

FAG ATTACKS THE COUNTRY

CLAUDIO PESTANA

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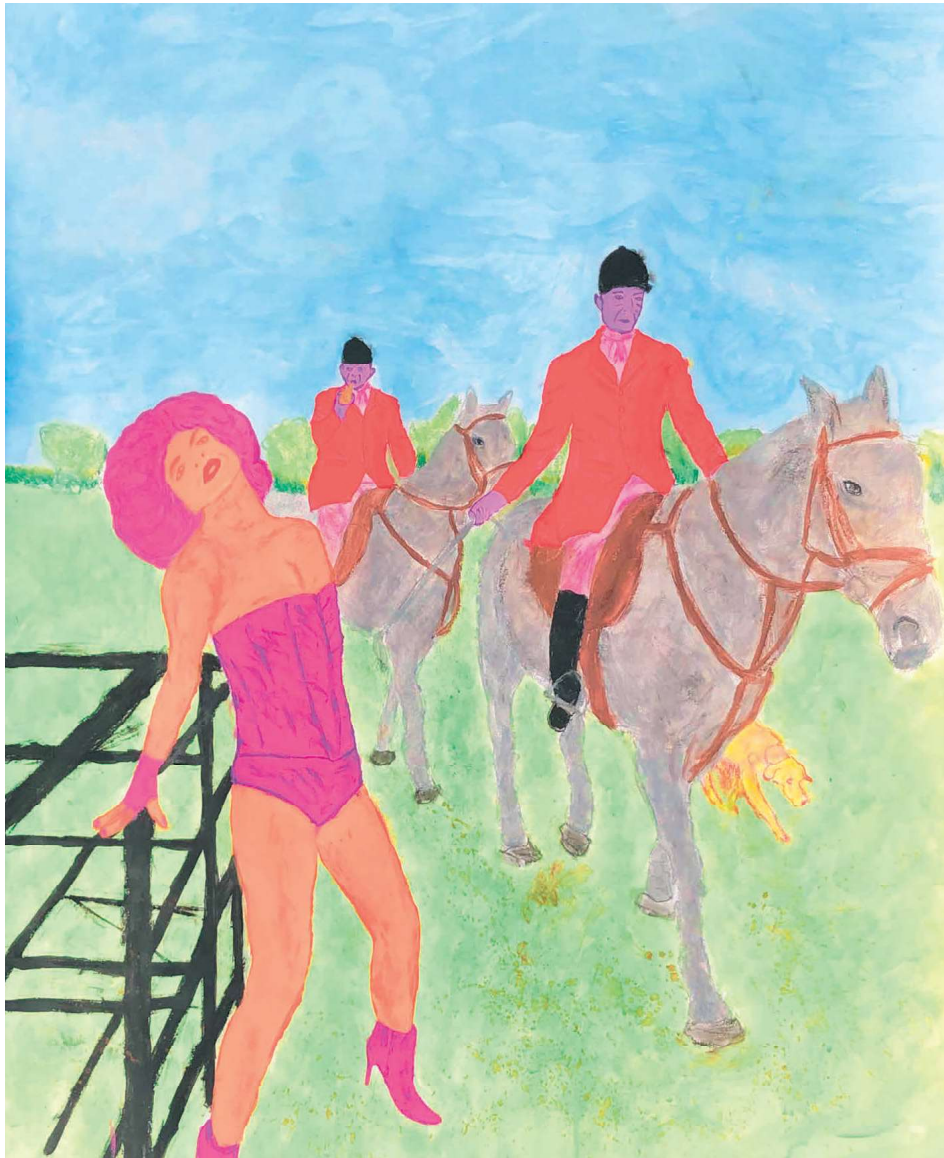
In 'Fag Attacks the Country', Claudio Pestana's first solo exhibition, we are presented with an imaginary Queer space in the English countryside. In this series of paintings, completed during lockdown, Pestana subverts the tradition of the 'conversation piece', the eighteenth-century sub-genre of portraiture, which at the time was profitably mastered by the likes of Gainsborough, Devis, and Zoffany. In 'Fag Attacks the Country' Pestana challenges the symbolic capital historically attached to the genre and creates an antithesis to the traditional decorum that was obligatorily depicted in the 18th century and beyond.

“Though a good deal is too strange to be believed,
nothing is too strange to have happened.”

Thomas Hardy, *The Personal Notebooks of Thomas Hardy*



Fag Attacks the Country I, 2020
Acrylic on paper
140 x 100 cm



Fag Attacks the Country II, 2020
Acrylic on paper
140 x 106 cm



Fag Attacks the Country III, 2020
Acrylic on paper
140 x 120 cm

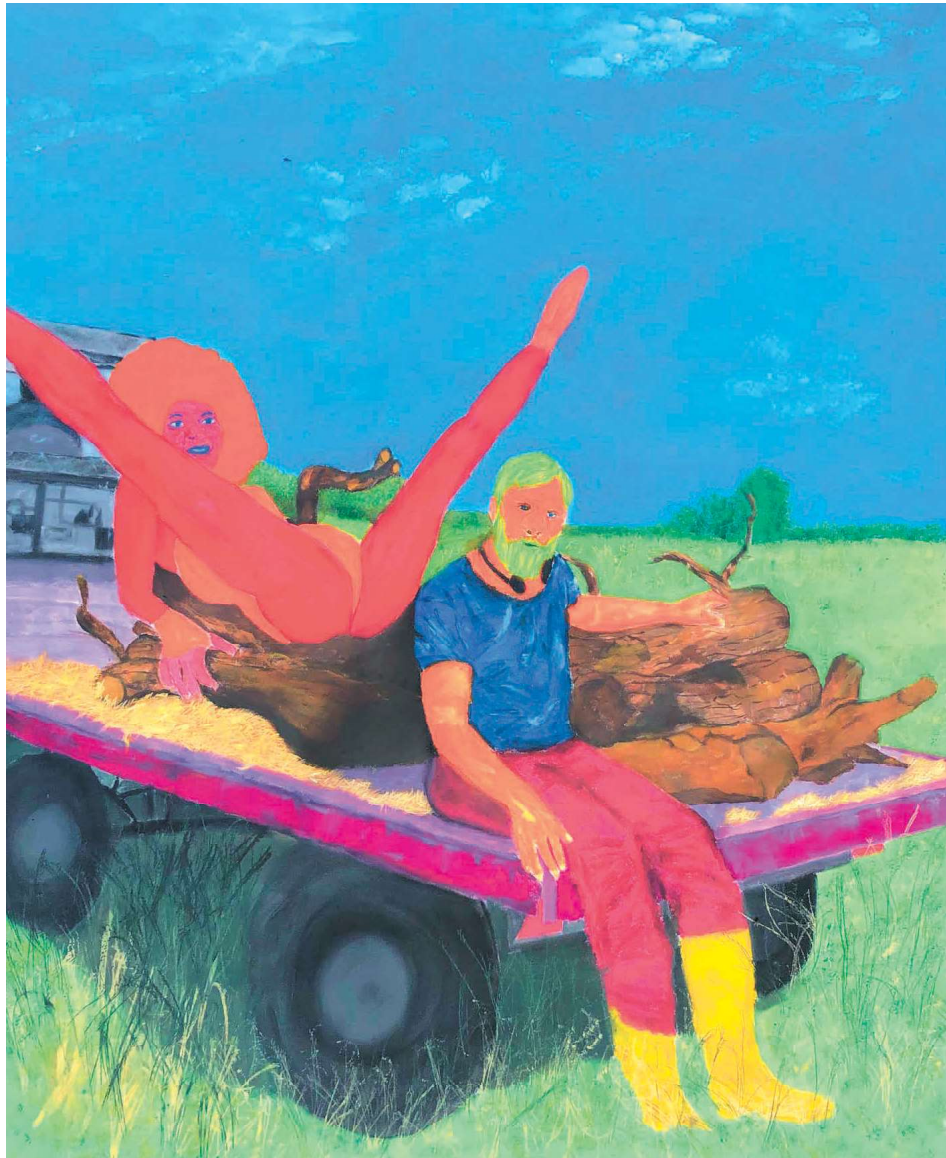


Fag Attacks the Country IV, 2020
Acrylic on paper
140 x 130 cm



Fag Attacks the Country V, 2020
Acrylic on paper
140 x 120 cm

Like a fairy tale, it all started once upon a time – this time in 2020 with the birth of a new world order of ecological dystopia. The woods were quiet, the cows grazed undisturbed, the genteel went about attending to their lawns and vegetable patches, the crows, always suspicious, scanned the rolling hills, when suddenly an evil foreign non-binary Queen arrived in the scene.



Fag Attacks the Country VI, 2020
Acrylic on canvas
145 x 115 cm



Fag Attacks the Country VII, 2020
Acrylic on canvas
145 x 115 cm



Fag Attacks the Country VIII, 2020
Acrylic on canvas
148 x 118 cm



Fag Attacks the Country IX, 2020
Acrylic on canvas
115 x 145 cm



Fag Attacks the Country X, 2021
Acrylic on canvas
118 x 148 cm



Fag Attacks the Country XI, 2021
Acrylic on canvas
118 x 148 cm



Fag Attacks the Country XII, 2021
Acrylic on canvas
115 x 145 cm



Fag Attacks the Country XIII, 2021
Acrylic on canvas
148 x 118 cm

“During lockdown, whilst social distancing in the depths of Dorset’s countryside, I started thinking about how, as a non-binary foreign person, I fitted into the landscape of the county with its specific social topography. Surrounded by traditional and conservative cultural markers, I started reflecting on the symbolic power that those around me held.

‘Fag Attacks the Country’ explores the intersection between (my) Queerness, the rural, and the tradition of portraiture and landscape painting. The paintings started as a spontaneous gesture that arose after I suddenly became aware of how my Queerness might be perceived in the rural community where I was living. I started feeling a rebellious and subversive energy arising in me, which led me to create an imaginary rural world where I arrived as a Fag (I consciously adopt this term as a way of hijacking the language of the abuser) and affronted the status quo of those who commanded social power.”



Fag Attacks the Country XIV, 2021
Acrylic on canvas
148 x 118 cm



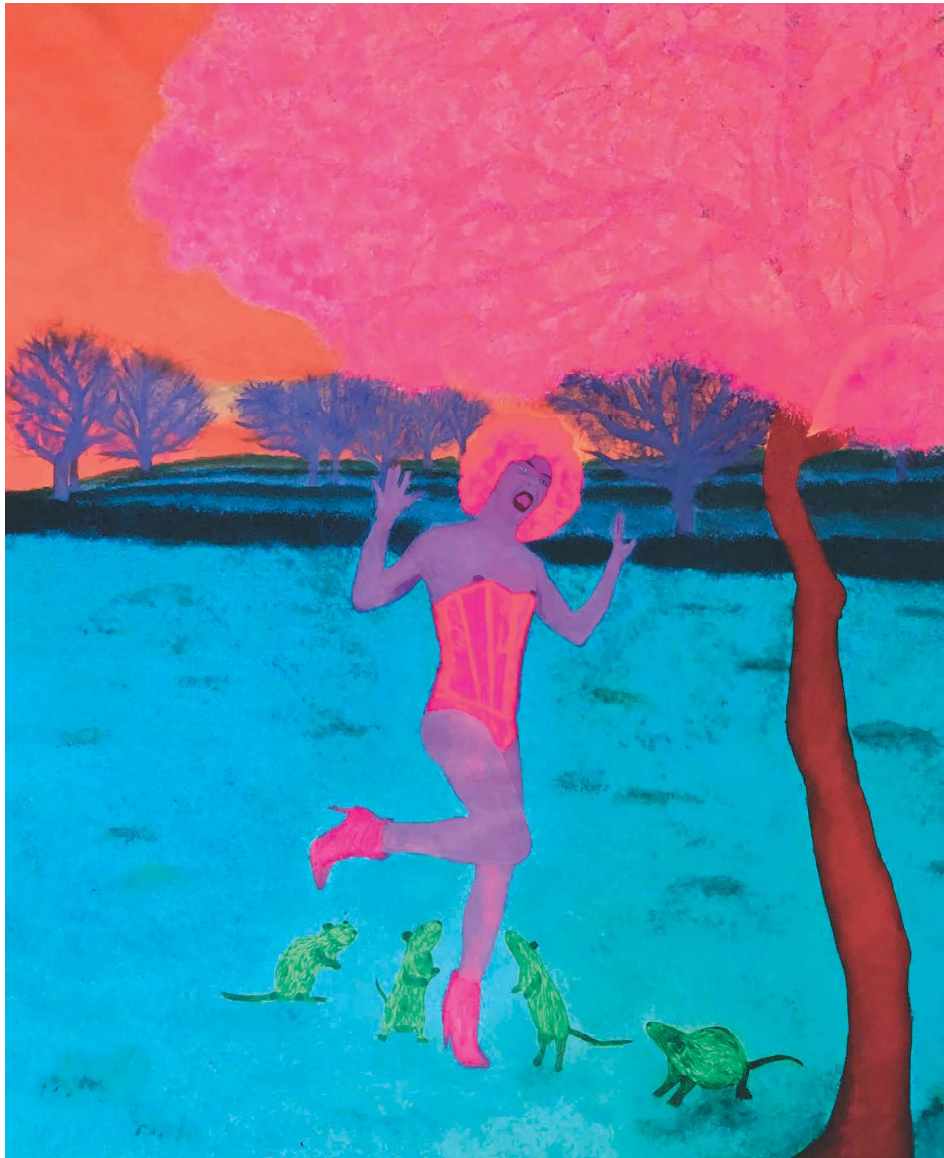
Fag Attacks the Country XV, 2021
Acrylic on canvas
145 x 115 cm



Fag Attacks the Country XVI, 2021
Acrylic on canvas
118 x 148 cm



Fag Attacks the Country XVII, 2021
Acrylic on canvas
148 x 118 cm



Fag Attacks the Country XVIII, 2021
Acrylic on canvas
148 x 118 cm



Fag Attacks the Country XIX, 2021
Acrylic on canvas
148 x 118 cm

“As I reflected further on this series, I also started thinking about these paintings in relation to the historical context of portraiture and landscape painting and how at some stage these were combined to create a new genre. For example, in ‘Mr and Mrs Andrews’ (1750), Gainsborough was not merely putting two distinctive painting genres together on canvas, he was creating a painting, naturally of its time, that reflected how both portraits and landscape paintings were symbols of wealth and status. In these paintings the sitters invariably displayed their best clothes and showed off their estate, whilst often excluding their workforce. My next gesture was to intentionally subvert the tradition of landscape and portraiture. In ‘Fag Attacks the Country’ the main protagonist is an outsider - a provocatively (un)dressed gender bender antagonist who invades the rural landscape and affronts the locals.”



Fag Attacks the Country XX, 2021
Acrylic on canvas
118 x 148 cm



Fag Attacks the Country XXI, 2021
Acrylic on canvas
148 x 118 cm



Fag Attacks the Country XXII, 2021
Acrylic on canvas
148 x 118 cm



Fag Attacks the Country XXIII, 2021

Acrylic on canvas

148 x 118 cm



Fag Attacks the Country XXIV, 2021

Acrylic on canvas

148 x 118 cm



Fag Attacks the Country XXV, 2021
Acrylic on canvas
148 x 118 cm

“But as with any game or performance or stunt, it doesn’t always go according to plan. Sometimes the attacker gets attacked. It is an everlasting power struggle.”

3 – 8 August 2021

OPENING HOURS
TUESDAY – SATURDAY 1 – 7 PM
SUNDAY 1 – 5 PM

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TAKE ME TAKE ME TAKE ME
OH COUNTRY
TAKE ME

STOP THE CHASE
THE FURTIVE EYES
BROWS RAISED

QUEER LOVE IS JUST AS SACRED
THEY CAN SAY-SEE WHAT THEY WANT

FAG
DRAG
MAD

CARESS MY BODY WITH YOUR GAZE
I KNOW YOU WANT TO

ESPACIO GALLERY