

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DAVID OSTROWSKI
YES OR LET'S SAY NO

28 NOVEMBER 2013 – 31 JANUARY 2014
PRIVATE VIEW: WEDNESDAY, 27 NOVEMBER 2013, 6–8PM

Harmony Korine: What kind of kid were you?

David Ostrowski: I was a real mama's boy, a late bloomer and one of those boys, who look like girls. I had to take up painting because I was even worse at everything else. My schoolbag was pink; and even as a baby, my nose was already too big. I ate only fruit, sweets and dry bread rolls; and I didn't "do it" until I was 31.

Harmony Korine: Do you like movies?

David Ostrowski: I love movies! Music sucks!

Harmony Korine: What are your favorite movies?

David Ostrowski: *Talladega Nights, Trash Humpers, Zoolander and Irréversible.*

Harmony Korine: Were your parents into art?

David Ostrowski: My mother is a singer and actress; my father is an artist and alcoholic. Both completely without any talent whatsoever!

Harmony Korine: What did your parents do for a living?

David Ostrowski: I'm still asking myself that today! Seriously! My father lives with his 14-year-old wife in a forest near Warsaw, and my mother has been writing a children's book for 26 years now. Maybe my parents should get back together again and open a gambling house.

Harmony Korine: What kind of school did you go to as a kid?

David Ostrowski: I first went to a Montessori primary school. I was the only kid who had to stay back; even though I was the prettiest kid in the whole school. Later, I was sent to the Humboldt Gymnasium, where I had to stay back again – but I still looked pretty good while doing it.

Harmony Korine: Did you like growing up in Cologne?

David Ostrowski: I guess so, although I would have preferred living in Leverkusen, which is the next town. My best friend at the time lived there with his parents and we played soccer under the bridge, right next-door to the Bayer plant.

Harmony Korine: What time of day do you paint?

David Ostrowski: Usually evenings and at night. It always gives me the feeling that I worked hard the whole day, even though I actually did nothing except thinking and looking damn good in the process – the latter is a bit tough on the psyche.

Harmony Korine: Were you a delinquent?

David Ostrowski: No.

Harmony Korine: How about drugs?

David Ostrowski: Sometimes I drink turpentine and paint by mistake.

Harmony Korine: Do you listen to music when you paint?

David Ostrowski: Pretty much all I do is listen to music. It's the only emotion I have while painting and it helps me forget what an absolute idiot I am sometimes.

Harmony Korine: Ever been arrested?

David Ostrowski: Once, in Warsaw.

Harmony Korine: When did you first start getting into painting?

David Ostrowski: My nana always played a game with me – “who can paint better?” I always won, because my nana loved me so much. When I got older, I just kept playing the game, but my opponents didn’t love me anymore, and that’s why I was arrested in Poland. That’s all I can say here...

Harmony Korine: Do you believe in aliens?

David Ostrowski: I believe in Sweden.

Harmony Korine: What’s the scariest thing to ever happen to you?

David Ostrowski: When my studio burned to the ground a few years ago.

Harmony Korine: You think more about love or hate?

David Ostrowski: Love.

Harmony Korine: Who are your favorite artists?

David Ostrowski: Adriano Celentano, the Wu-Tang Clan and Philip Guston.

Harmony Korine: How hard do you work?

David Ostrowski: I spend about 80% of my time in the studio not painting; instead, I read while listening to a lot of loud music.

Harmony Korine: Are you religious?

David Ostrowski: Yes or let’s say no.

Harmony Korine: You believe in the afterlife?

David Ostrowski: I don’t even believe in this life!

Harmony Korine: Where do you wanna live once you’re rich?

David Ostrowski: In Buenos Aires – it sounds so dirty!

Harmony Korine: Pussy or money?

David Ostrowski: Ivanka Trump.

David Ostrowski’s paintings are the results of a total analysis of the very nature of painting. He consistently strives to undermine composition, style and “typical gestures”, experiments with speed and imperfection. Errors are integrated into the process of pictorial composition, successful sections are painted over. Errors and coincidences are played off against each other in order to achieve unforeseen beauty. Ostrowski deletes, overwrites, layers, makes decisions. “I imagine going into the studio. A neon sign hangs on the wall, flashing the word ‘surprise’. When I ask myself, who painted my own works, I know it’s a good painting.” In the process of painting, consideration is constantly being given to which elements, even the smallest markings, could be removed or added. Ostrowski works with oil and lacquer; large areas of white dominate. Color is employed sparingly with the help of gestures that appear as unmotivated as possible. Ostrowski’s limited color palette is not something he actually prefers, but he does indeed approach this new, reduced color palette as the result of his intense analysis of this preference. Every now and then he wears blue pants. His working materials are things he finds in his studio: paper, strips of wood, newspaper, dirt. Having almost no options is considered an opportunity; even the lack of studio space is processed in the work. “Fuck painting a lot.” The music in the studio is the only emotion that gets captured on the canvas. Ostrowski’s large formats are mirrors of his own self: they depict the vast emptiness, the apparent lack of motivation, sometimes aggression, but especially beauty. What is presented to us as a result is permanent reflection. It’s about something. It’s about nothing.

- Elena Brugnano