

Baronian Xippas

Press release

Matthew Porter

Scenic

2 rue Isidore Verheyden
& 33 rue de la Concorde

06.09 - 26.10.2019

Opening

05.09 from 5 - 9pm
during the
Brussels Gallery Weekend

Matthew Porter

Scenic

Baronian Xippas is pleased to present *Scenic*, Matthew Porter's (b. 1975, Pennsylvania, US) first solo exhibition in Belgium. The exhibition consists of two parts and enables the visitor to discover the many facets of Porter's artistic practice. In the 2 rue Isidore Verheyden space, photographs from his 'flying cars' series are displayed alongside a new series inspired by current events. Across the street in the 33 Rue de la Concorde space, a selection of other works from ongoing projects and older series are on view. Matthew Porter's artistic practice is multifaceted, and his pictures are often permeated with multiple historical and cultural references. In his compositions, various elements coexist side by side, be it within the same image, or from one image to the next in a series of meticulously edited photographs. He moves between digital and analog processes freely, and engages with both studio experimentation and representational straight photography, creating both fictional narratives and process based works.

In the 2 rue Isidore Verheyden space, photographs from his 'flying cars' series are displayed alongside a new series inspired by current events. Influenced by the troubled times in which we live, other small-format photographs counter the glib tone and the nostalgic iconography of the 'flying cars' series. Matthew Porter claims to have drawn his inspiration from the news cycle in order to create this striking sequence. "Images of walls, fences and barbed wire are part of our current media landscape, in light of the debate about immigration and the migration crisis on the Southern border of the United States." The photographs recall the atmosphere of a film-noir and focus on specific details and relationships: people on the phone, passers-by crossing the street, fences and so on. A general sense of unease permeates the sun-drenched landscapes, imbuing the figures on the street with a mix of outward paranoia and subtle defiance. In contrast, vintage cars hover over American city streets and highway intersections, creating an absurd mix of pop-culture cliché and topical concerns.

The exhibition continues in the second space (33 rue de la Concorde) with older works, including a series of black-and-white photos created in the studio of Matthew Porter's father, a sculptor influenced by modernism. The black-and-white prints document the debris generated by the creation of his artworks and the 'remains' of unused materials come to life in front of the lens. Lighting effects are used to transform the photographed objects and conjure new associations: a mirror reflects an almost invisible field located beyond the frame of the camera, we are blinded by bleached metal, and black shadows create areas of absolute darkness and emptiness. Other works, in color, feature montages, overlays and multiple exposures. Here Matthew Porter's work harnesses experiments from both old and new technologies in order to explore the possibilities of image construction and manipulation. A third selection features works that center around a fictional place — the construction, abandonment, and rediscovery of a series

of dome structures on a tropical island. Several discrete characters make appearances, but their roles are never defined. Part science fiction, part fantasy, and part narrative riff, the work is a nod to the literary tradition of placing stories of colonial hubris in tropical locations.

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Matthew Porter was born in 1975 in State College in Pennsylvania (US). He graduated from Bard-ICP in 2006 and has taken part in many institutional exhibitions including *After Photoshop* at the Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York, 2012) and *Perspectives 2010* at the International Center of Photography (New York, 2010). He recently participated in group exhibitions at the George Eastman Museum in Rochester (New York, 2016) and the Foam Photography Museum (Amsterdam, 2014). In France his work was unveiled at the *Autophoto* exhibition at the Fondation Cartier (Paris, 2017). His first monograph, *Archipelago*, was published in 2015; and Aperture published *The Heights*, a book dedicated to his 'flying cars' series in 2019. His work features in the permanent collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Modern Art, New York (US). In 2016, Matthew Porter was invited by Christian Dior to design a collection of bags and accessories for the Dior Lady Art project.