

Dorota Jurczak

Bzzz



Dorota Jurczak
Brama, 2014

Vinyl paint and ink on canvas, 120 x 80 cm

Dorota Jurczak

Fatima Hellberg

May 2018

The colour plates show birds at peaceful moments, stepping tentatively into a marsh, or in dignified profile – as in plate #3, a rather melancholy-looking brown pelican, the weight of whose body is made palpable by his flat, wide-webbed yellow feet. John James Audubon, a self-taught naturalist painter, made scenes with carefully staged birds – en route or languidly posing in artificial wildness. He was able to create poses by devising a system using threads or wire tied to the bird's head, wings and tail, allowing him to position its various body parts in any way he chose. In *The Birds of America* (1827–1839), they extend wings, tilt heads, and look back with beady eyes – the inherent expressiveness of bird features are drawn upon, and yet here they communicate something beyond their own essence. A depiction in exacting detail, tipping over into a desire for the absence of a being. “Poor birds,” you remark; Audubon killed them in their thousands.

Audubon's birds are moving. Many of them, like the passenger pigeon, are now extinct, though some, like the brown pelican and whooping crane, are still teetering on the brink. What stirs you inside, what creates this feeling of being moved, is this knowledge – we sense the loss, because we know it is there. The knowing becomes the feeling.

Dorota Jurczak's birds are moving too, but this quality comes from somewhere else. They recur in most of her shows, in solemn series, with passerine shapes, one eye squarely in the middle. *Brama* (2014–15) is a suite of five paintings of looming, atonal, black-painted birds against monochrome backgrounds. They are the largest grouping of characters in Jurczak's exhibition “Bzzz” – their large eyes with a single carefully placed speck of light following the viewer around. Shift your position in the room, and the bird will still be looking at you. There is no single space within and between Jurczak's works in which the essence as such resides; instead an understanding is established; character is suggested by the interiors. The plural here is intentional: the interiority is that of

the picture itself, the interior of the space and another type of interiority, more accurately described as a mood. Jurczak's figuration suggests how much, or how very little, is needed for the spirit and idiosyncrasies of a being to be conjured up, a finely attuned state that involves an essential degree of withholding. In the Bergen iteration of “Bzzz”, the group is represented by one *Brama* – a title translating from Polish as ‘gate’ – an ambiguous reference to an entry point or that thing which is shut close. Indeed, there is a tension in Jurczak's work, between the desire to communicate and the desire to hide.

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*You walk into the room, and you know she's mad. She doesn't say anything at all, but you walk into the room and you know that she is mad. How do you know that she is mad? I think to myself, what have I done wrong, have I done something wrong? I can't think of anything I have done wrong, but I know that she is mad. The only light in the room is the light coming through the window, and it's a grey day. So do I blame the weather? Is she angry because of the weather? How do I know she is angry?*¹

Two central characters in “Bzzz” are the outlines of two slender, demure figures, each with an index finger on a separate doorbell. The characters are flat to the point where they could be folded over, and apart from the delicate pointed profile, no other features are filled in or spelled out, yet they exude a nervous anticipation, or is it perhaps irritation? The ‘Bzzz’ of the bell, and the other ‘Bzzz Bzzz’ carefully handwritten in beautiful little arches of noise across the paintings. The scenario is at one level a simple one, a plain gesture that recurs in Jurczak's work: a door is open or closed, a light is on or off. A simple, concrete presence

¹ Gregg Bordowitz in *Between Artists*
– Gregg Bordowitz Amy Sillmann, 2007, p. 29.

that becomes an absence and vice versa. It is a domestic metaphor, and yet, residing within these simple dualities, are the complicated ones. Questions of revelation and concealment. What is seen, what is hidden, and how do we know? "You walk into a room and he's gone. How do you know he's gone? What is the substance of 'he's gone'?"² Beyond the mundane shift between the on and the off, there is also a fragility there, one with an expansive and enveloping core. Within the seemingly undramatic and the appearances thereof, something unsettling is brewing away.

The distinctive, ever so slightly snub-nosed profiles of the waiting and buzzing figures return in *Zapalki* (*Matches*, 2014), a series of paintings and three lithographs. The characters are evocative of the figurations of Jan Lenica or Maciej Hibner, of the Polish Poster School, with its trippy aesthetic, its strong and vivid colours from folk art, and the continuous play of character between word and image. It is a play, or critique – most often both – that recurs in the spirit of Jurczak's figurations. The match is lying against a finely patterned backdrop, reminiscent of someone's pocket lining; its body a thin line, stiff as a stick, leading up to a worried head; its minute eye an anxious dot. In one canvas (*Zapalki*, 2014), seven black-headed matches, with eyes and noses, are seen lit, heads on fire, falling through a blank background. Here the on-off logic recurs, albeit in a more violent form; the head of the match in the pocket will catch fire, or at least he is waiting for it to do so. And yet this is also funny and macabre: "I am dying. Please ... bring me a toothpick"³.

These sticks, in turn, are re-translated into the three upright mannequins in the exhibition's central room (*Szmuko*, *Jevi*, and *Sib*, all 2015), crafted by Jurczak. A group of figures, a little council if you like, standing as if charged with the task of guarding the others, the seriousness of their demeanour undercut by the subtle lift of their robes, revealing their puppet stick-legs and their miniature sneakers from underneath. They are joined by a coloured glass vase corked by a toylike head – red-cheeked and round-eyed on top of delicate hand-blown glass, like a combination of folk art figuration and faded Belle Époque elegance. If there is didacticism it comes from the absurd and often twisted image-world of the children's book illustration, instilled with the darkness once allowed in nursery rhymes. Birds, matches and buzzers are the sorts of symbols that rhyme like the moulting shapes of a dream. The iconography here, though, is less symbolic than talismanic. Looking at this, we are invited to join in, given a certain uneasy ambivalence between profanation and sacralization of feelings, and techniques and media degraded but suddenly redeemed.

The newest addition to "Bzzz" takes the form of a set of blue reliefs, their features rendered with a vividly intense softness, their expressions making them appear half asleep. Their costumes make us believe that they too are perhaps puppets, or simply transposed from another time. The mood of these reliefs gives them a gentleness, as if, within the play of presence and absence, on and off, they are drifting somewhere in between. A full, deep blue, a half-closing of

the eye suggesting some state between and underneath taut consciousness, or a marked absence of the works they reside within. If anything, they appear for the time being to have drifted beyond this tension.

"It is a joy to be hidden, and disaster not to be found" remarked psychoanalyst Donald Winnicott. He was speaking of the children's game of hide and seek, here drawn upon as an expansive core to reflect on desires and knots of withdrawal and affirmation. It is a remark which, not unlike the remarks of Jurczak's work, speak at a level that only slowly unfolds. Unfolds also into places with a profound interiority, places that we do not necessarily want to name, often because we cannot fully or adequately do so. There is a clear insistence on an interior life. In a work that is not defined by its reference, but by its insistence on and a certain faith in imagination, and a recurrent looping between presence and absence, a movement here rendered less as a tragedy and more as a pale and lingering realization. The thing that fascinates me about this interiority in the work of Jurczak, with its ability to move and produce a gradual emotional charge, is its lightness. Not the lightness of what is easy to carry or hold, but a process of removing weight partly for pleasure and partly as a way to get close to and for a moment perhaps also contain what is too awkward, weighty or intertwined to hold or to seize head-on. There is in the work a search for a structure that is firm enough to hold the viewer in spite of its lightness. Residing in "Bzzz", as in all of Jurczak's shows, is a faith in imagination and interiority, not as escapism, but as a way of reclaiming a form of imaginary that moves beyond the negation and affirmation of structures, familiar enough to appear inevitable. An unassuming reminder that everything we see also could be otherwise. Lightness here, this thoughtful lightness, is not removal or insincerity, but a way of exploring a wormhole between zero and infinity – a notion that would not be lost on a bird.

Dorota Jurczak

Bzzz

24. MAI – 12. AUGUST
NO. 5



Dorota Jurczak, Jwi, 2015. Photo: Szymon Rogulski. Courtesy of the artist and Piko gram

DOROTA JURCZAK
BZZZ

24. MAI – 12. AUGUST
NO. 5



Dorota Jurczak, *Bzzz*, 2013. Photo: Szymon Rogiński. Courtesy of the artist and Piktoqram

Åpning / Opening

24. 5. 13:00

Omvisninger / Tours

Hver søndag / Every Sunday 14:00

27. 5. 13:00 Barnefamilier / Families

14. 6. 18:00 Medlem / Members

Dorota Jurczak var relativt ukjent i sitt hjemland Polen, inntil hun viste utstillingen «Bzzz» ved Piktoqram i Warszawa i 2015. Etter å ha bodd vel 15 år i Belgia og Tyskland, og med en rekke internasjonale utstillinger bak seg, vendte hun tilbake til sine polske røtter for å stille ut en rekke helt nye malerier, etsninger, skulpturelle vaser og objekter (dukker).

Ved første øyekast kan Jurczaks motiver synes tilforlidelige og utelukkende vakre, ettersom det er den rike sammenstillingen av farger, ulike materialer, blandingen av flate billedmønstre og skulpturelle former som slår en først, og som skaper et dynamisk og nærmest dekorativt helhetsinntrykk av utstillingen. Går man tettere på, og dykker dypere ned i ikonografien, vil man imidlertid se at de tilsynelatende enkle motivene rommer en drømmeaktig tvetydighet som leder mot det ugjennomtregelige, dystre og uhyggelige. I maleriene *Bzzz* og *Bzzz Bzzz* (begge 2013) vises for eksempel tids- og kjønnsløse figurer uten øyne som trykker på ringeklokker til usynlige dører, mens det prosaiske begrepet «fyrstikkhode» får ny og bisarr klang når vi dreier blikket videre til verket *Zapalki (Match)* fra 2014 og finner de to nevnte figurenes ansiktsprofiler gjenskapet i den røde svovelen. Kritiker Pablo Larios fanget denne understrømmen av ubehag, da han i en anmeldelse av utstillingen i Frieze skrev: «There's the nightmarish suggestion that a head is a thing lit on fire, or that the head 'buzzes' like a doorbell».

Jurczaks kunstneriske uttrykk er komplekst og drar veksler på flere kunsthistoriske og kulturelle referanser. Mest åpenbart

I NO.5 re-presenteres kunstverk og utstillinger som er tidligere vist andre steder. Programserien er et motsvar til en økende akselerasjon av produksjon og resepsjon av kunst, og en anledning til å skru ned tempoet og fokusere på utvalgte utstillinger. Utstillingen «Bzzz» ble vist ved Piktogram, Warszawa i 2015. Verkene i utstillingen ble først laget for utstillingen «Lucifers» ved Etablissement d'en face projects, Brussel (2015) og har senere vært vist ved Fundação Caixa Geral de Depósitos – Culturgest, Lisbon/ Porto (2016). En ny publikasjon vil være tilgjengelig online og i vår butikk.

er kanskje plakatkunstens utvikling, med særlig vekt på etterkrigstidens surrealistebaserte Polish School of Posters, hvor samtidens politisk ladete symbolikk ble formgitt gjennom et individualistisk og absurd billedspråk. Det material- og håndverksbaserte aspektet, slik vi ser det uttrykt i glassvasene med leketøysaktige hoder, kan assosiere til både *La Belle Époque* i Frankrike på tidlig 1900-tall og Bauhaus i Tyskland noen år senere. Mens de tekstile dukkene, og utstillingen som helhet, kan leses med klare referanser til tsjekkisk dukketeater, animasjon og illustrasjonskunst.

Dorota Jurczak (f. 1978 i Warszawa, Polen) bor og arbeider i Warszawa. •

Dorota Jurczak was relatively unknown in her native Poland until she showed the exhibition "Bzzz" at Piktogram in Warsaw in 2015. After living for a good 15 years in Belgium and Germany, and with a succession of international exhibitions behind her, she returned to her Polish roots to exhibit a number of brand new paintings, etching, sculptural vases and objects (puppets).

At first glance Jurczak's motifs may seem innocent and exclusively beautiful, since it is the rich combination of colours and different materials, the mixture of flat image patterns and sculptural forms, that first strikes you, and which creates a dynamic, rather decorative overall impression of the exhibition. If you look closer and go deeper into the iconography, though, you will see that the apparently simple motifs involve a dreamlike ambiguity that points towards the impenetrable, sombre and eerie. The paintings *Bzzz* and *Bzzz Bzzz* (both 2013), for example, show timeless and sexless figures without eyes who are ringing doorbells to invisible doors,

At NO.5 Bergen Kunsthall re-presents artworks and exhibitions that have been previously shown elsewhere. The programme series is a response to the increasing acceleration of both the production and reception of art, and an opportunity to slow down, revisit and focus on selected works or exhibitions.

The exhibition "Bzzz" was shown at Piktogram, Warsaw, in 2015. The works in the exhibition were first created for the exhibition "Lucifers", one of the *Etablissement d'en face* projects, Brussels (2015), and have later been shown at Fundação Caixa Geral de Depósitos – Culturgest, Lisbon / Porto (2016).

A new publication will be available online and in our shop.

while the prosaic concept "match head" takes on new and bizarre associations when we gaze further at the work *Zapalki (Match)* from 2014 and find the facial features of the two aforementioned figures recreated in the red sulphur. The critic Pablo Larios picked up on this undercurrent of unease when he wrote in a review of the exhibition in Frieze: "There's the nightmarish suggestion that a head is a thing lit on fire, or that the head 'buzzes' like a doorbell".

Jurczak's artistic idiom is complex and draws on several art-historical and cultural references; most obviously perhaps on the development of poster art, with particular emphasis on the post-war period's Surrealism-based Polish School of Posters, where the politically charged symbolism of the

time was given form by an individualistic, absurd visual imagery. The material and craftsmanship-based aspect, as we see it expressed in the glass vases with toy-like heads, can be associated with both *La Belle Époque* in France in the early 1900s and the Bauhaus in Germany a few years later, while the textile puppets, and the exhibition as a whole, can be read with clear references to Czech puppet theatre, animation and illustration art.

Dorota Jurczak (b. 1978 in Warsaw, Poland) lives and works in Warsaw. •

DOROTA JURCZAK

BZZZ

24 MAY – 12 AUGUST
NO.5

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A new publication by Bergen Kunsthall is available for download as PDF at www.kunsthall.no from May 24.

NO.5 #15

Dorota Jurczak

Bzzz

Text: Fatima Hellberg

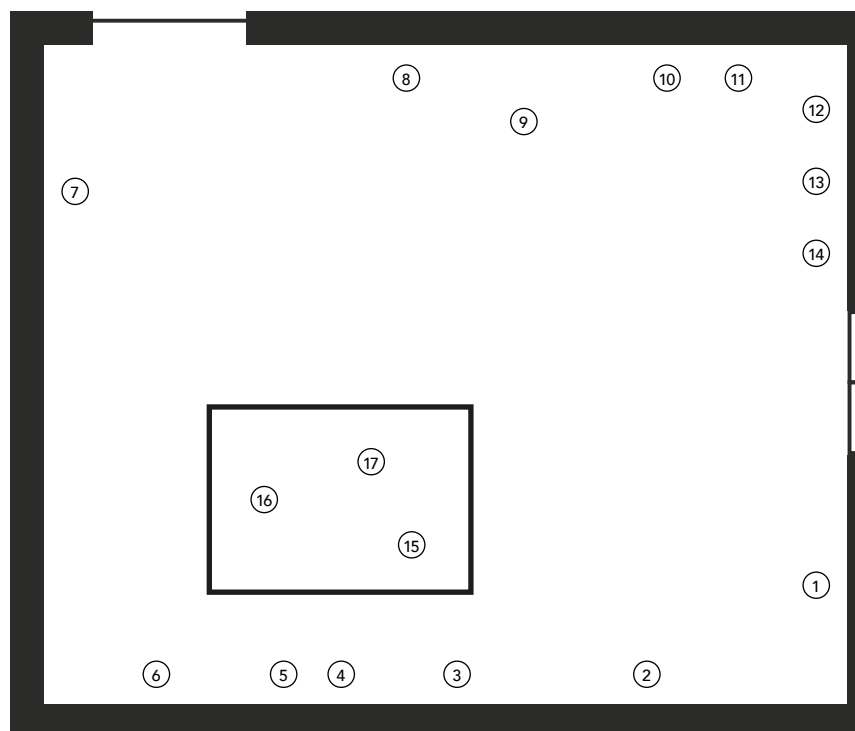
Tours:

Every Sunday

27 May, 13.00 for Families

14 June, 18.00 for Members

Platform



- | | |
|--|---|
| 1 Brama , 2014
Vinyl paint and ink on canvas, 120 x 80 cm | 10 Głowy , 2015
Etching, ed. 1/3, 53 x 43,5 cm |
| 2 Bzzz , 2013
Vinyl paint and ink on canvas, 120 x 80 cm | 11 Zapałki , 2014
Vinyl paint and ink on canvas, 100 x 60 cm |
| 3 Zapałki 4 , 2015
Lithography, ed. 4/15, 70 x 50 cm | 12 Alfred , 2017
Painted ceramic relief, 34,5 x 51,5 cm |
| 4. Zapałki 10 , 2015
Lithography, ed. 10/15, 70 x 50 cm | 13 Denton , 2017
Painted ceramic relief, 30 x 43,4 cm |
| 5 Zapałki 6 , 2015
Lithography, ed. 6/15, 70 x 50 cm | 14 Leo , 2017
Painted ceramic relief, 27 x 47,5 cm |
| 6 Untitled , 2015
Bronze, paint, 40 x 80 x 5 cm | 15 Sib , 2015
Steel holder, textiles, fimo clay, paint, 109 cm |
| 7 Zapałka , 2014
Vinyl paint and ink on canvas, 80 x 120 cm | 16 Jevi , 2015
Steel holder, textiles, fimo clay, paint, 110 cm |
| 8 Bzzz Bzzz , 2013
Vinyl paint and ink on canvas, 140 x 80 cm | 17 Szmuko , 2015
Steel holder, textiles, fimo clay, paint, 111 cm |
| 9 Ludwik 6 , 2015
Glass, styrofoam, fimo clay, paint, 100 x 30 x 30 cm | |

**ÅPEN UTSTILLING
OPEN EXHIBITION**

FESTSPILLUTSTILLINGEN 2018

**TORBJØRN RØDLAND
FIFTH HONEYMOON**

**24. MAI – 12. AUGUST
KUNSTHALLEN**

**DOROTA JURCZAK
BZZZ**

**24. MAI – 12. AUGUST
NO. 5**

**Gratis kveldsåpen utstilling torsdager 17:00 – 20:00
Free entrance to the exhibitions every Thursday 5pm – 8pm**

**Omvisninger hver søndag kl 14:00
Tours every Sunday at 2pm**





Installation view: Dorota Jurczak, *Bzzz*, 2018, Bergen Kunsthall, NO.5.

Image courtesy of the artist.

Photo: Thor Brødreskift



Installation view: Dorota Jurczak, *Bzzz*, 2018, Bergen Kunsthall, NO.5.

Image courtesy of the artist.

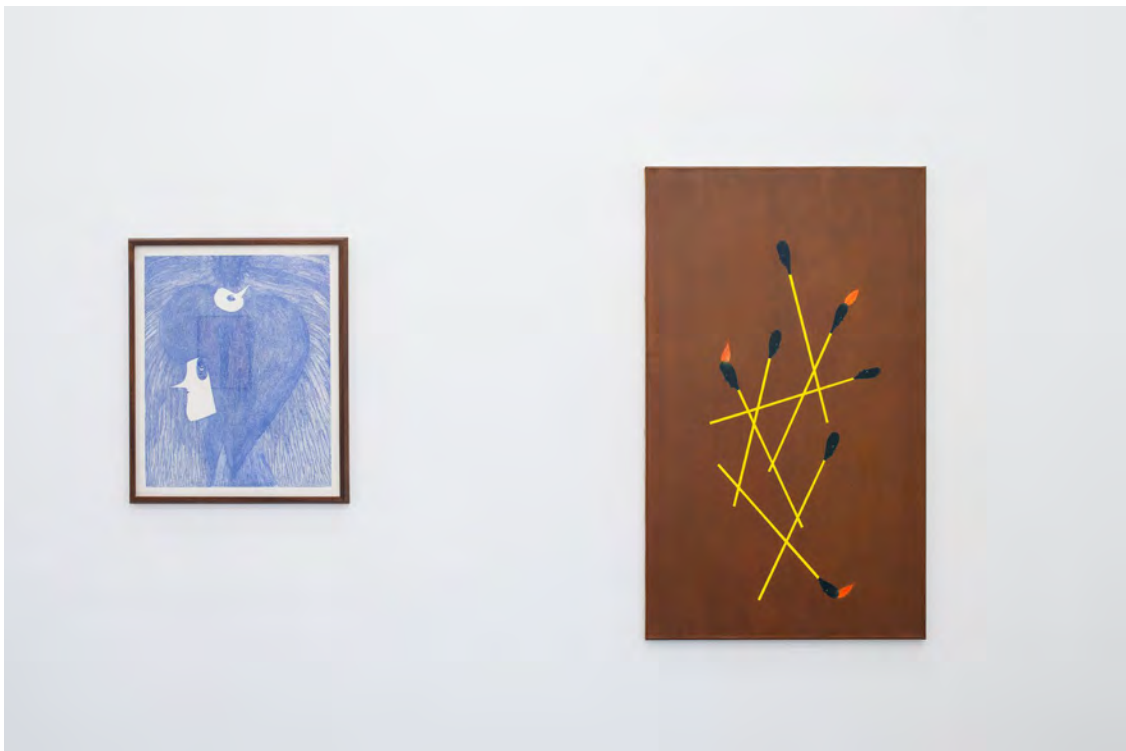
Photo: Thor Brødreskift



Installation view: Dorota Jurczak, *Bzzz*, 2018, Bergen Kunsthall, NO.5.

Image courtesy of the artist.

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Installation view: Dorota Jurczak, *Bzzz*, 2018, Bergen Kunsthall, NO.5.
Image courtesy of the artist.
Photo: Thor Brødreskift



Dorota Jurczak, *Ludwik 6*, 2015.
Image courtesy of the artist.
Photo: Thor Brødreskift

Etablissement d'en face presents:

DOROTA JURCZAK

LUCIFERS

18.04.15 - 25.05.15

Put a face on a thing and it will have a fate just like the rest of us. In the case of a humanized match this means that at some point your small head, with barely any charismatic facial features will burn up and the even smaller brain within it too. That's it. You can also add other matches some of them burning already, others squeaking in fear to give that fate a little social constellation, but it will not change much. Change the fancy background colors too, it will not help. The cork in anticipation of his pull me out destiny is wide awake, while two skinny female visitors already press the bubu-bell out in the corridor with the stripy carpet. The cork in awe is loosely attached to his support, same as with the three puppets downstairs winking and blinking from another era in which puppets still had a say. Rid of strings, but also of any movement, the vintage sneakers, detached and lost in the colorful robes are not really pushing forward and the bronze bas-relief is melting down from two faces into one with two noses.

You could say there is a lose assemblage of decorative things in anticipation, a prefixed future for the matches and two skinny female visitors outside in the corridor with the stripy carpet.

The balance between waiting and burning is traditionally hysteric, as sung about in numerous songs about firing it all up, by leading a short intense life of pleasure, pain and full-stop, instead of rotting away for a life span. For the hysteric character these processes of fading are hell, they take too long, are not suitable for the constant display of intensity and come with a lot of boredom and stalemate situations. The hysteric is craving for the new and unknown, but cannot really develop the skills needed to maintain, develop or even understand continuity. In this he is a sociopathic idiot who sparks up the party, funny to have around, but not for too long. He is good at founding a new city, but very bad at living in it.

But in the show this system, suitable for myths and legends of expressions, is accurately depicted in a graphical language that seems to root in illustrations of that kind that could make you open a junior's bank account or teach you how to ring somebody's bell fifty years ago, for example. More educational than explosive, the finishing of the works is final, the sculptural work is not carving but polishing, the paintings are rigidly executed. The matches in Belgium might be called Lucifers too, but the devil is not the one burning. Instead the hellfire smolders under cold, smooth surfaces, freed of any fate, sealed and preserved with tradition and artistic skills. The composition of waiting, wanting, change and the big bird is fixed in a precise form and a continuous praxis that no hysteric could live in for very long and for a match man, this lousy quitter, this is not even a conflict at all.





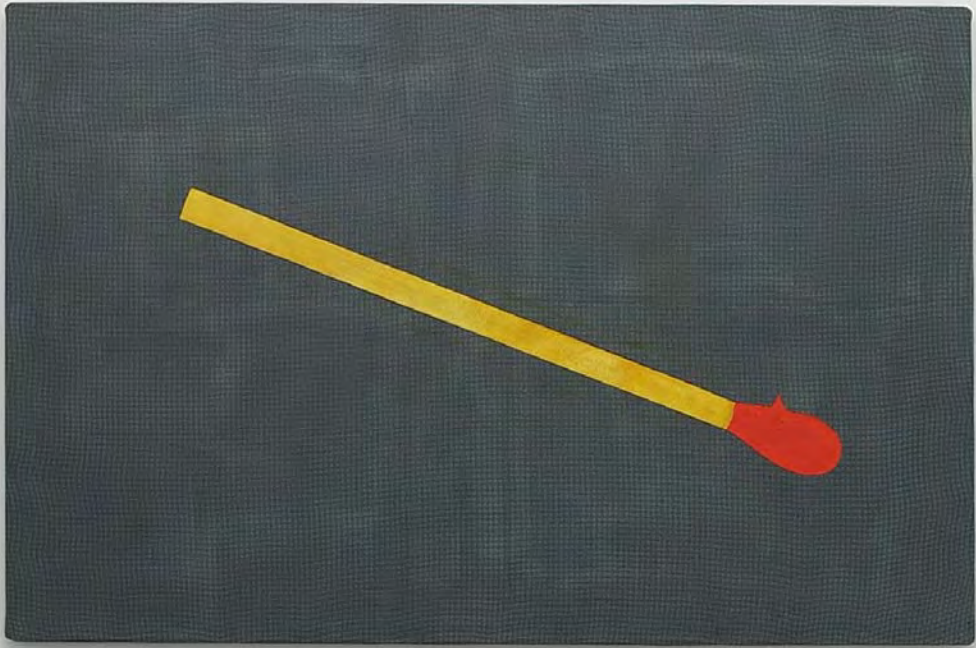


























Dorota Jurczak: BZZZ

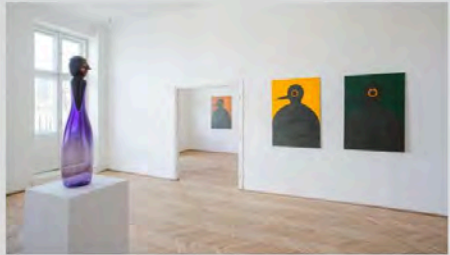


Dorota Jurczak: BZZZ
25th of September - 12th of December
Opening: 25th of September, 5 pm - 9 pm in the frame of
NARSAN Gallery Weekend 2011

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We would like to invite you to the exhibition BZZZ with the new works by Dorota Jurczak. These are paintings, sculptures (bronce, glass), objects (dolls), graphics. The artist left Poland in 1999 and this is her first solo show in the country. Her works have been exhibited, inter alia, in Van Abbemuseum in Eindhoven, at 4th Berlin Biennial for Contemporary Art in Berlin, Tate Modern in London, Kunsthalie Wien, Deichtorhallen Hamburg, Mies in Brussels and recently at Etablissement d'en face projects also in Brussels.

curated by Michal Holinaki
assistant: Agnieszka Theczyk
support: PERLA





Installation view: Dorota Jurczak, *Bzzz*, 2015, Piktogram, Warsaw. Photo: Szymon Rogiński.
Courtesy of the artist and Piktogram



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Courtesy of the artist and Piktogram

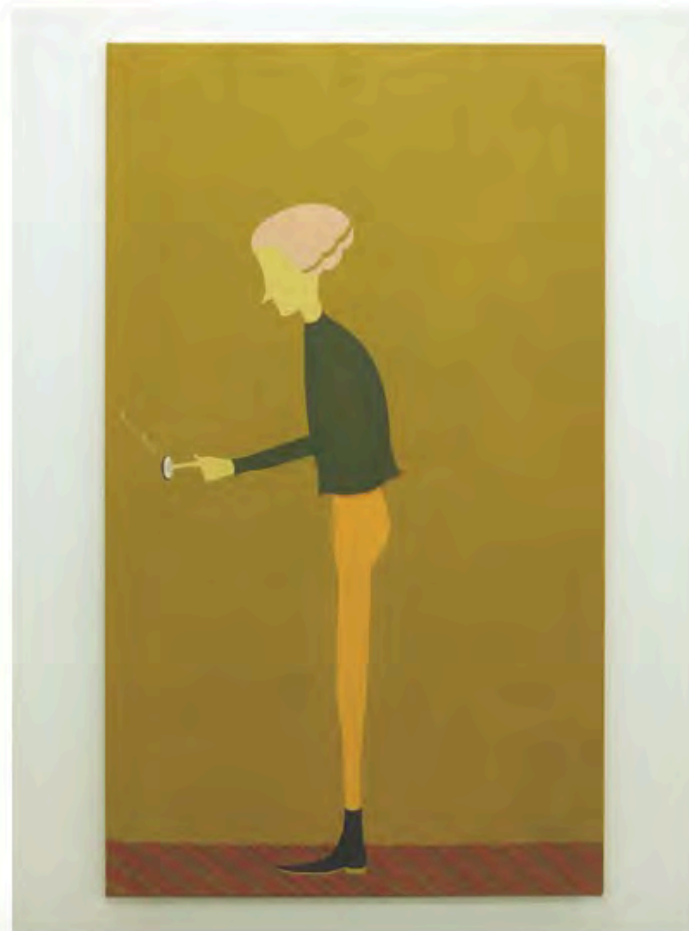


REVIEW - 10 DEC 2015

Dorota Jurczak

Piktogram, Warsaw, Poland

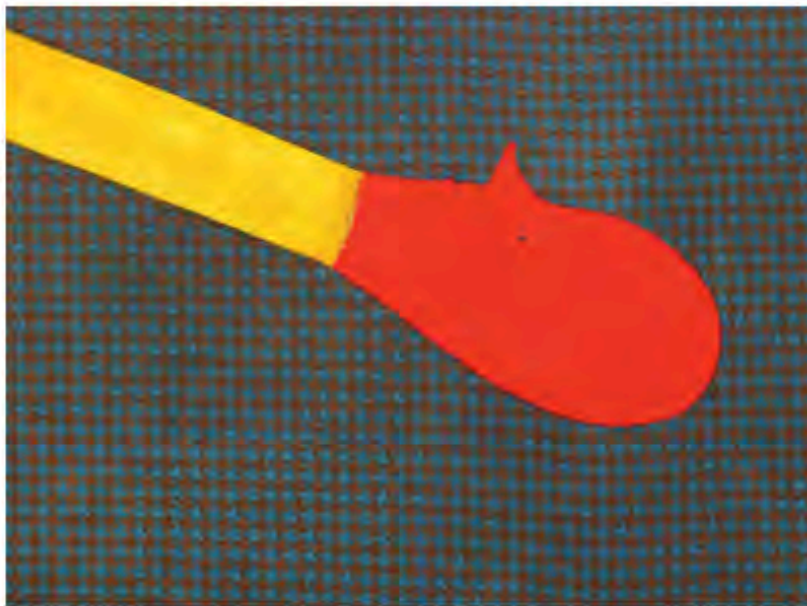
BY PABLO LARIOS



Dorota Jurczak, *Bzzz*
Bzzz, 2013, vinyl paint
and ink on canvas, 140
× 80 cm

Two female figures, seen in profile, are ringing separate doorbells. 'I've seen you before,' says the one. 'I wasn't expecting you here,' says the other. 'Maybe that's the point,' they say in unison. Two paintings (*Bzzz* and *Bzzz Bzzz*, both 2013), hung on either side of the foyer in Dorota Jurczak's exhibition 'Bzzz' at Piktogram, convey the awkwardness of an unexpected though familiar encounter, in the gauche threshold between waiting and entering. The two women are not actually speaking, though, and the fact that both figures are buzzing a doorbell does little to unite them because each is alone in an earth-toned interior, perhaps a stairwell. They don't see each other, either – their eyes are missing – though the buzzers seem to stare back at them.

Jurczak's exhibition – the first solo show in Poland of the Warsaw-born, Hamburg-based artist – is a free transposition and expansion of simple motifs, rendered in a moody, knowingly indie style that almost borders on twee. Buzzers, matches and human heads are whorled across works and media, the sorts of symbols that rhyme like the moulting shapes of a dream. The iconography here is less symbolic, though, than talismanic. Therein lies the works' strangeness. The flat, figurative delicacy of Jurczak's paintings and etchings nod to highly stylized decorative-craft traditions, while all the works in the show – from the paintings on canvas to lifeless mannequin sculptures in garish colours to a cast bronze wall work to coloured glass vases filled with wooden toylike heads – adhere to a faded belle époque aesthetic. The work is part Edward Gorey (in its sense of a comic macabre), part Elsa Schiaparelli (in the detail) and part Kai Althoff (in its mood, reference to craft and bohemianism).



Dorota

Jurczak, *Zapalki (Match)* (detail), 2014, vinyl paint and ink on canvas, 80 x 120 cm

The associations developed across the group of works via a process of resemblance are Jurczak's own. For the 'Zapalki' (Matches, 2014) series of paintings and three etchings, it's as if the heads of the two girls in the doorway have shrunk and become objects: the matches, again in profile, share their sharp noses. There's the nightmarish suggestion that a head is a thing lit on fire, or that the head 'buzzes' like a doorbell. In one canvas (*Zapalki*, 2014), seven black-headed matches, with eyes and noses, are seen lit, heads on fire, falling through a blank background. These, in turn, are re-translated into the three, upright mannequins in the exhibition's central room (*Untitled*, 2015), crafted by Juczak in the bright colours of Polish folk textiles. Then begins the terror of the birds ('Brahma' series, 2014-15): five paintings of looming, atonal, black painted passerine shapes, one eye squarely in the middle, against a bright monochrome background, as if the matches or noses have expanded again, flattened once more onto the canvas.

How do these works correspond? Maybe they don't and that's fine – sometimes a match is just a match. The modest, carefully, quietly assembled, yet still eerie series of works is surprising to me in its removal from the many demands placed on artistic production today – conceptual super-loadedness, the presentation of history or research, 'collaboration' as method, referential specificity, or the return of the documentary 'real'. Jurczak, seemingly indifferent, approaches her production with an unfashionable yet determined individualism – what used to be called a 'signature' or 'style'. In particular, the tonality of her work is a classic 'uncanny', or familiar made strange, which – when taken as a 'reference' or tactic – has been done so often as to seem nearly zombified. But – Jurczak's innocently uncanny exhibition made me think – what happens when the uncanny itself repeats, and the unfamiliar becomes familiar again, at least until the next match burns?

PABLO LARIOS

Pablo Larios is senior editor of *frieze*. He lives in Berlin.

[Deutsch](#)



REVIEW

ZOFIA RYDET

PIKTOGRAM

Dorota Jurczak's "Bzzz"

GALERIA PIKTOGRAM, Warsaw

September 25–December 12, 2015

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If the buzzer rings, will you open? Dangers are legion: scammers, Jehovah's witnesses, traveling salesmen, black-eyed children, werewolves. Better to keep the door closed. Much can be inferred from the social response to buzzing at the door. I've lived through the transition from the most pedestrian of locks to an impressive surface-mounted deadbolt, and the corresponding protocols, from spontaneously opening the door, regardless of who's there, to the fearful world of spy holes and intercoms—and yet nothing could have prepared me for the vault-door kind of thing I encountered in the Americas. Moving to East Berlin, on the other hand, was like traveling through time back to the days of social democracy, before widespread social paranoia and rampant inequality.

Polish-born artist Dorota Jurczak's characters also seem to belong to a gentler world, which, somewhat paradoxically, is also more somber than ours. In her paintings exhibited at Galeria Piktogram, two of the artist's slender and demure figures ring the buzzer: *Bzzz* and *Bzzz Bzzz* (both 2013). No *Bzzz Bzzz Bzzz*, as that would seem a tad compulsive. Besides, no matter how much they rang, the door would never be opened: none of the remaining protagonists in Jurczak's paintings and sculptures have any arms! *untitled (Schmuko)*, *untitled (Jevi)*, and *untitled (Sib)*—all from 2015—seem unfazed; *Jevi* looks circumspect, *Sib* slightly passive, and *Schmuko* somewhat aloof—more gatekeepers than a welcoming committee. Only *Ludwik 6* (2015) is apparently alarmed, though there's not much he can do: his body is a bottle, so whatever happens he won't be able to flee. As for the clamor of rook-men who seem to perch overhead—*Brahma*, *Brahma I*, *Brahma II*, *Brahma III*, and *Brahma IV* (2014–15) and the ill-fated matchstick-men, all called *Zapalki* (2014–15)—we have no way of knowing, based on their expression, if they can hear you.

Jurczak's figures are secretive and inscrutable, frail yet haunting—perhaps signaling that misfortune always hovers invisibly over everyone's heads?—with delicate frames, which draws them close to the tradition of (mostly Czech) illustration, animation, and puppet theatre, which at present feels oddly distant from the contemporary art context. Within modern art, folklore and figuration are mostly associated with the regressive sentiments prevalent in the work of the Pre-Raphaelites and the Symbolists, hence assimilated into the downward motion towards decadence and degeneracy, whereas the movement towards abstraction was codified as an upward motion, synonymous with progress. Clement Greenberg's school of thought argued that the essence of modernism lay in the use of a discipline's own methods in order to entrench it more firmly in its area of competence, progressively eliminating those elements that were beside its point.⁽¹⁾ As Fredric Jameson noted, "the shorthand of visuality will then mark mass culture as 'degraded' (...) by comparison with the anti-visuality, the anti-representational convictions, of the various high modernisms."⁽²⁾ But these aesthetic partitions also have a geopolitical correlate. In the early 1950s, abstract expressionism was widely promoted as a placeholder for American values, like free thought and free markets, as well as the best way to challenge both the Socialist Realist styles prevalent in Eastern Bloc nations and the dominance of European modernists in the art market.⁽³⁾ The West stylized the ever-expanding capitalist frontier, forging an identity between speedy turnover, broad brushstrokes, and frenzied cartoons; by contrast, Eastern European art felt quaint, timid, and arcane. But abstraction is not merely an aesthetic style or a metaphysical inclination, it's the process through which multiplicity is subsumed into homogeneity, and difference is subsumed into regularity, purging the imaginary of everything eerie or unsettling, and ultimately purging art of everything imaginary.

When Pop re-opened the floodgates of figuration, folk culture came back, yet this time round in the guise of the ready-made. Jurczak's work sits uncomfortably within this production canon, prompting a rethinking of this logic of genres and periodization. Whereas pop objects operate within the twin principles of alienation and reification, folk tales typically treat objects (usually animate household objects) as social exteriorities (restrictions, repressions) made into human-like form—they represent the labor of the non-human, rather than congealed labor. Repetition is ominous rather than numbing. Folk tales also often revolve around an interdiction ("don't go there"/ "don't open that door"), which is always meant to be broken. Even when no one has any limbs, buzzers will ring, doors will be opened, and matches will be lit.



1 View of Dorota Jurczak's "Bzzz," Galeria Piktogram, Warsaw, 2015.



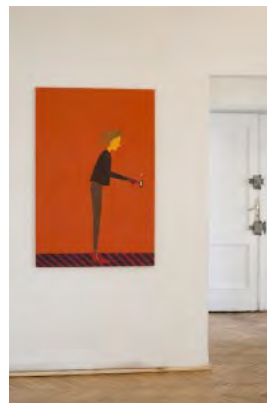
2 View of Dorota Jurczak's "Bzzz," Galeria Piktogram, Warsaw, 2015.



3 (Left) Dorota Jurczak, *Zapalki*, 2014. (Right) Dorota Jurczak, *Bzzz Bzzz*, 2013.



4 Dorota Jurczak, *Bzzz Bzzz*, 2013.



5 Dorota Jurczak, *Bzzz*, 2013.

- (1) Clement Greenberg, "Modernist Painting" (1961), <http://cas.uchicago.edu/workshops/wittgenstein/files/2007/10/Greenbergmodpaint.pdf> and Donald Kuspit, "art criticism," in *Encyclopedia Britannica*, http://universalium.academic.ru/247410/art_criticism.
- (2) Martha Rosler, "Culture Class: Art, Creativity, Urbanism, Part I," *e-flux Journal* no 21, (December 2010). For details about how the CIA financed and organized the promotion of Abstract Expressionists as part of a policy of cultural hegemony and imperialism via the Congress for Cultural Freedom from 1950–67, see: Frances Stonor Saunders, "Who Paid the Piper?: The CIA and the Cultural Cold War," (London: Granta), 1999.
- (3) Fredric Jameson, "In Hyperspace," *London Review of Books*, vol 37, no 17 (September 2015): 17–22.

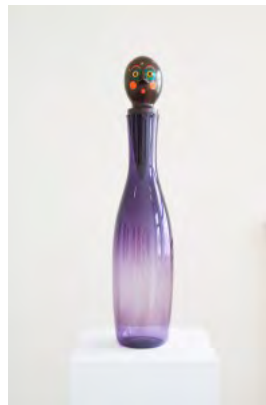
Ana Teixeira Pinto is a writer from Lisbon, currently living in Berlin.



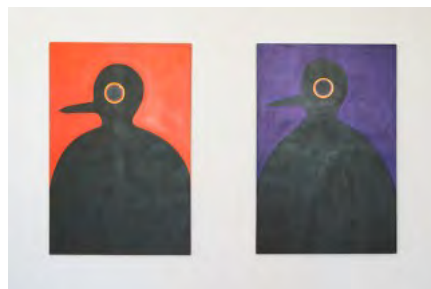
6 View of Dorota Jurczak's "Bzzz," Galeria Piktogram, Warsaw, 2015.



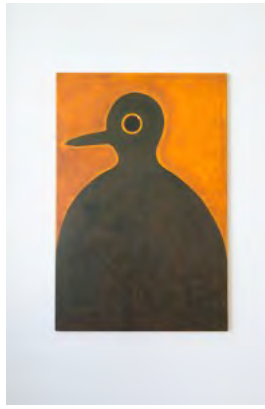
7 View of Dorota Jurczak's "Bzzz," Galeria Piktogram, Warsaw, 2015.



8 Dorota Jurczak, *Ludwik 6*, 2015.



9 (Left) Dorota Jurczak, *Brahma II*, 2015. (Right) Dorota Jurczak, *Brahma IV*, 2015.



10 Dorota Jurczak, *Brahma*, 2015.



11 Dorota Jurczak, *Zapalki*, 2014.

- 1 View of Dorota Jurczak's "Bzzz." Galeria Piktogram, Warsaw, 2015. All images courtesy of Galeria Piktogram, Warsaw. Photos by Szymon Roginski.
- 2 View of Dorota Jurczak's "Bzzz." Galeria Piktogram, Warsaw, 2015.
- 3 View of Dorota Jurczak's "Bzzz." Galeria Piktogram, Warsaw, 2015. (Left) Dorota Jurczak, *Zapalki*, 2014. Vinyl paint and ink on canvas, 80 x 120 cm. (Right) Dorota Jurczak, *Bzzz Bzzz*, 2013. Vinyl paint and ink on canvas, 140 x 80 cm.
- 4 Dorota Jurczak, *Bzzz Bzzz*, 2013. Vinyl paint and ink on canvas, 140 x 80 cm.
- 5 Dorota Jurczak, *Bzzz*, 2013. Vinyl paint and ink on canvas, 120 x 80 cm.
- 6 View of Dorota Jurczak's "Bzzz." Galeria Piktogram, Warsaw, 2015.
- 7 View of Dorota Jurczak's "Bzzz." Galeria Piktogram, Warsaw, 2015.
- 8 Dorota Jurczak, *Ludwik 6*, 2015. Glass, styrofoam, fimo clay, and paint, 30 x 30 x 100 cm.
- 9 View of Dorota Jurczak's "Bzzz." Galeria Piktogram, Warsaw, 2015. (Left) Dorota Jurczak, *Brahma II*, 2015. Vinyl paint and ink on canvas, 120 x 80 cm. (Right) Dorota Jurczak, *Brahma IV*, 2015. Vinyl paint and ink on canvas, 120 x 80 cm.
- 10 Dorota Jurczak, *Brahma*, 2015. Vinyl paint and ink on canvas, 120 x 80 cm.
- 11 Dorota Jurczak, *Zapalki*, 2014. Vinyl paint and ink on canvas, 80 x 120 cm.

Olivo Barbieri's "American Monument and Monument"

GALLERIA MAZZOLI, Modena

Yto Barrada's "Agadir"

THE BARBICAN CENTRE, London

"The Red Hour"

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Lisbon



Dorota Jurczak

02 Jul - 02 Oct 2016



DOROTA JURCZAK

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2 July – 2 October 2016

Curator -Miguel Wandschneider

Until her solo exhibition at the Piktogram Gallery, in Warsaw, in autumn 2015, the work of Dorota Jurczak (Warsaw, 1978) was still practically unknown in her country of origin. The artist has lived, worked and exhibited outside Poland since 1999, when she moved to Hamburg in order to study at the Hochschule für bildende Künste, where she made extensive use of the engraving studio. Over the years, Dorota Jurczak has gradually come to use, and expand upon, a repertoire of motifs, such as birds, feathers, candles and the smoke rising from them, cigarettes, excrement, beings with multiple heads (sometimes evoking the archetype of Medusa), the profile of a head with two faces, or matches. By using these elements, the artist composes a gallery of unusual or enigmatic portraits: for example, those of animal creatures that seem to be the result of genetic mutations and composite figures that lie somewhere between human and animal, or between human and inanimate. Some of these works depict mournful and macabre situations, a kind of theatre of cruelty, ruled by the laws of violence and dominance over other species. Over the years, however, one can note in her work both a greater pacification of her always intriguing iconography and imaginary and a greater refinement in formal and expressive terms.

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EXPOSIÇÃO

Dorota Jurczak

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Octoptak (Polvo-pássaro), 2009 · Imagem cortesia Corvi-Mora, Londres

Curadoria Miguel Wandschneider

Esta exposição é um *remake* daquela que durante o verão deu a conhecer em Lisboa a obra excêntrica e fascinante de Dorota Jurczak (Varsóvia, 1978). Até ter exposto na Galeria Piktogram, em Varsóvia, no outono de 2015, Dorota

Esta exposição é um *remake* daquela que durante o verão deu a conhecer em Lisboa a obra excêntrica e fascinante de Dorota Jurczak (Varsóvia, 1978). Até ter exposto na Galeria Piktogram, em Varsóvia, no outono de 2015, Dorota Jurczak permaneceu uma artista desconhecida no seu país de origem. Ela tem vivido, trabalhado e exposto fora da Polónia desde 1999, quando se mudou para Hamburgo com o objetivo de estudar na Hochschule für bildende Künste, onde fez uso intensivo do ateliê de gravura. Desde muito cedo, Dorota Jurczak tem vindo a utilizar e a expandir um repertório muito particular de motivos, tais como pássaros, penas de pássaros, velas e o fumo que delas se desprende, cigarros, excrementos, seres com múltiplas cabeças (evocando por vezes o arquétipo de Medusa), o perfil de uma cabeça com duas faces, ou fósforos. Combinando esses elementos, a artista compõe uma galeria de retratos insólitos ou enigmáticos, por exemplo, de criaturas animais que parecem o resultado de mutações genéticas e de figuras compósitas entre o humano e o animal, ou entre o humano e o inanimado. Algumas obras representam situações funestas e macabras, uma espécie de teatro da crueldade, regido pelas leis da violência e da dominação sobre outras espécies. Ao longo dos anos, observa-se no seu trabalho um crescente apaziguamento da sua iconografia e do seu imaginário sempre intrigantes, quer uma crescente depuração em termos formais e expressivos.

This exhibition is a remake of the one that during the summer introduced us to the eccentric and fascinating work of Dorota Jurczak (Warsaw, 1978). Until her solo exhibition at the Piktogram Gallery, in Warsaw, in autumn 2015, the work of Dorota Jurczak was still practically unknown in her country of origin. The artist has lived, worked and exhibited outside Poland since 1999. Over the years, Dorota Jurczak has gradually come to use, and expand upon, a repertoire of motifs, such as birds, feathers, candles and the smoke rising from them, cigarettes, excrement, beings with multiple heads (sometimes evoking the archetype of Medusa), the profile of a head with two faces, or matches. By combining these elements, the artist composes a gallery of unusual or enigmatic portraits: for example, those of animal creatures that seem to be the result of genetic mutations and composite figures that lie somewhere between human and animal, or between human and inanimate. Some of these works depict mournful and macabre situations, a kind of theatre of cruelty, ruled by the laws of violence and dominance over other species. Over the years, however, one can note in her work both a greater pacification of her always intriguing iconography and imaginary and a greater refinement in formal and expressive terms.



~. { }. ~, 2016, Fundação Caixa Geral de Depósitos – Culturgest, Lisboa, PT, exhibition view



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~. { }. ~, 2016, Fundação Caixa Geral de Depósitos – Culturgest, Lisboa, PT, exhibition view

DOROTA JURCZAK

b. 1978 in Warsaw, lives and works in Stuttgart, DE

Education:

- Hochschule für bildende Künste, Hamburg, DE
- Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw, Warsaw, PL

Selected exhibitions:

2017

- VORSCHAU Dorota Jurczak / Malgorzata Neubart, Galerie für Gegenwartskunst Barbara Claassen-Schmal, Berlin, DE (upcoming)
- Temporary Storeroom – Drawing: Case Study 2 (Czech-Polish version), Plato, Ostrava, CZ
- 140 Beats per Minute. Rave Culture and Art in 1990s Poland, Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw, Warsaw, PL
- Fleming Faloon, Office Baroque, Brussels, BE
- The Beguiling Siren Is Thy Crest, Museum by the Vistula, Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw, Warsaw, PL
- Johanna, Künstlerhaus Stuttgart, Stuttgart, DE (solo)

2016

- ~.{ }.~, Fundação Caixa Geral de Depósitos – Culturgest, Lisbon/ Porto, PT (solo)
- Tarantallegra, Hester Gallery, New York, USA

2015

- Bzzz, Piktogram, Warsaw, PL (solo)
- Lucifers, Etablissement d'en face projects, Brussels, BE (solo)
- Neupräsentation der Sammlung, Fürstenberg Zeitgenössisch, Donaueschingen, DE

2014

- zapalki, Marc Jancou Gallery, New York, USA (solo)
- Affective Affinities, Frans Hals Museum, De Hallen Haarlem, NL
- Strawberry Sausages, Nosbaum Reding Gallery, Luxembourg, LU

2013

- W lewo podwojenie mysli juz w trumnie tak dlugo dumnie odwiedzam cie, Marc Jancou Gallery, Geneva, CH (solo)
- Exposition d'Hiver, Marc Jancou Gallery, Geneva, CH
- Salon der Angst, Kunsthalle Wien, Wien, AT
- A top-hat, a monocle, and a butterfly, Etablissement d'en Face, Brussels, BE
- Zweiter Streich, Fürstenberg Zeitgenössisch, Donaueschingen, DE

2012

- Un-Scene II, Wiels, Brussels, BE
- Cirio, Dorothea Schlueter Galerie, Hamburg, DE
- ph-projects, Berlin, DE
- Mathew, Berlin, DE

2011

- Die Unsichtbaren Vier, Gabriele Senn Galerie, Vienna, AT
- Stories Being Told, BolteLang, Zurich, CH
- Kloake, Corvi-Mora, London, UK (solo)
- Captain Pamphile, Deichtorhallen Hamburg, Hamburg, DE

2010

- A Mysterious Cruise, Galerie Sophie Scheidecker, Paris, FR
- BigMinis, CAPC Musée d'art Contemporain, Bordeaux, FR
- Tüv Ocka, Sies + Höke, Düsseldorf, DE (with Abel Auer)
- Synogarlica, Loraini Alimantiri Gazonrouge, Athens, GR (solo)
- No New Thing Under The Sun, Royal Academy of Arts, London, UK
- When Shit Becomes Form, Kunsthalle Göppingen, Göppingen, DE
- Rive Gauche/ Rive Droite, Paris (various venues), FR
- The Curse of Imagination, Bunkier Sztuki, Cracow, PL
- Die Freundschaft, Galerie der Stadt Remscheid, Remscheid, DE
- Weisser Schimmel, Phoenix Art Sammlung Falckenberg, Hamburg, DE

2009

- On One Condition, Dépendance, Bruxelles, BE (with Christian Flamm)
- reuakaczkrúj, Marquise Dance Hall, Istanbul, TR (with Abel Auer)
- Cabinet of a Motion, Loraini Alimantiri Gazonrouge, Athens, GR

2008

- Michael Benevento, Los Angeles, USA (with Abel Auer)
- Smierdzace Balasem, Corvi-Mora, London, UK (solo)
- Max Ernst Surrealismus, Kunsthalle Göppingen, Göppingen, DE
- Melancholie, B-05 Kunst-und Kulturzentrum, Montabaur, DE
- Legende, Centre d' Art Contemporain, Chamarande, FR
- In Geneva No One Can Hear You Scream, Blondeau Fine Art Services, Geneva, CH (organized by Marc Jancou)

2007

- Seliga, Brachmanns Galeron, Hamburg, DE (solo)
- The Slimy Trail of Slug and Snail, P.S.1 MoMA, New York, USA (with Abel Auer)
- Bookish Relations, Anna-Catharina Gebbers, Berlin, DE
- Idylle. Traum und Trugschluss, Domus Artium 02, Salamanca, ES
- RAW Among The Ruins, MARRES Centre for Contemporary Culture, Maastricht, NL
- Inky Toy Affinitas, Cerealart, Philadelphia, USA
- Traum und Trauma, Kunsthalle Wien & Museum Moderner Kunst, Vienna, AT

2006

- Rings of Saturn, Tate Modern, London, UK
- The Unhomely-Phantom Scenes in Global Society, 2nd International Biennial of Contemporary Art in Seville, Sevilla, ES (curated by Okwui Enwezor)
- Wo warst du! All Ambra, Tiroler Künstherschaft, Innsbruck, AT
- Art' Fab-Women of Europe, Salle Jean Despas, Saint-Tropez, FR
- Of mice and men, 4th Berlin Biennial for Contemporary Art, Berlin, DE
- The subversive charm of the bourgeoisie, Vanabbemuseum, Eindhoven, NL

2005

- Corvi-Mora, London, UK (solo)
- Lasptaktancerka, Gabriele Senn Galerie, Wien, AT
- Ein Ding von Schönheit ein Glück auf immer, Corvi-Mora, London, UK

2004

- Sammlung Taubenstraße, Taubenstrasse 13, Kunsthaus Hamburg, DE
- Auf dem Berlich, Köln, DE
- Kunstlich Kongress, Kunstraum Walcheturm, Zürich, CH
- All Creatures Great and Small, Comme ci Comme ça II, Salon d'Art, Köln, DE

2003

- Nomadenoase, Hamburg, DE (with Anke Wenzel & Abel Auer)

2002

- Ulica Golebi 13, Taubenstraße 13, Hamburg, DE (solo)
- Alles. In einer Nacht, Tanya Bonakdar Gallery, New York, USA
- Hemmungen, Centre Cultural Andratx, Mallorca, ES
- Transterroituale-Mueller, Velada Santa Lucía, VE

Published by Bergen Kunsthall on the occasion of the exhibition:

Bzzz

Dorota Jurczak

Bergen Kunsthall

24 May – 12 August, 2018

The exhibition "Bzzz" was shown at Piktogram, Warsaw, in 2015. The works in the exhibition were first created for the exhibition "Lucifers", one of the Etablissement d'en face projects, Brussels (2015), and have later been shown at Fundação Caixa Geral de Depósitos — Culturgest, Lisbon / Porto (2016).

Text

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Proof reading

Bergen Kunsthall

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Photo

Installation views, Bergen Kunsthall: Thor Brødreskift.

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The press release for the exhibition "Lucifers" at Etablissement d'en face was written by Peter Wächtler and is reprinted here with the kind permission of Etablissement d'en face.

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ISBN 978-82-93101-39-0

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