

WITHERED

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Ewa
Agnieszka
Kama
Małgorzata

Axelrad
Kalinowska
Sokolnicka
Szymankiewicz

WITHE

RED

The state of the world after the fall — crisis, catastrophe — or simply a state of flux, a dwindling of energy. Something come to an end, its remnants still dominating the landscape. We've seen such things before, as with Piranesi, in his sketches documenting the burning of Ancient Rome. Today we're well aware that "our antiquity is modernism". An empire disintegrating before our eyes, these modular tower blocks, swing sets designed in the name of progress, concrete parking lots on the fringes of the city. The modernist conception for the ordering of everyday life has fallen into ruin. It isn't a spectacular catastrophe, rather, a slow decline, an ebbing away. Death in installments.

The question is, is this still of any interest to anyone? Contemporary art revolves around a collection of similar images from a decent period. And this increasingly resembles a dog chasing its own tail. The modernist utopia has already been over-analyzed from every angle. What's left?

What would happen if we tried to escape this hackneyed set of associations? To go in search of new metaphors? Freshen up our own lexicon? At least remind ourselves of experiences on a slightly more sensual level, taking our own bodies as our guides, with all their impulses? What would happen if we compared modernist cities to an organism? To plants? To the human or animal body? Withered attempts to answer such questions through the works of Ewa Axelrad, Agnieszka Kalinowska, Kama Sokolnicka and Małgorzata Szymankiewicz — artists who tie in that which is organic with the social. They liken the human body to the collective body. In the sicknesses of living organisms, animals and plants they see the symptoms of a greater crisis, even a political one.

Agnieszka Kalinowska's *Extinguished Neon Signs* are objects that have already passed their prime. Once the glittering lights of the city, today extinguished, they have lost their purpose. Kalinowska points to the transience of matter, also to evanescence and the

changeability of the ideas that stand behind it. A symbol of the prosperity of old has reverted into a dismal, insignificant skeleton. Kalinowska takes this idea further by making her dead neon signs out of withered plants. Another work by Kalinowska, made of concrete blocks, cites the realities of late modernism: at first glance they appear simply as rough, heavy pieces covered in moss (the "moss" is a green string dotingly arranged by the artist). A closer insight reveals an idea of almost mythic proportions: the remains of civilization swallowed up by the wild. This process can be understood as a return to a state of nature — or perhaps conversely, as a sign of civilization's own aspects of untamed savagery.

In the films of Ewa Axelrad (made in collaboration with Steve Press) she depicts a city undergoing a constant, yet almost imperceptible, change. Ventilators and surveillance cameras melting under bright lights represent a city as an organic beast, living its own life. Throughout these changes there are no signs of any major drama, rather, these are the products of gradual entropy. The city is withering away like a dried-up plant.

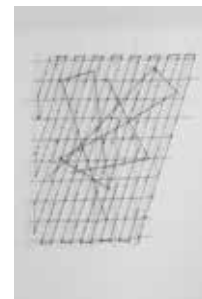
Kama Sokolnicka's *Locus Solus* collage series draws upon Raymond Roussel's novel of the same title. It's a characteristic reference, not only because Sokolnicka's own artistic narrative

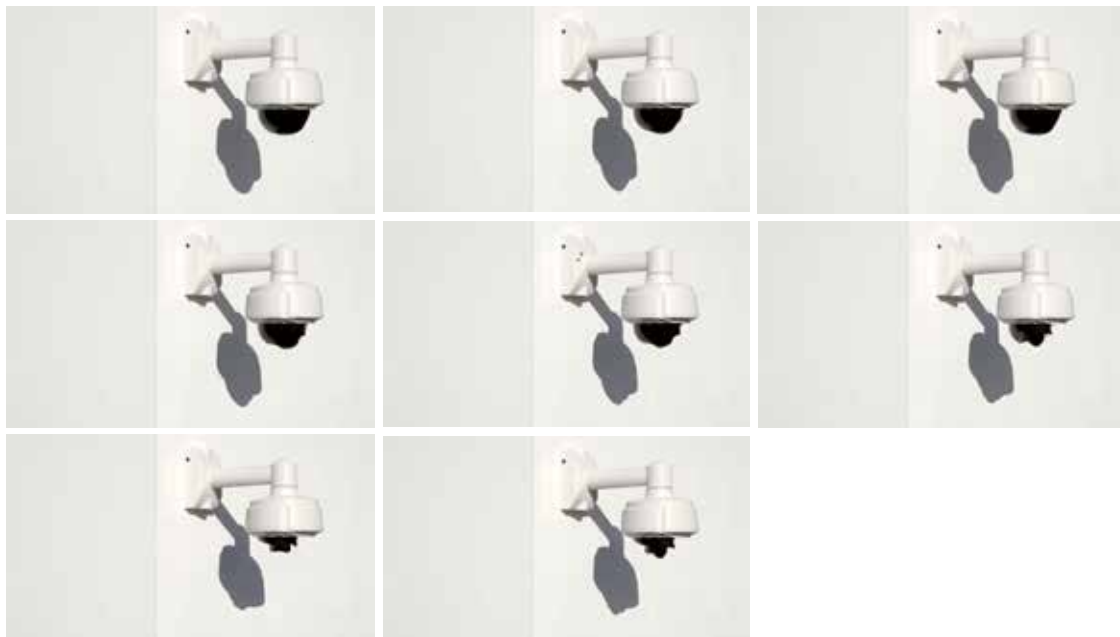
ties in with a phrase often associated with the literature of Roussel: "stories with cabinets". In *Locus Solus* the inventor Martial Canterel invites his friends over to witness a show of miracles he'd created in the garden of a villa outside the city. Remarkable and strange, these miracles would have satisfied the surrealists of his age. The tale reads as a refined game with the mythology of the garden — this is the trope Sokolnicka trails. Her garden isn't a metaphor of an orderly world. There is a multitude of meanings to be found, but certainly it is not a garden untouched by the tread of a barbarian.

Sokolnicka turns to a similar perspective in a series of three paintings on wood. On the surface these are beautiful, subtle plants. In truth, these are plants copied from the atlas of plant diseases. Here is a garden of illusions, masking death.

The most astonishing of these works may be the painting by Małgorzata Szymankiewicz. A large abstract canvas, painted with a recognizable degree of fluency, is actually an adaptation of a screen shot from a pornographic film. The visuals cue in the paintings of Georgia O'Keeffe, injecting abstraction with erotic overtones, revealing the similarities between plants and the female anatomy. Szymankiewicz uncovers the body in a moment of crisis, climax — at the moment of orgasm, that "petit

mort". What would happen if we tried to present the contemporary (post) modernist crisis as a post-orgasmic chill? Is the juxtaposition with the enigmatic crux when the body experiences release and a slackening of the limbs after achieving a height of sensory satisfaction not a telling insight into the demise of the modern utopia? Perhaps, at the very least, the entire thing would become slightly easier to grasp? More accessible to the touch?





EWA AXELRAD

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The author of installations, spatial objects, photographs. Her work usually involves site-specific interventions. Born in 1984, the Academy of Fine Arts in Poznan and Royal College of Art in London graduate. She continuously returns to her favorite subjects: the relationships between visibility and technology, distortion of perception, associations revealing similarities between artistic and military or police practices.

Solo Exhibitions:

2013
Warm Leatherette, BWA Warszawa, Warsaw
2012
Vk, Czytelnia Sztuki, Gliwice
2011
Oranż, Ende Neu in Biala Gallery, Lublin
Suche, Arsenal Gallery, Poznan

Selected Group Exhibitions:

2013
Warsaw: The Day After..., Vartai Gallery, Vilnius
2012
Alphaville, Griffin Art Space, Warsaw
The Impossible Heap, Galerie8, London
Aakupunktura, Kordegarda, Warsaw
Arbeitsdisziplin, Arsenal Gallery, Poznan
2011
The Institute of Mental Health is Burning, Newport Museum and Art Gallery, Newport
Guerrillas, Arsenal Gallery, Poznan
MIR, Arsenal Gallery, Bialystok
2010
SHOW One, Royal College of Art, London
2009
EASTinternational, Norwich



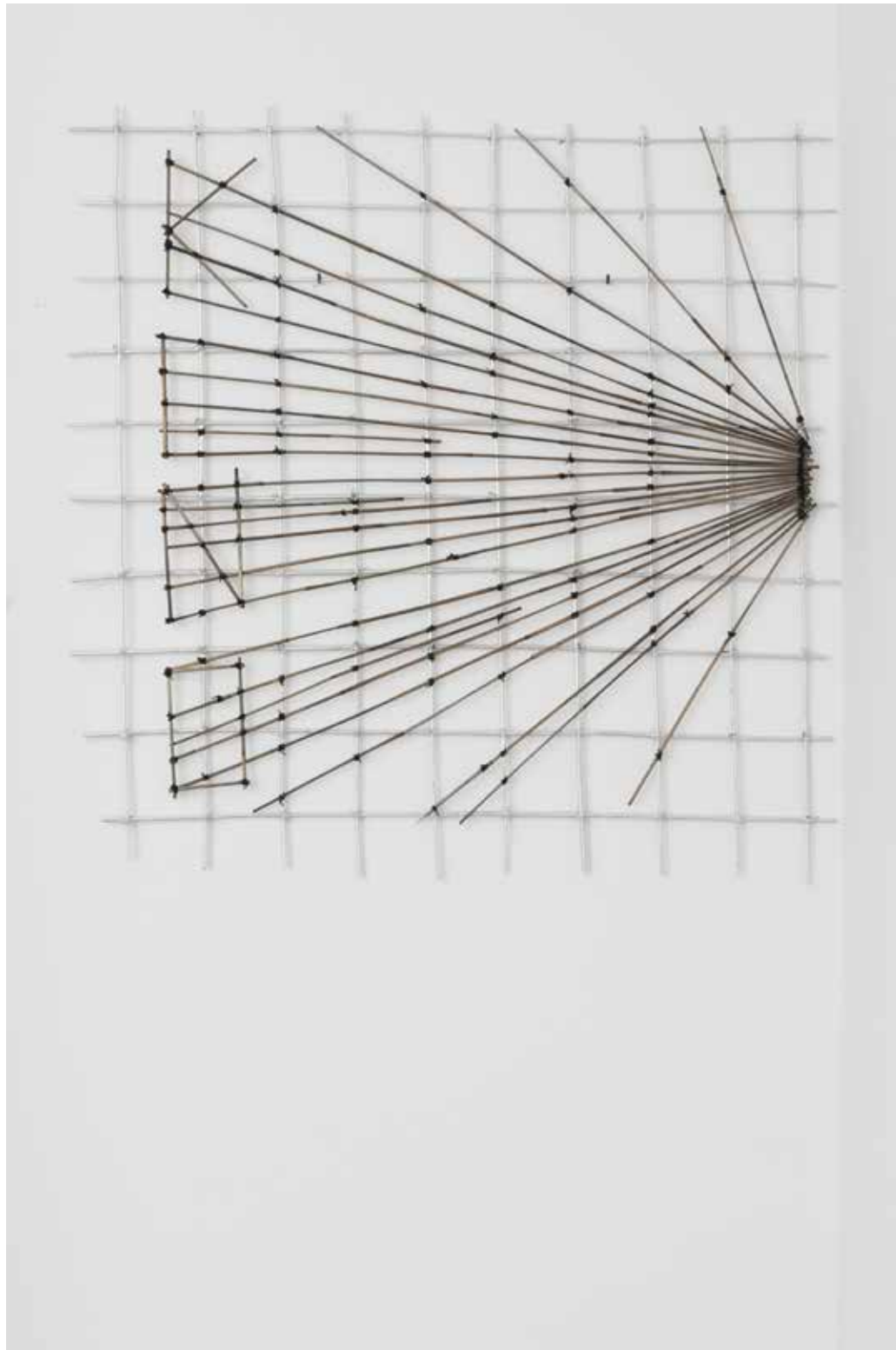


AGNIESZKA KALINOWSKA

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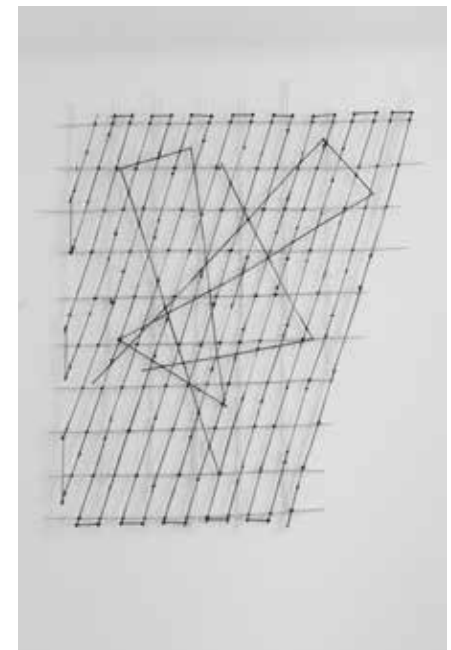
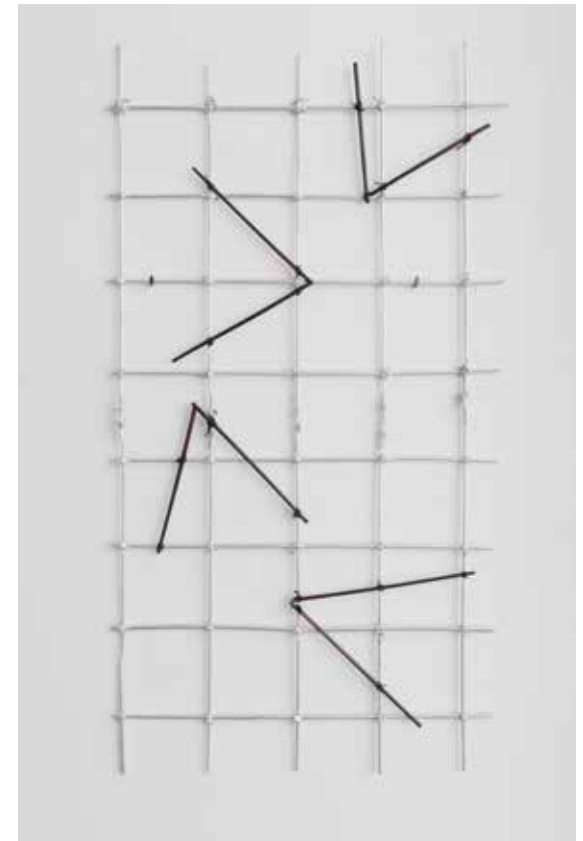
Active in the field of painting, video, sculpture, and installation. Born in 1971 in Warsaw; lives in Warsaw. Studied at the Faculty of Painting of the Academy of Fine Arts in Poznań. She focuses on social problems as seen from the perspective of the individual, often one ostracized or stigmatized. Her objects, made of non-standard materials (straw, paper, string), full of poetry and emotional involvement, comment on social processes. However, her works invariably touch on the abstract and are not as literal as critical art. Particularly characteristic of her output is the use of traditional folk techniques (weaving), thanks to which her works are more authentic and sincere.

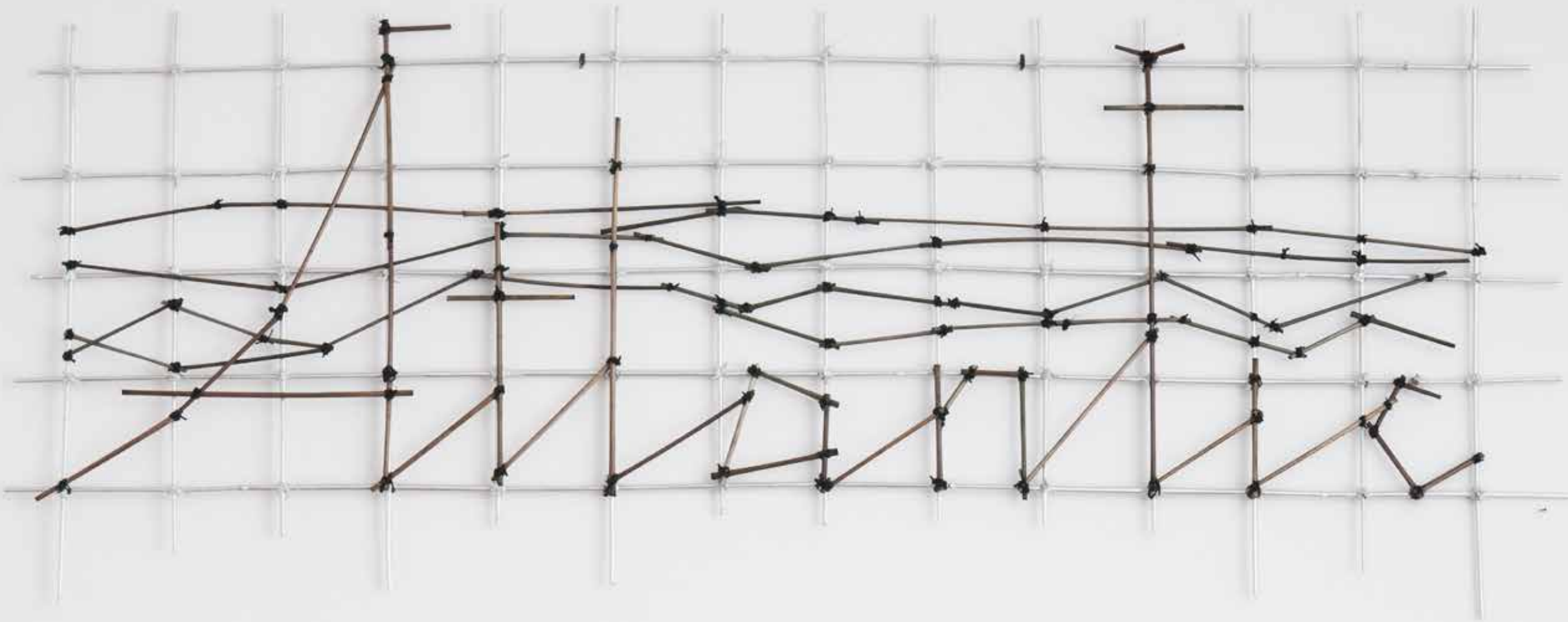




Selected solo shows
 2012
Mice & Rats, Krolikarnia, National Museum, Warsaw
 2011
Extinguished Neon Signs, BWA Warszawa, Warsaw
 2009
Draughty House, Museum Moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig — MUMOK, Vienna
 2008
Night Projection, Ujazdowski Castle CCA, Warsaw
 2007
...So is Moscow — Kunstraum Walcheturm, cooperation with Karma International, Zurich
 2006
Before It Will Get Hot, Galerie nächst St. Stephan Rosemarie Schwarzwälder, Vienna, Austria Great Scene, Theater Gallery, Uppsala
 2005
Safe, Goodnight Tower (with Artur Zmijewski), Karlskrona
 2004
Summer Solstice, Platan gallery, Budapest
Personal Doping, Zacheta National Gallery of Art, Warsaw

Selected group shows:
 2013
Warsaw: The Day After..., Vartai Gallery, Vilnius
 2012
Untimely Stories, Muzeum Sztuki, Łódź
Skontrum, Krolikarnia National Museum, Warsaw
 2011
Szenarien über Europa, Die Stiftung Galerie für Zeitgenössische Kunst, Lipsk
New Order, Art Stations Foundation, Poznań
Plundering the Ruins of Reality, BWA Warszawa, Warsaw
 2010
Hostipitality, Receiving Strangers, Muzeum Sztuki, Lodz
Ten Years Hunting — The Trophy Room, Parker's Box, New York
Things Evoke Feelings, CCA Ujazdowski Castle, Warsaw
 2009
Painting and Its Environs — About the Galerie nächst St. Stephan Rosemarie Schwarzwälder in Vienna, Palacio de Sástago, Zaragoza
 2008
Salon I, Galeri Bo Bjerggaard, Copenhagen
Life? Biomorphhic Forms in Sculpture, Kunsthaus Graz
Mortal Coil, Parker's Box, New York
 2006
You Won't Feel a Thing: On Panic, Obsession, Anesthesia and Ritualy, Kunsthaus Dresden
Polyphony of Images — a Night of Cutting-Edge Contemporary Art from Poland, the Consulate General of Poland in New York
Hot/Cold? Summer Loving, Zacheta National Gallery of Art, Warsaw
Videodyssey, Parker's Box, New York; Galerie Anne Barrault, Paris
 2005
Beyond the Red Horizon — New art from Poland and Russia, National Center for Contemporary Art, Moscow
Wrong expectation, Kunsthalle, Darmstadt
 2004
Beyond the red horizon — New art from Poland and Russia, Ujazdowski Castle CCA, Warsaw
 2004
Under Red and White Flag. New art from Poland, Estonian Art Museum, Tallinn; CCA, Vilnius, Lithuania; National Center of Contemporary Art, Moscow
 2003
Architectures of Gender: Contemporary Women's Art in Poland, Sculpture Center, Long Island City, NY







KAMA SOKOLNICKA

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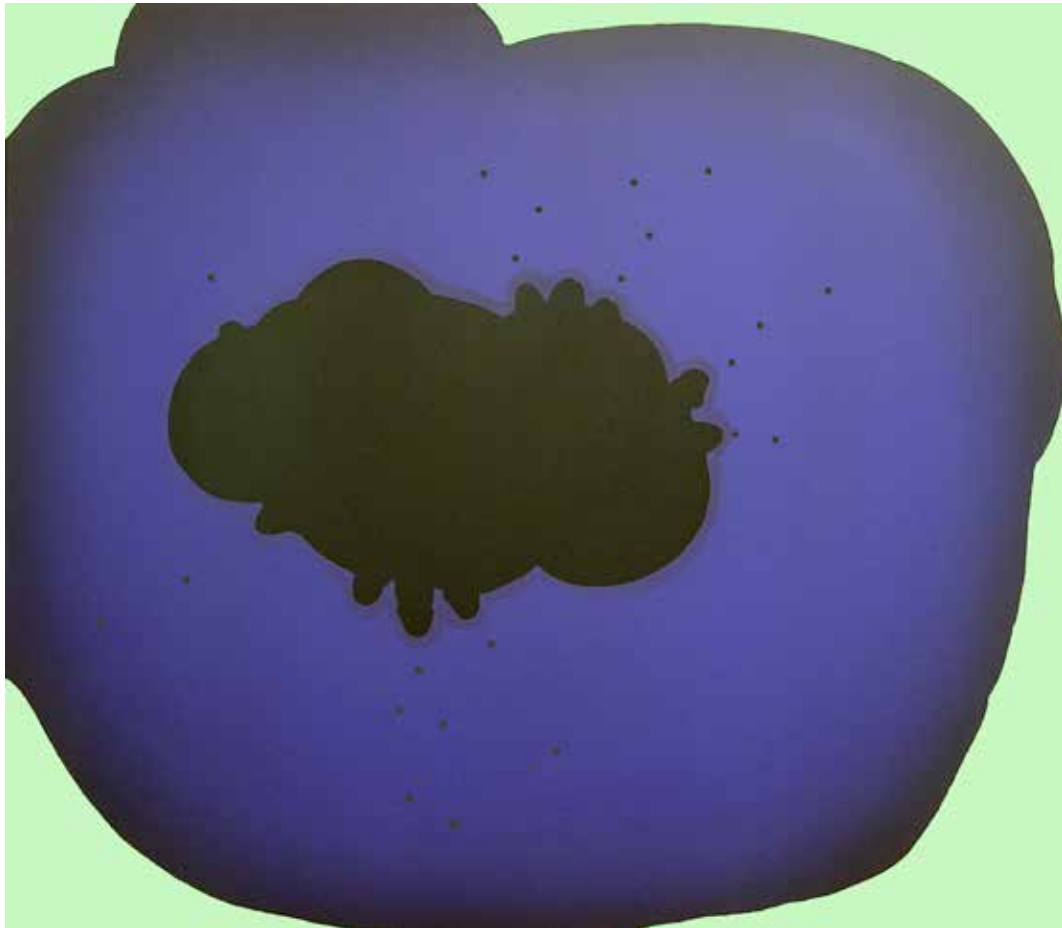
Author of collages, paintings, drawings, videos and site-specific installations. Born in 1978 in Wrocław, where she lives. Graduated in 2003 from graphic arts faculty at Academy of Fine Arts in Wrocław. Artworks in the collection of The Lower Silesian Society for the Encouragement of Fine Arts, CCA Ujazdowski Castle, Warsaw, Museum of Art, Łódź, Museum in Gliwice and many private collections.





- Selected solo exhibitions:
- 2012
 - Rusty elements of our garden, BWA Warszawa, Warsaw
 - Not All That Visibly, CCA Ujazdowski Castle, Warsaw
 - Disappoint of View, Awangarda BWA gallery, Wrocław
- 2011
- Gloom With A View, Kordegarda, Zachęta National Gallery of Art, Warsaw
- 2007
- Realations/microstatics, Entropia Gallery, Wrocław
 - 2003
 - Boiler House With Living Facilities, Museum of Architecture, Wrocław
- Selected group exhibitions:
- 2013
- Prostor Zlin, Bata Institut, Zlin
 - Warsaw: The Day After..., Vartai Gallery, Vilnius
 - 15th Media Art Biennale WRO 2013, Pałac Ballestremów, Wrocław
 - Czas kolażu, Kordegarda, Warsaw
- 2012
- Alphaville, Griffin Art Space, Warsaw
 - Artificial Fullmoon, Wrocław Contemporary Museum, Wrocław
 - Objects and Disintegrations, GGM2, Gdańsk
- 2011
- For Kids and Adults, Museum of Contemporary Art, Belgrade
 - Emergency Room, European Culture Congress, Wrocław
 - Award of the Vordemberge-Gildewart Foundation, MOCAK Museum of Contemporary Art, Cracow
- 2010
- Peep Generated, Muzeum Sztuki, Łódź
- 2009
- Luleå Art Biennial LAB09, Luleå
- 2008
- Animator, Arsenał Municipal Gallery, Poznań
- 2007
- Unconventional Books From Poland, National Print Museum, Dublin
 - Transformations, BWA Awangarda, Wrocław
 - Mutations, FRAC, Alsace





MAŁGORZATA SZYMANKIEWICZ

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Painter, author of objects and installations. Born in 1980 in Poznań; lives in Poznań. Studied at the Academy of Fine Arts in Poznań. Now an assistant lecturer at The Szczecin Academy of Arts. One of the most talented artists of the young generation. She directly applies the tradition of Polish and international abstract painting. She has recently expanded her fields of activity to sculpture, object in space and mural, where she is also primarily interested in purely formal questions and references to the esthetics of Modernism.





Selected solo exhibitions:

2012

- Sub Pop, BWA Warszawa, Warsaw (with Przemek Dzienis)

2011

- Low Visibility, BWA Contemporary Art Gallery, Katowice

- Background, Bielska BWA Gallery, Bielsko-Biala

- Ignorance, Pies Gallery, Poznań

- Comfortable Situation, ZONA Sztuki Aktualnej Gallery, Łódź

2010

- Małgorzata Szymankiewicz, Lange+Pult Galerie, Zurich

- Recent Paintings, lokal_30_warszawa_london, London

- Black Hole, CCA Bathhouse, Gdańsk

2009

- Attractions of Abstraction, Arsenal Municipal Gallery, Poznan

2008

- Miami Dream, Starter Gallery, Poznan

2006

- Painting, Arsenal Municipal Gallery, Białystok

Selected group exhibitions:

2013

- Warsaw: The Day After..., Vartai Gallery, Vilnius

2012

- Self-ignition, Bielska Gallery, Bielsko-Biala

- Alphaville, Griffin Art Space, Warsaw

- Modern Talking, Museum of Art, Cluj

2011

- Four Rooms, CCA Ujazdowski Castle, Warsaw

- New Order, Art Stations Foundation, Poznań

- Plundering the Ruins of Reality, BWA Warszawa, Warsaw

2010

- Monochrome II, Lange+Pult Galerie, Zurich

- Mediations Biennale, Poznań

- Monochrome, Galerie Une, Neuchatel Paintings from Poland, CCA, Claipeida

2006

- Polish Painting of the 21st Century, Zachęta National Gallery of Art, Warsaw

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WARSZAWA

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of Poland

KULTURÁLIS ÉS NEMZETI
ÖRÖKSÉG MINISZTERIUM
TÁMOGATÁSAVAL
VALÓSULT MEG

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