

**night  
light**

**Ryan Mrozowski**

In his second exhibition at Galerie Nordenhake Berlin, Ryan Mrozowski brings together new works in which he systematically develops his ongoing series. Painted in a sensuous palette of nocturnal hues, they invite into the realm of twilight to explore the perceptual constraints of darkness as aesthetic potential. As the exhibition title with the words deliberately placed below each other suggests, oppositions—like darkness and light or presence and absence—are displaced in favor of emphasizing obscurity, elusiveness and correspondences.

In the exhibition title, Mrozowski is referring to Aram Saroyan's famous poem "lighght" from 1968. Meant as much to be seen as to be read, Saroyan's one-word poems or one-letter poems have the immediacy of images and palpability of sculpture, eliciting an instant affective response. "lighght", a hurdle for the tongue and mind, represents a touchstone for what Mrozowski is attempting to do as a painter. Similar to minimalist poetry's simple words, he works with preexisting and easy to recognize forms and images, like oranges, flowers, polka dot or stripe patterns. Subjecting them to minor, careful structural changes, he transforms them into refracted images of themselves.

The large-scale Nocturne paintings on view show a pattern of orange dots immersed in a repetition of lush greenish-blue leaves that could continue infinitely beyond our field of vision escaping the confines of the canvas. The painting's palette captures the elusive nocturnal quality of dusk, when color becomes slippery and fugitive. The orange dots are richly nuanced in jewel-like blues and dark greens making them appear like glowing moons. They tilt and jump back and forth between the leaves creating an arresting confusion for the eye. The darker diptych Untitled (Pair) is a further exploration of the vibrant color that exists in dim light. By blocking out parts of a floral pattern in monochrome blue, Mrozowski provokes optical oscillation, as our minds strive to connect the two paintings into one continuous image, while in fact we are looking at the very same image only repeated and painted blue in exactly reversed parts. The works in the series Dot, executed for the first time on a surprisingly large scale, similarly unsettle our ability to recognize patterns. Myriads of white dots stand out from the dark wood grain structure into which they are embedded like stars in a pitch-dark sky. They dance in intricate wonky lines creating an illusion of folds reminiscent of exuberant Baroque drapery paintings or scientific illustrations of the curvature of spacetime. These works are in fact sculptures disguised as paintings. The artist painstakingly shaped small round plastic pieces (typically found on guitar fretboards) and inlaid them into approximately one thousand drilled holes in plywood, then sanding and staining the wood. The text painting Untitled (Eve) acts as a coda to the exhibition. The letters E and V rendered in bright white and randomly distributed against a dark background of lush foliage pattern unravel a wordplay and a game of contrasts between dark and light, background and foreground, image and text and looking versus reading.

Not unlike Saroyan's poems, Mrozowski's works are visual stumbling blocks. They halt, confuse and complicate perception, thus creating a moment in which we become aware of the amazing stories our minds instantaneously conjure when navigating the chaotic stream of sensory stimuli, how the eye completes the word, the eye completes the pattern, completes the illusion, completes the image, completes meaning, ever shifting.

Nothing is as simple as it looks in Mrozowski's paintings. After all, the universe is expanding.

Ryan Mrozowski, born in Indiana, PA in 1981, currently lives and works between Hudson and Brooklyn, NY. He received his MFA from the Pratt Institute, NY in 2005, and his BFA from the Indiana University of Pennsylvania in 2003. Mrozowski has had numerous solo exhibitions in galleries internationally, recently at i8 Gallery, Reykjavik (2022), Ratio 3, San Francisco (2021), Chapter New York (2019), Simon Lee Gallery, London (2018), Hannah Hoffman Gallery, Los Angeles, CA (2018) and Arcade, London, UK (2016) and Pierogi, Brooklyn, NY (2012 and 2010). His work was on view in group exhibitions at Museo Tamayo Arte Contemporáneo, México-City (2020), the Pratt Institute, New York (2017), Art in General, Vilnius (2014), Practice Gallery, Philadelphia, PA (2013), Kansas University Art & Design Gallery, Lawrence, KS (2012) and The Kitchen, New York (2011). This is the artists fourth solo exhibition at Galerie Nordenhake.

**Exhibition: November 5, 2022 – January 14, 2023**

**Opening hours: Tues.–Sat., 11am–6pm**

**Please contact the gallery for press photos or further information.**

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