

# POSTMASTERS

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for immediate release:

**March 4 - April 9, 2011**

opening reception Friday, March 4, 2011 6-8pm

## OSKAR DAWICKI

### *Phantom Pain*

Postmasters Gallery is pleased to present "Phantom Pain," an exhibition of works by Polish artist Oskar Dawicki. This will be his first solo show in the United States.

"Phantom Pain" may be a test of how a distinctly Polish fatalism translates outside. Oskar Dawicki is a well-known figure – in his trademark blue brocade jacket – obsessed with the embarrassing, the grotesque, and the absurd.

Born in 1971, Dawicki, who lives and works in Warsaw, belongs to a generation of artists that came after Pawel Althamer, Katarzyna Kozyra and Adam Zmijewski. His videos, performances, sculpture and photographs resonate with pathos and dark humor. In his works, though, failure and misery become life-affirming, absurd gestures; they start making perfect sense, and existential torment reveals deeply felt humanity.

For his show at Postmasters, Dawicki makes a ring out of his father's kidney stone, breaks a wall as if Bruce Lee went through it, has postcards sent to him that state it's all the same everywhere, grows a plant in a bottle of antidepressants, transforms a common ficus plant into marijuana, repeats Adam's sin in the Garden of Eden, prevents his own death by hanging with balloons attached to his hands, balances a circus acrobat on his head, and draws his initials in rat poison, all the while apologizing endlessly for disappointing you, the viewer, because his show is surely below your expectations.

We definitely don't think so.

One of Dawicki's best-known works on view is a video, "Tree of Knowledge" (2008), which premiered at Manifesta 7 in Rovereto, Italy, an exhibition curated by Adam Budak.

In his words: *"Oskar Dawicki is known for ironic, critical and subtly anarchistic actions, performances and installations that approach identity issues in relation to the persona of the artist, institutional structures and paradoxes of reality. Utilizing neo-Dadaist strategies, the artist highlights and mocks the absurdities of society in this post-consumer phase of late capitalism. Politics, economics and everyday life are reflected in the distorted mirror of Dawicki's art of resistance. Established norms of moral, spiritual and social order are challenged and put on trial. His "Tree of Knowledge" attempts to zoom in, with the artist's micro-lens, on the primordial moments of human ethics and the foundation of knowledge. The artist re-enacts the scene from the Bible, where Adam and Eve consume forbidden fruit from the Tree of Knowledge, thus committing a sin and consequently being denied access to the Tree of Life. Dawicki's masquerade is grotesque and soaked in irony. Stripping away pathos with the magic of a sorcerer, he narrates an epic of desire in an age at the end of innocence. The fruit is half consumed; the judgment is suspended and supposedly, hope for a new history is reborn."*

One of Oskar Dawicki's videos will also be presented at Moving Image art fair, in New York, March 3-6  
[www.moving-image.info](http://www.moving-image.info)



"Fruit of Anxiety, Vegetable of Calm" 2010, color photo on paper, 15 x 10 inches

Postmasters Gallery located at 459 West 19th Street between 9 and 10 Avenues is open  
Tuesday through Saturday 11 – 6

Please contact Magdalena Sawon or Paulina Bebecka with questions and image requests [postmasters@thing.net](mailto:postmasters@thing.net)  
[www.postmastersart.com](http://www.postmastersart.com)