

## BORTOLAMI

**Anna Ostoya**

**19 October – 22 December 2018**

**Opening Friday, October 19th from 6:00 – 8:00pm**

Bortolami is pleased to present an exhibition of new and recent works by Anna Ostoya. A book launch will accompany the exhibition, celebrating the release of *The Polish Rider*, a collaboration of the artist with poet and writer Ben Lerner. Ostoya and Lerner will be in conversation, moderated by Mónica de la Torre, at the gallery on October 26 at 6pm. *Anna Ostoya*, the catalogue for the artist's recent survey exhibition at the Zacheta National Gallery in Warsaw will be released concurrently.

"Systems that can't communicate, can only kiss," exclaims the narrator of Lerner's short story, "The Polish Rider," first published in *The New Yorker* in June 2016. A fictionalized account of actual events, the story follows the narrator as he helps a friend search for her lost paintings depicting two powerful men kissing on the lips. The search becomes a metaphor for the exploration of different contexts and networks within seemingly unified structures, that of a city or that of history. It can be also seen as a metaphor for Ostoya's work, which incorporates diverse materials, mediums, histories and aesthetics to stage collisions of ever-changing oppositions.

The new book, *The Polish Rider*, is the result of an ongoing conversation between Ostoya and Lerner across media and genres. It includes Lerner's short story, images of Ostoya's new and recent works, and a new essay by Lerner that describes how the artist's oeuvre catalyzed the fiction. It marks years of exchange between the artist and the writer, adding to an ongoing narrative that started when Lerner wrote a critical essay for Ostoya's first catalogue in 2014. The new publication presents contingencies and uncanny correspondences that have shaped the exchange, testing the boundaries between fact and fiction, original and reproduction, text and image.

At Bortolami, Ostoya's paintings and collages are installed distinctively in the gallery's two front rooms. While originating from different series, they all converge in the new publications. Originally shown in the artist's survey exhibition at Zacheta, *(UN)MADE (After Frenhofer)* (2017) is a large-scale composition of overlapping figures that she made by directly tracing the outlines of her own body on canvas. Ostoya composed her new series of collages, *Views (1-9)*, by abstracting snapshots she took of fences and buildings during walks in the Lower East Side. The *Alte Sachlichkeit* series consists of collages derived from the book *The American Heritage Picture History of World War II*, a book she found in the lobby of her apartment building, as well as found objects and images. Ostoya's paintings from the series *Slaying* are derived from the Gentileschi masterpiece *Judith Slaying Holofernes* (1643), and were not only the thesis of her last exhibition at the gallery but also the impetus for Lerner's piece of fiction.

Ostoya's paintings and collages can be viewed in relation to the short story, the ongoing narrative of the writer-artist collaboration, or through the perspective of the critical essays in the Zacheta catalogue. In all scenarios, each series operates independently, yet can overlap, or kiss, within their given networks.

## BORTOLAMI

*The Polish Rider*, by Anna Ostoya and Ben Lerner, published by MACK, August 2018

*Anna Ostoya*, published by Zacheta National Gallery, Warsaw with essays by Jeff Dolven, Jovana Stokic, Paulina Pobocho, September 2018.

Special thanks to everyone who helped make the publications and the exhibitions happen. Exhibition arranged in collaboration with Barbara Leoniak.

**Anna Ostoya**, born in Kraków, lives and works in New York. Her work has been shown at Tate St. Ives, the 2015 Lyon Biennial, at the Museum of Modern Art, the Power Plant Toronto, the CCS Bard College, Manifesta 7 Rovereto, Lisson Gallery, and the Second Athens Biennial. She has had solo exhibitions at Zacheta National Gallery, La Kunsthalle Mulhouse, CCA Kronika, and with her galleries: Bortolami, New York; tegenboschvanvreden, Amsterdam; and Silberkuppe, Berlin. She studied at the Städelschule in Frankfurt/M and the Parsons School in Paris and attended the Whitney Independent Study Program in New York.