

>DEPART

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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MICHAEL PYBUS: PEAK HUMAN

APRIL 13 – JUNE 3, 2017



PUBLIC OPENING THURSDAY, APRIL 13, 2017, 6-9PM

DEPART Foundation, 9105 West Sunset Boulevard, Los Angeles, CA 90069

Los Angeles, CA., - DEPART Foundation will present *Michael Pybus: PEAK HUMAN*, its first exhibition of works by the London-based mixed-media artist. A satirical blurring of boundaries and hierarchical relationships, *PEAK HUMAN* is a playful admixture of high and low. Hijacking the visual language of commercial consumption, Hollywood stargazing, and popular entertainment franchises, Pybus irreverently dissolves the graded divisions between the little known and the branded, the world of design and that of mass consumption, with the rarified vernaculars of fine art.

PEAK HUMAN will include a series of large-scale, collage paintings in which Pybus appropriates imagery from iconic sources. Recognizable are references to artworks by the likes of Warhol and Hokusai, Nintendo video game characters, Pokémon, and graphics from commercial design. Pybus creates amalgams of readily familiar brands in a commentary on the indiscriminate power of branding, while also referring to his cooptation of this fame. The freedom with which Pybus borrows objects, images, and references, captures varying forms of desire, whether it be the covetous satisfaction of consuming through retail, aspirational fantasies, or the familiar din of popular culture.

The exhibition will also include an installation component in the form of an IKEA living room showroom set up which will provide the viewing environment for his new video piece *Growing Vegetables*.

Pybus will also be premiering a series of reinterpreted red-carpet couture dresses, recalling three celebrities – Elizabeth Taylor, Jodie Foster and Jennifer Lawrence - at the height of their fame as Academy Award winners. Made in collaboration with his fashion designer sister Joanna Pybus, these garments replicate the design and proportions of the originals but are refashioned in loud, bombastic collage prints featuring many of the characters and artworks he samples in his paintings. Through this annexed gesture, Pybus stakes his claim on the generative myths of status and celebrity, past, and present.

PEAK HUMAN follows Michael Pybus's exhibition *A Hollywood Garden* at The Cabin LA for which he completed a month-long residency in Los Angeles. Upcoming North American exhibitions include *HIVE MIND* opening at Jonathan Hopson Gallery in Houston on April 23 and a solo presentation at Thierry Goldberg Gallery in New York City in June 2017.

In-kind media support is provided by KCET.

MICHAEL PYBUS

Michael Pybus hijacks capitalist brands and icons as a means to create an instant 'relationship' with the audience. They may not know his work, but everyone knows and has a relationship with brands and icons such as IKEA and Pikachu (love/hate or indifference). Pybus processes this iconography through collage and painting to allow his source material to deviate into new readings and narratives. Through doing so, Michael lays claim to mass market iconography linking it to his own brand as an artist, transforming the globally generic into the customized and autobiographical.

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DEPART Foundation provides an alternative platform for creative experimentation and exploration, set within a global context, that thrives outside of conventional, cultural structures. The impact of its work can best be understood as the charting of new artistic destinations with every project and program it undertakes.

Since its founding in 2008, DEPART Foundation has served as a catalyst for the Italian art and cultural community, strengthening the dialogue between Italy and the international art world. Like multiple outposts in Europe and U.S., DEPART Foundation has actively encouraged artistic production through sponsorship of young and established artists and the provision of spaces and resources conducive to the research, production and exhibition of new work, and to the presentation of educational and public programs.

Some of the most interesting and dynamic artists of our time, from around the world, have been presented for the first time in Rome by DEPART Foundation. They include Cory Arcangel, Joe Bradley, Nate Lowman, Ryan McGinley, Tauba Auerbach, Darren Bader, Louis Eisner, Roe Ethridge, Sam Falls, Mark Flood, Elias Hansen, Brendan Lynch, Oscar Murillo, Sarah Braman, Seth Price, Jon Rafman, Stephen G. Rhodes, Amanda Ross-Ho, Sterling Ruby, Lucien Smith, Valerie Snobeck and Frances Stark.

Depart Foundation in Los Angeles has presented solo exhibitions of work by Gabriele de Santis, Kour Pour, Grear Patterson, Petra Cortright, Mark Horowitz, Giorgio Andreotta Calo, Cameron Platter and Edward S. Curtis.

ULAY: *The Animist* is now on view till April 1, 2017

Image credits: Left: *Peak Human*, courtesy of the artist. Right: *Kick!* 2017 Acrylic and UV blacklight paint on canvas 78" x106", courtesy the artist.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION AND HIGH-RESOLUTION IMAGES

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