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Oskar Dawicki

Postmasters

Polish artist Oskar Dawicki made a big impression on viewers even before they entered his witty, sardonic exhibition. Greeting them was the silhouette of a man, cut out of the gallery's exterior wall, a work titled *Homage to Bruce Lee* (2003/2011). It looked as if the late Kung Fu hero had thrown his enemy so forcefully at the wall that his outline remained sharp and intact. It was the perfect introduction to this artist, who expresses nothing but disdain for artistic heroism, replacing any hint of it with an ironic suggestion of helplessness and a touch of silliness.

The exhibition featured a series of videos showing the artist in his emblematic Las Vegas-style: glittery blue brocade jacket and pur-



Oskar Dawicki, still from *Hanged Man*, 2011, single-channel HD video, 5 minutes, 26 seconds. Postmasters.

ple shirt. In *I'm Sorry* (2005), he stares at the ground against a soundtrack of sobbing while text appears on the screen, stating, "I'd like to apologize for this exhibition not being as good as it could be." In *Hanged Man* (2011), he appears to hover precariously with a noose around his neck, elevated only by white helium balloons that he holds in each hand. In both videos, he seems likely to fail the test—of his success as an artist and of his mortality—though we know in reality that he will survive.

Photographs and installations are also included in the exhibition, but the tour de force is the video *Tree of Knowledge* (2008), in which Dawicki attacks an apple tree in the middle of the night, taking and spitting out bites from every piece of fruit he can reach. At one point, the camera lingers on the destroyed apples browning in the night air while the artist continues his futile task. In the Bible, Adam only had to eat one apple to be thrown out of the Garden of Eden. Here, Dawicki achieves artistic redemption by trying to eat them all.

—Barbara Pollack