

Nicholas Hlobo
February 24-April 17, 2016
201 Chrystie Street, New York
#nicholashlobo

Opening Reception: Wednesday, February 24, 6-8PM



igqabhuk' 'imphunga' (detail), 2016, ribbons and leather on Belgian linen canvas, 47.2 x 35.4 x 1.9 in, 120 x 90 x 5 cm. Courtesy the artist and Lehmann Maupin, New York and Hong Kong.

New York, February 9, 2016—Lehmann Maupin is pleased to announce its inaugural exhibition for South African artist, **Nicholas Hlobo**. Presenting both mixed media on canvas paintings as well as leather and wood sculptures, Hlobo's newest body of work makes use of the migratory patterns of eels as a point of departure, and reconsiders as allegory the personal transformation necessary to his own artistic journey. Centered around organic and corporeal imagery, the exhibition elaborates on recurring themes of the artist's

concern with beauty, pain, pleasure, and cycles of life. **The artist will be present for an opening reception at the gallery on Wednesday, February 24 from 6-8PM.**

Hlobo (pronounced *sloh-boh*) is known for his intricate, sprawling installations that incorporate organic sculptures, performance, work on paper, and video installations. He employs tactile materials such as ribbon, leather, wood and rubber, which he often melds and weaves to create his two- and three-dimensional works. By incorporating influences from his ethnic and cultural background such as the Xhosa language and references to traditional craft, ritual, sexual orientation, gender, and nationality into his works, Hlobo address the constant shifting and subjective nature inherent in these identifiers. The eradication of legalized discrimination and segregation that came with the end of Apartheid in 1994 saw Hlobo and his peers empowered to voice their views under the protection of new laws. This fundamental right to challenge political and societal issues has been exercised and articulated at the core of Hlobo's work in the years since.

In his first solo gallery show in New York, Hlobo will present a number of new works inspired by the migratory patterns of eels. Cut and stitched together, and woven with leather, the works on canvas (referred to by the artist as paintings) are given greater dimensionality through handmade impressions, which echo the sculptures made of a tree trunk and stump embellished with leather. Hlobo also incorporates found objects into his works. In the work *Umkhokeli*, which roughly translates to "leader" or "master," he uses a vintage leather flagpole holster, sewn into tentacle-like ribbon embroidery and fashions it with a leather phallus in place of a flag,

For the artist, the mating ritual of eels is ripe with metaphor. The animals spend the majority of their solitary lives near the shoreline, but swim thousands of miles to the deep ocean when biologically called to spawn, and, ultimately die after their final progenerative act. It is the eels' abandonment of familiar territory for the ocean's unknown depths that resonates with Hlobo; the voyage of the eels is symbolic of the existential notions of transformation in the artist's personal creative journey that is guided by the subconscious. The belief in artistic instinct is essential to Hlobo, who begins production of any piece free from preconception or planned aesthetic result.

Concurrent with his exhibition at Lehmann Maupin, Hlobo's work will also be included in several major museum shows including the solo exhibition, *Imilonji Yembali (Melodies of History)* at Museum Beelden aan Zee, The Hague, Netherlands, on view from February 13-May 16, 2016; as well as group exhibitions, History, Art, Architecture and Design from the 80s to Now, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, on view through March 7, 2016.

About the artist

Nicholas Hlobo (b. 1975, Cape Town, South Africa) received a Fine Art degree from Johannesburg's Technikon Witwatersrand in 2002. Hlobo's exhibition history includes solo exhibitions at Locust Project, Miami (2013); National Museum of Art, Architecture and Design, Oslo (2011); Savannah College of Art and Design, Lacoste, France (2010); Tate Modern, London (2008); the Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston (2008); and SCAD Museum of Art, Savannah (2007). He has participated in several international biennials and notable group exhibitions including The Divine Comedy, Museum fur Moderne Kunst, Frankfurt (2014); 18th Biennale of Sydney (2012); 54th Venice Biennale (2011); La Triennale at the Palais de Tokyo, Paris (2012);

Liverpool Biennial (2010); Guangzhou Triennial, China (2008); and Flow at The Studio Museum in Harlem (2008). Hlobo's work is included in numerous collections including the South African National Art Gallery, Cape Town; SCAD Museum of Art, Savannah; Tate Modern, London; and Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris. The artist lives and works in Johannesburg, South Africa.

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.

Current & Upcoming Exhibitions

Catherine Opie, Portraits and Landscapes, through March 5, 2016 & 700 Nimes Road, through February 20, 2016, New York, West 22nd Street & Chrystie Street

Tony Oursler, PriV%te, through March 5, 2016, Hong Kong, Pedder Building

Hernan Bas, Bright Young Things, March 10-April 23, 2016, New York, West 22nd Street

Tracey Emin, I Cried Because I Love You, March 21-May 21, 2016, Hong Kong, Pedder Building

Adriana Varejão, Kindred Spirits, April 21-June 19, 2016, New York, Chrystie Street

Tracey Emin, May 5-June 18, 2016, West 22nd Street

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

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