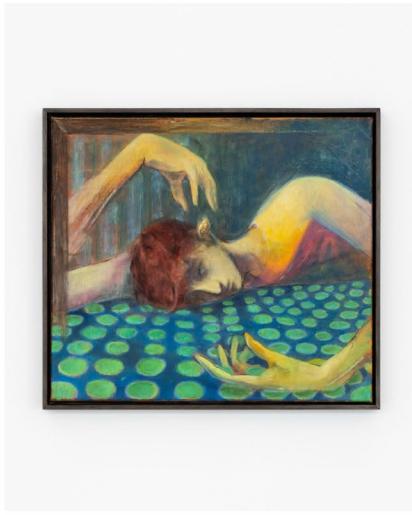


Lou Ellingson, *Ernst Yohji Jaeger*,
Artforum, 13 avril 2022

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Ernst Yohji Jaeger, *Untitled (Coin)*, 2022, distemper, oil pastel, oil on linen. 15 3/4 x 17 3/4".

PARIS

Ernst Yohji Jaeger

GALERIE CRÈVECOEUR
9 Rue des Cascades & 5 rue de Beaune
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The word “Lunatique,” here serving as the title of Ernst Yohji Jaeger’s solo show, describes a turbulence of moods that, unlike its *faux ami* in English, neither condemns nor institutionalizes. Rather, it names a volatility that we’re all capable of, an affect that remains enshrouded in the mystery of never knowing what’s next, of living in a bewitching present whose frightening, amusing, or mundane moments allow us to surprise even ourselves.

Such a spectrum of experience is conveyed

through ambivalence and earth tones in the ten works (all 2022) on view. In *Untitled (Coin)*, an elfin figure with an emo haircut and tiny faun ears slumps forward. In what could be the ennui of adolescence or the beginning of a magic trick, he frames his head between two disproportionately large hands, one of which begins to dissolve as it collects green dots off the blue ground—a reference to Felice Casorati’s *Joke: Eggs (or Eggs on a Green Carpet)*, 1914–15. In *Untitled (Heart)*, Jaeger fills the square-shaped canvas with geometric planes that become brown walls, a dark and cloudy sky, a wine-colored heart engraved like an ancient valentine. The light that seeps beneath a doorframe echoes the sepia hallway in Leonora Carrington’s *And Then We Saw the Daughter of the Minotaur*, 1953. Throughout Jaeger’s images, everything is somehow dimmed, subdued. Certain scenes possess the subtle horror of a Miljenko Stančić interior, such as one portrait of a manga-inspired character whose eyes and mouth are eerily absent, having perhaps slipped off into the emerald swaths of the canvas as the figure stares, catatonic, at a too-close screen. We’re left wondering what they see.

This is not the only moment when perspectives fall apart, or lock each other out. In *Untitled (Transit)*, someone gazes out from the deck of a ship at an almost imperceptible moon, while the wind turns pages in a book before them. Although they’re not alone—the hand holding a cigarette in the foreground, positioned as if an extension of the viewer’s body, becomes our avatar in this nocturnal scene—they are deep within their solitude. The whole picture is wistful and reflective, romantic but not overly sentimental. Wherever we’re headed, we glide on into the night of our inner worlds—calm one moment, troubled the next—wholly knowable to us alone.

—Lou Ellingson