



Above and next page: Hernan Bas (American, b. 1978). *Night Fishing* (detail, above), 2007. Mixed media on linen over panel, 24 x 20 in. (61 x 50.8 cm). Brooklyn Museum, Purchase gift of Shelley Fox Aarons and Philip E. Aarons, and Howard Wolfson, 2007.33. © Hernan Bas

Educator packet for the special exhibition

Hernan Bas: Works from the Rubell Family Collection

on view at the Brooklyn Museum from February 27 to May 24, 2009



Hernan Bas

Works from the Rubell Family Collection

About the Artist

Hernan Bas was born in 1978 in Miami, Florida, where he continues to live and work. He began his career producing small figural drawings and has since moved on to oil painting, installation, and video. Bas uses various media to explore the human figure. His characteristically lonesome, youthful figures are placed in natural settings where they appear to engage in some moment of discovery and adventure. Inspired by historical and mythological narratives, youth and Goth culture, and fashion, Bas's work invokes a coming-of-age narrative.

Description of *Night Fishing*

Night Fishing depicts a youthful male figure standing alone in nature. He holds a fishing pole and looks down toward the foreground, where splashes of blue and white paint indicate a violent torrent of water racing beneath him. Delicate brushstrokes suggest flowers, vegetation, and leafless trees in the middle ground. Cool shades of blue intermingle with warm yellow tones to create a night sky illuminated by a glowing full moon.

Questions for Viewing

What do you notice about this painting? Describe what's happening and where it's taking place.

The title of this painting is *Night Fishing*. What is the boy doing? What does his body language suggest he may be thinking? Why did the boy decide to fish alone at night?

Look closely at the marks of paint Hernan Bas has made. What tools do you think he used to apply the paint to the canvas? How many different techniques can you find?

What colors does the artist use in this painting? What mood(s) do the colors create? How do you imagine it may feel to visit this place?

Think about a time when you were surrounded by nature. Where did you go? What motivated you to visit this place? Compare your experience in nature to this painting. How was your experience different from that of the boy in this painting? How was it similar?

Classroom Activities

Writing Activity

Create a short story inspired by the painting *Night Fishing*. Describe what happens and imagine what it would be like to be the boy in the painting. Explain what happened before, during, and after the events of the painting. Share your story with a partner to compare your interpretations.

Art Activity

Many of Bas's paintings take place in nature and use vibrant colors and brushstrokes to create a mystical appeal for these outdoor settings.

Describe a place in nature you would like to visit. What does this place look like? What colors do you see? Would you like to experience this place alone or bring a companion? Illustrate your special place using acrylic paint and brushes of several different sizes. Look closely at the evidence of brushstrokes in *Night Fishing* and experiment with making similar marks in your work. How does your choice of color and brushstroke affect the mood of your painting?

Language Arts Activity

Inspired by writers like Oscar Wilde and Franklin W. Dixon, Hernan Bas explores the coming-of-age experiences of adolescent male figures. Select a novel that has a similar adolescent protagonist whose adventures result in personal growth. Examples of such novels include Mark Twain's *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, Franklin W. Dixon's Hardy Boys series, and S. E. Hinton's *The Outsiders*. How did the protagonist's attitude and behavior shift throughout the story? What events influenced these shifts? How do other characters respond to the changes made by the protagonist? Expand this study by creating a drawing or painting to illustrate one event from the novel that influenced the shift in the protagonist's attitude and behavior.

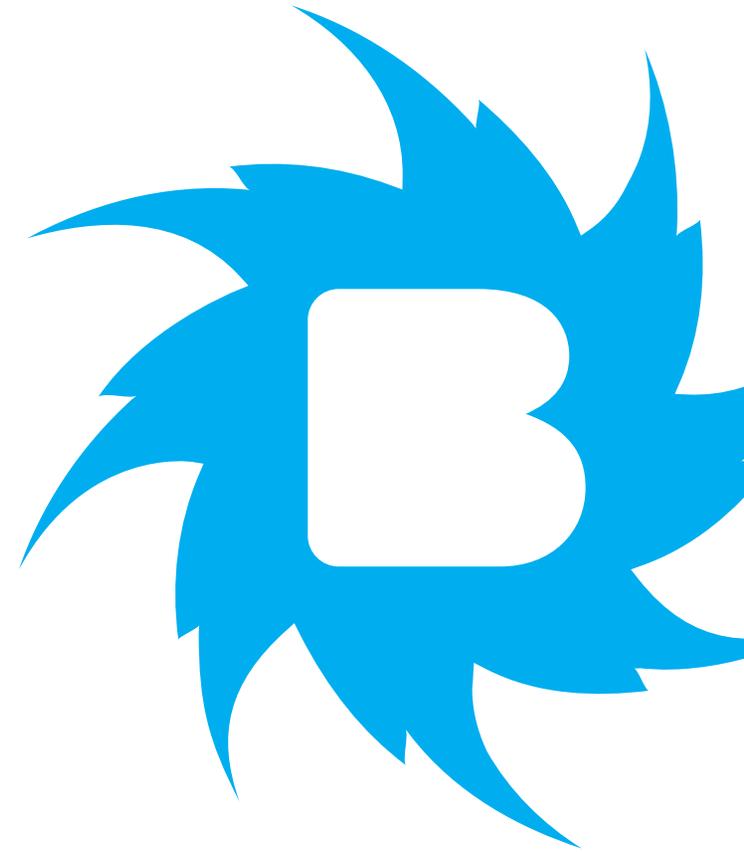
Resources

Mark Coetzee. *Hernan Bas: Works from the Rubell Family Collection*. Exh. cat. Miami: Rubell Family Collection, 2007.

This exhibition catalogue offers three essays discussing the work of Hernan Bas and its relationship to identity, literature, and popular culture. The books themes and language are most appropriate for older students.

Hernan Bas: Works from the Rubell Family Collection was organized by Mark Coetzee, former Director of the Rubell Family Collection; the Brooklyn Museum presentation is coordinated by Charles Desmarais, Deputy Director for Art. The exhibition is made possible by the Martha A. and Robert S. Rubin Exhibition Fund.

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