

Fellows



Michal Pawel Markowski
IFK_Senior Fellow

Duration of fellowship
01. March 2008 bis 30. June 2008

Michal Pawel Markowski

PROJECT TITLE

Mimesis at verge. Trompe-l'oeil and the paradoxes of pictorial representation

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Michal Pawel Markowski focuses on the 17th-century illusionist paintings which are considered commonly as a marginal movement in the history of Western painting. Trompe-l'oeil requires now a more philosophical and cultural interpretation as the pivotal point in the history of modern art. The main question of this analysis can be stated as follows: why trompe-l'oeil, which apparently brought mimesis to its perfection, had immediately been expelled from the pictorial space as the synonym of a mean and empty artificiality? Why was it considered not as a fulfillment of the re-presentative power of art, but as a dangerous supplement to it?

The hypothesis is that trompe-l'oeil, being a full realization of mimetical rhetoric, was paradoxically too subverting for the philosophical and aesthetic premises of the mimetological organon of culture (Louis Marin). Mere things which had previously been inscribed in a broader significant frame and thus bestowed with many kinds of familiar meaning suddenly gained their uncanny autonomy destroying the safe contemplative distance between representation and the beholder, on which mimetological ideology is thoroughly based. This aesthetic subversion, however, inherent in trompe-l'oeil, could not be limited to the field of art. Since there is a strong affinity between perception and politics, the trompe-l'oeil painting, evading the conventional rules of looking at images, was also displaying a high political potential.

CV

Michal Pawel Markowski is Professor at and Chairman of the Department of International Polish Studies and Director of the Centre for Advanced Studies in the Humanities at Jagiellonian University, Kraków, Poland. Visiting Professor at American universities including Harvard and Northwestern University. Co-editor of the series "Horizons of Modernity", editor of the series "Hermeneia".

Publications

(among others): *The Unforeseeable. Essays*, Kraków 2007; *Theories of Literature in the 20th Century*, Kraków 2006; *Dark Waters: Gombrowicz, World, Literature*, Kraków 2004; *Identity and Interpretation*, Stockholm 2003; *Anatomy of Curiosity*, Kraków 2000; *Desire for Presence. Philosophies of Representation from Plato to Descartes*, Gdansk 1999.