

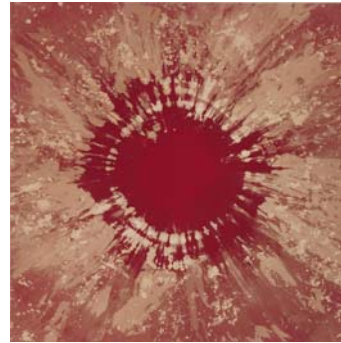
GAGOSIAN GALLERY

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PRESS RELEASE

GAGOSIAN GALLERY
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GALLERY HOURS:

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Tue - Sat 10:00am - 6:00pm



PIOTR UKLAŃSKI: *Discharge!*

Wednesday, January 12 – Saturday, February 19, 2011

Opening reception for the artist: Friday, January 21st, from 6 to 8 pm

Gagosian Gallery is pleased to present “Discharge!,” a *mise-en-scène* of new paintings by Piotr Ukiński.

If painting is traditionally defined as an accretive practice whereby pigments are applied to blank canvas to produce marks, Ukiński’s new work moves in the opposite direction. The process reveals a skepticism towards the act of painting that at the same time allows him to produce seductive pictorial results. Color is strategically removed — or discharged — from cotton bedsheets that have been saturated with vibrantly-hued fiber-reactive dyes. Bleach is the primary agent in this process that allows the creation of “paintings” without paint.

The nature of this discharge method aligns this work with a legacy of anti-painting. Sharing affinities with Sigmar Polke’s fabric paintings and Blinky Palermo’s sewn cloth pictures (*Stoffbilder*) — Ukiński abandons paint while engaging the histories of abstraction, conceptual art, and pop culture. While Polke and Palermo shopped together for their materials at the Karstadt department store in Cologne, Ukiński sources his fabrics at Ikea and Bloomingdales.

His recuperation of tie-dyeing into the realm of “serious painting” suggests an irreverence towards mainstream modernism while he explains his approach as emerging in part from his position as an immigrant in the city that gave rise to Abstract Expressionism: “Neither English nor abstraction is my mother tongue. These paintings ‘speak’ an aesthetic ESL.”

This intertwining of irreverence and sincerity, as well as the pitting of modernist ambition against banal cultural references, provides the conceptual threads that link the *Discharge!* paintings to Ukiński’s previous work. Expanding upon the themes of *Joy of Photography* (begun in 1996), these paintings generate visual pleasure through the appropriation of readymade images and clichéd artistic typologies. As with the crayon- shavings paintings, torn-paper collages and ceramic-mosaic tableaux, Ukiński opts for low-fi, household wares — in this case, commercial bedding and bleach — over conventional, codified art materials with which to make his art.

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Piotr Uklański was born in 1968 in Warsaw, Poland. Recent exhibitions include "2010: Whitney Biennial" (2010); "Mapping the Studio: Artists from the François Pinault Collection", Punta della Dogana and Palazzo Grassi, Venice (2009); "Biało-Czerwona", Gagosian Gallery, New York (2008); "Piotr Uklański: A Retrospective", Wiener Secession, Vienna (2007); and "The Joy of Photography", Musée d'art moderne et contemporain, Strasbourg (2007).

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