

Marlborough Contemporary

Agnieszka Brzeżańska — I love you. Be good.

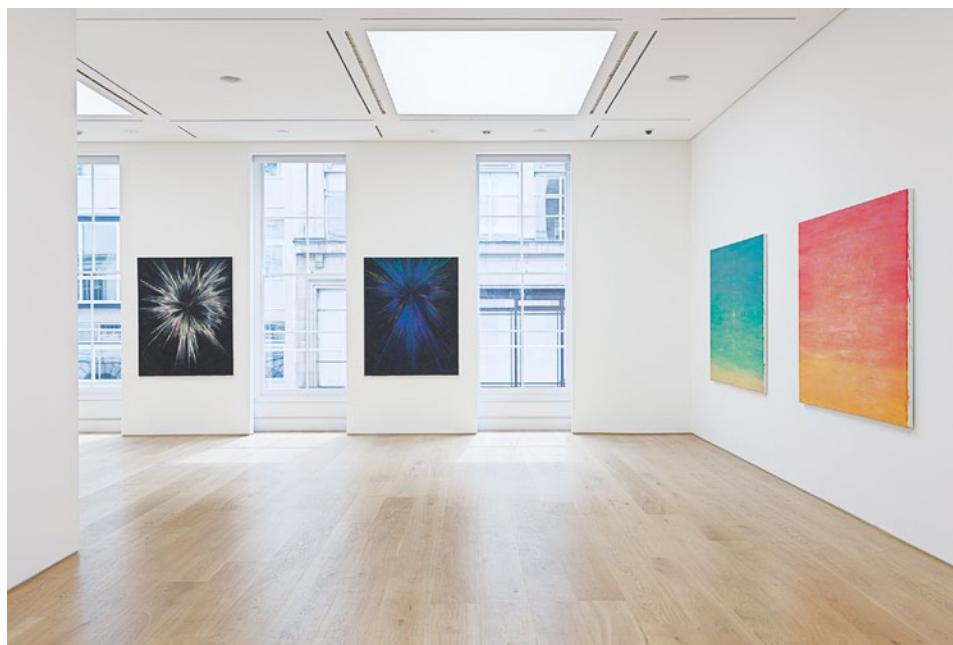
Agnieszka
Brzeżańska
I love you.
Be good.



**Agnieszka
Brzeżańska
I love you.
Be good.**

Marlborough Contemporary







Sentimental
2013
Oil on canvas
200 x 150 cm



Where Beings Lose Their Faces

2013

Oil on canvas

150 x 120 cm



Tesla
2013
Oil on canvas
150 x 120 cm



The Event
2012
Oil on canvas
150 x 200 cm



Synchronization
2012
Oil on canvas
150 x 200 cm

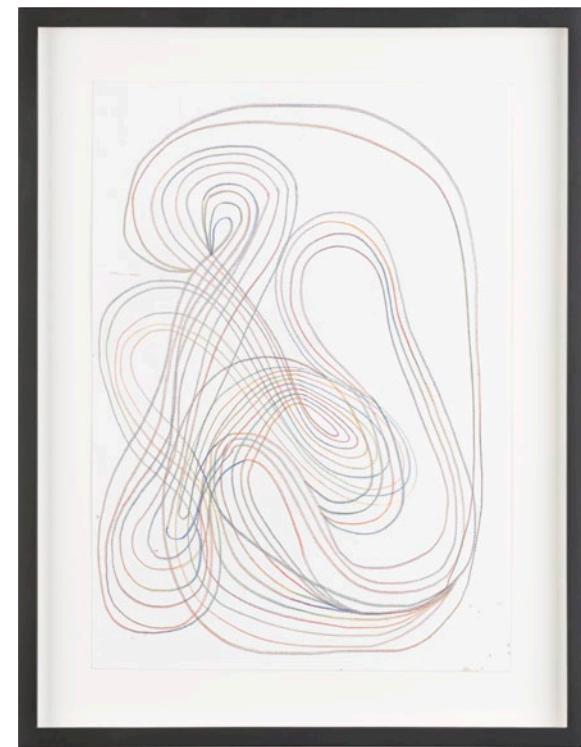


Dissection of a Thought

2013

Oil on canvas

150 x 200 cm



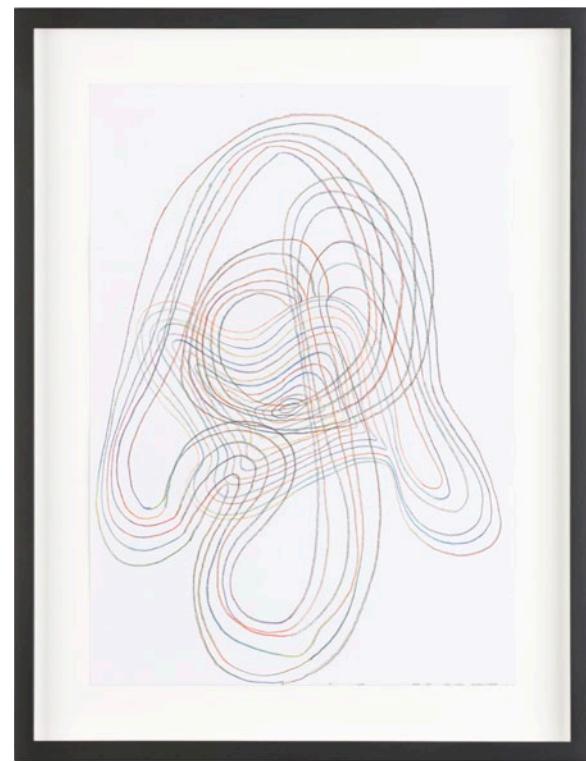
Untitled
2013
Crayon on paper
29.7 x 21 cm



Elegy
2013
Oil on canvas
200 x 150 cm

Naked Awareness
2013
Oil on canvas
150 x 120 cm





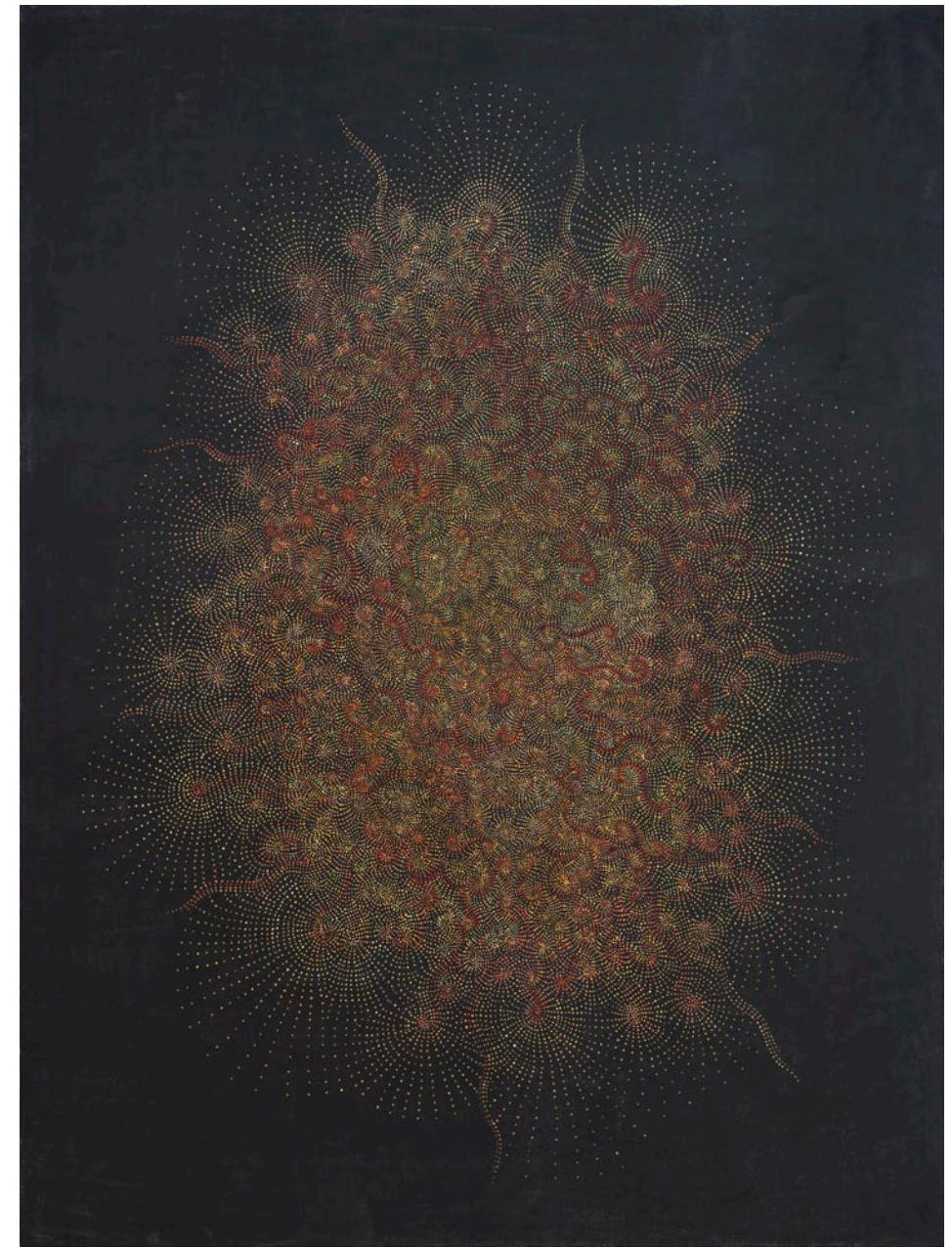
Untitled
2013
Crayon on paper
29.7 x 21 cm



Untitled (Tetrahedron)
2012
Oil on canvas
150 x 120 cm



V
2012
Oil on canvas
150 x 200 cm



Body of Light
2012
Oil on canvas
200 x 150 cm



Mind Playing with Thoughts
2013
Oil on canvas
150 x 120 cm



Untitled
2013
Oil on canvas
150 x 200 cm



Untitled
2013
Oil on canvas
150 x 120 cm

Dialogue

'Don't come here and take our Dreamtime. Get your own.'
Agnieszka Brzeżańska, Chris Sharp
and Andrew Renton in conversation

Andrew Renton

Quite a moving place to start, if a bit misleading, is with the title of the show. 'I love you. Be good.' The last words of Alex the parrot. There's no parrot visible in the show. Titles may be descriptive of a work or a whole show, and might invoke a mood of sorts. Or they might be false trails or projects. Your work often seems to hover between abstraction and more specific reference points such as landscape, or a temptation to anthropomorphise. But titles will always steer the viewer... So what's the story with Alex? Is his spirit in the show?

Agnieszka Brzeżańska

He is here for us to remember that consciousness is not a human quality, but it exists in all life. Exploring it is an amazing adventure, and since we all share the same field, even if we are in different streams of reality, there are ways to communicate. Alex was amazing because he was able to speak, as if an intelligent human. A feat still beyond abilities of science, which I think is funny. And his message is love. There is a possibility that love is a force which holds all reality together. It might be called light or vibration, or God. But what counts is that through love we gain access to other layers of reality, and our ability to understand, connect and perceive expands when we follow that path.

Chris Sharp

The introduction of Alex and your response, Agnieszka, takes me in two different directions, which may or may not inform each other. The first is the extent to which Alex, his intelligence and your valorisation of both are consonant with the anti-anthropocentric contents of

Speculative Realism. It may be a coincidence that our changing relationship with animals parallels some of the developments of this philosophical movement, or perhaps both are evidence of a general paradigm shift. I wonder if it's too much of a stretch to link a certain earnestness in this shift with an apparent collapse or absence of irony – something which has always fascinated, if not confounded me (in the best possible way) about your work, given its combined medium of paint and predominantly metaphysical subject matter. And yet I would not describe your work as naive or unsophisticated. Can you say a few words about this?

AB

I am all for a paradigm shift. I might be its symptom. It seems that Speculative Realism is also a sign of the times, and it is a very interesting time to be in. I was always happy when someone noticed how a sense of humour is important in my works, but irony is a different thing. It expresses separation, it relies on one feeling trying to be different and better than the other, while humour overrules boundaries, unites and liberates. I love making jokes of painting, and of art. It is all a joke if you look at it from certain angle.

AR

Funny, perhaps, but definitely not ironic. The paintings are very sincere in their execution. Not really painting about painting, for example, even though they might resemble genres or categories of historical abstract precedents. They resemble paintings you know, but they come from somewhere else. Part of our conversation, Agnieszka, has been that we both believe in an alternative history of abstraction, and I think this might well tally with readings offered by Speculative Realism. And there must be something in the air. This Venice

Biennale is full of such things. Hilma af Klint is just one example. So, not so much a paradigm shift, but a recognition that there was always an alternative history, a pure form of abstraction never articulated. We're only just finding the tools to read it. We are taught the one that proposes an evolution of abstraction around Kandinsky, but I would want to propose a more organic form of abstraction that has its origins in pattern-making, and pattern-observing... There were always pure forms of abstraction, long before this was blurred by ideas of painterly 'expression'.

CS

I will most certainly agree that such a view of abstraction is hardly evidence of any kind of paradigm shift, and one does indeed grow tired of irony, primarily due to its preclusion of commitment. And yet for me, perhaps because I come from the U.S., where any form of so-called sophisticated culture has become inconceivable without a minimum of irony, it is very hard for me to consider anything like spirituality and abstraction without it. The best I can do is Nauman's 'The true artist helps the world by revealing mystic truths,' which, as is well known, he both did and not believe in. (And perhaps still does/ doesn't?). In doing so, he eschews the pat, noncommittal insulation of irony. (That is, however, perhaps debatable.) But that is not what you're doing. Something else happens in your work, which does not undercut the sincerity of your, let's say, spiritual commitment, but rather nuances it – a big part of which has to do with humour, not just any humour, but a kind of erotic humour. Everything from your mingling, amorphous forms and your milky hues to your outright explosions gently smack of a touchingly guileless eroticism. What is more, it seems to be a specifically feminine form of eroticism.

AB

Chris, here you invoke another figure – a woman artist. That is a subject I enjoy investigating. There is a mix of feelings (sometimes a little weird) and layers of meaning (mostly feminist and philosophical) in it. And I take it very personally. I made the last book about it – **L'artiste, le modèle et la peinture**. Recently we have seen how the history of art is being rewritten by the rediscovery of work by female artists of the twentieth century. There are new interpretations of prehistorical art as well. And we should include history of non-European art and what is called outsider art. All of it was not considered worthy of much attention. But it was always there – and including it will change the story profoundly. As for sources of abstraction, there is a lot of new physics around. Quantum physics has been around for a hundred years, but it is a science which is the most reliable ground for both – abstraction and the new paradigm. I enjoy it a lot – the whole search for Theory of Everything.



Bettie Page / Aquarius

2010, Inkjet on cotton paper, 150 x 111 cm

Especially new (not accepted by the mainstream) takes on it. Garret Lisi, Nassim Haramein, Randy Powell with Tesla inspired vortex mathematics. And even more on the fringe – James Carter or Dewey B. Larson. These concepts turn upside down the stubborn (but already unhinged from its place by quantum theory) paradigm which is a current operating system. So I would go for paradigm shift. How it works is to reprogramme the story, but include all previous data.

AR

Could we shift things and talk practicalities a little? You seem to work intensively on a body of paintings simultaneously. But what is remarkable about the works in the show is the disparity of styles. Could you talk about the process? And do you have sense of something that binds them together formally?

AB

I can never predict how the work will become. It is sort of non-doing (which is a taoist concept I like to refer to). What I usually do is to go into very intense research, processing as much information as possible from different sources. That sets the background. And then, if I'm painting – as in case of this show – I isolate myself in my studio and see what happens. I usually have some ideas on how to start, but then the process takes over. It's a discovery. I am not really able to do something whose results I know, I just produce it. So it is a surprise and sometimes a delight to see what happens when it comes. The receptive part of the process is really important. I learn from it a lot. Sometimes they play a joke on me, sometimes they take me in the dark areas where something has to get cleared. It is always an adventure. I usually eliminate everything that is redundant, try to get the form as clear as possible.

The form can transmit the essence, the meaning, better than words. Especially as there is a lot of important stuff in the area beyond words where we create reality, not only art. (It sounds mystical, but neuroscience is giving us an understanding of how important non verbal processes are.) It is possible to influence these processes and transmit meaning directly. These works are supposed to be tools to help oneself to reprogramme.

AR

Can you pinpoint examples of where the receptive process helps you understand the paintings better, or indeed your process of making?

AB

Receptive means you stop internal talking, and become empty. Then you reach a space where you see things more clearly. (It is a basic practice in any tradition concerned with liberation and evolution of human species.) Which reminds me of how important the void might be to our understanding of physics and the nature of reality. The concept of Nassim Haramein seduced me recently. He explains how all matter is emerging from the void. I happened to see how it works, in a very abstract mental way, so I try to paint it.

CS

The way you speak about painting reminds me of a talk the artist/educator Pavel Büchler gave in Berlin in the context of a show he curated at Tanya Leighton gallery called, *The Way We Do Art Now*. For Büchler, pre-conceptual art practices were characterised by going into the studio and figuring it out, what one was about as an artist, etc., while post-conceptual art practices were/are characterised by studying, attaining theoretically informed clarity about one's position, and then making art.

It is refreshing to see how your work combines the two modes: rigorous study, work and then discovery. Likewise, it is also interesting how your metaphysics, so to speak, are very grounded in a scientific frame of reference, which includes neurology and physics. We haven't discussed your personal background yet, though. Is there anything particularly Polish about your work? If so, how?

AB

Poland is an interesting country to be from. I lived through a change of systems and have seen the profound shift in reality as one political system collapsed and has been replaced by liberal capitalism. (Which is just a change of style in control and surveillance, as it becomes clear.) I have a strong connection to the land I am from. It is part of the world, so my basic identity is wordly. But, as important as it is to see the big picture, it is also necessary to have a local focus. Now I think about making work which would reconnect us to our lost native inheritance. It needs to be reinvented. History was not easy for us, and we don't know what was destroyed by a thousand years of colonisation. I am talking about Christianity's war on nature and women, slavery and robbery, and whatever is done by the civilisation we all belong to. It is obvious how destructive it is to all life. Maybe there is a chance that we can figure out how to be what we are supposed to be. As one Australian Aboriginal said, 'Don't come here and take our Dreamtime. Get your own.'

July 2013

Biography

Agnieszka Brzeżańska

Born
1972, Gdańsk, Poland

Lives and Works
Warsaw, Poland and Berlin, Germany

Education

1998–01 University of the Arts, Tokyo, Japan

1995–97 Academy of Fine Arts, Warsaw, Poland

1992–95 Academy of Fine Arts, Gdańsk, Poland

Solo Exhibitions

2013 I Love You. Be Good., Marlborough Contemporary, London

2012 A Painting Cycle, Nomas Foundation, Rome

Back to the Garden, Galerie Kamm, Berlin

2011 Sound Waves, Light Waves, Dance Waves, Clifton Benevento, New York

852 Hz, Michael Benevento, Los Angeles

2010 Cosmic Equation, Kunsthaus Baselland, Basel

Galactic Resonance, Hotel, London

Playlist, DAAD Galerie, Berlin

2009 528 Hz, Karma International, Zurich

Venus Conjunct, Galerie Kamm, Berlin

2008 Nudes, Moons and Horses, Karma International, Zurich

Pulawska 25a, Warsaw

2007 L'artiste, Le modèle et la peinture, Broadway 1602, New York

2006 Tunnel Like a Tail, Hotel, London

Warsaw for Amateurs, Kordegarda / Zacheta National Art Gallery, Warsaw

2004 Agnieszka Brzeżańska / Svetlana Heger, ap4-art, Geneva

2003 Agnieszka Brzeżańska and Janos Fodor, Platan Gallery, Budapest

2002 Double Happiness, Zacheta Gallery and CCA Ujazdowski Castle, Warsaw

Selected Group Exhibitions

2013 Genealogies of Work, Arsenal City Gallery, Poznań

Cowboy Style, Marlborough Contemporary, London

2012 Self-ignition, BWA Galeria Bielska, Bielsko-Biała

Agency of Unrealized Projects, DAAD galerie, Berlin

Cosmic Laughter, Ursula Bickle Stiftung, Kraichtal-Unteröwisheim

Schach Matt, Märkisches Museum, Witten

I Went to an Exhibition in Warsaw, Dom Artysty Plastyk, Warsaw

Hotavantgardehot, Oslo 10, Münchenstein, Basel

In Our Nature, Bel Etage, 800QM, Berlin

Expanded Territory, KAI 10 – Arthena Foundation, Düsseldorf

Beautiful Weather, Foksal Gallery Foundation, Warsaw

One, Another, The FLAG Art Foundation, New York

Drau.en ist feindlich, Bel Etage, Rosa-Luxemburg-Platz, Berlin

Starke Emergenz, Kunstraum Innsbruck

2010 Milk Drop Coronet. 30 Exhibitions on the Virtuosity of Thingness, Camera Austria, Graz, Austria

The Zero Budget Biennial, Klemm's, Berlin, Pianissimo, Milan, Schleicher + Lange
and Carlos Cardenas, Galerie, Paris

2009 Zeigen, an audio tour through Berlin by Karin Sander, Temporäre Kunsthalle Berlin, Berlin

Cave Painting, Gresham's Ghost, New York

Prose pour des esseintes, Karma International, Zurich

2008 ArtILV 08: Open Plan Living, Tel Aviv

2007 Rencontres d'Arles, Photo Festival Awards Exhibition, Arles

Walk Real Slow, Anna Helwing Gallery, Los Angeles

2006 Housewarming, Swiss Institute, New York

Farewell to Icon, Anna Helwing Gallery, Los Angeles

Keep passing the open windows or Happiness, Galerie Gisela Capitain, Cologne

All Dressed Up with Nowhere to Go..., Sorcha Dallas, Glasgow

Take One, Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Texas

2005 The Pantagruel Syndrom, T1-Turin Triennial, Turin

EXILE. New York is a Good Hotel, Broadway 1602, New York

Sicht der Dinge, Kunstforum Ostdeutsche Galerie, Regensburg

2003 Poesia, Kunsthalle Mucsarnok, Budapest

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I love you. Be good.
20 June–20 July 2013

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