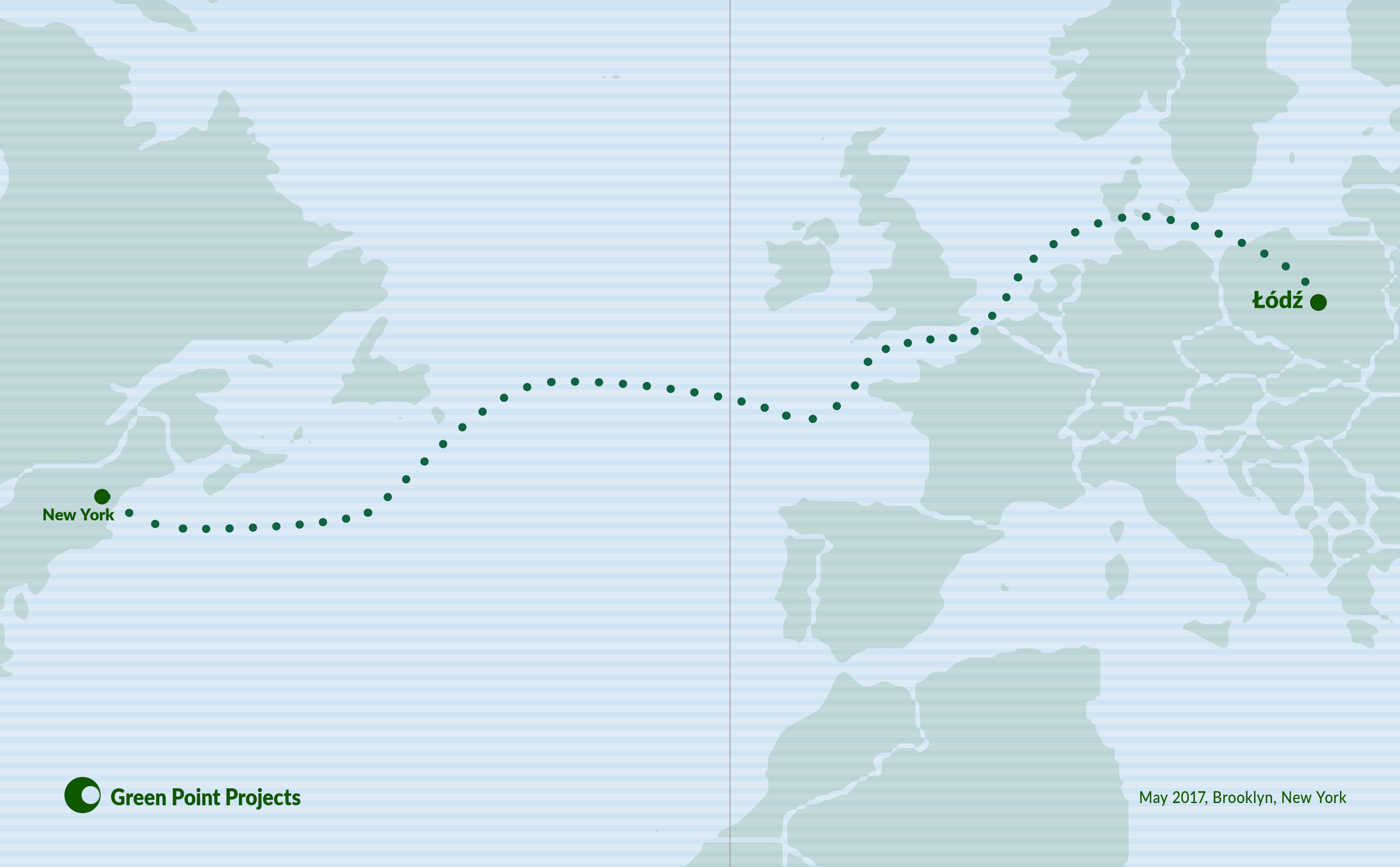


Stanisław Fijałkowski



New York ●

Łódź ●

# Stanisław Fijałkowski

There are many elements in my paintings that  
border on mysticism...

Everyone interprets art according to their  
own inner capacity, everyone understands it,  
individually, and that is what open forms  
in art are based on.

Stanisław Fijałkowski



A Young Man Plans a Voyage

Curator: Marek Bartelik



Self-Portrait, 2002

## Stanisław Fijałkowski

Polish painter and printmaker, born in Zdołbunów (today Ukraine) in 1922. Between 1946 and 1951, Fijałkowski studied art at the State Art Academy (PWSSP) in Łódź, having the renowned Constructivist Władysław Strzemiński among his teachers. The artist taught at his alma matter until 1993.

During the early stages of his career, Fijałkowski was influenced by surrealism and constructivism. He was a great admirer of Wassily Kandinsky and Kazimir Malevich, and translated into Polish Kandinsky's *Punkt und Linie zu Fläche* (*Point and Line to Plane*) and *Über das Geistige in der Kunst* (*On the Spiritual in Art*), as well as Kazimir Malevich's *The World as Objectlessness*. By the early 1960s he developed a highly unique painterly language based on an introspective approach to constructivism, minimalism, and lyrical abstraction, to which he has been loyal to these days.

The artist represented Poland at the biennales in São Paulo (1969) and Venice (1972). In 1977, he received the Cyprian Kamil Norwid Art Criticism Award; in 1990, he was awarded the prestigious Jan Cybis Prize for his art. He has also received awards at the Graphic Art Biennale in Kraków (1968 and 1970), the Mostra Internazionale di Bianco e Nero in Lugano (1972), and the Graphic Art Biennale in Lubiana (1977).

To celebrate his 80th birthday, the National Museum in Poznań mounted his retrospective in 2003, which travelled to the "Zachęta" National Gallery in Warsaw and the National Museum in Wrocław.

Fijałkowski served as chairman of the Polish section of the XYLON International (Society of Wood-Engravers) and was its international vice-president. Between 1974 and 1979 he was the vice-president of the Polish section of AIAP (the International Association of Art). He has been a member of the European Academy of Arts and Sciences in Salzburg and the Royal Academy of Sciences, Letters, and Fine Arts of Belgium.

His works are included in the collections of: MoMA, New York; Albertina, Vienna; Tate Gallery, London; Trietriakov Gallery, Moscow; Kunstmuseum, Bochum; the national museums in Warsaw, Kraków, Poznań, Wrocław, Gdańsk and Szczecin; and the Muzeum Sztuki in Łódź; as well as numerous private collections in Poland and abroad.

The artist lives and works in Łódź.

\* Information based on <http://culture.pl/en/artist/stanislaw-fjalkowski>; accessed 13 April 2017.



Artist (on the right)  
with Władysław Strzemiński  
at studio of Łódź Academy of Arts, 1946

## Marek Bartelik

Stanisław Fijałkowski:  
*A Young Man Plans a Voyage*

I cannot discuss your verses; for any attempt at criticism would be foreign to me. Nothing touches a work of art so little as words of criticism: they always result in more or less fortunate misunderstandings. Things aren't all so tangible and sayable as people would usually have us believe; most experiences are unsayable, they happen in a space that no word has ever entered, and more unsayable than all other things are works of art, those mysterious existences, whose life endures beside our own small, transitory life.

— Rainer Maria Rilke, *Letters To A Young Poet*  
(Paris, February 17, 1903)

Stanisław Fijałkowski will be 95 years old later this year. How can I speak about an artist with such a long and prolific life, the majority of which has been devoted to making art; to speak about his works that are still being made with the same passion and commitment as in the past? How can I introduce Stanisław Fijałkowski in a short text to an audience that knows practically nothing about his work? Is an introduction necessary here at all?

I read somewhere that when Walter Gropius met Eero Saarinen, they sat down, facing each other, and remained silent for almost the entire visit. They later explained that they didn't say a word not because they didn't have anything to say, but—to show mutual respect for their work. However, the temptation to write a few words about Fijałkowski here is greater than my growing allegiance to silence. After all, it is an opportunity to express my respect for this artist whom I have admired since my childhood. It is also an opportunity to engage





Painting in the open air  
in Roudnice-on-Elbe, the 1970's

#### A Young Man Plans a Voyage

in yet another incredible journey in art, a journey within a journey in fact, for many of the artist's works presented in this exhibition deal with that subject in different contexts, sometimes literally, often metaphorically, always as powerful illusions.

Turning 95 might be interpreted as reaching an age when one "has nothing to prove". That might be the case, indeed. But, Fijałkowski's artistic accomplishments are remarkable in so many ways that he doesn't need his age, or his curriculum vitae to justify them. He has been widely considered to be one of the most accomplished Polish artists of the twentieth century, with exhibitions around the world, including those at the biennials in São Paulo (1969) and Venice (1972), works in collections of major museums, and a distinguished career as a teacher at the State Art School in Łódź, today called the Władysław Strzemiński Academy of Fine Arts in homage to the pioneer of abstraction in Poland, who was Fijałkowski's art teacher.

I perceive Fijałkowski as one of the most "discrete" and quiet Polish artists today. I know very few artists who have managed to retain such great calmness in art—and to express much with so little: a few lines and a few colors, an allusion to a theme or a motif, a trace, a void. "Minimalism", yes, but not devoid of emotions, sometimes explicit, sometimes even whimsical, always unexpected. As the artist has said in an interview: his art is about a search for a minimum that is just enough to reveal the essential, in color, line, and in subject. Hence, no need for dramatic gestures in the name of supreme geometry, figuration, or any other form of ideology.

No aggressive criticality, artistic or political. “Lyrical abstraction” has been a term often applied to this type of painting, and, indeed, Fijałkowski’s works possess artistic, and poetic, qualities that have been associated with that tendency in art. His lyricism is very personal though: always subtle, “fogged”, and yet direct. He puts his hand on the pulse of time and makes art that carries a metaphysical beat to nourish our daily existence. What makes his art “abstract” is very simple: it is highly universal, a quality which allows us to perceive it as close, familiar, and warm, and to pose and feel.

When I saw his works in reality for the first time, their size surprised me. I pictured Fijałkowski’s works as very large when seeing them in reproductions. In reality, most of his paintings can be called middle-sized. That medium size could make them look like “widows,” but to me they look more like small “gates” which open to the enigmatic side of life, or as Rilke once wrote, to “those mysterious existences, whose life endures beside our own small, transitory life”. And, as such, they are boundless.

Fijałkowski in New York— and a new voyage in time and space begins with the artist with us. When asked about the origins of the title of his work, *A Young Man Plans a Voyage*, the artist answered: “This is a painting that brings to mind being young.”

Paris, April 5, 2017

Marek Bartelik is a Polish-born, New York-based art critic, art historian and poet. He currently serves as the XVth President of the International Association of Art Critics (AICA), an NGO affiliated with UNESCO, which has 63 national chapters with a membership of approximately 5000 art critics around the world.



At a studio of the Łódź Academy of Arts, the 1970's

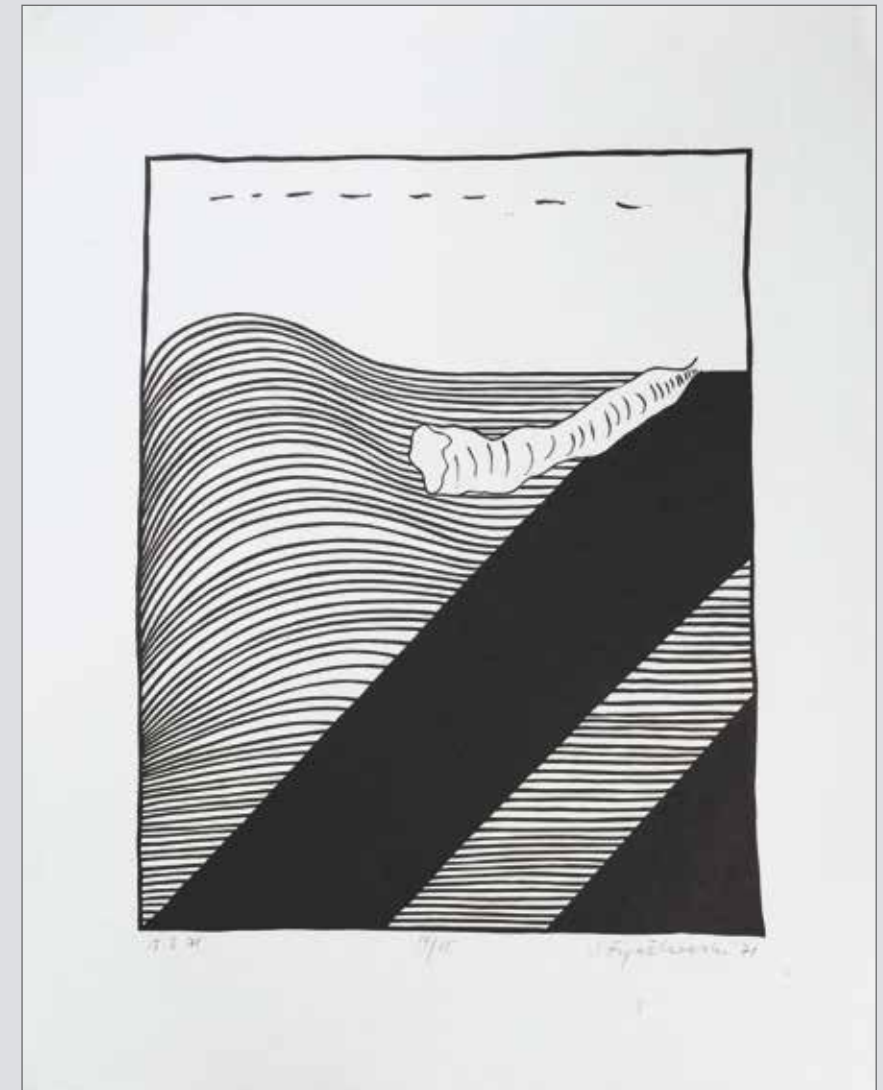


I have always held a belief that there are forms that resemble  
the famous “Jacob’s Ladder” of the Old Testament.

# highways

It is a connection between heaven and earth that provides a close connection between man and his being. The highways have been like a ladder that appeared to Jacob when he saw the angels descending from the mountain and climbing it to the sky.

**15.I.71**  
1971, linoleum cut, 14/15; 25,9 x 20 in (66 x 51 cm)



*A Young Man Plans a Voyage—February 3, 1973*  
1973, acrylic on canvas, 39.3 x 28.7 in (100 x 73 cm)



**10.VI.73**  
1973, ink on paper, 24,8 x 19,4 in (63 x 49,5 cm)





*XV Highway—January 11, 1974*  
1974, acrylic on canvas, 23.6 x 31.8 in (60 x 81 cm)



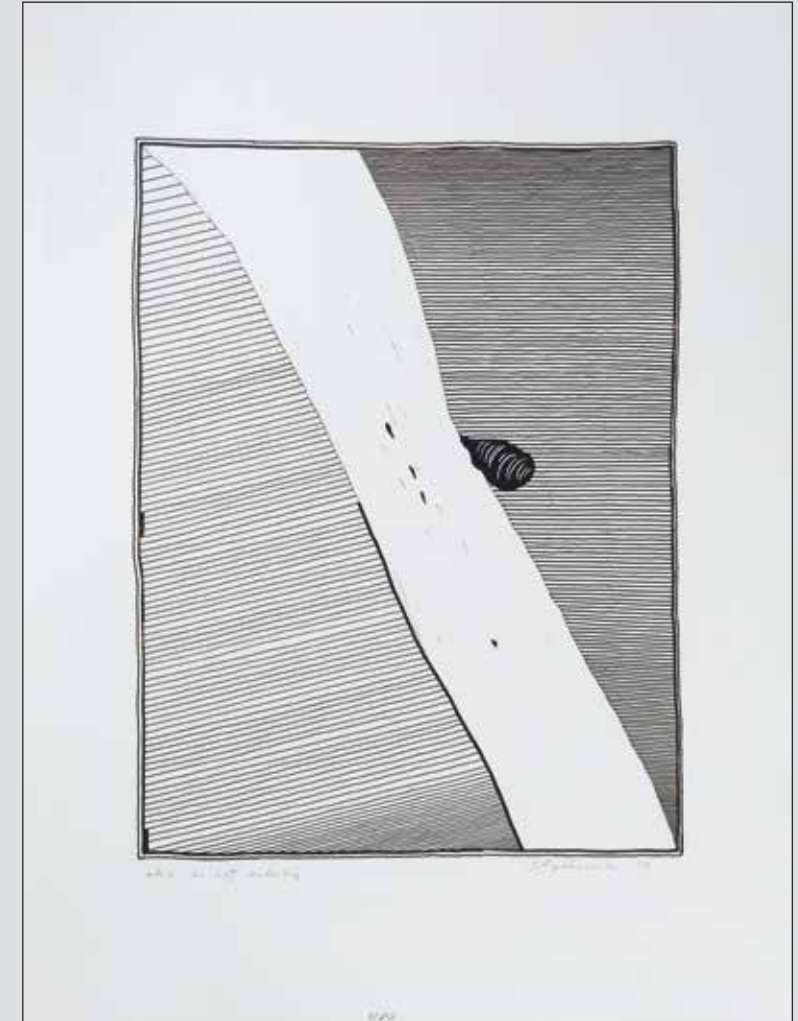
*XXVII Highway—March 2, 1975*  
1975, oil on canvas, 32.2 x 23.6 in (82 x 60 cm)



*XXXVII Highway—May 26, 1976*  
1976, oil on canvas, 28.7 x 23.6 in (73 x 60 cm)



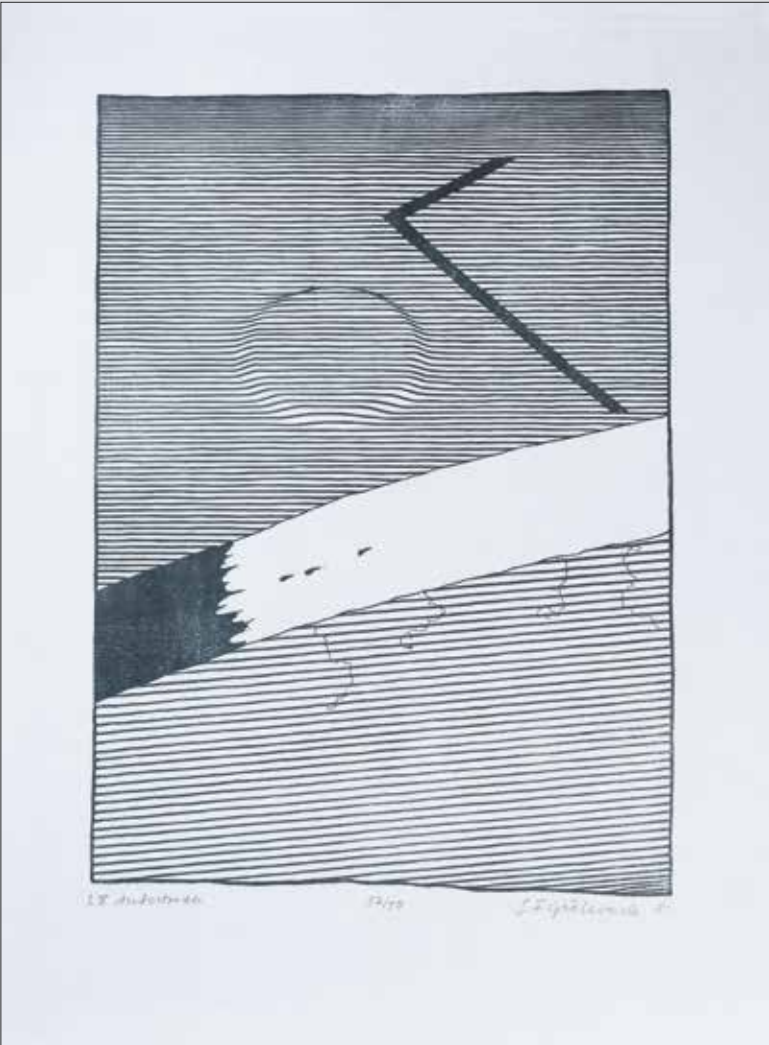
*LVII Highway*  
1980, ink on paper, 25,5 x 19,4 in (65 x 49,5 cm)





**LX Highway**

1981, linoleum cut, 37/50, 24 x 17,7 in (61 x 45 cm)

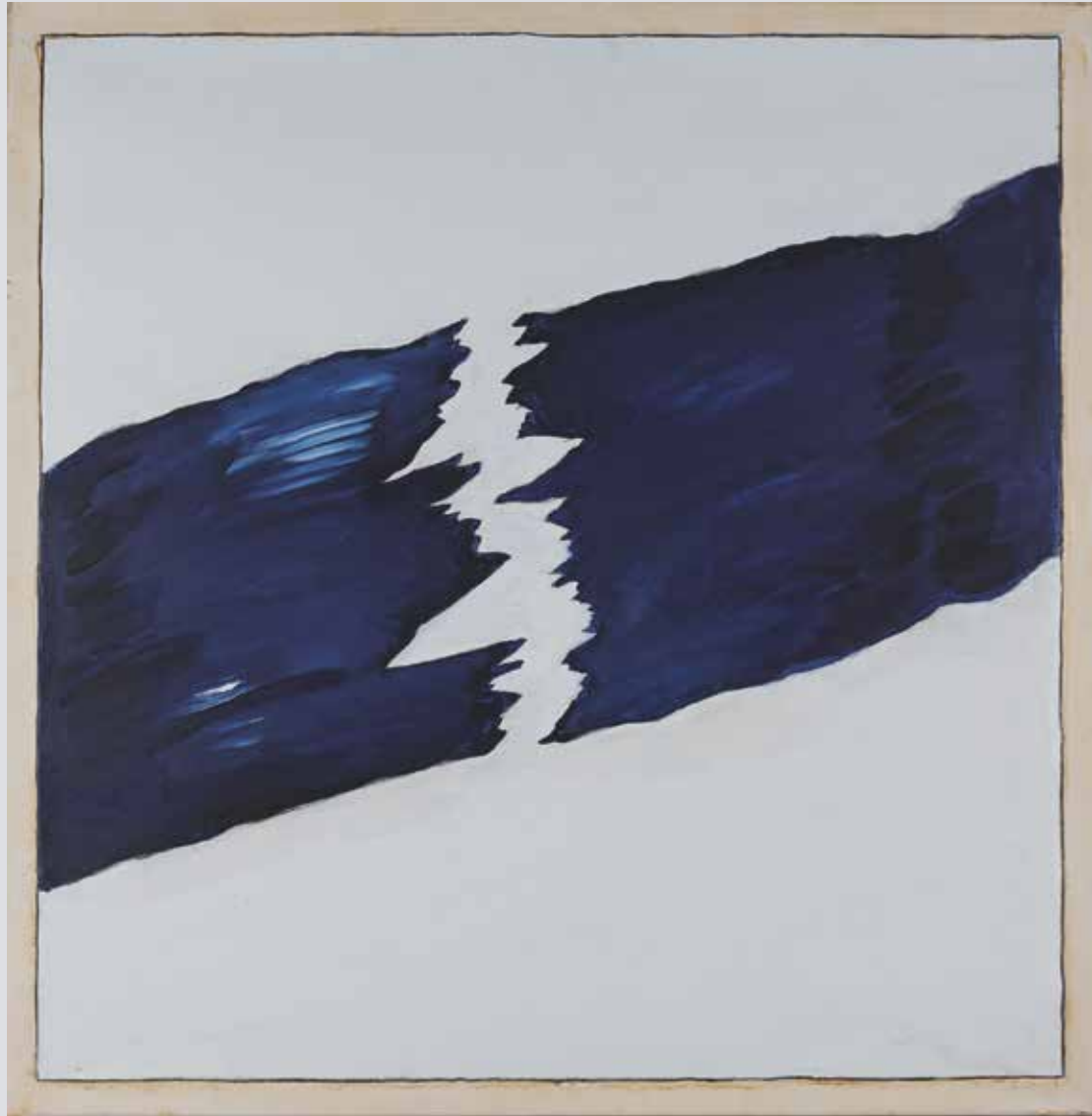


*LXXVI Highway—March 7, 1990*  
1990, oil on canvas, 45.6 x 38.1 in (116 x 97 cm)



*Highway for a Heavenly Messenger –September 11-13, 1990*  
1990, oil on canvas, 45.6 x 35in (116 x 89 cm)





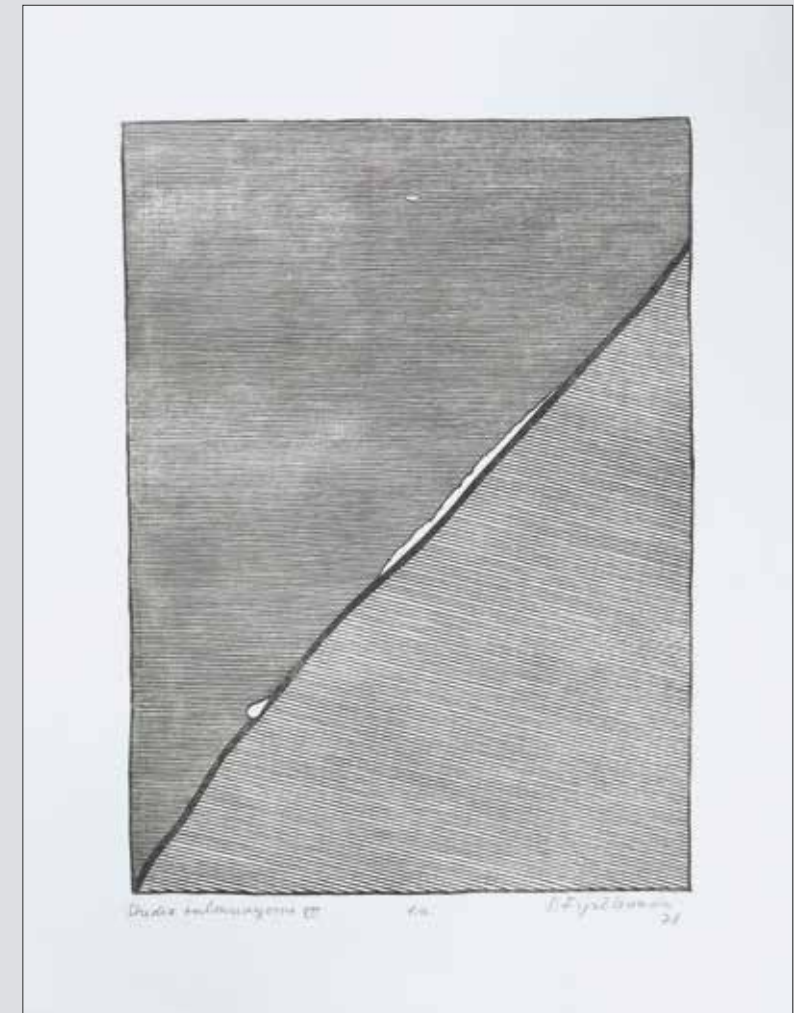
*Brand New Highway III*  
2007, acrylic on canvas, 39.3 x 39,3 in (100 x 100 cm)



talmudic  
studies

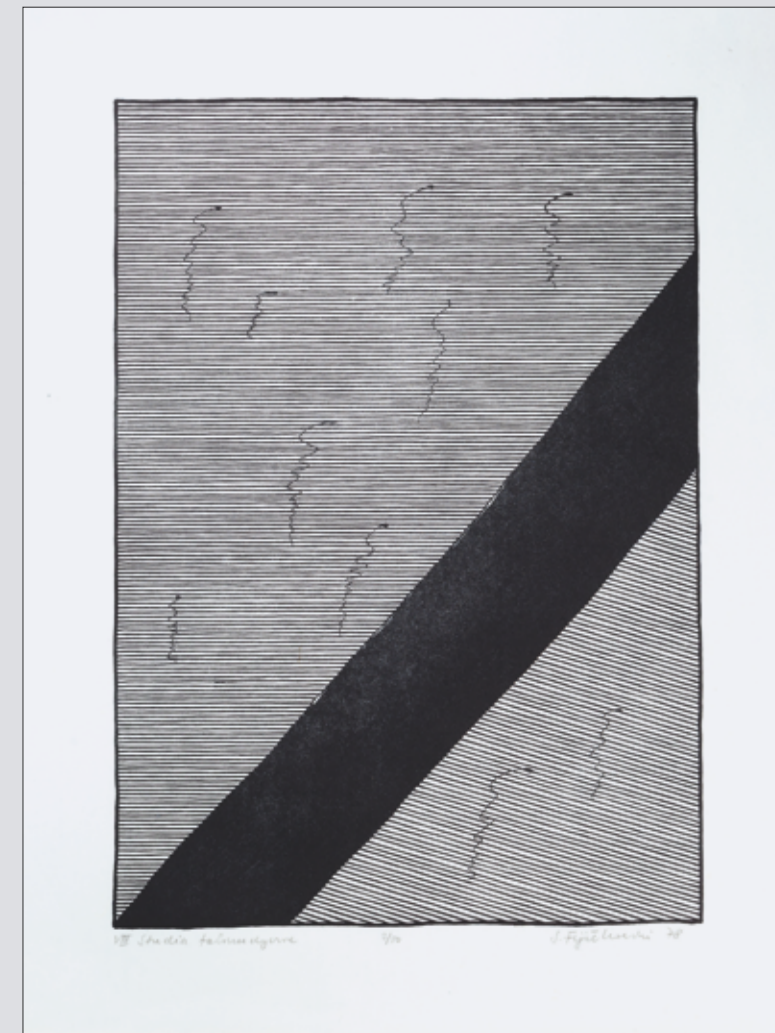
**Talmudic Studies VII**

1978, linoleum cut, e.a., 25,1 x 19,2 in (64 x 49 cm)



***Talmudic Studies VIII***

1978, linoleum cut, 2/50, 24 x17,7 in (71 x 45 cm)

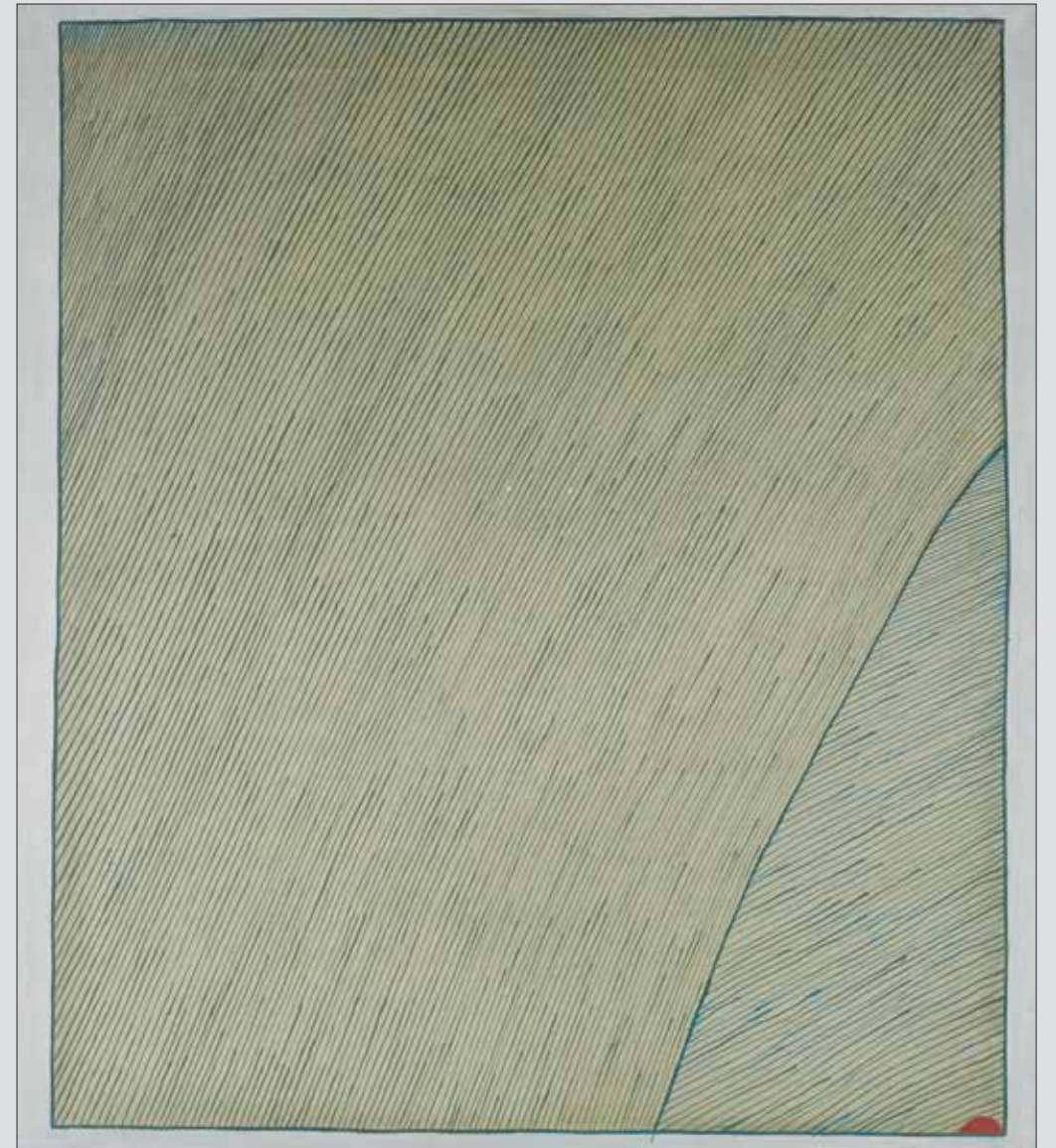


*Talmudic Studies XVII*  
1978, linoleum cut, e.a., 23,6 x 17,9 in (60 x 45,5 cm)





*XVIII Talmudic Studies*  
1980, oil on canvas, 28.7 x 25.5 in (73 x 65 cm)



You can speak to people through symbols that are not always obvious, but are understood. A person sees an image and as he/she sees it, somewhere deep down he/she understands it.

voyage  
paintings and drawings

*Landscape from Bierutowice,*  
1949, oil on canvas, 18.4 x 14.9 in (46 x 38 cm)



*Poet I*  
1957, oil on plywood, 28.7 x 23.6 in (73 x 60 cm)







*November 1958*  
1958, oil on canvas, 34.6 x 44.8 in (88 x 114cm)

*Library mural-wall #1/8*  
1959, watercolor on paper, 8,2 x 9,8 in (21 x 25 cm)

*Library mural-wall #2/1*  
1959, watercolor on paper, 8,2 x 9,8 in (21 x 25 cm)

*Library mural-wall #2/15*  
1959, watercolor on paper, 8,2 x 9,8 in (21 x 25 cm)





*Project for a mural at the National Library in Łódź*  
1959, oil on board, 16.5 x 19.6 in (42 x 50 cm)



*December 1959*  
1959, oil on canvas, 19.6 x 24 in (50 x 61 cm)

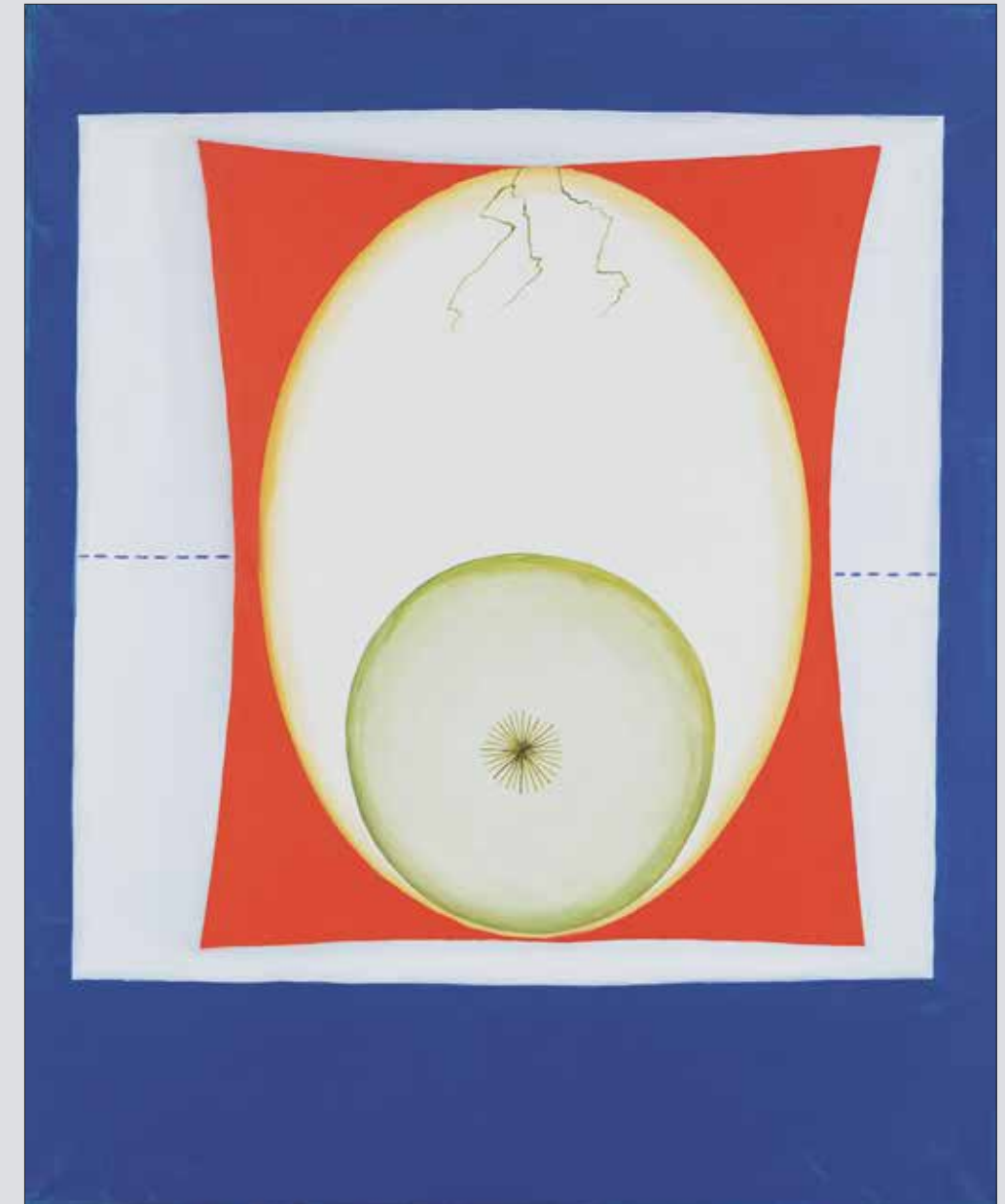


*January 7, 1960*  
1960, oil on canvas, 31.8 x 23.6 in (81 x 60 cm)

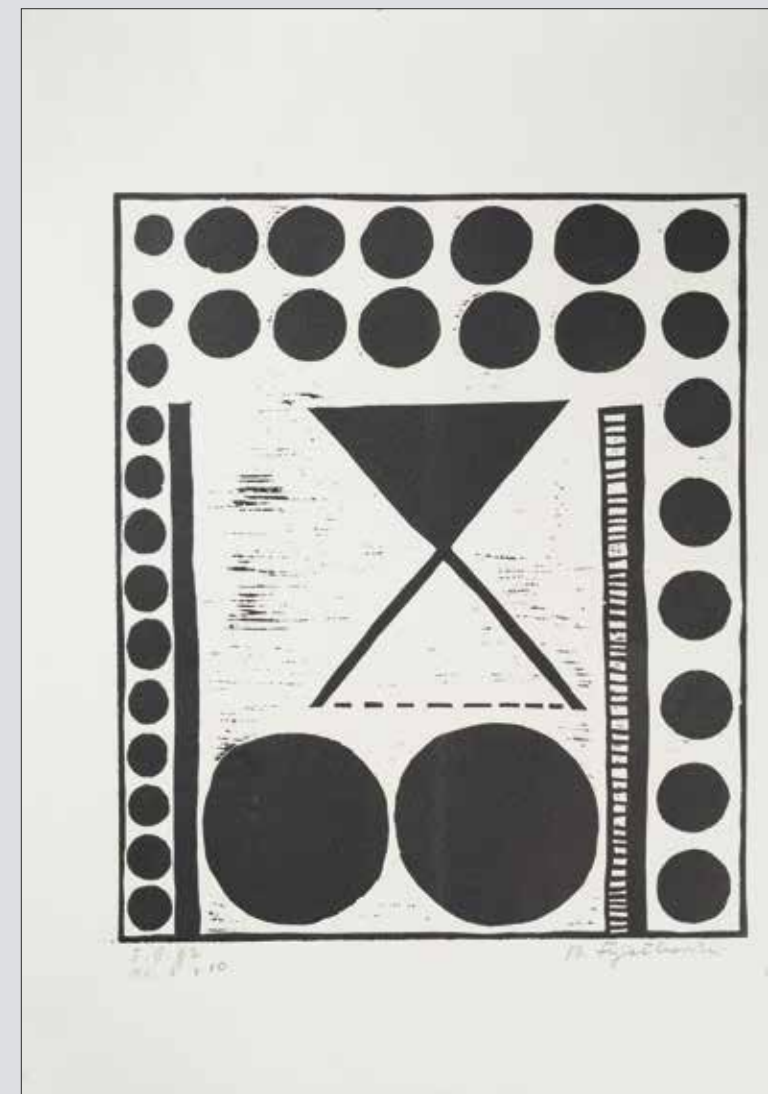


Mandala, the symbol of completeness  
– the square and the circle in evolving situations.

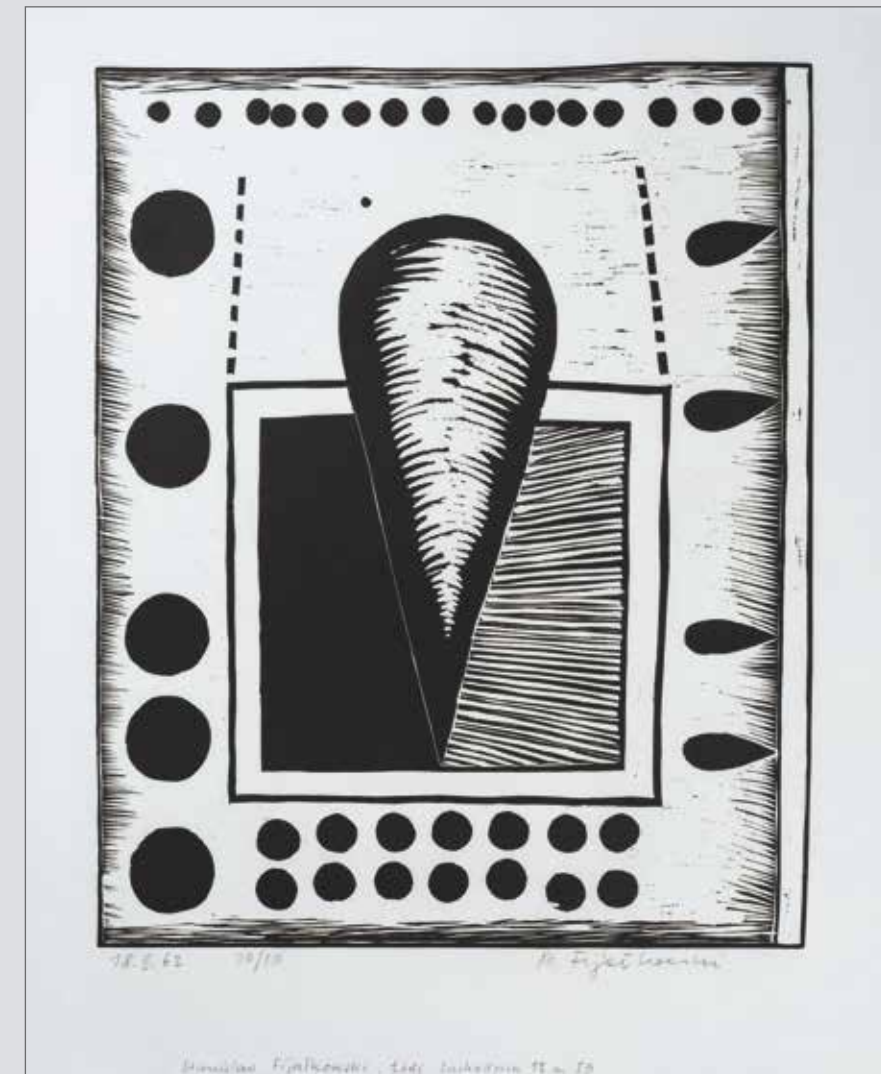
*September 6, 1961—Live Mandala*  
1961, oil on canvas, 39.3 x 31.4 in (100 x 80 cm)



5.II.62  
1962, linoleum cut, 8/10, 19,6 x 13,7 in (50 x 35 cm)



**18.II.62**  
1962, linoleum cut, 10/19, 22 x17,7 in (56 x 45 cm)



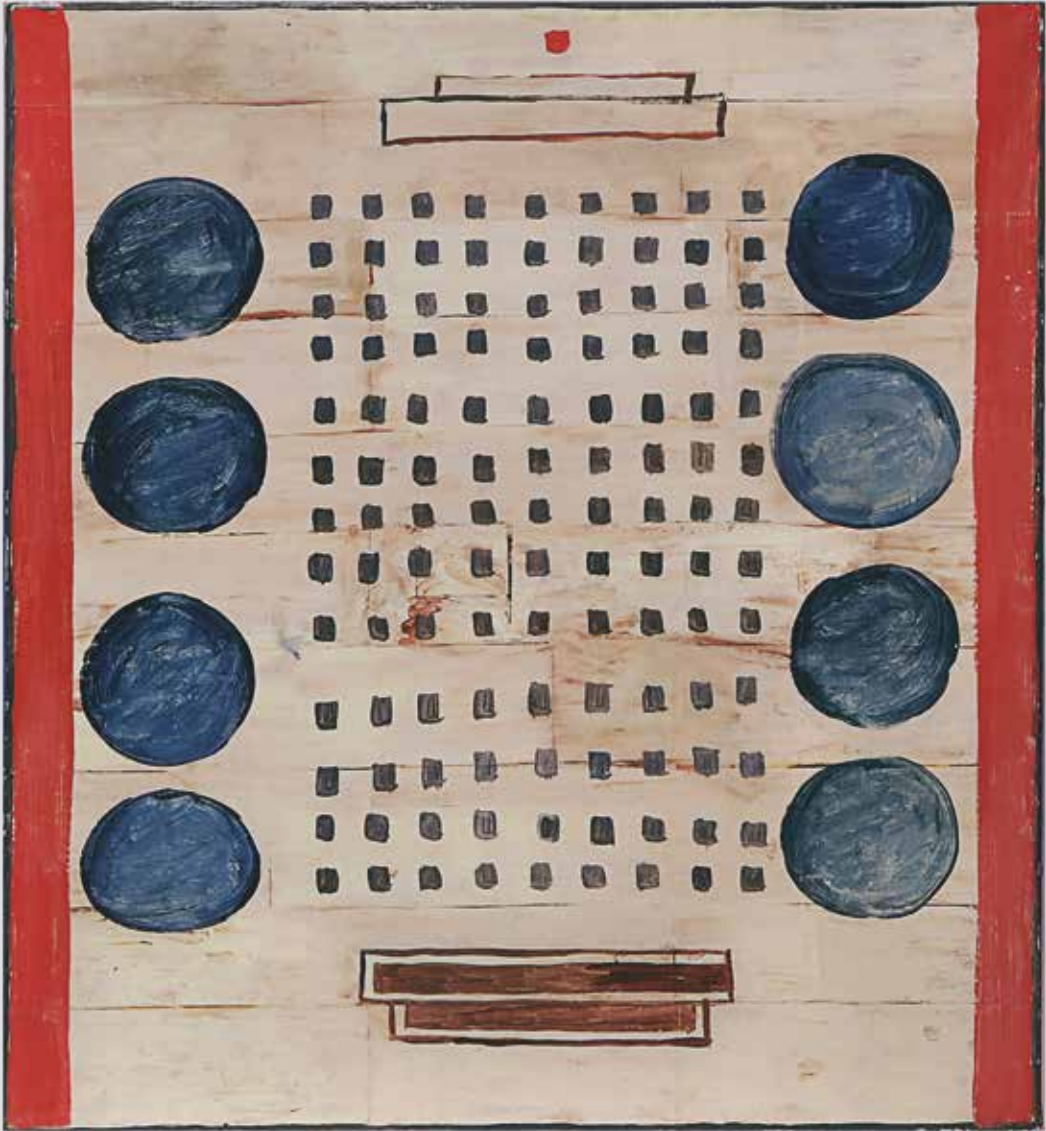


*September 23, 1963*  
1963, oil on canvas, 25.5 x 23.6 in (65 x 60 cm)

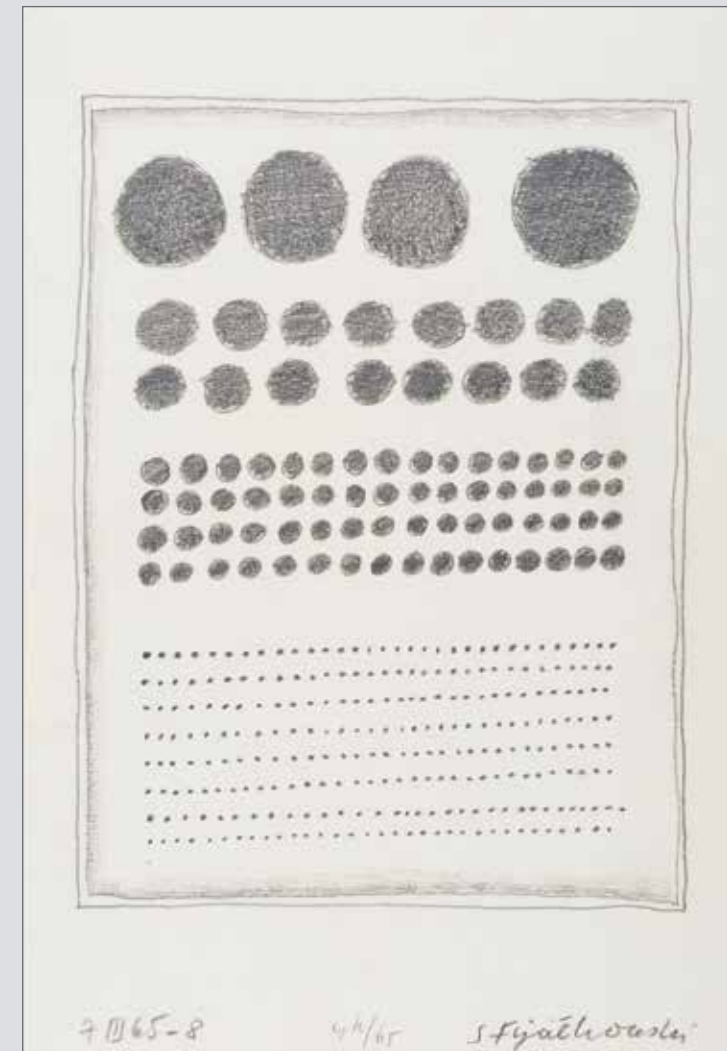


*Composition*

1964, oil on canvas, 25.5 x 23.6 in (65 x 60 cm)



4.III.65-8  
1965, pencil on paper, 10,6 x 7 in (27 x 18 cm)



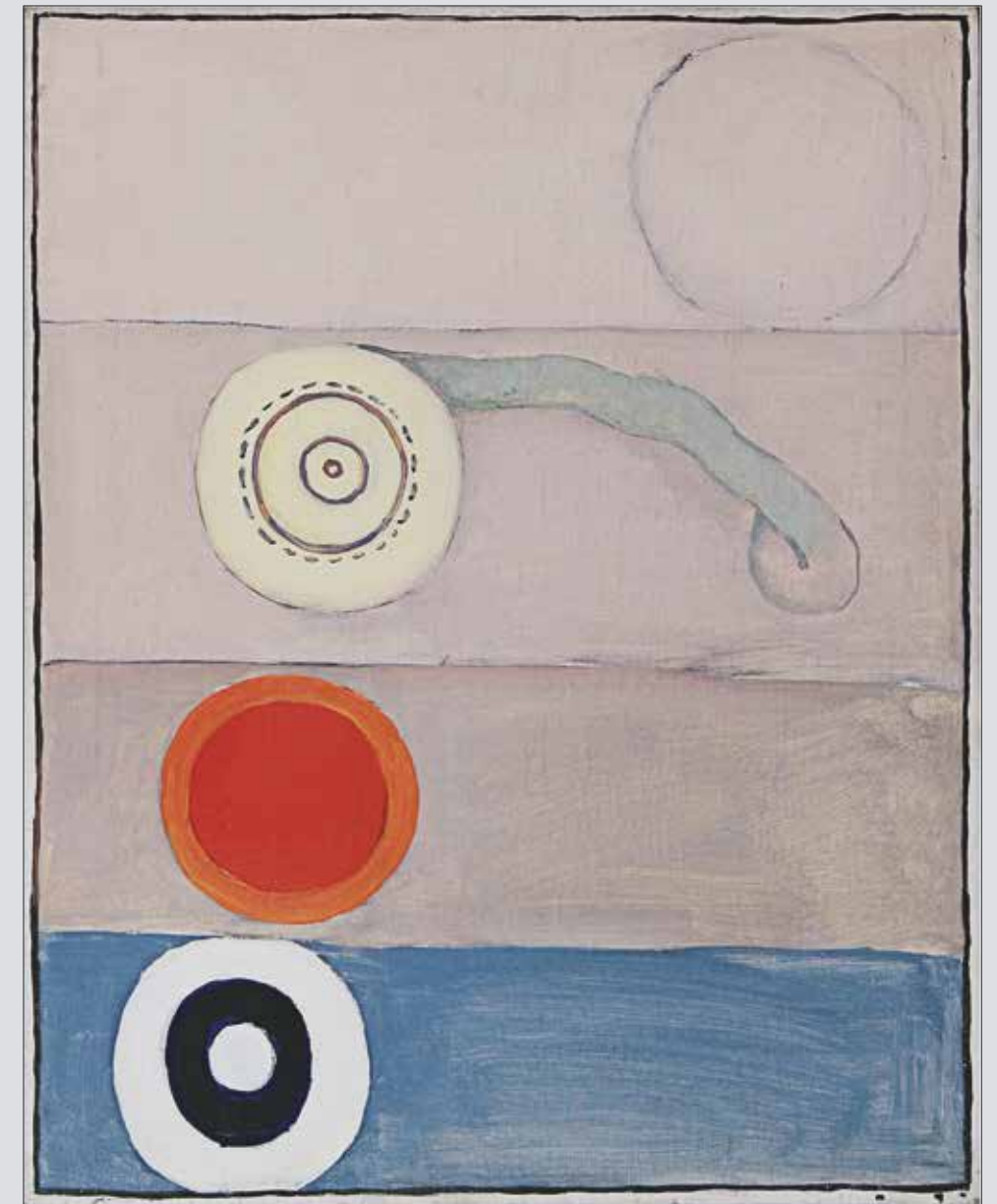
21.VII.65 *Sea Angel*  
1965, pencil on paper, 16,5 x 11,6 in (42 x 29,5 cm)



**Left Right**  
1965, pencil on paper, 16,5 x 11,6 in (42 x 29,5 cm)



*Seeds—February 27, 1967*  
1967, oil on canvas, 16.5 x 13.1 in (42 x 33.5 cm)





I was very much interested in surrealism, so at some point while working on my own things, I wanted to express how I highly value it and, therefore, I titled one of my paintings “Hommage à Breton”

*Hommage à Breton II—October 24, 1967*  
1967, oil on canvas, 39.3 x 31.4 in (100 x 80 cm)



***A Beautiful Trustworthy***

1973, linoleum cut, 22/35, 19,6 x 14,8 in (49 x 37 cm)



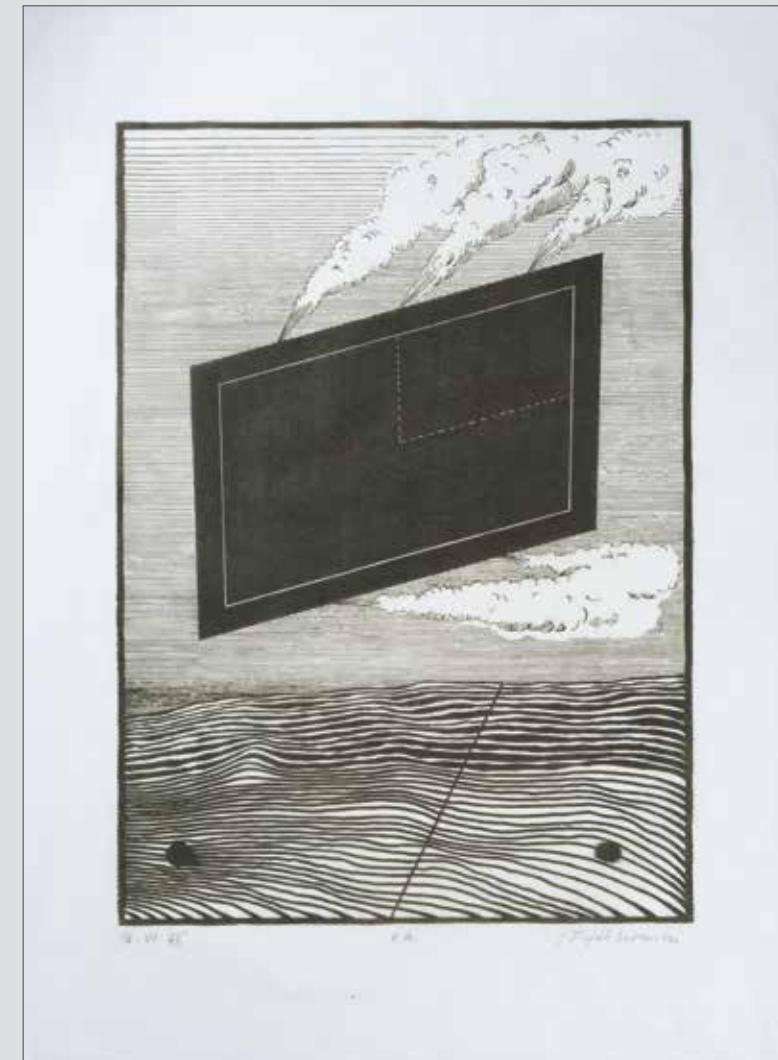
November 8, 1973  
1973, oil on canvas, 25.5 x 23.6 in (65 x 60 cm)



*June 5, 1974*  
1974, acrylic on canvas, 28.7 x 23.6 in (73 x 60 cm)



16.IV.75  
1975, linoleum cut, e.a., 25,5 x 18,7 in (65 x 47 cm)



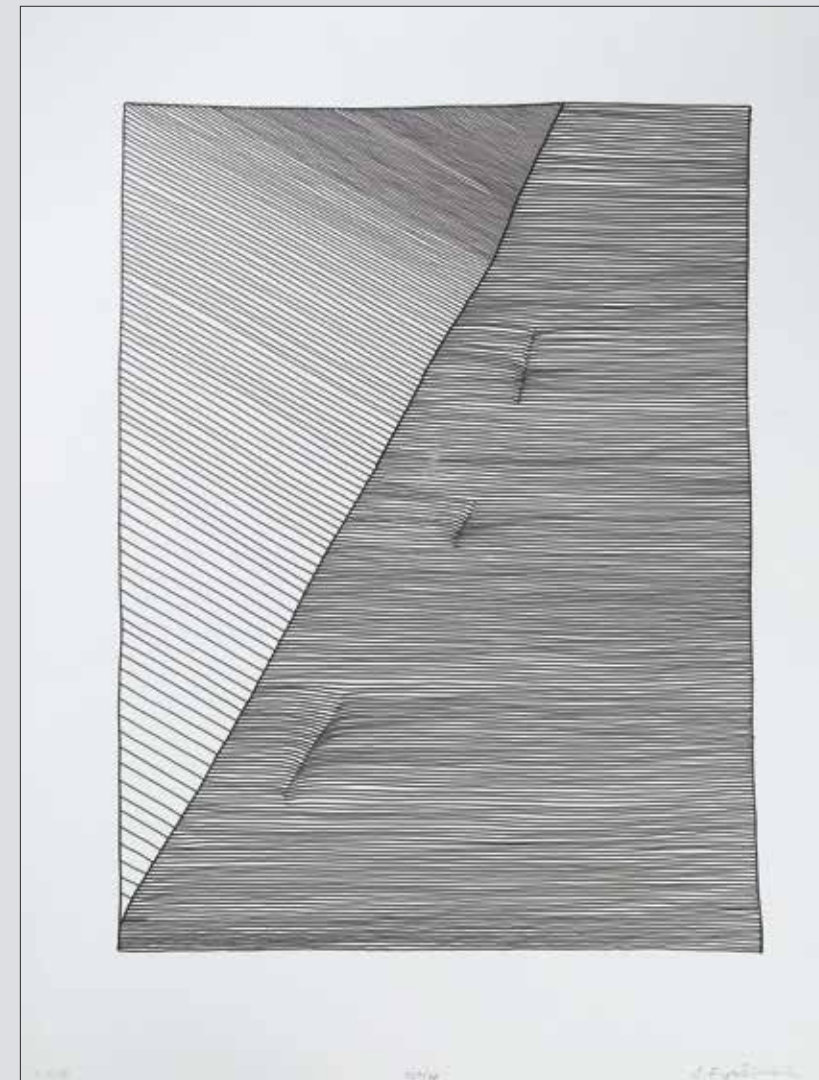
"Warning" is an image for my son, who as adolescent  
had a girlfriend who was not right for him...  
I wanted to warn him not to succumb to desires.

**A Warning – March 4, 1976**  
1976, oil on canvas, 39.3 x 31.8 in (100 x 81 cm)





*Hommage á Joan Miró*  
1978, ink on paper, 25,9 x 19,4 in (65 x 49,5 cm)



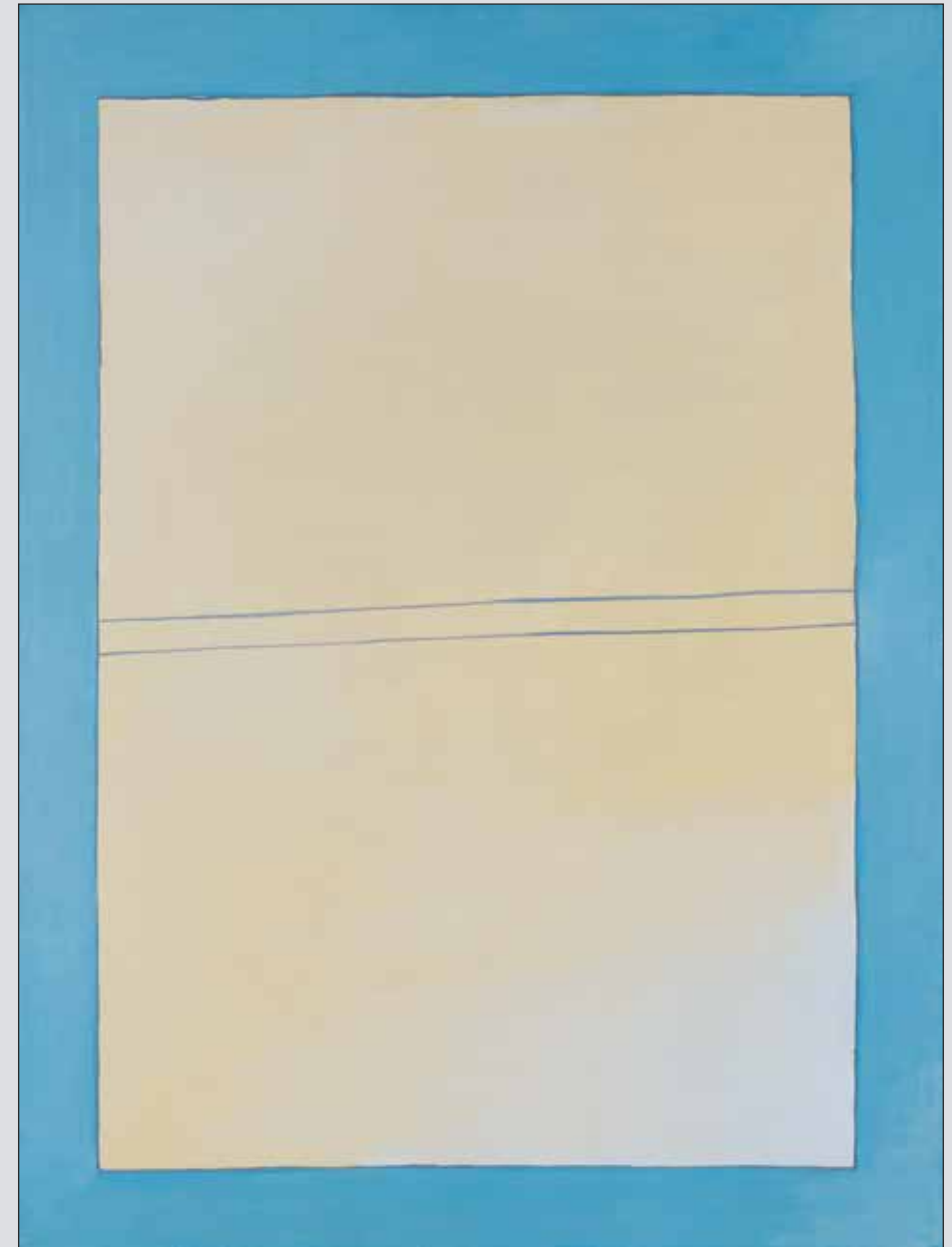


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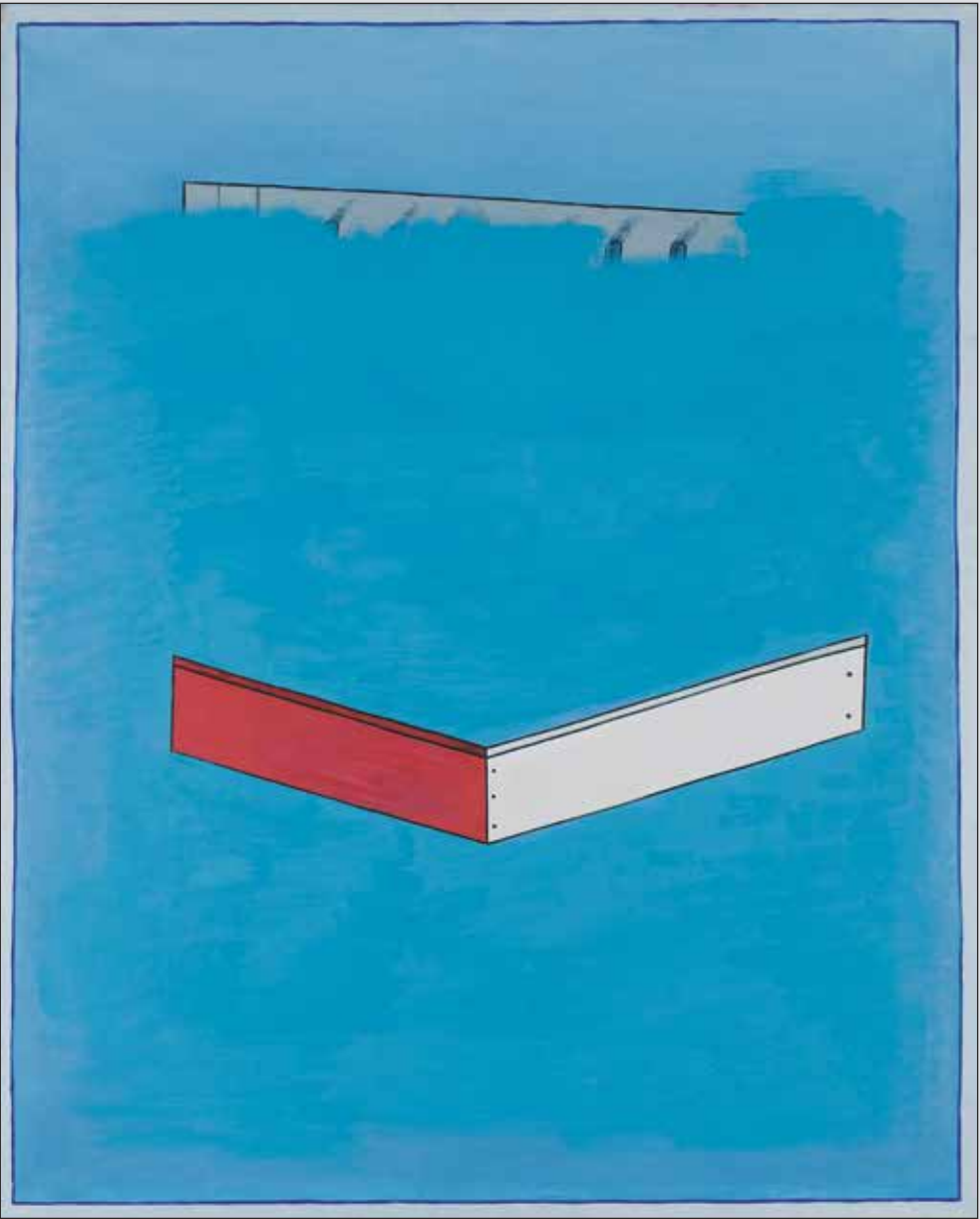
1984, linoleum cut, 15/50; 25,1 x 19,2 in (64 x 49 cm)



*Other Geometry*  
1996, oil on canvas, 31.8 x 23.6 in (81 x 60 cm)



*Repainted Eighth Canvas Painted During Martial Law*  
a1997, oil on canvas, 39.3 x 31.8 in (100 x 81 cm)



When I painted this picture it was a very nice day and I was inspired by it, so I wanted to capture how glad I was to be alive and how beautiful the world was.

*II Variation on a Theme of a Beautiful Day*  
1997, oil on canvas, 28.7 x 45.6 in (73 x 116 cm)



**30 June 99**  
1999, acrylic on canvas, 9,4 x 7 in (24 x 18 cm)

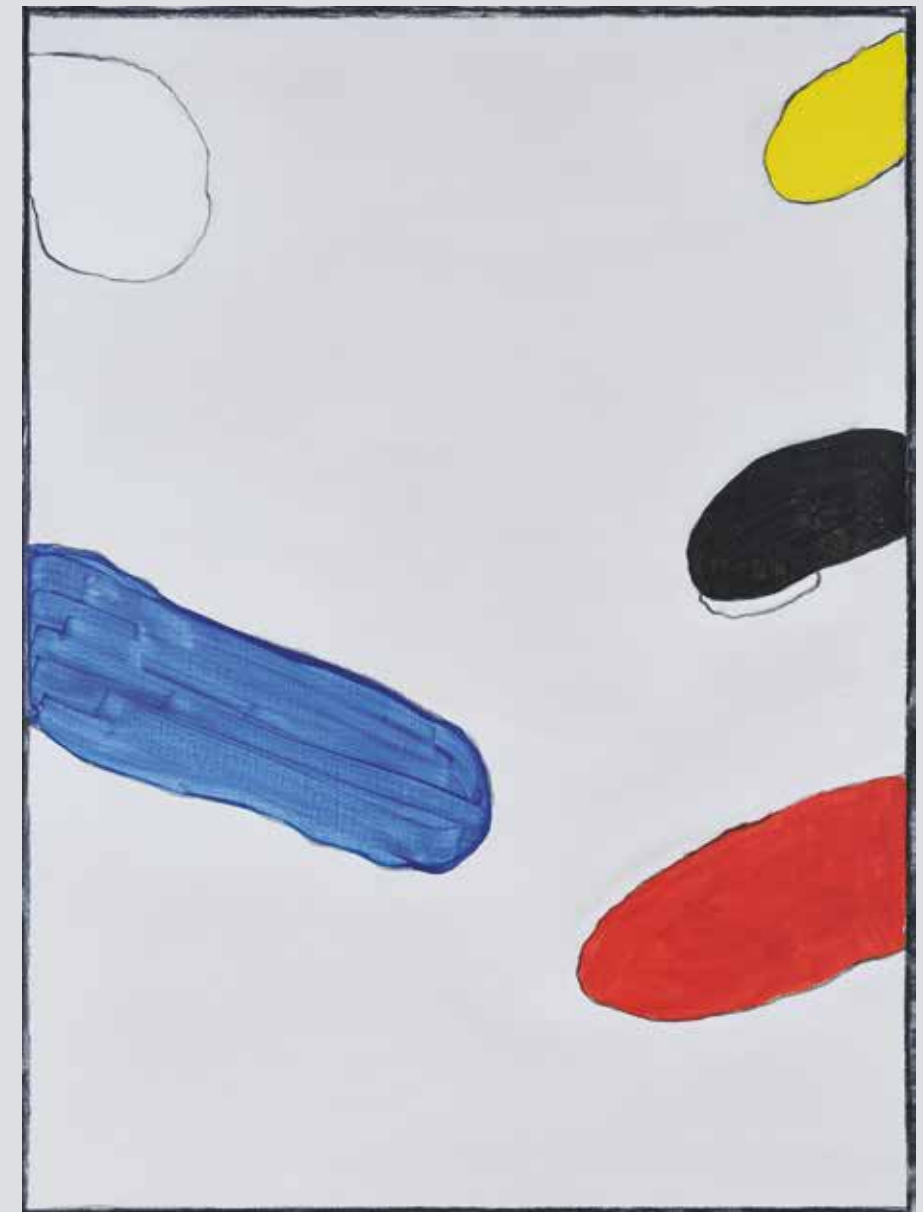


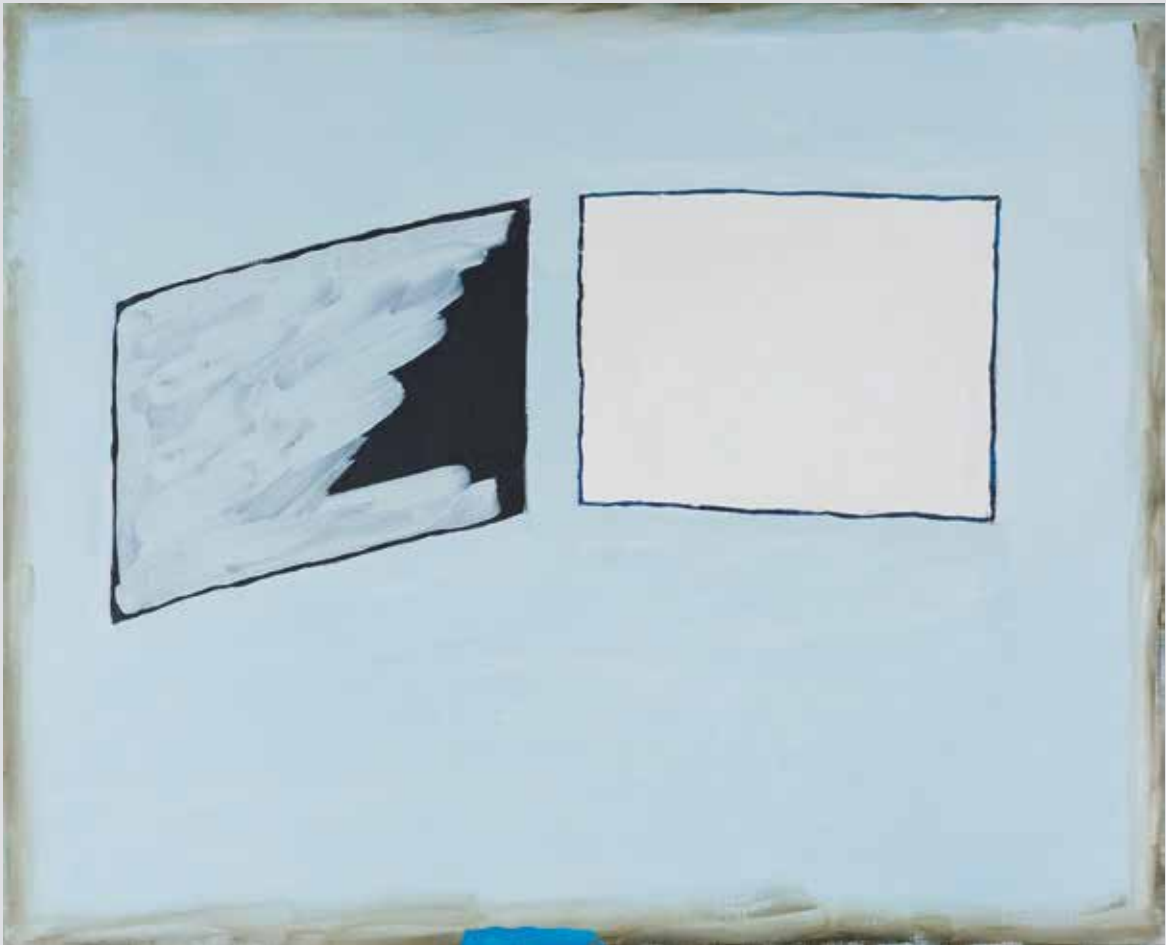
*June 2001*  
2001, oil on canvas, 78 x 52 in (195 x 130 cm)





*Pallet II—April 24, 2010*  
2010, acrylic on canvas, 31.6 x 23.6 in (80.5 x 60 cm)





*A Hardly Visible Three Appears*  
2011, acrylic and oil on canvas, 31.8 x 39.3 in (81 x 100 cm)

Selected solo exhibitions

2017	<i>Stanisław Fijałkowski: A Young Man Plans a Voyage</i> , Green Point Project, Brooklyn, New York
2016	<i>Stanisław Fijałkowski. Before and after Abstraction</i> , Galerie Isbella Czarnowska, Berlin (Germany)
2012	<i>Wystawa prac Stanisława Fijałkowskiego</i> , Miejska Galeria Sztuki, Łódź (Poland)
2010	<i>Stanisław Fijałkowski</i> , Atlas Sztuki, Łódź (Poland)
2003	<i>Stanisław Fijałkowski</i> , Muzeum Narodowe, Poznań (Poland) <i>Zachęta – Narodowa Galeria Sztuki</i> , Warszawa (Poland) Muzeum Narodowe, Wrocław (Poland)
2002	<i>Stanisław Fijałkowski. Obrazy z lat 2000-2002</i> , Miejska Galeria Sztuki, Łódź (Poland)
1998	<i>Stanisław Fijałkowski</i> , Polish Insitute, Rome; Polish Consulate, Milan (Italy)
1996	<i>Stanisław Fijałkowski. Road</i> , Muzeum Sztuki, Łódź (Poland)
1994	<i>Stanisław Fijałkowski – Malerei</i> , Graphik Galerie des Polnischen Instituts, Düsseldorf (Germany)
1989	<i>Stanisław Fijałkowski- Malerei</i> , Graphik, Universitätsmuseum für Kunst und Kulturgeschichte, Marburg (Germany)
1990	<i>Stanisław Fijałkowski, Paintings, Graphics</i> , Polish Cultural Institute, London (UK)
1988	<i>Stanisław Fijałkowski, Graphiken</i> , Justus-Liebig Universität, Gissen (Germany)
1984	<i>Stanisław Fijałkowski - peinture et gravure</i> , Institut Polonais, Paris (France)
1980	<i>Stanisław Fijałkowski, Graphic Works</i> , Alberta University, Edmonton (Canada)
1977-78	<i>Stanisław Fijałkowski – Bilder und Grafik 1965-1977</i> , St. Annen- Museum Lübeck (Germany) Kulturgeschichtliches Museum, Osnabrück (Germany) Künstlerhaus Honnover (Germany)
1973	<i>Stanisław Fijałkowski, Paintings and Graphics</i> , Galeria Krzysztofory, Kraków (Poland) <i>Malarstwo i grafika Stanisława Fijałkowskiego</i> , Galeria Kordegarda, Warszawa (Poland)
1970	<i>Stanisław Fijałkowski, Lucjan Mianowski, Ignacy Witz</i> , Galerie beim Minoritensaal, Graz (Austria)
1965	<i>Stanisław Fijałkowski</i> , Galerie Lambert, Paris (France)
1957	<i>Exhibition of Paintings by Stanisław Fijałkowski</i> , BWA, Łódź (Poland)

Selected group exhibitions:

2006	<i>Eye on Europe-Prints, Books &amp; Multiples, 1960 to Now</i> , Museum of Modern Art, New York (US)
2005	<i>Afterimages</i> , Muzeum Sztuki, Łódź (Poland)
2004	<i>Makevich in Polend</i> , Galeria Arsenat, Białystok (Poland)
2002	<i>Profil kolekcji</i> , Muzeum Sztuki Łódź (Poland)
2001	<i>Hommage á Paul Klee</i> , Muzeum Narodowe, Warszawa; Muzeum Narodowe, Poznań (Poland)
2000	<i>Die vier Jahreszeiten – Polnische Landschaftesmalerei von der Aufklärung bis heute</i> , Schrin Kunsthalle, Frankfurt/Main (Germany) <i>Verteidigung der Moderne-Positionen der polnischen Kunst nach 1945</i> , Museum Würth, Künzelsau (Germany)
1997	<i>Lengyelország. Muveszet 1945-1986</i> , Mücsarnok, Budapest (Hungry) <i>The Borders of the Painting. Polish Painting of the 1990s</i> , Centrum Sztuki Współczesnej Zamek Ujazdowski, Warszawa (Poland)
1994	<i>Europa/Europa. Das Jahrhundert der Avantgarde in Mittel – und Osteuropa</i> , Kunst und Ausstellungshalle der Bundersrepublik Deutschland, Bonn (Germany)
1992	<i>Łódź/Lyon</i> , Muzeum Sztuki w Łodzi 1931-1992, Collection – Documentation – Actualité, Musée d'art. Contemporain, ELAC Lyon (France)
1991	<i>Kolekcja Sztuki XX wieku w Muzeum Sztuki w Łodzi</i> , Zachęta – Narodowa Galeria Sztuki, Warszawa (Poland)
1988	<i>Polnische Malerei seit 1945 aus der Sammlung des Bezirksmuseums Bydgoszcz</i> , Villa Merkel, Esslingen, Kunsthalle Wilhelmshaven (Germany)
1984	<i>Koncepcja przestrzeni w sztuce współczesnej</i> , Muzeum Narodowe, Warszawa (Poland)
1983	<i>Présences polonaises: l' art vivant autour du Musee de Łódź</i> , Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris (France)
1981	<i>Młtoszowi – artyści polscy</i> , Muzeum Narodowe, Wrocław (Poland) <i>Contemporary Painting in Eastern Europe in Japan</i> , National Museum of art, Osaka (Japan) <i>Grafika i rysunek XX wieku ze zbiorów Muzeum Sztuki w Łodzi</i> , Muzeum Sztuki, Łódź (Poland)
1977	<i>22 polnische Künstler aus der Sammlung des Muzeum Sztuki w Łodzi</i> , Muzeum Sztuki, Łódź (Poland), Kölnischer Kunstverein, Köln (Germany)
1975	<i>Widzieć i rozumieć</i> , Muzeum Narodowe, Kraków (Poland) <i>W kręgu nadrealizmu</i> , Muzeum Narodowe, Wrocław (Poland)
1972	<i>XXXVI La Biennale di Venezia</i> , Polish Pavilion, Venice (Italy)
1970	<i>1000 Years of Art In Poland</i> , Royal Academy of Arts, London (England)
1969	<i>X Bienal de São Paulo</i> . (Brazil)
1966	<i>I International Biennale of Graphic Arts</i> , Kraków (Poland)
1959	<i>III Wystawa Sztuki Nowoczesnej</i> , Zachęta, Warszawa (Poland)

This catalouge is published on the occasion of the exhibition:

**Stanisław Fijałkowski: A Young Man Plans a Voyage**

Green Point Project, Brooklyn, New York; May 2017  
tel: 1-347-386-8508,

[www.green-point-project.com](http://www.green-point-project.com)

[www.pieknagallery.pl](http://www.pieknagallery.pl)

Special thanks to **Stanisław Fijałkowski**,  
as well as several private collectors,  
for lending the works in this exhibition.

**Curator:** Marek Bartelik

**Director:** Sławomir Górecki

**Editorial co-operation:** Paulina Katkiewicz, Jerzy Szot

**Editing:** Piękna Gallery

**Text:** Marek Bartelik

**Translations:** Margaret Górecka, Peter Majcherczyk

**Photos:** Przemysław Blechman

**Graphic design:** Sławomir Bit

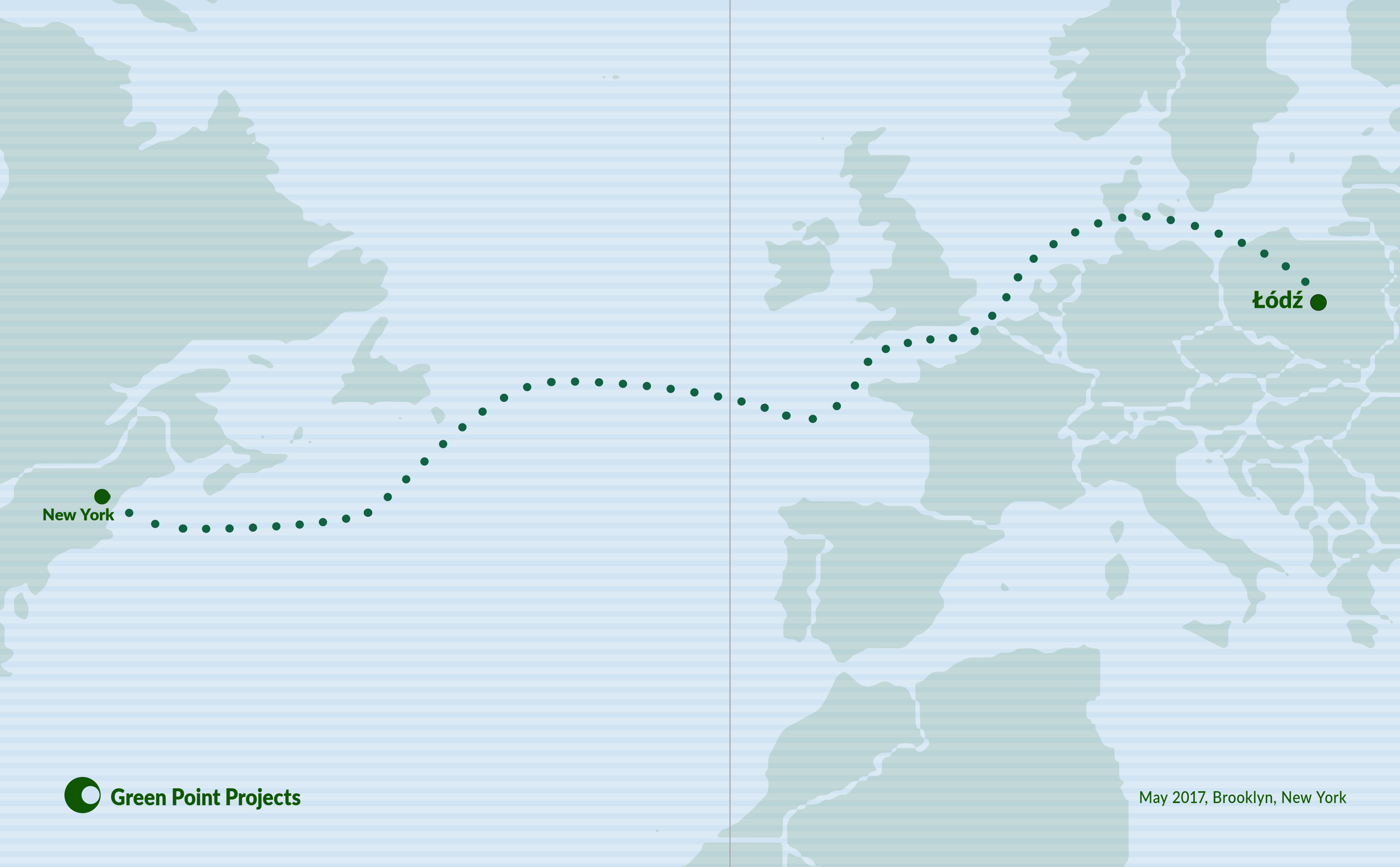
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Printed in Poland

ISBN: 978-83-947933-0-2

Sponsors:





New York

Łódź

"Tranquility in these paintings is misleading; their silence—apparent and illusory. In reality, they hide tensions which demonstrate that this type of painting crystallized in high temperatures."

— Ryszard Kapuściński,  
Lapidarium IV, 2000.

"No major presentation of Polish art can exclude the works by Stanisław Fijałkowski. His special position in 20th-century art has been noted by both the sympathizers of the avant-garde and those interested in the postmodern plurality in art and the multiplicity of artistic inspirations. One might argue that Fijałkowski has achieved this unique position by keeping distance from both of those groups."

— Agnieszka Morawińska,  
from the catalogue of the artist's retrospective  
at the National Museum in Poznań in 2003.

"Until now little known outside Poland, Stanisław Fijałkowski can claim, to say the least, a most distinctive artistic lineage: He was a student of Władysław Strzemiński, who in turn had studied with the modern master Kazimir Malevich. But Fijałkowski is also heir to all the upheaval that his part of the world has suffered over the past century."

— Barry Schwabsky,  
exhibition review,  
Artforum, November 2016.

"I perceive Fijałkowski as one of the most 'discrete' and quiet Polish artists today. I know very few artists who have managed to retain such great calmness in art—and to express much with so little: a few lines and a few colors, an allusion to a theme or a motif, a trace, a void. "Minimalism," yes, but not devoid of emotions, sometimes explicit, sometimes even whimsical, always unexpected."

— Marek Bartelik,  
"Stanisław Fijałkowski: A Young Man Plans a Voyage,"  
exh. cat., Green Point Projects, New York, 2017.

S. Fijałkowski

ISBN 978-83-947933-0-2



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