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## Zbigniew Rogalski

Karol Sienkiewicz



**The Vengeance of the Old Indian**  
2001, 180x220 cm



**Untitled**  
2003

**Painter, photographer and installation artist. Born in 1974 in Dąbrowa Białostocka.**

In his paintings, Rogalski highlights perspective and, specifically, linear perspective. This, however, by no means indicates his works are technical drawings, but rather he takes on a painterly view, a landscape, if not for the fact that that what we have hear is a still nature - a representation of a papier-mâché model presenting a linear perspective. His paintings are, in a literal sense, entertaining, illusionistic, and contemplative. At the same time, they are "about something", adroitly subversing the ambiguity and metaphorical meaning of "perspective".

Rogalski's artistic perspective is a hyper-perspective - recognizing the templates that human mind imposes on itself in order to comprehend and see "something". Many of Zbigniew Rogalski's works refer to the traditional categories and genres of painting, such as the portrait or the landscape, but with the added effect that comes of splicing various frames and conventions of representation, which leads the artist to some astonishingly essentialist painterly conclusions. The surface of the painting becomes a screen on which the obsessions, fears and revelations of our consciousness are projected. It is, above all, a method of painting for the imagination, which does not allow for the thoughtless consumption of the visual world, but instead leads us consistently towards issues that are resolute, yet evanescent. A vital element of Rogalski's imagination is his studies of the artifice of images and the methods of constructing illusions within them. Some of his projects draw their inspiration from works of music and film, yet an essential element of Rogalski's artistic practice is the collaboration with other artists, such as Michał Budny and Szymon Rogiński. In 1999 Rogalski earned a degree in painting under Professor Jerzy Kalucki at the **Poznań Academy of Fine Arts**, and in 2001 he won first prize in the Eugeniusz Geppert Painting Competition. Between 2000 and 2002 he worked together with Hubert Czerepok, a duo of photographers and video artist known as The Magisters. He is represented by **Galeria Raster**, and he lives and works in Warsaw.

Rogalski belongs to the generation of painters who debuted around 2000. He often paints series of works and his pictures often consist of multi-level narratives, leading some people to dub him the "image director." During and immediately after his studies, however, the most frequent motif in Rogalski's work was the act of painting itself. His canvases show the painter at work and speak to their own creation, not so much representing reality as revealing the process of making the representation. These pieces also often allude to the work of other painters as well. In the tradition of Jackson Pollock, Rogalski emphasises the gestures of the painter, and has actually made Pollock the subject of several of his pictures. In reference to Hans Namuth's photographs of Pollock splashing paint across a canvas spread on the floor, Rogalski painted a scene in which Pollock is being helped by another person (2000). He also portrayed himself painting Pollock (**Painting Jackson Pollock**, 2000). His early paintings utilise the well-known historical motif of the artist at the easel, but in Rogalski's case the picture showing him at work and the picture he is painting are identical. In one of the canvases, entitled **The Vengeance of the Old Indian** (2000), the artist, hit by an arrow, tries as his last gesture to paint a blue circle. In several pieces from 2003, Rogalski paints over the fragment of the canvas where he himself is represented, as if he could be annihilated in a couple of brushstrokes. Another frequent motif in his work is his own studio, in which he portrays himself (see **About a Neighbour's Death**, 2003; and **Self-Portrait Under a Canvas**, 2003). The theme of artistic creation sometimes appears in an ironic or even mocking context, as in the painting **Euro** (2003), showing the counterfeiting of euro banknotes.



**Partisan's Death**  
2005, 130x180 cm

Rogalski is also interested in the phenomenon of other people's perceptions, and the scenes in his paintings depict not so much reality as the way it is perceived. In the series **Closer** (2006), the artist portrayed, in extreme close-up, the faces of figures lying on the ground. The images are blurred and out of focus, as if seen from too close a from distance. The series **Partisan's Death** (2005) shows a forest seen from the point of view of a person lying on the ground, the tree trunks forming concentric circle against the background of the sky. These grey, almost monochrome paintings are an attempt to capture the moment of death, the final look of the dying. **How She Sees the Moon** (2007) addresses the subject's defective vision, since the image of the moon is double.

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**Closer (Self-Portrait)**  
2006, 180x120cm, oil on canvas



**How She Sees the**  
2007, 160x160 cm

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Two other frequent motifs in Rogalski's paintings are mirror im and inscriptions made on steamed-up windows and mirrors, places where reality coexists with its own reflection (such as in the series **Heroes**, 2003-2005). In the piece **Björk** (2003), the image of the half-naked artist is reflected in a steamed-up bathroom mirror on which the name of the Icelandic singer has been finger-written. Other canvases contain the names of astronauts (like Gagarin, 2003) and philosophers, such as Fukuyama, Baudrillard and Zizek (in the series **Lifts**, 2005). In another series, **Private Spring** (2005), the interior of the artist's studio is reflected in the glass frames of photos of landscapes. The **Coffin Portraits** (2005), in turn, show a series of reflections in the sort of glassy photographs usually mounted on gravestones.



**Private Spring**  
2005, 120x170 cm, oil on canvas



**Coffin Portrait, NN**  
2005, 120x120 cm, oil on canvas

A number of Rogalski's paintings build on the associations evoked by random objects or everyday articles. This is the guiding principle of the series **Projects** (2003), showing simplified, schematic images of detached houses with huge tank cannons sticking out of their roofs. Sometimes it is the artist himself who constructs the analogy by arranging common objects into familiar patterns. In **Similar Pictures** (2003), for instance, these objects were the title sequences of major film studios like **Paramount Pictures** and **20th Century Fox**.



**Similar Pictures (Paramount Pictures)**  
2003, 73x85 cm



**Untitled (Heroes)**  
2003, 140x110 cm

Rogalski employed a similar strategy in **Projection** (2006), a collaboration with **Michał Budny** in which the two artists offered a somewhat ironic look at the history of the construction of a modern art museum in Warsaw. They created the suggestion of a video-installation, except that the "projectors" had been made out of cardboard by Budny, and the "projected images" had been painted by Rogalski. At first sight, the installation appeared to be the design of a modern architectural project; but in reality it was only cardboard models. Budny and Rogalski also participated in the group exhibition *Here a Change Occurs* at the Kordegarda in Warsaw in 2007, which dealt with the disappearance of modernist architecture from Warsaw's urban landscape. The artists designed a simple geometric portal that they wanted to place in front of the Kordegarda building as a modernistic symbol of the gallery's famous white cube, but the project was never carried out.



**Air**  
2006, 160x160cm, photo series, c-print, aluminium, plexi



**Projection**  
(with Michał Budny), 2006

Rogalski's most recent work is **Air** (2007), a series of large-format photographs printed on aluminium under plexiglas. Collaborating with Andrzej Kruszewicz, chief ornithologist of the Warsaw Zoo, he photographed birds' wings and placed them on a neutral, white background, an allusion to death and transience.

Author: Karol Sienkiewicz, October 2007



**Cups**  
2000, 170x440 cm

Selected solo exhibitions:

- 1999 - "Malarstwo", Galeria Arsenał, Białystok
- 2000
- "Child in Time" - Galeria ON, Poznań
- "Malarz" - **Centre for Contemporary Art at Ujazdowskie Castle**, Warsaw
- 2003 - "Autoportret pod płótnem" - Galeria Arsenał, Białystok; **Raster**, Warsaw; BWA, Zielona Góra; Galeria Kronika, Bytom
- 2004 - "Mute" - Galerie Griedervonputtkamer, Berlin, Germany
- 2005
- "Śmierć partyzanta" - Galeria Raster, Warsaw
- "Daydreaming" - Galeria Entropia, Wrocław
- "Private Spring" - Göttingen Kunstverein, Goettingen, Germany
- 2006
- "Projekcja" - Zachęta National Art Gallery, Warsaw (with **Michał Budny**)
- "Letter" - Galeria Monika Spruth Philomene Magers, Munich, Germany
- 2007 - "Air" - Galerie Almine Rech, Paris, France

Selected group exhibitions:

- 1999
- "Najgroźniejsze pędzle" - Królikarnia, Warsaw
- "Polska abstrakcja analityczna II" - BWA, Wrocław
- "Bielska jesień '99" - Galeria Bielska BWA, Bielsko-Biała
- 2000 - "Scena 2000" - Centre for Contemporary Art at Ujazdowski Castle, Warsaw
- 2001
- "Rybie oko" - Bałtycka Galeria Sztuki Współczesnej, Słupsk
- 4. Krajowa Wystawa Malarstwa Młodych - BWA Awangarda, Wrocław
- "Relaks" - Galeria Arsenał, Białystok
- "Malarstwo polskie 2001" - Galeria Stara, Lublin
- "Dobro" - Galeria Raster, Warsaw
- 2002
- "Rewolucja" - Galeria Raster, Warsaw
- "Rybie oko" - Bałtycka Galeria Sztuki Współczesnej, Słupsk
- "Rzeczywiście młodzi są realistami" - Centre for Contemporary Art at Ujazdowski Castle, Warsaw
- 2003
- "Age of Romanticism" - Art Palace, Lviv, Ukraine; Polish Institute, Kyiv, Ukraine (2004)
- "Zaangażowani / Wyrachowani" - Centrum Sztuki Współczesnej Łaźnia, Gdańsk
- 2004
- "From My Window. Artists and Their Territories" - École National Supérieure des Beaux-Arts, Paris, France
- "Zasiedzenie" - Galeria Miejska Arsenał, Poznań
- "Under the White-and-Red Flag" - Estonian Art Museum, Tallinn, Estonia; Contemporary Art Centre, Vilnius, Lithuania; National Centre for Contemporary Arts, Moscow, Russia
- "Art Brussels" - Brussels, Belgium
- 2005
- "Private Spring" - Göttinger Kunstverein, Goettingen, Germany
- "Hank You for the Music" - Sprüth Magers Gallery, Munich, Germany
- "Broniewski" - Raster, Warsaw; BWA, Zielona Góra (2007)
- "Prague Biennale 2" - Prague, Czech Republic
- "Revenge on Realism" - Krinzinger Projekte, Vienna, Austria
- "Malarstwo - Zimne medium" - Galeria Piekary, Poznań
- "Potencjał" - Metropolitan Building, Warsaw
- 2006
- "Malarstwo polskie XXI wieku" - Zachęta Narodowa Galeria Sztuki, Warsaw
- "Gut und billig" - PackHof Museum Junge Kunst, Frankfurt Oder, Germany
- "Fiac" - art fair, Paris, France
- "Neuerwerbungen der Sammlung Marx" - Hamburger Bahnhof, Berlin
- "Is it Better to Be a Good Artist or a Good Person?" - Rental Gallery, Los Angeles, USA
- 2007
- "Muzeum jako świetlany przedmiot pożądania" - **Muzeum Sztuki**, Łódź
- "Kilkadziesiąt sekund źle wywołanej taśmy filmowej" - Galeria Raster, Warsaw
- "Tu zaszła zmiana" - Galeria Kordegarda, Warsaw



**Cover Picture**  
2001, 240x240 cm

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