



**PHILIPPE MAYAUX**  
***BUTTERFLY DIVINITIES***

23.10.2020 – 28.11.2020

There is a form of modesty in Philippe Mayaux's painting. With great delicacy, and sincere concern for the viewer, he holds in reserve his work's existential gravitas.

Because he knows that the truth is elsewhere, he starts by doing his painter-as-huckster act, comes on as a cut-rate iconographer of half-hard-rock and half-ghost-train monsters (the result of teenage years shared between Gotlib and The Residents) plying a line in ghoulish humour. But hidden behind the fairground masks is the true science (vs. fiction): painting. Philippe Mayaux is an alchemist. The real monster that he is grappling with, and always has, but especially in his latest works, is the monster of painting. In this sense, taken outside the Pop register with which he is sometimes associated, it is as a painter and nothing but that he is exhibiting at Galerie Loevenbruck this autumn.

Mayaux's latest paintings are more reflexive than ever, too. Titled "Butterfly Divinities," they form a set of small pictures on an intergalactic ground over which is splurged an almost-all-over gangbang of gargoylish heads. The method that produces these figures is simple: as elsewhere in the Universe, it all starts with a blotch, which doubles up then proliferates. But don't to looking for Rorschach-style psychology here; these are just grimacing mouths emerging from the primal material, like shadows in the Cave. And, in a beating of wings, the butterfly becomes god and calls on Mayaux to take the constellation of his painting up a level – or two, or three.

Mayaux sees the inner world of the picture pour itself onto the surface, and his painting captures its trace. Apart from the playful illusions of pareidolia, like reading the future in coffee grounds, the pictures in the "Butterfly Divinities" series tell us nothing about the future, or about ourselves, and that is why they are at once beautiful and disturbing, and absolutely contemporary. Captured for eternity, these are portraits of the pictures themselves that look out at us, mirroring our gaze and piercing us with their blind pupils.

Nicolas Chardon  
Paris, 14 September 2020

**Further information:**

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Gallery opening hours: Tuesday - Saturday, 11am-7pm and by appointment