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OLAF BREUNING

Focus Mexico: TAMAYO'S reopening / EUGENIO LÓPEZ / ADRIANA LARA /
ABRAHAM CRUZVILLEGAS / STEFAN BRÜGGEMANN / *Survey US:* ALEX KATZ /
TRISHA BROWN & BORIS CHARMATZ

Oskar Dawicki

Art Stations Foundation, Poznan

"Absence is a higher state of presence," says Oskar Dawicki, the protagonist of both the novel *Half Empty* and the film *Performer*, which will have its premiere in May. The basis for both works is the life and work of the artist in reality. For purposes of convention, it is a somewhat "fluid" version of it — a colorized film and a literary fiction. It is quite difficult, however, to state clearly what should be considered here to be an artistic activity and what is not, all the more so given the fact that the artist constantly strives to diminish this line of division. In addition, he has a clear tendency to disappear (from life), reinforcing in himself and others a belief in its fragile existential condition, and leaning dangerously in the direction of despair and emptiness. In any case, the category of emptiness constantly accompanies Dawicki. Thus, the exhibition *Performer* at the Art Stations Foundation in Poznań, comprising one element of *Half Empty*, can be read as yet another attempt at mystification, the (not only) metaphorical moment of transition from the world of art toward fiction, or even the transformation of a real artist into a fictional character. There is no shortage of coquetry in this. Still, this is a special character — an anti-hero actually — who materializes his creative energy in major and minor failures, and who measures success in small missteps. As we move to the upper levels of the gallery building, the *Performer* undergoes — in the course of its annihilation from the world of art — a transformation into a film hero and/or celebrity. The artist has surrounded himself with a cycle of works from the Grazyna Kulczyk Collection (including those of Jan Malczewski, Roman Opalka, Magdalena Abakanowicz, Edward Dwurnik and Vanessa Beecroft) that confront the *topoi* of the hero in cinema and literature with their counterparts in the visual arts. The artist himself, however, is already on the other side. Located at the apex of a pyramid-like structure, a museum composed entirely of the artist's works can be interpreted as a tribute to Dawicki himself. For his next performative action he will abandon the field of art and, with all his (painful) experience, enter into cinematic reality. With his usual sarcasm, however, he nods to his fellow artists, preparing for them a folksy Polish version of the Avenue of the Stars for artists, consisting of twelve handprints in cow dung (including his own). Although the work was created a few years earlier, in the context of the exhibition's narrative, it provides a perfect punch line to the story.

by ANNA CZABAN



Oskar Dawicki, *Snowman of Quotes*, 2005. Snow, engraved brass buttons, freezer.
From the collection of the Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw