

Wojciech Bąkowski
Heart on the Trail
May 24 - June 29, 2024

Bureau is pleased to present *Heart on the Trail*, a solo exhibition of new work by Polish artist Wojciech Bąkowski. *Heart on the Trail* is Bąkowski's second solo exhibition with Bureau, and his first solo show in New York since 2016. Bąkowski is prolific in many media: known in Poland as a musician and poet, he also makes audio work, sculpture, hand-drawn animation, and drawings. *Heart on the Trail* will feature a number of new drawings and a sound-object.

Bąkowski's drawings in pastel and charcoal on cardboard depict dream-like visions through a hazy half-light. In these scenes, interiors and exteriors become interchangeable: the portal in *Parents Room* is at once a door and a window, with a sea horizon at the bottom; in *Landscape with a Red Lamp*, light pours through a doorway to reveal a forest within. The built environment structures Bąkowski's unconscious—memories of his childhood housing block in Poznan suffuse his interior life with densely symbolic imagery. The artist cultivates the practice of lucid dreaming, a technique that allows him to invoke images from his past deliberately. In this liminal state between the conscious and unconscious mind, familiar sights like train cars, apartment buildings, city streets with bicycles or children at play, layer over each other, overlapping in time and space, shifting scales, mapping the tangled logic of the mind's eye.

To prepare his surfaces for drawing, Bąkowski sands heavy cardboard to give it a rough texture, then draws with charcoal or pastel to create smoky atmospheres from which his figures and places emerge. His use of color—a new development in his drawings—softens the emotional tone of his starker scenes, enhancing their sensory power. Pale yellows and dusky purples describe pools of light and shadow, evoking times of day or feelings of safety or danger. A ring of blue flames has the scale of a huge bonfire but the shape of a tiny burner on a gas stove. In a diptych and triptych included here, scenes are depicted from different points of view, with the simultaneity and shifting perspective common to dreams and memory alike.

The exhibition shares its title with the sound-object *Heart on the Trail*. A speaker embedded in this wall-relief plays a recording of a mechanical clock from Bąkowski's grandparents' home. This type of Soviet-manufactured clock was common in post-War Poland, and its metallic ticking registers on multiple levels—as the hallucinatory soundtrack to the artist's childhood dreams; as a poetic signifier for the Cold War era in Eastern Europe; and as a universal reminder of time's relentless passage.

Wojciech Bąkowski (b. 1979, Poznan, Poland; lives and works in Warsaw) earned an MFA (2005) and a PhD (2018) from the University of Fine Arts in Poznań. Recent solo exhibitions include *Route Phantom*, Neuer Essener Kunstverein, Essen (2023); *A Couple of Details*, Stereo, Warsaw (2023); *Holiday Power Supply*, SVIT, Prague (2016); *Hideout in the Corner of Level 6*, Bureau, New York (2016). Bąkowski's work has been included in numerous biennials and museum exhibitions including: *Procedures for the head: Polish Art Today*, Kunsthalle Bratislava, Slovakia (2015); *Propotypes*, XII Baltic Triennial, Vilnius, Lithuania (2015); *State of Life*, National Art Museum of China, Beijing, China (2015); *As You Can See: Polish Art Today*, Museum of Modern Art, Warsaw, Poland (2014); *The Generational: Younger than Jesus*, New Museum, New York (2009). His animation films have also been included in film festivals in New York, Toronto, Vienna, Ann Arbor, Wrocław, and have been presented at Anthology Film Archives, New York. In 2015 he was awarded the Grand Prize at the International Short Film Festival Oberhausen, Germany. His work is held in the public collections of Museum of Modern Art, Warsaw; Muzeum Sztuki, Łódź; and CCA Ujazdowski Castle, Warsaw.

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Left wall:

Light from the Kitchen, 2024
Pastel on cardboard
100 × 70 cm
(39 ³/₈ × 27 ¹/₂ in.)

Landscape with a Red Lamp, 2024
Pastel on cardboard
25.3 × 30 cm
(10 × 11 ³/₄ in.)

The Loop with Lunch, 2024
Pastel on cardboard
33 × 58 cm
(13 × 22 ⁷/₈ in.)

Against the Light 2, 2024
Pastel on cardboard
23 × 36.5 cm
(9 × 14 ³/₈ in.)

Further and Further, 2024
Pastel on cardboard
triptych: 36.5 × 23 cm
(14 ³/₈ × 9 in.) each

Center wall:

Parents Room, 2024
Charcoal on cardboard
70 × 33.5 cm
(27 ¹/₂ × 13 ¹/₄ in.)

After Talking in the Kitchen, 2023
Charcoal on cardboard
100 × 70 cm
(39 ³/₈ × 27 ¹/₂ in.)

Argument, 2023
Charcoal on cardboard
70 × 83 cm
(27 ¹/₂ × 32 ⁵/₈ in.)

Heart on the Trail, 2020
Charcoal on cardboard, brass, speaker, sound
36 × 35 × 10 cm
(14 ¹/₈ × 13 ³/₄ × 3 ⁷/₈ in.)

Right wall:

The Shadow of Hours, 2023
Charcoal on cardboard
70 × 78 cm
(27 ¹/₂ × 30 ³/₄ in.)

The Views Warehouse, 2023
Charcoal on cardboard
70 × 100 cm
(27 ¹/₂ × 39 ³/₈ in.)

Conversation, 2023
Charcoal on cardboard
Diptych: 100 × 70 cm
(39 ³/₈ × 27 ¹/₂ in.) each

Piatkowo Housing Estate and the Firebugs, 2021
Charcoal and crayon on cardboard
10.5 × 21 cm
(4 ¹/₈ × 8 ¹/₄ in.)

Start, 2023
Charcoal on cardboard
82 × 70 cm
(32 ¹/₄ × 27 ¹/₂ in.)

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Downstairs, left to right:

Passenger Heads, 2022
Pastel on cardboard
23 × 37.5 cm
(9 × 14 $\frac{3}{4}$ in.)

Man, 2022
Charcoal on cardboard
55 × 69.5 cm
(21 $\frac{5}{8}$ × 27 $\frac{3}{8}$ in.)

Types, Dates, Routes, 2022
Charcoal on cardboard
48.5 × 48.5 cm
(19 $\frac{1}{8}$ × 19 $\frac{1}{8}$ in.)

Proportions of Memory, 2022
Charcoal on cardboard
50 × 70 cm
(19 $\frac{5}{8}$ × 27 $\frac{1}{2}$ in.)

Against the Light 1, 2021
Charcoal on cardboard
47 × 70 cm
(18 $\frac{1}{2}$ × 27 $\frac{1}{2}$ in.)