

WILHELM SASNAL

02 June – 11 July 2009
 69 South Audley Street
 9 Balfour Mews, London W1

For his third show at Sadie Coles HQ, Wilhelm Sasnal is showing a series of paintings and a 16mm film. Two main themes emerge from this body of work, those of food sovereignty and earthly idylls. Paintings of a paddy field, unmarked barrels, brightly-coloured food packaging, and a looming truck: all speak of trade, transportation, and global agricultural networks. The politics of food are seen not in the narrow sense of consumerism, but rather as part of an urgent study of globalisation and currencies of exchange in the modern capitalist era. Other works depict landscapes that are alluring and yet subtly unnerving. As a great wave curls onto shore, it draws the shoreline into a vortex as if a refractory lens were at work. The flawless beach seemingly stretches to infinity, yet thoughts of perfect holidays are undercut by the leaden sky and the eerie shadow cast by the wave. In another work, *Untitled (Kacper and Anka)*, the surface coolness of Sasnal's blue and grey tones gives way to a quiet and surprising sense of inner reflection and emotional transportation.



Sasnal has emerged as a painter at a time of massive political and social change in his native Poland. Fast and fluent, the surfaces of his paintings might appear blithely detached, yet time spent with them can revive the sense of an image, closing the distance between the experience of reality and its representations. Sasnal shifts continually between the abstract and the figurative, his style and technique mutating accordingly. In this new body of work this is seen as the sky above Sao Paulo is evoked through a grid of intertwined, blurred lines; a tree's branches are presented as a dense mass of triangles. Sasnal makes work in which it becomes impossible to distinguish the mundane from the mysterious, observation from conceptualism, or history from the here and now. Working largely from photographic images from the media and his own records, Sasnal's works form a self-reflexive statement on the mediated nature of images in contemporary culture. Further, as other series of work have shown, as in his Middle East pictures in 2006, or his paintings after Spiegelman's *Maus* (2001), Sasnal is more passionately engaged with his content than the reductive strokes might have us believe.

Sasnal's film, *Mojave*, 2006, was shot among debris of airplanes in the Mojave junkyard, California. By overlaying the scenes with music taken from classic Polish films, Sasnal invests them with an uncanny sense of plot.

Wilhelm Sasnal was born in 1972 in Tarnow, Poland, and now lives and works in Krakow. Between 5 September 2009 and 10 January 2010, K21 in Düsseldorf, Germany, hosts a survey of Wilhelm Sasnal's last seven years of work. He has previously had solo shows throughout Europe and the US including *Years of Struggle* at the Zacheta National Gallery, Warsaw, Poland, 2007; *Matrix*, at The Berkeley Art Museum, Berkeley (CA), USA, 2005; *Wilhelm Sasnal*, The Locker Plant, Marfa (TX), USA; Camden Arts Centre, London, 2004; and Kunsthalle Zürich, Zürich, Switzerland, 2003. There are a number of publications on his work including *Wilhelm Sasnal: Paintings and Films*, published by Veenman Publishers, 2006, and *Day Night Day*, 2004.

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 Opening hours Tuesday – Saturday 10 – 6pm