



Zbigniew Rogalski

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Echo

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Upended little bags of cocaine with the drugs replaced by a streak of white paint; an empty aquarium, in the panes of which its own reflection is visible; paintings that copy faded, scaled down versions of themselves – these are the phantoms of Zbigniew Rogalski's paintings.

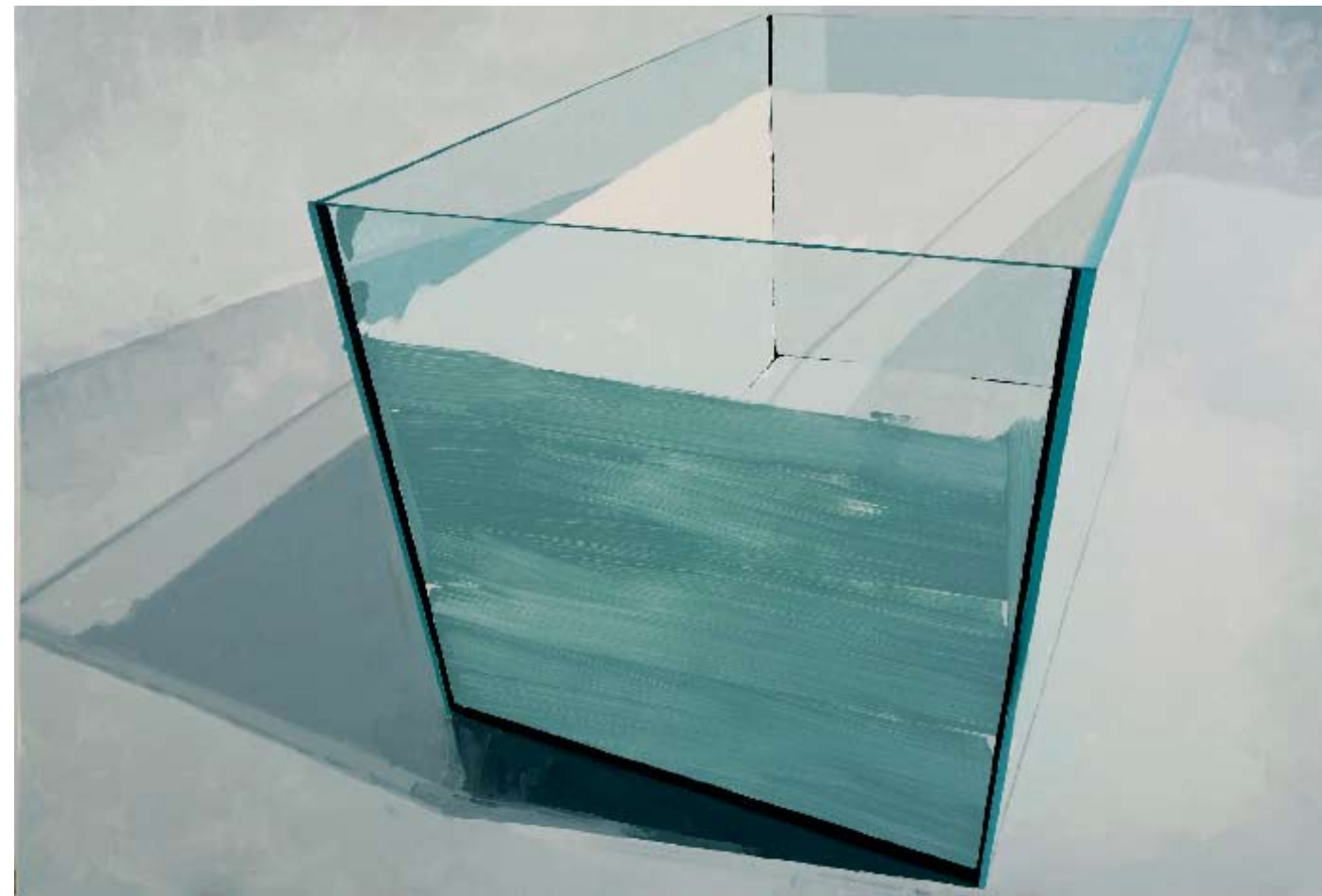
The natural environment of a painter is full of dangerous fallacies and optical plunges, full of recurrences, dependencies and rituals. In a painting depicting a large, empty aquarium, the artist painted some of its panes white. In this way, the glass, like a display window donning an "under construction" sign, refers to the domain of its given habitat. This domain is fundamentally quite small and self-contained, but through it one can peer into other, external worlds and become seduced by further reflections, none of which can be truly permeated. One thus becomes quickly aware that Rogalski's paintings are descents wherein what we see is only a substitute for that with which we are presented. They are a pledge and a Baudrillardesque Simulacrum: the aquarium's painted panes consist of only color. The cocaine in the little plastic bags in the series, Ghosts, is also only color. This is a method of painting that masks even itself.

Optical effects drive the metaphor in Rogalski's work. The amount of mirror images, endless reflections and visual distortions are inconsistent with the rules of physics suggesting that somewhere behind our range of cognition other worlds exist – or concurrently, that the worlds that we see are not necessarily reality.

Rogalski began by unmasking painting. He painted images of fogged up panes of glass and mirrors onto which the names of pop-icons were written. In another series, Rogalski depicts himself painting over the canvas' facade from inside of it (already sounding quite close to a tautology). Later, he concentrated on reflections: discovering in windows, mirrors, panes of glass, and even in porcelain tombstone portraits that which is concealed within their surfaces. The images of reflections develop and more realities appear within and are mounted on top of one another – for example the interior of his studio and the view out of its window are at once visible. Rogalski is interested in optical fallacies – the lies that our eyes tell us.

Zbigniew Rogalski's self-referential canvases are as though glass panes behind which the artist himself stands. His newest works renounce any narrative – only the reflections in this glass remain. The series, *Stories*, portrays that which isn't there at the same time as it plays with traditions of abstract and modern art. The goal of Rogalski's painting is essentially a deceleration of cognition. He holds the observer in the moment in which the eyes already recognize the form but have not yet found the memory of its meaning. And exactly in this instant – just as in the novel *One Hundred Years of Solitude* – the story inverts itself: the end turns out to be the beginning and neither the viewer nor the artist can say what came first – the subject or the painting.

Stories, 2008, oil on canvas, 110x160 cm





Ghosts, 2008, c-print, 11x13 cm each

Next pages: *Stories 05*, 2008, oil on canvas, 155x225 cm; *Stories 02*, 2008, oil on canvas, 150x215 cm



Zbigniew Rogalski

Born in 1974. Graduated from the Poznan Academy of Fine Arts, Painting Department (1999). Together with Hubert Czerepok formed Magisters group (2000-2002). Lives and works in Warsaw.

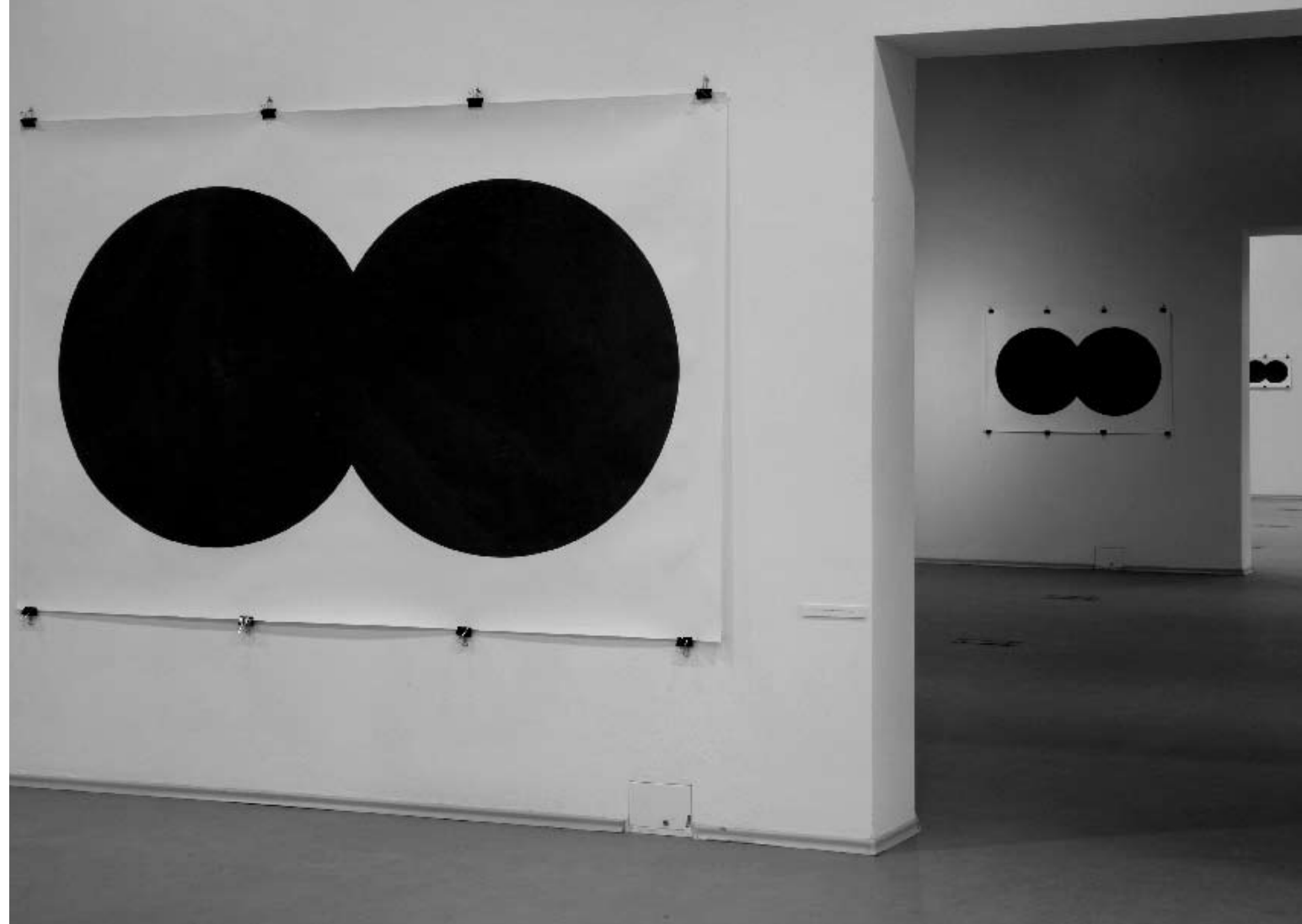
Solo exhibitions (selection):

- 2009 Echo, ŻAK | BRANICKA, Berlin, D
Center for Contemporary Art, Warsaw, PL
- 2008 Shot, Jack Hanley Gallery (with Michal Budny), Los Angeles, CA, USA
- 2007 Galerie Almine Rech, Paris, F
- 2006 Letter, Sprüth Magers Projekte, Munich, D
Kunsthalle Mannheim, D
- 2005 Private Spring, Göttinger Kunstverein, Göttingen, D

Group exhibitions (selection) :

- 2008 SITE Santa Fe's Seventh International Biennial: Lucky Number Seven, SITE Santa Fe, USA
Back to black. Black in recent painting, Kestner Gessellschaft, Hannover, D
- 2007 XXS (Extra Extra Small), Sommer Contemporary Art, Tel Aviv, ISR
- 2006 Neuerwerbungen der Sammlung Marx, Hamburger Bahnhof, Berlin, D
Polish Painting of the 21st century, Zacheta National Gallery of Art, Warsaw, PL
- 2005 Poles Apart: Contemporary Polish Art, Rubell Family Collection, Miami, USA
Thank You For The Music, Sprüth Magers Projekte, Munich, D
Egocentric, Immoral, Outmoded..., Zacheta National Gallery of Art, Warsaw, PL
Prague Biennale 2. The expanded painting, Prague, CZ
- 2004 From My Window. Artists and their Territories, Ecole National Supérieure des Beaux-Arts, Paris, F
At home, The Letterkenny Arts Centre, Letterkenny, IRL
Under The Red & White Flag, New Art from Poland, Estonian Art Museum, EST

Echo, installation, 2009, graphite on paper



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