

***Caught by traffic light.***

**Bartłomiej Kownacki**

curators: Magdalena Cienkus, Karolina Hebda,  
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## Przykłady malarstwa:



**Owoce z naklejkami, 90 x 70 cm olej, płótno 2013**  
*Fruits with labels, 90 x 70 cm, oil on canvas 2013*



**Makler, 97 x 68 cm olej, płótno 2017**  
*Broker, 97 x 68 cm, oil on canvas 2017*



**Makler, 97 x 68 cm olej, płótno 2017**  
*Broker, 97 x 68 cm, oil on canvas 2017*



**Ostatnie śniadanie, 90 x 80 cm olej, płótno 2020**  
*The last breakfast, 90x80 cm, oil on canvas 2020*

# Caught by traffic light

Artist: **Bartłomiej Kownacki**

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## Exhibition concept:

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There haven't been many life conversations, meetings in recent times, not enough direct contacting and mutual understanding. Facing the pandemic situation, we couldn't have enough contact with family and friends, culture, art and its creators. Therefore, during the biennial exhibition Caught by traffic light, viewers will have the opportunity to stay with the artist in one space for a longer time together, to observe the act of painting. Bartłomiej Kownacki, the artist, will be creating his masterpieces for many hours a day, resigning from private plans, providing himself with only minimum time for basic needs such as sleeping, refreshing etc. He will become a part of the contemporary painting process, the complicated one, much different from the traditional imagination of it. The artist spending every single day on painting will be observed by the audience as a part of the "creative painting machine" like a theatre performance, ready to interact with the audience. The project assumes the public as an interactive element of the creating process. Everyone who agrees to cross the traffic lights placed on the way to the main exhibition, will have a chance to appear on the canvas and become a part of the performance. The painter will have only partial right to decide about the final result of his artwork. The portrayed characters will be chosen randomly by computer using pictures taken before crossing the Kownacki's atelier.

The process of taking photos of viewers will start at the beginning of the performance adventure. Visitors of the exhibition will be guided in a kind of tunnel, straight down to the place where they will be intuitively forced to stop in front of traffic lights. In this area there will be audiovisual communication informing about privacy policy before coming inside the gallery. Green background behind the visitors and an automatic camera will be useful for transferring portraits to the painter's computer for future uprocess. The information placed there will also contain a disclaimer saying that in case of privacy policy disagreement, the person will be asked to leave the gallery. In actual global networking consent for the processing of personal data is common and mandatory.

The main attraction of the exhibition is to present the modern painter's workplace. Bartłomiej Kownacki will be creating his oil paintings in large format canvases with electronic devices like computers equipped with high resolution

screen, printer and projector. His creation act will not be limited only to traditional painting. Computers with graphic programmes are used by many contemporary painters as a basic tool. Using available equipment Kownacki will make viewers familiar with the evolution that took place in painting techniques. New technologies have both supporters and opponents, however technical progress shows the impression of being unstoppable.

One of the main goals of the project will be to present an actual realistic painter's studio and look closer at the privacy policy which is in the hands of the huge corporations which can use and manipulate user datas. Bartłomiej Kownacki through his artistic attitude seems to provoke reflection of the audience. The artist asks a question: Don't we demand much more in the field of the art? or maybe we prefer the old rules in this case? He hopes that we will also do it willingly to join the artwork creation process, just as we create social networks together, sharing details of our lives, not being aware that we are guided by algorithms. Perhaps it is time for us to reflect on whether we really co-create something. There is a chance that we want to co-exist and co-create something together, to become a part of the big thing. Not just watch something but also be watched. The performance by Bartłomiej Kownacki will undoubtedly create a space for this type of reflection.

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## Scenario:

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From the entrance of the building, the visitors will walk through the hall to a lighted spot with the green coloured wall and imitation of traffic lights. The red light will appear until someone decides to pass, going towards the main exhibition area. In the traffic light area voice and text comment will be installed, regarding privacy policy of the image taking. The image will be automatically sent to the artist's computer placed in the main area of the exhibition, however it will not be processed until visitor's permission. Step into the gallery means the acceptance of processing the image using various backgrounds for the final of Kownacki's painting and public presentation. Construction of the communication will resemble warnings that we used to see on each website while we use any modern device asking for access to pictures and data. In case of no permission, the main exhibition won't be shown. Otherwise, the image has a chance to be randomly chosen and modified by a graphic programme.

In the centre of the building the visitor will have a chance to see the main performance. Seated on the chair, the artist will be preparing his photographs on the computer, printing copies, using a projector to make his large-size canvas more realistic. Bartłomiej Kownacki decided to use canvases 6 meters long and about 2.5 m high which gives an extraordinary work space for him. Atelier is equipped not only with large format frames, paints, traditional tools, but also with new-tech devices. You can find modern computer working with advanced graphic programmes, projector, printer. The artist in his studio will be partly old fashioned painter and graphic designer at the same time. According to the plan, the author plans to work in his studio a few hours a day, giving a chance to the audience to have personal encounters. As a result of this plan, the exhibition will get many of new artworks during the whole time of exhibition. People will have a double chance seeing artist at work and a growing number of just made paintings. The very unique feature of those arts is the size. Not many painters are ready to create such impressive big scale artworks e.g. 6m x 2 m.

With time, the studio will be decorated with new artefacts encouraging people to compare early stages and finished works. This makes exhibitions "living every single day".

**Bartłomiej Kownacki** – Polish artist born in 1978 in Ostróda. He graduated from the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw. He lives in Warsaw, specializing in large-size oil paintings on canvas and additionally objects and movies. Kownacki is the author of many individual and group exhibitions. His movie was awarded in 2015 at the International Festival of Independent Films. He is also the leader of the rock band named Płótno (guitar, voice).

**Plan:**

