LEHMANN MAUPIN

Adriana Varejão
Polvo
April 24 – June 21, 2014
540 W 26th Street, New York, NY

Press Preview: Wednesday, April 23, 2014, 10AM-12PM
Opening Reception: Thursday, April 24, 2014, 6-8PM

Adriana Varejão, *Polvo Oil Colors*, 2013. Wooden box with acrylic cover, containing 33 aluminum oil paint tubes, 14 ⅛ x 20 ⅛ x 3 ⅛ in. Courtesy the artist and Lehmann Maupin, New York and Hong Kong.

New York, April 3, 2014—For her fifth exhibition with the gallery, Lehmann Maupin is pleased to present a solo exhibition of new works by one of Brazil's leading artists, Adriana Varejão, opening April 24, 2014. Through painting, sculpture, installation and photography, Varejão addresses themes of colonialism, miscegenation and anthropology in Brazil, one of the most ethnically diverse countries in the world. The artist will be present for an opening reception on Thursday, April 24 from 6 to 8PM.

Varejão's newest body of work, *Polvo*, expands her exploration of miscegenation—the mixture of races—with a series of self-portraits that highlights the spectrum of interracial identity in Brazil, where historically race has assumed a social and cultural function. Varejão often uses the term *mestizaje,* as it embodies the concept of miscegenation, though indiscriminate of the combination of ethnicities.

Varejão's influences include the baroque, history and ceramics, as well as art history; she weaves these together to show the impact of the Euro-centric worldview on the New World. Colonial Spanish *casta* paintings, a 17th and 18th century genre characteristic of New Spain and particularly prevalent in colonial Mexico that sought to document the varieties of interracial mixing in an attempt to classify and frame racial diversity and hybridity throughout a complex caste system, and a 1976 racial census issued by the Brazilian government, served as inspiration for this series. The government survey asked Brazilian citizens to describe their own skin color,

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resulting in 136 different metaphorical descriptions. From these Varejão selected the most linguistically poetic descriptions, varying from *Sapecada* (Flirting with Freckles), *Café com Leite* (Milky Coffee), *Burro quando Foge* (Faded Fawn) and *Queimada de Sol* (Sun Kissed), and depicts herself as she envisions with each of these skin tones. The artist groups these works together as triptychs, so that comparisons can be made between the various self-assessments of race.

Varejão also created her own set of oil paints as part of the series, which will be displayed alongside the portraits. Branded by the artist under the name *Polvo* (meaning "octopus" in Portuguese), each color of flesh-toned paint in the set corresponds with the descriptions from the survey. The logo of the octopus was chosen as its dark-colored ink consists primarily of melanin, the same natural pigmentation found in human hair and skin. The sets will be accompanied by two color wheel paintings depicting the various shades of *Polvo* oil paints.

Varejão's first solo museum exhibition in the United States will take place at the Institute of Contemporary Art Boston in November 2014. The exhibition will feature a survey of her work from 1988 to 2014, including paintings from the *Polvo* series.

About Adriana Varejão

Born in 1964 in Rio de Janeiro, where she lives and works, Adriana Varejão is one of Brazil's leading contemporary artists. Her work is included in the permanent collections of the Tate Modern, London; the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; the Hara Museum, Tokyo; the Fondation Cartier pour l'art contemporain, Paris; Fundación "la Caixa", Barcelona; and the Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego, among others. Varejão has exhibited extensively internationally, with solo shows at the Fondation Cartier pour l'art contemporain, Paris (2005); Hara Museum, Japan (2007); Museu de Arte Moderna de Sao Paulo, Brazil (2012); Museu de Arte Moderna do Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (2013) and Museo de Arte Latinoamericano de Buenos Aires, Argentina (2013). Varejão's work was included in the São Paulo Biennial (1994 and 1998), Sydney Biennial (2001), Site Santa Fé (2004), Mercosul Biennial in Visual Art, Brazil (1997 and 2005), Liverpool Biennial (1999 and 2006) and 12th International Istanbul Biennial, Turkey (2011), among others. Most recently her work was featured prominently in *Cruzamentos: Contemporary Art in Brazil* at the Wexner Center for the Arts in Columbus, OH and in *Imagine Brazil* at the Astrup Fearnley Museet in Oslo, Norway. She also has a permanent pavilion devoted to her work at the Centro de Arte Contemporânea Inhotim in Brazil that opened in 2008.

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 three locations—two in New York and one in Hong Kong—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.

Upcoming Exhibitions
Lee Bul, May 2–June 21, 2014, New York
Hernan Bas, *Case Studies*, May 13–June 28, 2014, Hong Kong
Mickalene Thomas, *Tête de Femme*, June 26–August 8, 2014, New York
Gilbert & George, June 26–August 8, 2014, New York

For more information on Adriana Varejão or other gallery artists, please contact Marta de Movellan at Lehmann Maupin on +1 212 255 2923 or visit www.lehmannmaupin.com.

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