自身兴趣和痴迷，也受启于绘画史和早期文学著作，尤其是于斯曼、王尔德、波德莱尔等作家笔下的诗意和颓废。在古典和浪漫的滤镜之下，19 世纪的花花公子、孤独青年、收藏探险家，经由巴斯对文学诗歌的想象和视觉重塑，被赋予当代重生。

这些身形单薄、介于青春期和成年期的男性主角是其画作中反复出现的主体，他们常独自沉思或凝视画外，游离于绚烂华丽的如梦之地，或迷失在危险混沌的末世景象中。拥有冷峻忧郁面容和怪异姿态的男孩根植于艺术家早期的作品并伴其成长至今，既可解读为巴斯充满自传性的自我探寻，亦是对当代个体面对未知世界的观察写照，捕捉了具有普世性的生命状态和情感。部分作品中，巴斯也转向对小团体群像的探索，定格那些既关联又疏远、看似平静又难掩不安的瞬间。

巴斯倾向于创造紧张、危险、神秘、暧昧的情境，特定的意象通常隐含多重指涉。在早期作品中，融合抽象表现和装饰图案的超现实景观几乎将人物吞噬其中，或可视为对人物内心剧变的渲染和象征。近几年，尤其是创作于 2020–2021 年的新作，除了延续巴斯对材料、色彩、构图的长期实践，似乎也揭示了艺术家叙事方式的转变：取中景构图突出人物的面容和姿态，以高度细腻的笔触刻画逼真的场景，在平铺直叙式的描绘中创造戏剧冲突。航海险境、群鸟突袭、旱灾阴霾显然是巴斯在向文学和电影大师的作品致敬，但或多或少也投射出人们因疫情席卷全球而对真实世界的灾难险境和末日启示所产生的普遍焦虑和不安。艺术家通过模棱两可的叙述，为作品注入多维视角和想象空间。正如展览标题所示，他借用《选择你自己的冒险》这套童书的概念，意图让每个观众自由选择人物角色和叙事发展，体验各自的奇幻冒险，讲述不同的故事结局。

此次展览是巴斯横跨近 20 年的艺术实践缩影。极具代表性的 20 余幅绘画和难得一见的早期影像装置，基于时间线索和主题性逐一呈现，以“冒险”贯穿始终，邀请观众在艺术家不同时期的创作篇章之间畅游。值得一提的是，巴斯画笔下的少年似乎也在潜藏危机的世界中逐渐成熟，坚定的眼神昭示着不惧逆境的信心和不畏将来的勇气，也暗示着艺术家不断开启的全新征程。

Hernan Bas is renowned for his complex and intricate narrative paintings. He frequently immerses himself in a staged process of deep and detailed research centered around a specific theme, followed by a continuous exploration of the topic in question. Based on his extensive research and observations, he remixes materials and samples that are relevant to himself and recomposes them in his inimitable personal vocabulary and aesthetics, in a way similar to a visual collage. The jungle adventures of his childhood in Miami and North Florida, being steeped in local myths and legends of mystery and the supernatural, and his diverse interpretations and wild imaginations towards fascinating stories all have a profound impact on his artworks. His deep-seated interest in horror films, television programs, the paranormal, occult, fashions, and various subcultures have empowered him with a steady stream of inspiration. Not only are the whimsical and fascinating scenes on Bas' canvas born out of his personal experiences, interests, and obsession, but they have also been informed by art history and early literature, particularly the poetry and decadence of authors such as Joris-Karl Huysmans, Oscar Wilde, and Charles Baudelaire. Through classical and romantic filters, these dandies of the 19th century, lonesome youths, and treasure explorers have been granted contemporary rebirth through Bas' visualization and imagination.

These lanky, male characters between the ages of adolescence and adulthood are recurring protagonists in Bas' paintings. They often contemplate in solitude or stare off canvas, wandering through splendid and flowery fantasies, or lost in dangerous and chaotic apocalyptic scenes. Young men with indifferent and melancholic looks depicted in eccentric postures are rooted in the artist's early works and have accompanied him throughout his artistic journey. They can be interpreted as Bas' autobiographical self-exploration, as well as his observations and portrayal of contemporaries facing the unknown world, effectively capturing the universal states and sentiments of life. In some of his works, Bas has turned towards exploring small group portraits, framing those interconnected yet distant, deceptively peaceful while simultaneously unsettling moments.

Bas tends to create tense, dangerous, mysterious, and ambiguous scenes, with specific imageries often filled with layers of references. In his early works, surreal landscapes that combine abstract expressions and decorative motifs almost overwhelmingly swallow the characters in the paintings, which alternatively could be interpreted as the rendering and symbolization of the characters' emotional upheavals. In recent years, beyond Bas' rich and long-standing experience in materials, colors, and composition, his new works, especially the ones created between 2020 to 2021 reveal a shift in his mode of narration: Using extremely delicate strokes to depict realistic scenes, he creates dramatic tension in straightforward and unembellished portraits by highlighting the characters' countenances and postures in the middle ground. Perilous nautical adventures, wild birds' ambushes, and the gloom of climate changes are obvious tributes to great masters of literature and films. They are also, more or less, a projection of the angst and anxiety people feel towards disaster and apocalypse in the real world in light of the pandemic sweeping across the globe today. Through ambiguous narratives, Bas successfully introduces multidimensional perspectives and space for imagination in his artworks. As the exhibition title "Choose Your Own Adventure" implies, the artist pays homage to the homonymous children's book series, with the aim of giving each visitor the freedom to choose their own characters and story development, experience unique fantastical adventures and arrive at different endings.

This exhibition could be seen as an epitome of Bas' artistic practice of almost twenty years and features more than twenty quintessential paintings as well as rarely-seen video installations from the early period. Presented chronologically and thematically, all artworks are coherent with the theme of "adventure," inviting visitors to roam wildly among the artist's creative chapters over different periods. Worthy of a special mention are the youths proceeding from Bas' brush, who seem to grow mature amidst the risks lurking in the world. The determined and unyielding spirit in their eyes that strikingly captures their confidence in face of adversities and fearless courage towards uncertain future also indicates the artist's untiring endeavors in conquering brand-new frontiers.

赫尔南·巴斯 选择你自己的 ……

赫尔南·巴斯在上海余德耀美术馆的个展标题“选择你自己的冒险”，引用了曾广泛流行于上世纪 80 至 90 年代由班坦图书公司出版的同名美国丛书系列标题，其理念在于让读者更加“主动”地参与故事，设想自己成为书中的主人公，选择叙事发展来决定情节走向。书中有着形形色色的人物，从私家侦探到登山者，从赛车手到医生、间谍，还有各种各样的冒险和计谋供读者选择。书上的宣传语写道：“你就是故事的主角！从 40 种可能的结局中选择你自己的冒险。”¹ 在孩子眼中，40 种结局或许相当于无数种，意味着无尽可能；难怪巴斯童年时期就被这套图书深深吸引，而且如今在构思画作的叙事结构和其中人物的冒险经历时，他仍然深受启发：“我总是想象我画中的人物在《选择你自己的冒险》这本书中，观众都能选择故事的走向。”² 虽然此次展出的作品创作于 2003 年至 2021 年间，但从很多方面而言，展览的标题或可视为巴斯所有作品中不言而喻的提示。

展览“选择你自己的冒险”中的每一幅作品都是精彩绝伦的点睛之作：观众受邀登上帆船，在波涛汹涌的海上航行；坐上野营车，去寻找传说中的尼斯湖水怪；在大灾难后，踏入路边汽车旅馆旁的空水池；又或是来到迈阿密一栋房子的前院，窥见满地粉红色的人造火烈鸟。和不断变换的场景一样，巴斯创作中的文化参考也同样丰富多变，从海明威到哈迪男孩，从吉尼斯世界纪录到海怪传说，从平淡无奇的生活场景到趣味丛生的荒野探险。然而，每一件作品都有一条鲜明的美国文化主线贯穿其中，尤其是他在童年时期所感受到的古怪奇异而又美妙的佛罗里达式情调。巴斯生于迈阿密，成长于当地和佛罗里达州北部，这里的人愿意相信怪兽、幽灵和外星人的存在，他也深受这种独特美式文化的影响。巴斯解释说：“我很早就对神秘的事物产生兴趣，在佛罗里达长大，当地的环境非常奇特。对我来说，关于不明飞行物和幽灵的想法早已司空见惯，直到多年以后，我才意识到这是奇怪的想法。”³ 这种地理环境孕育了美国历史和文化中神秘隐晦的部分，满足了巴斯对叙事的好奇心；他对此进行深入的研究，近乎痴迷，也常常催生出新的系列创作或绘画作品。每一幅画作的每一处细节，无论看起来多么微不足道，都在巴斯所讲述的主体故事中发挥着恰到好处地作用。

此次展览中的最新作品《怪兽与水手》（2021 年）是一幅大型墙纸壁画，由 23 幅小插图组成，描绘了年轻的渔夫、水手、探险家和潜水员，以及海洋中真实存在或想象中的危险。墙纸覆盖了展览中两面主墙，画作挂于其上，将巴斯过去 15 年的艺术生涯串联起来。虽然大部分插图描绘的都是新“场景”，但其中灵感大

¹ “你就是故事的主角：纪念《选择你自己的冒险》系列图书”，
<https://flashbak.com/youre-star-story-remembering-cyoa-choose-adventure-books-38559/>，访问日期：2021 年 1 月 19 日。

² 南希·斯佩克特，“赫尔南·巴斯对话南希·斯佩克特”，《赫尔南·巴斯》，马特·普莱斯编，纽约：Rizzoli 国际出版社，2014 年，60 页。

³ 出处同上，59 页。

都来自巴斯过往的海洋主题作品，如 2003 年《每个人心中都有一头小白鲸》同样描绘了年轻人与海洋力量以及海洋生物之间的斗争。其中一幅插图基于本次展出的绘画作品《青年与海》（2020 年）稍作调整。《怪兽与水手》体现了“选择你自己的冒险”的主题基调，如同其灵感来源是著名小说系列《哈迪男孩》的书籍环衬，它在整个展览中也几乎充当了书立的功能。

长篇连载小说系列《哈迪男孩》首次出版于 1927 年，讲述了虚构的少年侦探弗兰克·哈迪和乔·哈迪的生活和冒险经历，他们面对的案件和谜题涵盖了成年人也束手无策的谋杀、贩毒、赛马诱拐、钻石走私、盗窃和间谍活动等。⁴ 在《怪兽与水手》中，巴斯同样描绘了踏上一系列冒险旅程的年轻人，他们战胜鲨鱼和巨型乌贼，捕猎海怪，直面章鱼或强劲暴风雨带来的潜在危险，甚至在背上绑上假鳍或蛇尾来扮演他们所寻找的“怪兽”。海洋和怪兽主题是巴斯熟悉的领域：自 21 世纪初，他已围绕此类主题创作了大量单幅绘画和系列作品。他对这两个主题的兴趣源于人类对未知的恐惧。巴斯回忆说：“我记得小时候看的第一部电影是《黑湖妖谭》。当时我还是个小孩，坐在电视机前看这部黑白电影。它给我留下了心理阴影。黑暗虚空的水面比外太空还要可怕。”⁵

巴斯对细节的极致追求在近五年的作品中展现得淋漓尽致，他通常选取一个主题，并围绕其构建错综复杂的分层叙事。这些作品的主角多是某个领域的“狂热爱好者”，痴迷于奇特、隐晦、神秘的事物。在一幅近作中，巴斯尝试处理最为声名狼藉的海怪题材之一“尼斯湖水怪”，虽然它并非来自美国文化，但尼斯湖水怪风靡全球的奇异传说已经成为众多影视作品的主题，也吸引了许多热衷于未知事物的人去执着探寻它背后的真相。在画作《怪兽猎人（或疯狂寻找尼斯湖水怪）》（2020 年）中，巴斯刻画了著名的尼斯湖水怪专家史蒂夫·费瑟姆：1991 年，为了解开尼斯湖水怪之谜，28 岁的费瑟姆把他的野营车停在苏格兰高地的尼斯湖岸边。他放弃家庭、工作和女友，热切渴望着一睹尼斯湖水怪的身影。时至今日，费瑟姆仍驻守在岸边，还因此创下了连续搜寻尼斯湖水怪最长时间的吉尼斯世界纪录。

巴斯并没有准确描绘费瑟姆的外貌特征，而是正如他自己所说：“更多是一种戏剧化处理，像犯罪剧里的案情再现或《未知之谜》里的情节。”⁶ 巴斯笔下的费瑟姆被各种与尼斯湖水怪相关的资料和装备所环绕，在开展其毕生搜寻的第一个月，他看上去年轻而充满希望。野营车的内饰细节，包括插画、卷起的地图、仪

⁴ “哈迪男孩推理故事书系列”，<https://hardyboys.us/>，访问日期 2021 年 1 月 19 日。

⁵ 赫尔南·巴斯，与作者的对话，2021 年 1 月 8 日和 2021 年 1 月 18 日。

⁶ 出处同上。



怪兽猎人 (或疯狂寻找尼斯湖水怪)

The Monster Hunter (or Desperately Seeking Nessie)
2020

布面丙烯、色胶、油墨转印

Acrylic, ink transfers and distemper on linen

183 × 152.2 cm

Severine Lim 收藏

Collection of Severine Lim

表盘上的尼斯湖游客纪念品、双筒望远镜和一摞书，都是基于巴斯对相关照片和文章的广泛研究，以及他用谷歌地图对费瑟姆野营车内饰进行勘察的结果。书架上的书均是艺术家个人的神秘学藏书。为了进一步突显费瑟姆对尼斯湖水怪的痴迷，巴斯幽默地刻画了费瑟姆用手影模仿人们熟悉的水怪轮廓。这些虚构而又贴近真实生活的细节常常映射出艺术家自身所关注的领域，像是某种自画像。尽管这类细节有时会被忽略，但对于好奇心旺盛的观众而言，这些半开玩笑的“彩蛋”和对特定历史事件的回应，让他们得以深入探寻巴斯的兴趣所在。

巴斯对历史细节及精准度的要求，常常会延伸到不同时期的建筑和设计，通过其画笔下美国景观的特质得以体现。在画作《最长旱季即将结束》(2020 年) 中，一个青年站在路边汽车旅馆旁干涸的泳池里，脚边的水桶盛满雨水。作品的标题为主角设定了场景（这也是巴斯的惯常做法），他身穿黑色卫衣，看上去疲惫、孤独，但却坚定。空旷的场景暗示着正经历一场自然灾害的劫后余生，甚至可能是僵尸入侵后的惨状。雨滴采用了夜光的丙烯颜料刻画，进一步加深了“反常”感。但巴斯最终仍将背景故事留给观众自己想象。

巴斯笔下的汽车旅馆占满画布背景，其设计灵感源自美国 20 世纪 60 年代风靡一时的路边汽车旅馆，那是当时各地自驾游客经常光顾的地方，也是恐怖片和后世末世电影中的重要场景。巴斯创作这幅作品的灵感来自当今流媒体平台上盛行的众多末日题材电视剧，包括《末日逼近》(1994/2020 年)、《行尸走肉》(2010 年始)、《惨雨》(2018 年始) 和《守望尘世》(2014 年始) 等。他说：“我看了很多反乌托邦主题的电视剧，所以，我希望把故事设定在一个世界末日后的场景里，旱灾摧毁了主角生活的地方。”⁷ 巴斯花了大量时间研究这一时期的汽车旅馆和泳池设计，最终借鉴了《结束的开始》中所描绘的样子。画面中的跳水板是汽车旅馆泳池曾经的标配，如今已被淘汰，暗示故事发生在上世纪 60 年代的美国乡村，那些生锈的水桶在当时的美国中西部农场也十分常见。黑色卫衣是唯一不属于这个时代的异类，带着一种模糊的暗示，也突出了人物略显神圣感的形象，他身后的线条划出泳道，也仿佛一排十字架。无论是构思特定的人物或事件，抑或是描绘虚构的场景或景观，这种多层次象征手法的运用始终是巴斯的标志性特征。

在本世纪头十年中期，巴斯创作了许多繁密的住宅和自然风景画，尽管景中人物刻画清晰，但感觉几乎像是周围环境的陪衬。在作品《粉色人造诱饵》(2016 年) 中，破败不堪的房屋前院里停放着两辆废旧的汽车，

⁷ 出处同上。



粉色人造诱饵 *Pink Plastic Lures*

2016

布面丙烯 Acrylic on linen

303.5 × 504.8 × 5.1 cm

Chao-Lee Collection, Hong Kong

一名年轻男子斜靠在其中一辆生锈的粉色凯迪拉克前。对巴斯而言,这幅画作描绘了“真正的佛罗里达”,与理想中的白色沙滩和湛蓝海水相去甚远。院子里杂草丛生,散落着木头碎片和破损的栅栏,房子几乎被棕榈树丛掩盖。荒废的院子和破旧的粉色凯迪拉克象征着美国梦的失败或破灭。院子里的纸箱装满了俗气的粉色人造火烈鸟,还有一些散落在四周。画中的年轻人头戴平顶硬草帽,身穿白色T恤和牛仔裤(借此致敬曾令人倾心的美国演员詹姆斯·迪恩),以敬畏的目光凝视着出现在一堆人造复制品(即诱饵)中的真正的火烈鸟。在这幅繁密的美国城市风景中,人造景观与自然交织碰撞。以大卫·霍克尼、爱德华·霍珀、阿尔贝特·比尔施塔特为代表的画家笔下所描绘的美国常展现人类与自然和谐共处的田园风光,相比之下,《粉色人造诱饵》呈现了新时代下美国的另一面。巴斯显然受到艺术前辈们的启发,更准确地描绘了工业化和全球化所导致的自然景观与人类居住者之间的抗衡。

在同时期的另一幅风景画《寻觅数周之后……(世界上最小的鸟)》(2015年)中,一个青年在纵横交错的繁茂树林间发现一只世界上最小的鸟儿栖息在枝头。这幅作品集中体现了在巴斯早期作品中占据重要地位的虚构景观。当艺术家偶然看到一张“世界上最小的鸟”的照片时,他想象有一个人“跌跌撞撞地穿过一片光怪陆离、杂乱无序的风景”。这一念头立即激发了他的灵感:“寻找未知和奇异的事物是我作品中持续出现的主题;在这幅画作里,我们勇敢的探险家最后在不经意间发现了他的战利品,世界上最小的鸟。”⁸有趣的是,两幅作品的主角(佛罗里达的年轻人和勇敢无畏的鸟类学家)都戴着类似的帽子,为看似当代的场景增添了一抹怀旧的色彩:前者的平顶硬草帽使人想起19世纪末和20世纪初的时装风格,而鸟类学家头上的帽子则与巴斯个人收藏的一幅古老的达盖尔银版照片(也可能来自19世纪)中一位古怪的探险家所戴的帽子相似。巴斯再一次利用能指,以非传统的方式来描绘一个融合了不同时空的、更为复杂的美国形象。

对赫尔南·巴斯的个展而言,“选择你自己的冒险”是一个恰到好处的标题,不仅因为它提示观众去“选择”自己想要的探索方式和内容,还在于它通过这种方式,让观众将自身的童年经历、记忆、幻想和恐惧代入叙事之中。巴斯无疑是一位讲故事的天才,他能够从各种类型和体裁的文学和影视作品中汲取灵感,将好奇心与探索欲注入每一幅画作,并以此为机制应对现实生活中的焦虑与恐惧。巴斯曾说:“总体而言,探险故事和冒险精神是我作品的一部分,也和我对《选择你自己的冒险》这套书的喜爱息息相关……这一点与我

⁸ 出处同上。

对可怕而深不可测事物的兴趣,全都互相交织在我的作品中。”⁹ 通过一系列冒险小说、怪兽故事、末日灾难、水手传说和探险旅程,巴斯深入探索了美国历史与文化,并将其汇集于这场为“大朋友”打造的“选择你自己的冒险”展览中。归根结底,这次展览仅仅是巴斯数十年艺术生涯中的一个章节,感兴趣的读者请继续关注赫尔南·巴斯下一章《选择你自己的……》。

文 / 安娜·斯托哈特 (独立策展人)

⁹ 出处同上。

Choose your own ... Hernan Bas:

The title of Hernan Bas' solo exhibition at Yuz Museum in Shanghai, China, *Choose Your Own Adventure*, references the collective title of a series of American children's books published by Bantam Books, wildly popular during the 1980s and 1990s. These books, meant to engage a more "active" reader, invite participants to assume the role of the protagonist and make narrative decisions that determine the plot's outcome. The characters range from private investigators to mountain climbers, from race car drivers to doctors and spies, offering a wide range of varied adventures and shenanigans one can get into. The tagline of the books reads: "You're the star of the story! Choose from 40 possible endings."¹ To a child, 40 potential endings may as well be one million; the possibilities are seemingly endless. It is not surprising that Bas was drawn to these books as a young boy, nor that he continues to consider them when devising the narrative structure for his paintings and the adventures his characters will undertake: "I've always pictured my figures as being in a choose-your-own-adventure book — the person looking at the painting can choose where the story is going."² While the works in this exhibition were produced from 2003 to 2021, in many ways the show's title could be considered an unspoken prompt for all of Bas' works.

Each work in *Choose Your Own Adventure* embodies the title in every sense of the word: you are invited onto a sailboat amidst a stormy sea, into a camper van on the hunt for the Loch Ness Monster, into the empty pool of a roadside motel after the apocalypse, or onto the front yard of a Miami home strewn with plastic pink flamingos. Bas' cultural references are similarly diverse; they range from Ernest Hemingway to the Hardy Boys, from the Guinness Book of World Records to tales of sea monsters, from mundane scenes of domestic life to expeditions in the wilderness. However, there is a distinctly American throughline that connects each work, specifically related to the oddball, wonderful, strange Floridian sensibility he encountered as a child. Born in Miami and raised both there and in northern Florida, Bas experienced a unique version of America — one that embraced a belief in monsters, ghosts, and aliens. "I had an early interest in the occult growing up where I did," he explains, "Florida was a very strange environment. The idea of UFOs and ghosts were just commonplace for me, which I didn't

¹ "You're the star of the story: Remembering CYOA (Choose Your Own Adventure) Books," accessed January 19, 2021, <https://flashbak.com/youre-star-story-remembering-cyoa-choose-adventure-books-38559/>.

² Nancy Spector, "Hernan Bas in Conversation with Nancy Spector," in *Hernan Bas*, ed. Matt Price, (New York: Rizzoli International Publications, 2014), 60.

realize was weird until many years later.”³ This geographical hotbed of paranormal and obscure aspects of American history and culture feeds Bas’ narrative curiosities and often sparks the beginning of a new series or painting that is deeply, almost obsessively, researched. Every detail of every painting, regardless of its apparent insignificance, has a precise function in relation to the overarching story that Bas chronicles.

The most recent work in the exhibition, *Monsters and Mariners* (2021), is a large-scale wallpaper mural comprised of 23 vignettes of young fishermen, sailors, explorers, and divers — and the real or imagined dangers that exist in the sea. Covering two major walls in the exhibition (on top of which paintings hang), this work provides the connective tissue for the last 15 years of Bas’ career. While most of the vignettes are new “scenes,” many are inspired by Bas’ previous works focused on the sea, like *A Little Moby Dick in All of Us* from 2003 that similarly depicts young men contending with the power of the ocean and the creatures that inhabit it. One of the vignettes is a slightly modified illustration of one of the works featured in the exhibition, *The Young Man & the Sea* (2020). *Monsters and Mariners* embodies the thematic underpinning of *Choose Your Own Adventure* and functions almost as bookends for the exhibition, like the endpapers of the well-known series, *The Hardy Boys*, from which it was inspired.

A long-running series of books first published in 1927, *The Hardy Boys* portrays the lives and adventures of fictional teen sleuths Frank and Joe Hardy, who find themselves solving crimes and mysteries that bewilder their adult counterparts — murder, drug peddling, race-horse kidnapping, diamond smuggling, burglaries, and espionage.⁴ In *Monsters and Mariners*, Bas similarly depicts young men embarking on a series of adventures — triumphing over sharks and giant squids, hunting a sea monster, facing potential peril from an octopus or violent storm, and even embodying the “monsters” they seek by wearing fake fins or serpent tails strapped to their backs. For Bas, maritime and monster themes are familiar territory; since the early 2000s he has created numerous individual works and series based on these subjects. His interest in both resides in the human fear of the unknown. “The first film I ever recall watching as a child

³ *Ibid*, 59.

⁴ “The Hardy Boys Mystery Books,” accessed January 19, 2021, <https://hardyboys.us/>.

was *Creature from the Black Lagoon*. I was a little kid and I remember sitting in front of the TV, watching this black and white movie.” Bas recalls, “It traumatized me. The dark void of the water is even scarier than space.”⁵

Bas’ obsessive attention to detail is most notable in the work he has made over the past five years, where he takes a single subject and builds a complexly layered narrative around it. Many of these works feature “enthusiasts” whose obsessions are oriented toward the odd, obscure, and occult. In one recent work, Bas tackles one of the most infamous sea monsters in the world, the Loch Ness Monster. Though not distinctly American, the international reputation of Nessie (her common name) and the lore that surrounds her has been the subject of numerous TV series, films, and the fixation of many who are drawn to the unexplained. In *The Monster Hunter (or Desperately Seeking Nessie)* (2020), Bas portrays Steve Feltham, the notorious Loch Ness Monster hunter who in 1991 at the age of 28 parked his campervan on the shore of Loch Ness in the Scottish Highlands in search of Nessie. Giving up his home, job, and girlfriend, Feltham’s feverish desire to catch a glimpse of the Monster has kept him on that shore to this day, granting him the Guinness World Record for the longest continuous hunt for the Loch Ness Monster.

Bas’ representation of Feltham is not an accurate depiction of his likeness, but rather, as Bas describes, “more of a dramatization, like a crime show reenactment or something from *Mysteries of the Unknown*.”⁶ Feltham is portrayed surrounded by every kind of Nessie paraphernalia, young and hopeful in just the first month of his life-long search. The details of the van’s interior — the illustrations and rolled maps, a small tourist trinket of Nessie on the dashboard, the binoculars and stacks of books — are all based on Bas’ extensive research into photographs, articles, and his Google Map explorations of the interior of Feltham’s van. The books on the shelf are all from the artist’s personal occult library, and to further emphasize the hunter’s deep fascination Bas humorously depicts Feltham making a shadow puppet gesture that resembles the cliché outline of Nessie. Such fictional and true-to-life details in Bas’ work

⁵ Hernan Bas, conversation with author, January 8, 2021 and January 18, 2021.

⁶ *Ibid.*



最长旱季即将结束

The Start of the End of the Longest Drought

2020

布面丙烯 Acrylic on linen

213.4 × 182.9 cm

私人收藏, 韩国

Private collection, Korea

often hint at the artist's own preoccupations, and offer a self-portrait of sorts. While these details may at times go unnoticed, for those curious enough, these tongue-in-cheek attributes and nods to historic specificity allow viewers to go as deep into the abyss of Bas' interests as they choose.

Bas' devotion to historical detail and accuracy often extends to period architecture and design, manifesting itself in the idiosyncrasies of the American landscapes he invokes. In *The Start of the End of the Longest Drought* (2020), a young man stands in the empty pool of a roadside motel surrounded by buckets filling up with rain. Bas' title (as is often the case in his work) sets the stage for the protagonist who, adorned in a black hoodie, looks tired and forlorn, yet resolute. The vacant scene suggests that we are witnessing the aftermath of a catastrophic environmental event or perhaps even a zombie invasion. The rain is painted with glow-in-the-dark acrylic, contributing further to the feeling that something is "awry." Ultimately, however, Bas leaves the backstory for the viewer to decide.

The design of Bas' motel that occupies the background of the painting is inspired by the once-ubiquitous roadside motels from the 1960s that were frequented by tourists on road trips across the United States and often figure prominently in horror films and post-apocalyptic movies. According to Bas, this work was inspired by the myriad doomsday TV series that are prevalent on today's streaming platforms, including *The Stand* (1994/2020), *The Walking Dead* (2010–), *The Rain* (2018–), and *The Leftovers* (2014–), just to name a few. "I have been watching a lot of dystopian TV so I wanted this scene to take place amidst a post-apocalyptic landscape," he states, "where something like a drought has decimated the land where the character lives."⁷ Bas spent a significant amount of time researching motels and pool designs from this period, finally landing on the one depicted in *The Beginning of the End*. The diving board, a now obsolete accessory of motel pools, locates us in rural America during the 1960s, as do the rusted buckets once common to farms in the Midwest. The black hoodie is the only temporal outlier, inviting a hint of ambiguity and accentuating the somewhat saintly appearance

⁷ Ibid.

of the figure who stands amidst the lines that demarcate swimming lanes, but here resembles a row of crosses. This type of layered symbolism is Bas' signature gesture, whether he is conjuring a specific person or event or a fictionalized scene or landscape.

During the mid-2000s Bas created a number of dense domestic and natural landscapes where the figure, though clearly articulated, feels almost secondary to the surrounding environment. In *Pink Plastic Lures* (2016) a young man leans against a rusted pink Cadillac (one of two broken-down cars) in his ramshackle front yard. For Bas, this painting depicts the "real Florida," which counters idealized tropes of white sandy beaches and crystal blue waters. The yard is littered with scraps of wood, broken pieces of fencing, and overgrown plants. The house is barely visible from behind the cluster of palm trees. The rundown appearance of the yard and dilapidated pink Cadillac represent the failure or loss of the American Dream. A cardboard box filled with kitschy, plastic pink flamingos sits in the yard with others strewn about. The young man, adorned with a straw boater hat, a white t-shirt, and jeans (a nod to American actor and heartthrob James Dean) stares at the real flamingo that has appeared amidst its artificial replicas (the lures) in awe. Artifice and nature clash in this dense rendering of an urban American landscape. *Pink Plastic Lures* offers an alternative, updated version to the America represented by the painters such as David Hockney, Edward Hopper, and Albert Bierstadt, who often depicted idyllic scenes of humans living in perfect harmony with nature. Bas, clearly inspired by his predecessors, presents a more accurate depiction of the landscape contending with its human inhabitants as a result of industrialization and globalization.

In another landscape from this period, *After Weeks of Searching... (the Smallest Bird in the World)* (2015), a young man stands amidst a lush tangled environment having found the smallest bird in the world sitting atop a branch. This work epitomizes the imaginary landscapes that figure prominently in Bas' earlier work. When the artist came across an image of "the smallest bird in the world," he envisioned a person "stumbling through a landscape that is fanciful and behaves in a more chaotic way than nature actually does." This idea immediately inspired him:



寻觅数周之后..... (世界上最小的鸟)

After Weeks of Searching... (the Smallest Bird in the World)

2015

布面丙烯 Acrylic on linen

182.9 × 304.8 × 5.1 cm

私人收藏, 韩国 Private collection, Korea

“seeking the unknown and the bizarre is a running theme in my work, and in this case our intrepid explorer finally stumbles on his prize, the smallest bird in the world.”⁸ Interestingly, both protagonists (our Florida man and our fearless ornithologist) are wearing similar hats that add a layer of nostalgia to what is a seemingly contemporary scene — the boater hat recalls a late 19th– and early 20th–century style while the ornithologist sports a hat similar to one worn by an odd explorer depicted in an old Daguerreotype (also likely from the 19th century) from Bas’ personal collection. Once again, Bas plays with signifiers in order to portray a more complex depiction of America that combines disparate times and spaces in often unorthodox ways.

Choose Your Own Adventure is a title befitting a Hernan Bas exhibition not simply because of the prompt it offers the viewer to “choose” how and what to explore, but also because it presents a way into the narrative through one’s own childhood experiences, memories, fantasies, and fears. Bas is inarguably a gifted storyteller whose ability to draw upon every variety and genre of literature, TV, and film infuses each painting with curiosity and wonder, using these as mechanisms to grapple with real life anxieties and horrors. Bas has stated that “narratives of expeditions and engaging a sense of adventure is part of [my] work in general, [and] ties back to my love of the *Choose Your Own Adventure* books... that and my interest in the horrific and deep unknown all fold into each other in my work.”⁹ Bas’ exploration of American history and culture through serial adventure novels, monster stories, the apocalypse, mariner tales, and exploration come together in *Choose Your Own Adventure* as a made-for-adult version of the children’s book series. Ultimately, this exhibition is only one chapter in Bas’ decades-long career — interested readers should stay tuned for the next installment of Hernan Bas’ *Choose Your Own*...

Text / Anna Stothart (Independent Curator)

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ *Ibid.*

About the artist
关于艺术家

怯场的小丑

The Harlequin, Stage Fright

2006

板上丙烯、油彩和水粉

Acrylic, oil and gouache on panel

30.5 × 25.4 cm

Brian 和 Elva 收藏

Collection of Brian & Elva





赫尔南·巴斯肖像
Portrait of Hernan Bas
2017

赫尔南·巴斯, 1978 年出生于迈阿密, 1996 年毕业于迈阿密新世界艺术学院, 现生活、工作于底特律和迈阿密。巴斯的作品已经在许多国际艺术机构展出, 主要个展包括上海余德耀美术馆 (2021 年)、首尔 K 空间 (2021 年)、马拉加当代艺术中心 (2018 年)、沃特维尔科尔比学院艺术博物馆 (2018 年)、萨凡纳艺术设计学院博物馆 (2017 年)、迈阿密巴斯艺术博物馆 (2013 年)、布鲁克林博物馆 (2009 年)、迈阿密鲁贝尔家族珍藏馆 (2007 年) 等; 重要群展包括第 53 届威尼斯双年展 (2009 年)、惠特尼双年展 (2004 年) 等。

巴斯的作品被许多私人收藏, 并被安大略省美术馆、布鲁克林艺术博物馆、底特律艺术学院、赫希洪博物馆和雕塑园、洛杉矶当代艺术博物馆、北迈阿密当代艺术博物馆、波士顿美术馆、纽约现代艺术博物馆、费城艺术博物馆、旧金山现代艺术博物馆、惠特尼美国艺术馆等机构永久收藏。

Hernan Bas was born in Miami in 1978. He currently lives and works in Detroit and Miami. Bas received a degree from the New World School of the Arts, Miami, in 1996. He has participated in a number of important exhibitions. Solo exhibitions of his work have been organized by Yuz Museum, Shanghai (2021); Space K, Seoul (2021); Centro De Arte Contemporáneo Málaga, Málaga (2018); Colby College Museum of Art, Waterville (2018); SCAD Museum of Art, Savannah (2017); Bass Museum of Art, Miami (2013); Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn (2009); the Rubell Family Collection, Miami (2007) and etc. Important group exhibitions include the 53rd Venice Biennale (2009), the Whitney Biennial (2004) and etc.

His work is in many private collections as well as the permanent collections of the Art Gallery of Ontario, Brooklyn Museum of Art, Detroit Institute of Arts, Hirschhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, Museum of Contemporary Art, North Miami, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Museum of Modern Art, New York, Philadelphia Museum of Art, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, and the Whitney Museum of American Art.

本展册为配合余德耀美术馆 2021 年 10 月 27 日至 2022 年 1 月 9 日举办的展览《赫尔南·巴斯：选择你自己的冒险》特别制作。

This brochure was produced in conjunction with the exhibition “Hernan Bas: Choose Your Own Adventure” at Yuz Museum from October 27, 2021 to January 9, 2022.

封面、封底 Covers

爆米花项链 *The Popcorn Necklace* (局部 detail)

2020

布面丙烯 Acrylic on linen

213.4 × 182.9 cm

私人收藏, 韩国 Private collection, Korea

封二、封三 Endpapers

怪兽与水手 *Monsters and Mariners*

2021

墙纸 Wallpaper

尺寸可变 Dimensions variable

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此次展览由余德耀美术馆策划并与韩国首尔 Space K 合作呈现

This exhibition is organized by Yuz Museum in collaboration with Space K, Seoul, Korea

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