

JASON VASS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 2016

JASON VASS ANNOUNCES

LUKE AUSTIN: SOFT INSTANT
MARCH 19–APRIL 16, 2016

OPENING RECEPTION: SATURDAY, MARCH 19, 2016 FROM 6-9 PM
JASON VASS 1452 E. SIXTH STREET, LOS ANGELES, CA 90021



LOS ANGELES - Jason Vass is pleased to announce *Soft Instant*, featuring new works by Australian-born, Los Angeles-based photographer Luke Austin. This is the artist's first solo exhibition in Los Angeles. Known for his intimate nude male portraits, Austin captures images that reveal the individuality of his subjects in a moment of disarming contact. Austin intuitively conveys the vulnerability of his sitters through the empathetic quality of his photographic gaze, extending a care to his subjects and humanizing their masculinity beyond the momentary arrest of the frame.

A social media phenom in his own right, Austin has amassed an impressive following on Instagram, using the platform as a way to disseminate his images and connect with potential subjects. Austin has mobilized the virtual space as a connective tool, and in 2013 traveled to

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eleven different cities throughout Europe, Australia and North America, meeting over 132 men behind the Instagram accounts that interested him. He photographed these strangers in the interiors of their homes and personal spaces, publishing the collections in *Beau Book*, a popularly acclaimed photo book released in 2015. Motivated by a desire to uncover the identities of the men hidden behind the platform's visually staged and filtered culture, Austin set out to reveal and connect to something more immediate and raw. This cultivated intimacy between photographer and sitter is felt throughout Austin's work, and contributes to an undeniable quality of naturalism and simplicity in the resulting photographs.

Soft Instant is a departure from Austin's previously slick digital output of photographs of strangers and will feature a series of 14 portraits of friends shot entirely on film at his home in Los Angeles (2016) and New York City (2015). Using a dated, medium format Kodak Duaflex IV camera and 620 film, Austin embraces the limitations, warmth, and imperfections of this analog medium. Limiting the number of shots that can be taken in a single sitting and lessening the digital mediation of the image, Austin reconnects to the physicality of the photograph as a material imprint of light and time. The small shots taken on the handheld Duaflex are scanned, enlarged, and then translated into large-format prints, creating a dramatic, and self-referential, conversion in scale. The image is both amplified and softened through this process of alteration, revealing the imperfections of the physical film, heightening the abstraction of light and shadow, and intensifying the compositional structure of the shot when taken out of its proportional context. An intentional expansion and diffusion of the image pulls the photograph into a more impressionistic representational space. As the contours of the subjects are blurred and interrupted, the poignancy of Austin's amplified gaze surfaces.

ABOUT LUKE AUSTIN

Luke Austin is a Los Angeles-based photographer. He began exhibiting in 2011, following a successful decade working in fashion photography, and has exhibited in New York and Australia. A collection of Austin's photographic portraits, *Beau Book*, was published in 2015 by Antinous Press, NYC.

ABOUT JASON VASS

Situated in the burgeoning arts district neighborhood of Downtown Los Angeles in a 2,700 square foot, space designed to accommodate diverse exhibitions and related programs, the gallery aims to create an exhibition program that offers a historical perspective through the lens of contemporary artists. The gallery is committed to cultivating emerging talent and supporting established artists from around the world. Exhibiting artists include: Luke Austin, Deborah Brown, Dan Callis, Mark Dutcher, Bouke deVries, Cynthia MacAdams, Roman Pyotkovka, Douglas Tausik and Nettie Wakefield. The gallery manages the estates of Muriel Castanis and Gene Vass.

Gallery founder Jason Vass is the son of Gene Vass, the youngest member of NYC's Cedar Tavern abstract expressionist group. His mother, Joan Vass, was a fashion designer and curator

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at MOMA where he spent much of his youth. His extraordinary parents influenced his eye and his passion for art. In the 1980's Vass was managing partner at contemporary art gallery Patrick Fox in NYC. After moving from New York to Los Angeles, Vass opened his first gallery on Santa Monica's Montana Avenue in 1992 where he developed a reputation as a well-known and internationally respected dealer of posters, prints and limited-edition museum quality fine art lithographs. He has since owned galleries in Santa Monica and Santa Fe. More info at jasonvass.com

Gallery hours are Tuesday through Saturday from 11am to 6pm.

Image Credit: Luke Austin, *Ben (New York)*, 2015, archival inkjet print, 36 in. x 36 in.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION AND MEDIA INQUIRIES PLEASE CONTACT:

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