

**PRESSBOOK**

Hernan BAS

*Flash Art Internationa*

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## HERNAN BAS

EMMANUEL PERROTIN - PARIS

Hernan Bas's exhibition "Thirty-Six Unknown Poets (or, Decorative Objects for the Homosexual Home)" features three screens and numerous drawings in celebration of the *poètes maudits* (accursed poets). Bas has used gold leaf for the first time in these drawings, which consequently have a shimmering, precious and iconic quality. They depict lean young men reminiscent of the figures of Egon Schiele or Gustav Klimt, or of contemporary film and fashion icons (the models or actors of Hedi Slimane, Raf Simons, Larry Clark or Gus Van Sant); these androgynous youths are shown in melancholy, contemplative poses that stand out against backgrounds combining lush vegetation and gestural abstraction — tortured backdrops for tortured minds. Here, all is sensuality, eroticism, glorification of the beauty of youth. According to Mark Clintberg, Hernan Bas directly acknowledges "the skinny kid, or twink, as desirable. What might be construed as mere representation of a prepubescent form is actually a social construct, an objectified male body type."

There's also something nostalgic and sentimental in the work, which draws inspiration from the literary and artistic culture

of the late 19th century, from the romanticism and decadence of Lautréamont, Huysmans, Wilde and Thoreau. For his show, Bas "wanted to focus on the writers themselves as opposed to their words." But why the figure of the poet as a starting point for the whole exhibition? "In the past few years," says Bas, "that often misunderstood genre of the literary arts known simply as poetry has become a strong influence on the things I make. All of the things I look for can be found in the words of Poe, Frost, Keats or Plath."

While preparing his show, the artist's consideration of these poet luminaries made him consider the other side of immortality, the forgotten. He set out to paint these unknown (and invented) poets — a suite of portraits for those who may have loved to call themselves poets but never published a word.

*Timothée Chaillou*

HERNAN BAS, Decorative screen for the foyer of a homosexuals summer home (empty pool), 2012. Three panel folding screen, acrylic and genuine gold and silver leaf on linen mounted in a birch-wood and genuine gold leaf frame, 137 x 183 x 5 cm. Courtesy Galerie Perrotin, Hong Kong & Paris. Photo: André Morin.

