

**Jason Saager**

*Intermediate Worlds*

**March 30 - May 15, 2023**

3, rue du Cloître Saint-Merri, Paris 4<sup>e</sup>



*Horizon Deceivers*, 2023  
Monotype and oil on paper mounted over canvas on panel  
122 x 157,5 x 4 cm (48<sup>1/32</sup> x 62 x 1<sup>9/16</sup> in.)

Nathalie Obadia Gallery is delighted to present *Intermediate Worlds*, Jason Saager's first solo exhibition in Paris.

After obtaining a Bachelor of Fine Art from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, then a Master at the Hunter College, New York, Jason Saager now lives in Arizona, near the Superstition Mountains where he spent his childhood. The American West's vast natural spaces constitute the setting in which the artist grew up. Although he does not directly associate his personal story with his predilection for depicting landscapes, Saager focuses essentially on this subject. By adopting this classic theme of American pictorial art, Jason Saager maintains the continuity of this tradition, while distinguishing himself with his highly personal and singular approach that is resolutely contemporary in nature. While the spatial composition of his works includes figurative, natural elements such as clouds, trees and hills, the paintings displayed in the exhibition show worlds where reality disintegrates in favour of a fantasy universe. *Intermediate Worlds* offers a journey through the heart of the artist's rampant imagination, permeated by influences from many different horizons.

In our collective imagination, the immense landscapes of the American West are vectors of both fantasy and fascination: their painted representations are endowed with powerful nationalistic significance and in this sense, have taken on a more mythological rather than geographical aspect. The Hudson River School, an artistic movement born in 19<sup>th</sup> century America, is the most eloquent example of this. As the American Republic advanced westward, the artists from this movement painted wild and grandiose, natural landscapes, akin to a lost paradise. These various depictions have fed generations of imaginations and persist in doing so, even today.

Jason Saager breathes new life into this classic theme and on viewing the five paintings in this exhibition, the visitor might just as easily gain the impression of standing before a romantic landscape from a bygone era, as of being faced with a futuristic painting from the world of science fiction. This feeling of temporal disorder stems from a meticulous combination of the various sources that inspire the artist. He first evokes the meticulously laid-out gardens of Italian Renaissance frescos such as those of the *Magi Chapel* by Benozzo Gozzoli (1420-1497), a pupil of Fra Angelico. He then mentions ancient Asian art, citing Don Yuan (934-962) or Ni Zan (1301-1374) before referring to science fiction stories from the last century by Kafka, Lovecraft and Philip K. Dick amongst others.

The seemingly simple task of painting clouds and trees in natural colours, is transformed into a complex process involving a wide range of possibilities concerning the representation of landscapes. Inspired by this diversity, the artist plays with our sense of reality: he distorts time and the perception of elements in the very place where the eye expects to find what it is familiar with. In Jason Saager's paintings, everything seems out of control, on a beautiful winter, spring or summer day.

These temporal superimpositions extend to the artist's working process: he combines monotyping – a technique that precludes any form of reworking or retouching – with painting, which calls for a slower and more controlled approach. He begins with a monotype, applying oil paint to a large sheet of transparent acrylic and then transfers the image to paper using his own bodyweight as a printing press. These unique prints form the sketches that allow him to begin painting. He proceeds using multiple brush-strokes, generating density, opacity and varying transparency across the depicted landscape.

The complexity of these imaginary worlds remains secret in the exhibition. Far from the density of today's cities, *Intermediate Worlds* offers a possibility of escape: visitors are captivated by the radiance of a strikingly beautiful nature, penetrated by an almost magical luminosity. A precious refuge from the disharmony of today's landscapes. Faced with the frightening prophecies of 20<sup>th</sup> century dystopian narratives – of which Jason Saager is particularly fond – the artist has created a resolutely contemporary or even futuristic body of work, that conveys the hope of a better and enchanted future.

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**Born in 1986 in Mesa (USA), Jason Saager lives and works in Arizona (USA).**

Following his graduation as a Bachelor of Fine Art from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago in 2006, and his Master of Fine Art from Hunter College in New York in 2012, Jason Saager has developed a body of work based around landscape painting. The artist grew up in the midst of the vast natural spaces of the American West – which the artists of the 19th century Hudson River School endeavoured to capture in paint – and proposes a fresh and very personal vision of these territories that is also resolutely contemporary. Borrowing this classic theme of American painting, Jason Saager pursues this tradition whilst distinguishing himself from it with his singular approach and a broad variety of influences. Each work, which involves a combination of monotyping and painting, reveals a world where reality disintegrates to make way for fantasy. These new utopias seem to emerge as if to counterbalance the frightening prophecies of dystopian science fiction stories from the last century. His oeuvre is influenced by the early Italian Renaissance (Benozzo Gozzoli, Fra Angelico), ancient Asian art (Don Yuan, Ni Zan) and 20th century science fiction (Kafka, Lovecraft, Philip K. Dick) in a cohabitation that creates timeless and optimistic narratives, that carry the hope of a better future.

Jason Saager's work has been presented in solo exhibitions such as *Sky Gardens* at Rodolphe Janssen Gallery (Brussels, Belgium, 2022), *Ecstatic Outdoors* at Ross+Kramer Gallery (New York, USA, 2021), *Scenes From the Time Collapse* at St. Paul The Apostle Church (New York, USA, 2015) as well as in numerous group exhibitions such as *SPRING+BREAK Art Show* (New York, USA, 2021), *My Sweet Doppelgänger* at Richard Heller Gallery (Santa Monica, USA, 2021), *Flowers and Beauty* at Washington Project for the Art (Washington, USA, 2017-2016), *Karmic* at Life on Mars Gallery (New York, USA, 2015), *Paul Klee* at Underdonk Gallery (New York, USA, 2015).

He has had artist residencies at the Shape-Walentas Studio Program (New York, USA, 2019-2021) at the Pioneer Works in Brooklyn (New York, USA, 2014) and at the International School of Painting, Drawing, and Sculpture in Montecastello (Montecastello di Vibio, Italy, 2006).

Jason Saager received the Richard Marnin Kaye Award while studying at Hunter College in New York in 2012.

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**Paris Saint-Honoré**

**Exposition collective**  
*Mettre les formes*  
March 15 - May 6, 2023

**Robert Kushner**  
*Oeuvres anciennes 73-77*  
May 23 - July 22, 2023

**Paris Cloître Saint-Merri**

**Josep Grau-Garriga**  
*Grau-Garriga. L'expérience imaginée*  
February 24 - April 27, 2023

**Paris Cloître Saint-Merri II**

**Jason Saager**  
*Intermediate Worlds*  
March 30 - May 15, 2023

**Bruxelles**

**Laura Henno**  
March 25 - May 6, 2023

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