

## THE NEW YORKER



Intersections—whether between drawing and painting, or movies and modernism, or at a sketchy street corner in SoHo—fuel the wild imagination of **Jason Fox**, an exceedingly talented American painter whose new show, “Old Wrld,” is on view at the David Kordansky gallery through April 22. The thirteen recent works here are among the strongest (which, in Fox’s case, is also to say the strangest) of the artist’s three-decade career. Allusions careen from the scatological (Jason, from “Friday the 13th,” attended by splatter in “Hotel Bathroom”) to the art-historical (shout-outs to Carrol Dunham and

Jasper Johns). One favorite Fox device is the pictorial portmanteau, grafting together portraits of cultural icons, as seen in a blood-red monochrome that combines the faces of Tom Petty and Giacometti. The pairing transcends the joke of rhyming names; the rock star’s anthemic “Free Fallin’” and the existential angst of the Italian modernist are flip sides of the same coin. The first piece that visitors encounter is “Friend” (seen above), a hybrid of man and beast, whose palette calls to mind Barnett Newman’s Ab Ex icon, “Who’s Afraid of Red, Yellow, and Blue?” Of the many balancing acts that Fox achieves, painting at the cusp of humor and dread is among the most impressive. In 1945, Newman wrote that “terror has indeed become as real as life”—words that still ring true today. Fox’s paintings manage to be both a reminder and a refuge.

— *Andrea K. Scott*