

Rafal Bujnowski

Lamp Black Love Story

28 Oct. - 18 Dec. 2022

Lamp Black Love Story, Rafal Bujnowski's second solo exhibition at the gallery, analyzes the effects of light on surfaces and how this fusion generates meaning. This quality of light has a distinctive history in the visual arts as well as literature and poetry—Marcel Proust has described a particular light as a “golden atmosphere”— a history rich in symbolism and allusion that the artist meditates in a range of media, including painting, light sculpture, found objects, drawing, and digital imagery.

In *Lamp Black Love Story*, minimalist figurations seem to move in and out of abstraction in mysterious scenes replete with desire. A primary visual theme of the exhibition is lamp black, the traditional carbon paint with blue and brown undertones that seems to contain a world of colors within it. Bujnowski embraces the possibilities of monochrome tonality and the positive/negative binary as sites of struggle and desire, while always considering the role of the artist within this nexus of relationships.

A series of black paintings, in different sizes, captures couples and individuals in scenes that suggest both sensuality and conflict. The works are produced using the artist's signature process: while the oil is still wet on the canvas, he moves a brush over them, creating grooves that recall vinyl records or lenticular 3D postcards as they reflect and refract light. The paintings are enlivened by, and in a symbiotic relationship with, the available light in the space.

Sun / Lamp is a light sculpture or lamp comprising a backlit found piece of rusted metal, reminiscent of the flaring sun during a total eclipse; a fiery iris; or an incinerated, doomed Earth. Its elemental structure is a reverse of Bujnowski's other works: here, the figure blocks the light, which fissures around and through it.

Sand Castles is a series of ten black-and-white photographs of a man at a beach standing aloft sandcastles as he faces the waves. It records an action by the artist in homage to the European post-War avant-garde and in particular performance art that challenged conventional art-making. The images capture him out of place, wearing a white shirt and trousers, in a collection of moments where he strives to remain upright. Like the frames of a film reel, the work conjures serial movement, a dynamic underscored by a sense of alienation and the resilient energy needed to maintain one's equilibrium in absurd conditions.

Shell's Shells Collection is an assortment of small found objects, including shells, stones, and pieces of eroded plastic, that the artist found on a beach. Laid out museum-style in a vitrine, they appear to be archeological artifacts, yet their museological narrative is elusive. Their story seems more personal, an intimate configuration that may be someone's *aide de memoire*, or a visual display of their consciousness.

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Shadow on Paper comprises a series of images on a screen together with some of the original ink on paper drawings that were scanned to produce the digital slide-show of minimal stick figures on an imposing, broad horizon line. The relationship between the digital and analog images is a duality of similarity and difference, an optical tension that infuses the exhibition as a whole, where original and copy struggle for primacy.

Bujnowski takes a conceptual approach to painting, video, objects, and actions to explore the social functions of artists and artworks, revealing disjunctions 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). He is a founder of the artist-curator collaborative, Fundacja Dzielna.

Selected exhibitions include: "Dom w budowie," Fundacja Dzielna, Warsaw (solo) (2022); "The Passion," Hall Art Foundation, Schloss Derneburg, Holle-Derneburg, Germany; "Selected Works," Georg Kargl, Vienna (solo) (both 2021); "Fear," Galeria Arsenal, Białystok, Poland; "Contemporary models of realism," (MOCAK Collection), Museum of Contemporary Art in Kraków, Kraków (both 2020); "Polish Artists in the Bunkier Sztuki Collection," Bunkier Sztuki, Kraków; "Formy," Shibuya Hikarie Creative Space, Tokyo; "Rafal Bujnowski," Foxy Production, New York (all 2019); "Wild at Heart. Portrait and Self-Portrait in Poland After 1989," Zachęta National Gallery of Art, Warsaw (2018); "L'arte differente: MOCAK al MAXXI, MAXXI," National Museum of XXI Century Arts, Rome (2016-2017); "May 2066," National Gallery of Art, Warsaw, Warsaw (solo); and "wallpaper.linocut," Berlnskej Model, Prague (solo); "Man on Tree," Raster, Warsaw (all 2016).

Special thanks to Fundacja Dzielna and White Columns.