

**GALERIE NÄCHST ST. STEPHAN
ROSEMARIE SCHWARZWÄLDER**

MICHAŁ BUDNY

4 SEP – 31 OCT 2026

Night

Opening: Friday, 4 September 2026, 7 p.m.

Introduction: Vitus Weh, Director of Esterhazy NOW, 7.30 p.m.

“The world is deep, and deeper than ever day thought it might.”
(Friedrich Nietzsche)

The traditional Japanese haiku is considered to be the shortest poetic form, and its classic structure has been passed down since the seventeenth century. It focuses on observations of nature, the passing of time, and fleeting moments, all of which it condenses into a distinct image using only a few syllables. Michał Budny's interest in these motifs sets the tone for the works assembled in this exhibition. “The works preserve the framework and rhythm of the composition; they are minimalist and precise at the same time, and their tension arises from observation rather than from spectacle,” says Budny.

When we look at the sculptures and objects, their proximity to this literary form is not immediately noticeable, but rather takes effect as a concentrated intervention. Instead of featuring in the foreground of the metal sculptures, wood reliefs, and textile works, materiality serves as a vehicle for narratives and ideas that appear in changing forms. Here, they are distilled into a motif: the night, this unclear sphere of experiences onto which we project our thoughts and which also serves as the title of this exhibition. Budny understands night as a metaphor. For him, it is part of a cycle of experiences that he regards as neither a beginning nor an end – just like his metal objects, which are characterized by precise cuts, a smooth surface, and a cool detachment and refer to the basic form of the circle, which can be read as a symbol of entirety, repetition, and a deepening of experience. As a cut-out form and a trace, Budny's circle seems like a “materialized pattern of emerging” and is reminiscent of transitions – for example, from idea to creation, day to night, negative to positive.

Budny's other works demonstrate how he deliberately employs the diversity of materials to lend his theme narrative variations. A sown, three-dimensional textile relief transforms basic geometric shapes into a reference to the cycle of sunrise and sunset; the semicircular wings open and close, the color hues remind us of twilight. A wood relief translates this movement into a two-dimensional plane, where lines and incisions structure a back and forth between concentration and pause, light and shadow, resembling a metronome at rest that enables us to experience the motif of the night as a rhythm.

“The world is deep, and deeper than ever day thought it might”: With this passage from the “Midnight Song” in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, Friedrich Nietzsche reminds us that reality reaches deeper than what our daytime thinking, our reason and science, are able to grasp. The night, on the other hand, opens up a space for further mental and imaginary levels. One of the essential qualities of a haiku is precisely this openness: It doesn't complete anything, it leaves breaks and blank spaces; it is only through the experience of the reader that these gaps are filled. Michał Budny's exhibition can also be read in this light: Instead of offering a conclusive interpretation, it opens up a resonance chamber where our perception, memory, and imagination resound.

MICHAŁ BUDNY was born in 1976 in Leszno, Poland. He lives and works in Warsaw.

He participated in the 10th Fellbach Small Sculpture Triennial in 2007 and Manifesta 7 in Trentino in 2008.

Solo exhibitions (selection): PEAC Museum, Freiburg (2026); Kunstmuseum Luzern, Lucerne (2020); Saarlandmuseum, Saarbrücken (2015); National Gallery of Art, Vilnius (2012); Kunstverein für die Rheinlande und Westfalen, Düsseldorf; Kunstmuseum Stuttgart, Stuttgart (2011); and South London Gallery, London (2010).

Group exhibitions (selection): Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw (2025); Kunstmuseum Stuttgart (2025); Zachęta National Gallery Warsaw (2025, 2022, 2020) Galerie Rudolfinum Prague (2023), ARTER, Istanbul (2023); PEAC Museum in Freiburg (2023, 2018), Wrocław Contemporary Museum, Wrocław (2022); MOCAR Museum of Contemporary Art in Kraków (2018), Kunstsammlungen Chemnitz, Chemnitz (2017) Ujazdowski Castle - Centre for Contemporary Art, Warsaw (2017, 2013); Marta Herford, Herford (2016); MAC Museo de Arte Contemporáneo Gas Natural Fenosa, A Coruña; NAMOC National Art Museum of China, Beijing; Museum Morsbroich, Leverkusen (2015); and Palazzina dei Giardini, Galleria Civica of Modena (2015).

Budny's works can be found in many private collections and institutions around the world, such as Kunsthaus Zürich, Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw, Kunstmuseum Luzern, Kunstmuseum Stuttgart, Muzeum Sztuki in Łódź, Fondation National d'Art Contemporain in Paris, University of Virginia School of Law, Charlottesville, Virginia, Kunsthalle Praha Collection in Prague, Munich Re in Munich, Sammlung Otten in Hohenems, Sammlung KiCo, Bonn, Kienbaum Collection in Cologne, Kunstsammlungen Chemnitz, Saarlandmuseum, Paul Ege Art Collection in Freiburg, Vehbi Koç Foundation, Istanbul, Berezdivin Collection, San Juan, Puerto Rico, Jorge M. Pérez Collection, Aspen, Colorado; and SYZYGY Collection of JoAnn Gonzalez Hickey.