

For her second exhibition at Metro Pictures, Paulina Ołowska shows paintings and knitted sweaters adapted from postcards of home knitting patterns from late communist-era Poland. With these works Ołowska continues her engagement with communist Poland's fascination with Western consumerism and celebrates the spirit and stylish improvisations of the "Applied Fantastic." Polish writer Leopold Tyrmand, describing the localized re-creations of Western styles, coined the term "Applied Fantastic" in 1954.

Ołowska incorporates text and graphics from the illustrations including the Polish names for the pattern styles. The paintings are done in a realist style that achieves the same disjointed effects of the postcards. The illustrations used by Ołowska depict high-fashion looks to be fabricated at home and, however glamorous, the images have a decidedly "behind the iron curtain" look. These works also pay tribute to American Pattern and Decoration art of the 1970s and its use of non-traditional contemporary art mediums such as tiles and textiles.

Ołowska, who lives and works in the Polish countryside, commissioned a local knitter to create sweaters from the original patterns. These will be shown alongside drawings, posters and various images and objects that are part of Ołowska's "inspiration wall" that will be recreated from the artist's studio.

Recent one-person exhibitions include Tramway, Glasgow (2010); Pinakothek der Moderne, Munich (2009 – 2010); DAAD Galerie, Berlin (2008 – 2009); and Portikus, Frankfurt (2007). In 2011, Ołowska will participate in a residency and exhibition at the CCA Wattis Institute for Contemporary Art, San Francisco.

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