Gasser's approach is almost anthropological. Painting becomes a practice of collecting and combining images, tracing the cultural impulses that animate fictional characters and allow them to outlive their original contexts. In this respect, his work recalls both psychiatrist Carl Gustav Jung's (1875–1961) investigations into archetypal images as manifestations of a collective unconscious and art historian Aby Warburg's (1866–1929) *Mnemosyne Atlas*. Where Jung sought recurring structures of the psyche, Warburg traced the afterlife (*Nachleben*) of affectively charged gestures, which he called *Pathosformeln*, across images spanning antiquity to his own day. His *Atlas* took the form of an open montage, a constellation of photographs tracing the survival and recurrence of these gestures—a project he aptly described as a "ghost story for adults." *Heroes and Ghosts* likewise gathers figures that recur across time, manifesting the contradictory, often violent forces that haunt our social worlds and their competing imaginaries.

Gasser's montage, however, does not seek universal or monomythic character types, such as the hero, the trickster, or the villain, but traces the contradictions of collective imaginaries through fictional figures. Embodying both emancipatory and reactionary forces, these figures can become emblems of disparate subcultures and opposing ideologies. They give form to the paradoxical desires and anxieties that inhabit our institutions and social movements, reaching backward toward archaic forms and forward toward imagined futures. "The time is out of joint," Hamlet declares after his father's ghost appears. The tragic hero is born in the untimely moment of the ghost's return.

- Samuel Frédéric Luterbacher
2026

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Mathis Gasser (b. 1984; Zürich, CH) lives and works in London, UK. Previous exhibitions include *Works* at Galerie Oskar Weiss, Zürich, CH (2026); *Heroes and Ghosts* at Brunette Coleman, London, UK (2024); *Objects in the Sky* at MAMCO, Geneva, CH (2023); *Heroes and Ghosts* at Schiefe Zähne, Berlin, DE (2022); *Parallels Part 1: Astral Border* at CAN Centre d'Art Neuchâtel, Neuchâtel, CH (2022); *Breaching* at Weiss Falk, Basel, CH (2021); *Hergest: Trem*, with Angharad Williams, at Swiss Institute, New York, NY (2021); *We Never Sleep* at Schirn Kunsthalle, Frankfurt, DE (2020); *Structures and Institutions II* at Ginevra Gambino, Cologne, DE (2019); *Mathis Gasser & Tobias Hantmann* at Lady Helen, London, UK (2019); exhibitions at Centre Culturel Suisse, Paris, FR; Cordova, Barcelona, ES; Chewday's, London, UK; and Kunsthaus Glarus, Glarus, CH (2017); *Sept sont tombés vers le ciel* at Centre d'édition contemporaine, Geneva, CH (2016); and *In the Museum* at Kunsthalle Bern, Bern, CH (2013). In 2021, Edition Patrick Frey published *Heroes and Ghosts*, a monograph dedicated to Gasser's ongoing series.