

## Ashley Bickerton

### Lehmann Maupin

In 1992 Ashley Bickerton created an installation for an exhibition called “Translation” at the Centre for Contemporary Art, Ujazdowski Castle, in Warsaw. It was a large circular life raft heaped with green cabbages in a room painted black. Its flashing emergency light lit the space. Two



Ashley Bickerton, *Yellow Canoe*, 2006, acrylic and digital print on canvas in carved-wood artist frame, inlaid with coconut, mother-of-pearl, and coins, 72" x 86" x 7". Lehmann Maupin.

The multicolored women, children, piglets, tropical fruit, and pottery knowingly take Gauguin’s escapist fantasy to bizarre extremes. The bronze snake sculptures are portraits of the artist as the serpent that strangled Laocöon. It’s hard not to think of that legendary photo of Gauguin in Tahiti, a ludicrous white man playing the piano in his boxer shorts. But Bickerton, at least, is fully aware that he is the snake in the garden.

—Kim Levin