

HEROES AND GHOSTS

Mathis Gasser

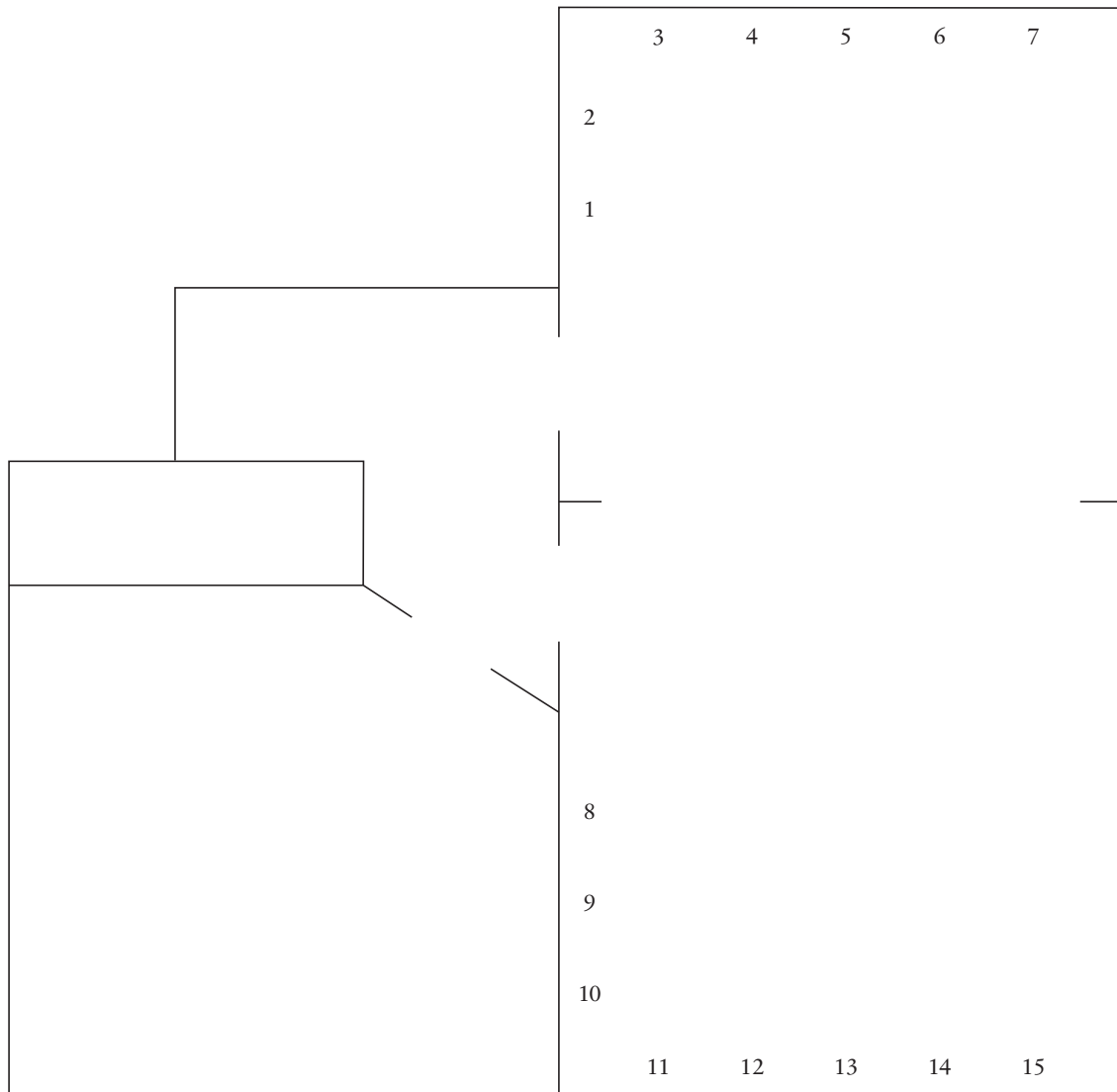
12 January – 10 February 2024

Mathis Gasser's ongoing series of 233 *Heroes and Ghosts* started in 2007. Although the paintings at Brunette Coleman differ in context and style, the protagonists always stand in equally defiant poses, head-on and full-length, either bearing phones, bags, guns, or else empty handed and stripped of their subtext.

The characters are often esoteric, plucked from artworks, films, comics or manga. His selection is intuitive, but involves many slow deliberations before they're immortalised in paint. Often inhabiting certain ambiguous characteristics within popular culture, they have been reimagined in oil to become a meditation on bygone and contemporary cultural mores. Each fictional in origin, they don't all inhabit memorable or instantly recognisable features; rather their meaning in the world is shaped by a complexity and beguilement perceived by Gasser. As the selector of every character, *Heroes and Ghosts* stands both as a marker of collective time, but also of his own desires.

Having continued the series alongside other artistic endeavours, Gasser sometimes repeatedly returns to a character: three iterations of Lain Iwakura, the titular protagonist from anime series *Serial Experiments Lain*, and also Nami Matsushima from the 1970s film series, *Female Prisoner Scorpion*. When aligned, the disparately sourced figures are assimilated with their homogenous stance, courting the viewer with a long, confrontational stare. At Brunette Coleman, subjects from contemporary artworks including painting *Bar Boy* by Salman Toor or Chalice Wong from Ian Cheng's *Life after BOB*, share the same walls as Succession's Shiv Roy or June Osborne from *The Handmaid's Tale*.

Heroes and Ghosts borrows its name from the title of a 1998 book surveying the woodblock prints of Japanese artist Utagawa Kuniyoshi. Working during the Edo period (1603–1867) in Japan, Kuniyoshi's prints absorbed the changes of this period through tales played by heroic and mythical characters at the demand of story-hungry readers. Like Kuniyoshi, Gasser's series is a simulation of modernity, the paintings emblematic of our epoch through icons and bit-part players whose anthropological nuances have helped shape it.



1 Mathis Gasser
Annlee, 2023–24
Oil on canvas
44×30 cm

2 Mathis Gasser
Brunette Coleman (After Stanley Davis),
2023–24
Oil on canvas
44×30 cm

3 Mathis Gasser
Jaq Lawrence, 2023–24
Oil on canvas
44×30 cm

4 Mathis Gasser
Patrick Bateman 2, 2023–24
Oil on canvas
44×30 cm

5 Mathis Gasser
Bar Boy (After Salman Toor), 2023–24
Oil on canvas
44×30 cm

6 Mathis Gasser
Jackie Brown, 2023–24
Oil on canvas
44×30 cm

7 Mathis Gasser
June Osborne/Offred 2, 2023–24
Oil on canvas
44×30 cm

8 Mathis Gasser
Rachael 2, 2023–24
Oil on canvas
44×30 cm

9 Mathis Gasser
Chalice Wong (After Ian Cheng),
2023–24
Oil on canvas
44×30 cm

10 Mathis Gasser
Siobhan 'Shiv' Roy, 2023–24
Oil on canvas
44×30 cm

11 Mathis Gasser
Dale Cooper, 2023–24
Oil on canvas
44×30 cm

12 Mathis Gasser
Lain Iwakura 3, 2023–24
Oil on canvas
44×30 cm

13 Mathis Gasser
Nami Matsushima 3, 2023–24
Oil on canvas
44×30 cm

14 Mathis Gasser
Lucas, 2023–24
Oil on canvas
44×30 cm

15 Mathis Gasser
Louise Banks 2, 2023–24
Oil on canvas
44×30 cm