

GAGOSIAN GALLERY

# whitewall

## Piotr Ukański at the Bass Museum: English and Abstraction as Second Language

Sola Agustsson



*Piotr Ukański, Untitled (Priceless), 2012. Fiber reactive dye on oxidized cotton textile, 105 x105 inches.  
Courtesy of the Bass Museum*

Piotr Ukański rose to fame in the mid-90s with his iconic piece *Untitled (Dance Floor)* a colorfully tiled light-up dance floor that merged art and entertainment. This winter, Ukański will exhibit at the Bass Museum in Miami.

His new show “ESL” (English as a second language) refers to the artist’s status as an immigrant from Warsaw, as well as to the idea that artistic interpretation is itself a second language, in a way. The show will draw from an eclectic body of work encompassing sculpture, painting, photography, performance, and film. All the works will revolve around his status as an ESL individual, as well as American views on Polish culture and the myth of the “American Dream.”

“Neither English nor abstraction is my mother tongue. These paintings ‘speak’ an aesthetic ESL,” Ukański explains.

Uklanski’s work has often been the center of both controversy and acclaim. His photographic series *Untitled (The Nazis)*, which posed Polish actors as German officers, caused protests and was eventually destroyed. However when *Untitled (John Pope II)* was exhibited publically, the piece spontaneously turned into a memorial.

*“ESL” will be on view at the Bass Museum December 5, 2013 – March 16, 2014.*