

« House Call »

Jacent

April 27 – June 3, 2023

Painting outside the frame is among the great concerns of the avant-garde of the early 20th century, as well as for that of the 60s and 70s and up to the present day. It would seem that during this period, both fatal and salvational for painting, the act of painting was constrained by different pressures related to historical contexts, political changes, and social progress. Painting, far from being ridiculed by Marcel Duchamp¹, became a zone of tension between radicalism and bourgeois conservatism, political emancipation and the art market; financial speculation on one side and artistic speculation on the other. Painting does not decide between one or the other: it remains a realm of possibility that belong to no one. By extracting itself from its limitations, it became vulnerable, but became a tangible medium for all forms of expression, from the most praiseworthy to the most questionable.

Insatiable painters since their childhood, the duo of Jacent (Jade Fourès-Varnier and Vincent de Hoÿm) have embraced this emancipation head on, by formulating, since they began working together, a pictorial practice that deploys itself on furniture, walls, the floors... All in order to express themselves in an environment that becomes a living space more than an exhibition space. Without being rejected, since it remains in many of their works, the frame of the painting happens to be highly limited for personalities too attached to notions of sharing and generosity to circumscribe their practice in such a way. If their painting often enriches the walls of an exhibition space, it is, for the artists, a way to make the authoritarian and inextricable white cube a welcoming zone, in order to transmit this pleasure that they feel in confronting it. Their painting also covers white earthenware tiles from the pictorial universe of artists, on canvases and on furniture (coffee tables, armchairs, benches, lamps...) alike, thanks to which the visitor is invited to feel "like at home." It's not so much a matter of participatory art, as a way of filling a void, a tenacious one identified with places where repose, fatigue, and the possibility of taking one's time are not part of the program. For Jacent, painting is also intended for sitting, looking around, having a drink, chatting, reading... So that the exhibition space becomes a pleasant place, without necessarily trying to turn it into a café, a living room, a restaurant, a hotel room, or a nightclub. Because there are certainly better places than an exhibition space to do all that. And if Jacent was indeed able, in the past, to draw inspiration from these public or private places in their practice, it was simply to breathe into it a little of these atmospheres where everybody feels at ease, with the aim of making the white cube less hostile while still preserving its characteristics.

This approach cedes an important place to conviviality, and their painting has been able to become a receptacle for meals, in which dishes have been skillfully cooked and composed and served on painted plates, which themselves are as relevant on a table as they are when hung on walls. Depending on the use and the context, Jacent's works change their function: works of art in essence, they serve as furniture in their homes, or sometimes appear in the exhibitions of artists featured at Tonus², where they oversee curation.

This coming and going is representative of an artistic practice that prefers not to differentiate between art and life, in order to welcome visitors to exhibitions as one welcomes friends. This generosity is found in Jacent's pictorial touch and imaginary environment, plunging the viewer into landscapes of luxuriant nature, shimmering with color, where fauna and flora coexist

1. cf. the exhibition Marcel Duchamp. *La peinture, même*, Centre Pompidou-Musée national d'art moderne, curator: Cécile Debray, September 24, 2014 - January 5, 2015, Paris.

2. Tonus is an artist-run space located in Paris, founded and directed by the duo since 2014.

harmoniously with human bodies and those of animals. There we see children, couples in love, ungendered, family situations and scenes of desire. And everything could depict a perfect world, from a childish and carefree point of view, if not for this depth of color, the illustration of mysterious dreams, an ambient melancholy reminding us that this state of plenitude could come to a prompt end.

For the occasion of their exhibition *House Call*, Jacent continues this search for flexibility between private and public zones within the exhibition space at Sans titre. *House Call* is the call of home, but an open home, where the family unit opens up to other types of family, other understandings and uses of domestic space, for experiments in exchange in which art, too, has a role to play. *House Call* reconfigures the gallery space into a hybrid space with, on the floor, a colorful composition made of carpeting; on the wall are works of painted earthenware tiles, depicting flowers and characters that seem to emerge from a common origin; pastels showing windows opening onto dreamlike, sandy landscapes, whose intense light transforms the beach into a desert expanse at once infinite and uncanny. Letters appear like H.O.U.S.E, but also H.O., evoking the ruins of signage reminiscent of vacation spots, or even musical atmospheres associated with moments of pleasure that permit one to release oneself and achieve harmony. Paintings are fixed to the walls like flat screens while mini-paintings are plugged in, being loaded, humorously questioning the influence of social networks on the evolution of painting, as well as its contemporary status, troubled by a plethora of digital images or NFTs. An edition produced by the artists reiterates the subject of the flower bouquet, already present in the paintings, in the form of drawings and photographs of floral compositions inspired by the series, this time highlighting the medium of paper. It can be leafed-through on a sofa, by the light of lamp-sculptures in cut earthenware tiles. At the far end, a last room hides away in the manner of a *studiolo*. More refined, this space suggests the study and analysis of other variations of bouquets of flowers, and here, only painting enjoys the total attention of the senses. These repetitions of floral motifs act like a musical composition, their titles often referring to melancholy songs by Billie Holiday, to rap, or to house music or classical music.

If we always find ourselves « Chez Jacent »³, Jacent find themselves always at others' places, and it matters little that they be at the home of someone in particular, as long as the duo always find the aesthetic means of offering and sharing something, whether it be a meal, an emotion, a conversation, an exhibition, or a little bit of love.

Benoît Lamy de la Chapelle
(translated by Aaron Ayscough)

The artist duo Jacent is composed of Jade Fourès-Varnier (b. 1984, Paris) and Vincent de Hoÿm (b. 1984, Narbonne).

They have been the subject of solo exhibitions at Le Shed – CAC Normandie (2022); Rolabola, Rouen (2022); sonneundsolsche, Dusseldorf (2022); Cocotte, Treignac (2022); Plat-, Amsterdam (2019); PSM, Berlin (2018); In Extenso, Clermont-Ferrand (2017); Tonus, Paris (2017); Harpe 45, Lausanne (2015); Lokal-int, Biel (2014).

Selected group shows include «Meet Me Halfway», one gee in fog x Wallstreet, Geneva and Fribourg (2023) ; «Mamoune», Pina, Vienna (2022); «Mon palais, choir», Sans titre, Paris (2022); «Illusion of Comfort», Campoli Presti, Paris (2022); «Still Time», Fitzpatrick Gallery, Paris (2021); «La Psychologie des Serrures», CAN – Centre d'Art de Neuchâtel (2020); «Your friends and Neighbors», High Art, Paris (2020); «Les Chemins du Sud», MRAC Occitanie, Sérignan (2019); «Somewhere in between. Contemporary Art Scenes in Europe», Bozar, Brussels (2018); «Vous me rappelez quelqu'un», FRAC Lorraine, Metz (2018); «Wie werden wir uns wiedererkennen», Künstlerhaus Bremen (2017); Paris Internationale with Tonus, Paris (2017); «Canard au sans», Sans titre, Paris (2017); «Cululture Pop Marauders», Mains-d'oeuvres, Saint-Ouen (2016); 58e Salon de Montrouge, Le Beffroi, Montrouge (2015) amongst other.

3. The title of one of their notable exhibitions on the subject, *Chez Jacent*, Tonus, Paris, 2017.