

**Robin Rhode**

***The Geometry of Colour***

**January 18—February 24, 2018**

**536 West 22nd Street, New York, NY**

@lehmannmaupin | #robinrhode

**Opening Reception:** Thursday, January 18, 6-8 PM



*Joints (detail)*, 2017, c-print, 4 parts, each: 21.69 x 28.58 inches, 55.1 x 72.6 cm. Courtesy the artist and Lehmann Maupin, New York and Hong Kong.

a wall in Johannesburg where he and his team have worked since 2011. In *The Geometry of Colour*, Rhode sets forth to make a case for the role of art in developing the skepticism and spirituality he views as necessary to challenge a surge of global divisiveness. The gallery will host an opening reception for the artist on Thursday, January 18, from 6 to 8 PM at 536 West 22nd Street.

Rhode has established his unique practice with a multifold approach, working across media, including drawing, performance, photography, video, and music. As a young artist inspired by the rebellion and possibility of graffiti, he was first drawn to working in public, unsanctioned spaces. Since then, his practice has evolved to become more closely aligned with and influenced by the minimal wall drawings of Sol Lewitt, and the 1970s performance work of artists such as Vito Acconci and Bruce Nauman, as well as earlier art historical references such as Eadweard Muybridge's stop-motion photography.

In *The Geometry of Colour*, Rhode utilizes geometric articulation of space, together with color theory—another optical science—to visualize the complexities of human nature and the political and economic

*In order to save himself from this chaos, in order to provide himself with a bearable, acceptable framework for his existence, one productive of human well-being and control, man has projected the laws of nature into a system that is a manifestation of the human spirit itself: geometry.*

—Le Corbusier

New York, December 19, 2017—Lehmann Maupin is pleased to present *The Geometry of Colour*, an exhibition of new work by South Africa-born, Berlin-based artist Robin Rhode. This recent series culminates Rhode's well-known work engaging the public through cooperative visual and performance art, documented through c-print photographs, at

systems established in its image. *Under the Sun* (2017) was inspired by the artist's trip to Israel and the Palestinian territories last year while he was preparing for his current exhibition at the Tel Aviv Museum of Art. Struck by the similarity of today's treatment of Palestinians to the divisive history of South Africa, Rhode was inspired to produce images of the sun's rays as metaphor for both the political and atmospheric climates that the regions share. In a nod to religious architecture and spiritual associations with the sun, Rhode treats the squares of color representing gradients of sunlight as stained glass or a mosaic across 36 photographs. A doppelgänger of the artist alternates between basking in and shielding himself from the light depicted in the shifting spectrum. Rhode's sun rays are an additional contribution to the long representational history of the sun, both as a benevolent father figure, and a symbol of victory and might, found throughout the monotheistic religions. The rays also revisit the theme of light as a sociopolitical issue—the expansion of the electrical grid to serve black townships was an early achievement of the African National Congress under Nelson Mandela—that he has addressed in previous works.

Coming of age among the first generation of post-apartheid South Africans, Rhode has long made it his mission to engage with the realities of poverty, crime, and violence that plague many developing and postcolonial societies. However, Rhode approaches this grim subject matter with consummate whimsy and play, capturing the sentiments of spontaneity and freedom that accompanied the legal and civic opening of South Africa. He is dedicated to producing works within Johannesburg—specifically returning to the same wall within a gang-controlled territory at risk to himself and his team—to introduce material that is nuanced, politically aware, and relevant to art history. This underscores his commitment to return the resources and recognition he has received abroad to the community and local artists he identifies with and works alongside. Rhode emphasizes the reciprocal and collaborative nature of his work, saying, "The reactions and responses of the people on the street, the conditions pervading that particular process—that's part of the narrative."

### **About the artist**

Robin Rhode (b. 1976, Cape Town, South Africa; lives and works in Berlin) studied at the University of Johannesburg as well as at the Association of Film and Dramatic Arts (AFDA), from 1996 to 2001. Solo exhibitions of his work have been organized by the Tel Aviv Museum of Art, Israel (2017); Savannah College of Art and Design Museum of Art, GA (2016); The Drawing Center, New York (2015); Neuberger Museum of Art, Purchase, NY (2014); National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, Australia (2013); Los Angeles County Museum of Art (2010); Wexner Center for the Arts, Columbus, OH (2009); Hayward Gallery, London (2008); and Haus der Kunst, Munich, Germany (2007). Select group exhibitions featuring his work include *Synthesize: Art + Music*, Museum of Contemporary Art Jacksonville, FL (2017); *Shifting Views: People and Politics in Contemporary African Art*, Baltimore Museum of Art, MD (2016-2017); PERFORMA 15, *Arnold Schönberg's Erwartung - A Performance by Robin Rhode*, New York (2015), *Making Africa. A Continent of Contemporary Design*, Vitra Design Museum, Weil am Rhein, Germany, traveled to the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao, Spain (2015); *DRAWING NOW*, Albertina, Vienna, Austria (2015), *GOLD*, Bass Museum of Art, Miami (2014); *Staging Action: Performance in Photography Since 1960*, The Museum of Modern Art, New

York (2011); and *New Photography*, The Museum of Modern Art, New York (2005). Rhode has participated in multiple biennials and triennials, including the Busan Biennale (2017), 56th Venice Biennale (2015); 18th Biennale of Sydney (2012); Yokohama Triennial, Yokohama Museum of Art, Japan (2005); and the 51st Venice Biennale (2005). His work is included in numerous public collections, including the Castello di Rivoli, Turin; Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris; Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, D.C.; Miami Art Museum; Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, France; The Museum of Modern Art, New York; Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; and Walker Art Center, Minneapolis.

### **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 locations in New York, Hong Kong, and Seoul, 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**

Gilbert & George, *THE BEARD PICTURES*, through December 22, 2017, West 22nd Street & 201 Chrystie Street, NEW YORK

Teresita Fernández, *Rise and Fall*, through December 30, 2017, Pedder Building, HONG KONG

Alex Prager, January 18—March 17, 2018, Pedder Building, HONG KONG

OSGEMEOS, *Déjà Vu*, March 26—May 12, 2018, Pedder Building, HONG KONG

For more information about Robin Rhode or other Lehmann Maupin artists, please contact Marta de Movellan or Kathryn McKinney at +1 212 255 2923, or visit [lehmannmaupin.com](http://lehmannmaupin.com).

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