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## **Rafal Bujnowski**

### **3 May 2019—16 June 2019**

In his first solo exhibition at the gallery, Warsaw-based artist Rafal Bujnowski presents a series of monochrome oil paintings and works on paper that, like film negatives, are a reversal of light and dark. The works are in Bujnowski's signature elemental style, one that is both photographic and painterly. Figures on a beach have an otherworldly presence as light reflects off the sand rather than the water; spectral portraits exhibit the merest trace of the subject's presence; and landscapes, portraits, and bodies appear on paper towels the artist had used to clean his brushes.

The exhibition's seashore images may at first suggest a post-apocalyptic world or an Arctic beach under the midnight sun. The artist was inspired by *The Last Day of Summer* (1958), a black-and-white art film by Polish director Tadeusz Konwick full of longing, tension, and silences. The paintings combine a filmic realism – not unlike the “day for night” shooting technique of the classical cinema – with pronounced brush strokes, as if the artist had painted them in one take.

The artist's series of portraits has both a sense of reversal and erasure. Bujnowski paints in black-and-white oil a repeated schematic face that, while still wet, he brushes over, creating a gray-scale after-image, a haunting impression, like spirit photographs, of a being hovering somewhere between earth and the other world.

Bujnowski's works on used paper towels start as accidental images, Rorschach tests of his painting practice, that he divines into portraits, bodies, and landscapes.

Rafal Bujnowski takes a conceptual approach to painting, video, objects, and actions to explore the social functions of artists and artworks. His work reveals tensions between the process of artistic production and an artwork's consumption.

Rafal Bujnowski (1974, Wadowice, Poland) lives and works in Warsaw. He studied architecture at the Kraków University of Technology (1993-1995); and graphic arts at the Academy of Fine Art, Kraków, Poland (1995-2000).

Selected exhibitions include: “Wild at Heart. Portrait and Self-Portrait in Poland After 1989,” Zachęta National Gallery of Art, Warsaw, Poland; “Thinking Ahead,” Erna Hecey, Luxembourg (all 2018); “What is Abstraction?” Foundation Stefana Gierowskiego, Warsaw, Poland (2017); “L'arte differente: MOCAK al MAXXI,” MAXXI, National Museum of XXI Century Arts, Rome, Italy (2016-2017); Raster, Warsaw, Poland (solo); “May 2066,” National Gallery of Art, Warsaw, Poland (solo); “wallpaper.linocut,” Berlinskej Model, Prague, Czech Republic (solo)(all 2016); Neuer Kunstverein Wien Vienna, Austria, with Michał Budny (2011); “Painting: Process and Expansion. From the 1950s till Now,” MUMOK, Vienna, Austria (2010); Kunstverein Duesseldorf, Germany (solo)(2005); and Art in General, New York, US (2004).