



RASTER Gallery (Warsaw, Poland)
in RENTAL, New York
co-presented with the Polish Cultural
Institute in New York

RASTER HAIRCUT

Artists:

Rafal Bujnowski
Aneta Grzeszykowska
Przemek Matecki
Jan Smaga

curated by

Lukasz Gorczyca & Michal Kaczynski

Opening: Thursday 13, 2007, 7-9 PM
Exhibition lasts until January 13, 2008
Opening hours: Wed-Sun 12-6 PM

RENTAL

120 East Broadway, Floor 6
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www.rental-gallery.com
www.raster.art.pl

“Raster Haircut” is the first presentation in New York City of the Warsaw-based Raster Gallery. In contradiction to the Polish saying, “Don’t split hairs in four”, the exhibition is composed of works by four artists: Rafal Bujnowski, Aneta Grzeszykowska, Przemek Matecki and Jan Smaga. Most of them are recent works, created or selected especially for this exhibition.

The exhibition does not have a subject - instead it has a main motif: hair. Hair as a characteristic, organic structure (often difficult to disentangle!), but also hair as a coiffure, a stylized form, a carefully designed shape, and also a sign of identity. “Raster Haircut”, though, is not a proposal of yet another style or fashion, but rather an attempt to describe our artistic identity. “Raster Haircut” is not only a specific “hair-do”, but above all it is our special way of seeing, which sometimes requires respectfully stooping down to examine every single “hair”, whatever seems marginal and petty, and which at first glance is not always visible, even though - as with hair - we live with it every day. Thus “Raster Haircut” is simply a hair stylist’s mirror, in which, as on the palm of the hand, one sees an unfolding process: sense slowly emerging from chaos, the promise of a new order.

Artists in the show:

Rafał Bujnowski (born 1974) is one of the most radical and intelligent contemporary painters. His works are a brilliant blend of two seemingly remote artistic disciplines - painting and conceptual art. The theme of the Bujnowski's successive projects - paintings, videos, objects or actions - are the conventions linked to the social functioning of the artist and the works of art, as well as the conventions present in the art itself. Rafał's paintings are an example of fully aware conceptual painting - his objects, disclosing and changing meaning depending on the surrounding in which they are placed, are peculiar models of an artwork. They reveal a tension between the process of artistic production and consumption. At the same time, the unquestionable and outstanding visual talent of the artist causes his works to be treated as 'self-sufficient works' - very good paintings, to put it simply.



The primary medium in which **Aneta Grzeszykowska** (born 1974) works is photography. However, she treats it instrumentally, as a tool for the realization of advanced, artistic and ontological exercises. The artist is interested in the role photography plays in documenting and creation of a personal identity. Therefore, in her film projects or in the doll sculptures, the human figure becomes a puppet-like in shape and gains a marionette dimension. One of the main topics of Grzeszykowska's works is her own identity with which she plays on many levels: by erasing her own figure from a family collection of photographs ('Album', 2005), or by impersonating Cindy Sherman in her classic cycle 'Untitled Film Stills' (2006). Some projects by Grzeszykowska - like the cycle of illusionist portraits of non-existent people ('Untitled', 2006) - take advantage of the possibilities offered by the digital image manipulation, while others use photography and film in a classic way by emphasizing the performative dimension of the artist's activities. The motifs which she obsessively returns to in her works are absence, invisibility, disappearing and the confrontation of body and thought with non-existence.



Taking as his point of departure the excrements and garbage (also literally) of the contemporary visual and material culture, **Przemek Matecki** (born 1976) produces painterly beings - paintings, objects and installations - representing the highest degree of sophistication. In his works, he combines press photographs and reproductions with a noble painterly camouflage. Matecki's art has a radical and experimental nature. Vulgar at times, his works flirt with pornography and politics, only to (in a somewhat unclear way) win the forces of evil over to his side. Simultaneously, this art bears a peculiar and rare quality - an ability to revolutionize one's way of perceiving reality and to reconstruct a 'better world' using pieces of the one in which we breathe everyday. Matecki's painting has an exceptional rhetorical force which is used to challenge the culture, including its most down-to-earth manifestations. It bears a specific, non-academic sensitivity to the painterly image and, at the same time, a counterculture-energy which lets the paintings - constructed out of quotations, stencils, torn out press photos - live a real life, here and now.



Jan Smaga (born 1974) works with photography and combines classical techniques with computer editing, constructing three-dimensional photographic objects. Together with Aneta Grzeszykowska, he realized several series whose main topic was the translation of three-dimensional architectural space onto a two-dimensional image ('A Plan', 2003) and the attempt at a recreation of the three-dimensional nature of architecture with the help of spatial photographic installations ('YMCA', 2005). The technique developed by Grzeszykowska and Smaga is reminiscent of the process of scanning - a total voyeuristic documentation of the space and the people which inhabit it. In the individual projects, the artist subjects the human body to a similar, detailed analysis of the surface. The incredible formal quality of these photographs, combined with their subject matter, sends an existential shiver down the spine. Smaga is fascinated with the illusionist power of photography, the way in which it interprets the third dimension and the question of how deep one can look down the even surface of a photograph - the skin taken off the reality.



To learn more about the gallery and the artists, please visit: www.raster.art.pl