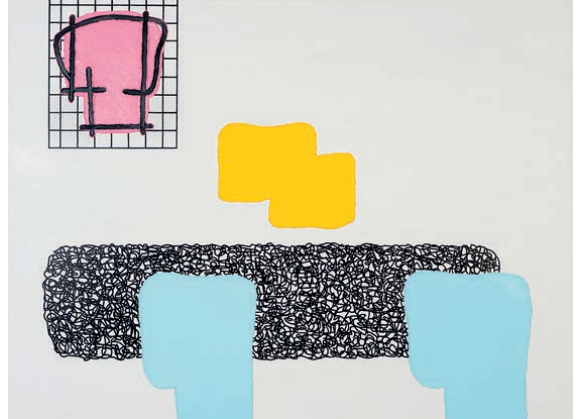


Jonathan Lasker. Pictures for Happy Existentialists



Jonathan Lasker. Pictures for Happy Existentialists. Exhibition view with, on the right *Haunted Geometry*, 2025.



Contract Between Picture & Viewer, 2024. Oil on linen. 150 x 200 cm. (Court. the artist and Timothy Taylor; © Jonathan Lasker)

In his London space, Timothy Taylor presents thirteen works (including four drawings) by Jonathan Lasker (USA, b. 1948) created between 1990 and 2025. The humour in the titles counterbalances the great precision of the style and the enduring principle: painting painting. The iconoclastic irony is subtle, always kept under control by the time invested in the making and the demanding treatment of the pictorial material. The viewer's interpretation is at the heart of the play; many of the works organise elements that cut across each other to the point of incompatibility, reinforced by the recurring use of oxymoron in the titles. The shapeless silhouettes in the foreground of *Contract Between Picture & Viewer* (2024), which one finds oneself almost regarding as viewers, also produce a discordance. In two other paintings, *Incoherent Domesticity* (2025) and *Interior with Mondrian Deformation* (2025), anthropomorphic forms stage the viewer even more directly. This mise en abyme of the gaze, as often, leads to a certain blindness; Lasker seeks to restore the meaning of painting to its plurality, suggesting the multiple paths it can take, keeping the viewer at their crossroads.

It is pleasing to see how much the artist's most recent works remain faithful to the ideas already at play in the older ones. From the *Untitled* drawing of 1990 to that of 2003, and up to the painting *Haunted Geometry* of 2025, the knot of black pigment endures. This logic of reference is also synchronic: the multicoloured braid of impasto lines in *Interior with Mondrian Deformation* is found, in a barely modified version, at the forefront of *To Be Titled*, painted in 2024. As these elements repeat, they transform into symbols: they come to represent the entire process.

This process, which engages the possibility of painting existing on its own, still holds the subject drawn from the visible world (or turning its back on it) as an important yet imprecise datum. Lasker skilfully folds a foundational prerogative of abstraction onto its figural reverse. The distinction between two formerly incompatible pictorial paths is annulled and, at the same time, activated. In few works, the exhibition thus achieves what Lasker himself accomplishes: a compelling synthesis. It has the merit of confronting a kind of unease, or at least discomfort, without sadness or cynicism; a path for the "happy Existentialists"?