

Piotr Uklański: Collages

September 22 – October 28, 2015

NEW YORK – Nahmad Contemporary is pleased to present *Piotr Uklański: Collages* at our 980 Madison Avenue gallery, on view from September 22 through October 28, 2015. The Polish-born, New York-based artist, who rose to prominence in the mid-nineties, has produced a diverse oeuvre that defies categorization through a wildly promiscuous artistic practice including photography, film, performance, sculpture, installation, textiles and painting. Mining the fringes of art, culture and history, Uklański has developed a conceptually challenging and utterly unique pictorial language that reevaluates modernist paradigms and hierarchies. This exhibition will present a survey of works from Uklański's torn paper collage series, spanning from 2003 through the present.

In 2000, Uklański created his first torn paper collages, a series in which large sheets of Lanaquarelle paper are applied with matte gouache then torn and collaged. The white lines of the torn edges, generally associated with scraps and failed attempts, are used to construct seductive images of landscapes, lightning bolts, bombs and other imagery frequently alluding to war and environmental disaster. The vibrant, alluring surfaces of these works, which bring visual pleasure to the foreground, belie the gravity and intellectual depth of their subject matter.

This body of work encapsulates Uklański's ongoing practice of "meta-painting" with unconventional materials such as torn paper, pencil shavings, and ceramic, whereby "painting" is used as a means rather than an end. While the series is undoubtedly rooted in the "low" craft aesthetic and tradition, the collages simultaneously pay homage to and question a long art historical lineage, from Henri Matisse's cut-outs to Lucio Fontana's *Concetti Spaziali*. The artworks produced from these exercises are self-consciously interwoven with politics and the artist's personal biography to reignite existing artistic idioms with a newfound criticality that allows for subversion and provocation.

Curator Francesco Bonami has noted, "Uklański is the inventor of 'resuscitative painting,' which is the opposite of 'action painting.' His canvases are both targets and garbage bags for all the pictorial vernaculars he resurrects...What was originally a sleepy, rural, arts and crafts movement, transformed through Uklański's vision and turned into a charged, subversive, and highly sexual attack on the definition of painting."

Piotr Uklański was born in 1968 in Warsaw, Poland. He currently lives and works in New York and Warsaw. The artist has been the subject of major exhibitions at prestigious institutions worldwide, including the Museum of Modern Art, New York (2000), Kunsthalle Basel (2004), Whitney Museum of American Art, New York (2007), the Musée d'art moderne et contemporain, Strasbourg (2007–08); Punta della Dogana and Palazzo Grassi, Venice (2009–11); Bass Museum of Art, Miami (2013-14); and most recently the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (2015).

On the occasion of this exhibition, Nahmad Contemporary will produce a fully illustrated catalogue of Uklański's torn paper collage works with an accompanying scholarly text.