

## FALLOUT

World premiere of a new film by Wilhelm Sasnal  
70 minutes, Poland, 2010, in Polish with English subtitles

*this is the brief moment after the disaster  
when they crawl out of their holes*

Sadie Coles HQ in association with Artprojx is delighted to announce a series of screenings of *Fallout*, the second feature film by Polish artist Wilhelm Sasnal, at the West End's Prince Charles Cinema in October. Set in an unidentified region of Poland, *Fallout* glimpses at the decimated existences of men and women in the aftermath of a nuclear bombing. The largely nameless characters inhabit a wasteland of junk-strewn garages and drab apartment blocks – locked in a listless waiting game that recalls the dramas of Samuel Beckett. Only the ghosts of human dynamics survive, fraught with undercurrents of sexual suspicion and decay. Men address each other using sardonic epithets – ‘Mr Bad’ or ‘Mr Kiddo’; and they observe and follow each other with ambiguous intent. Sasnal holds his characters at arm’s length, undercutting our instincts about them as their desperate interrelationships shift and expire, to form an acute and unnerving picture of personal and social degeneration.



Wilhelm Sasnal has emerged in the last decade as one of Europe’s most celebrated figurative painters as well as a prolific maker of short films shot on 8mm or 16mm camera. *Fallout* demonstrates his engagement with Polish avant-garde cinema from the 1940s works of Stefan and Franciszka Themerson to the punk music videos of the 1970s. In particular, the film foregrounds the relationship between picture and sound: its discordant, tremulous soundtrack merges with interior noises while mirroring the phases of wobbly footage shot on a handheld camera. As in Sasnal’s short films, the influences of music video and poststructuralist cinema combine to evoke ‘personal cinema’ – the privately produced short films which proliferated among Polish artists during the Communist regime, and which often overlaid the banal details of life with whimsical fantasies. A painterly sensibility furthermore threads through the film, which echoes the off-kilter angles, minute observations and mundane subjects of Sasnal’s canvases.

The characters of *Fallout* find parallels to their dystopian world in stories and dreams: ‘Mr Bad’ speaks of Siparis, the sole survivor of a volcanic eruption, while a doctor relates how she has been “dreaming of mice lately, young and old, all sick”. *Fallout* is itself a social fable in the mould of Orwell. Its nightmarish world – where memories, whether individual or collective, are suspended, and words themselves have disappeared – furnishes an allegory for the Polish Communist regime’s assaults on individual freedom, as well as the identity crises, personal and national, of the post-Communist era.

Wilhelm Sasnal was born in 1972 in Tarnow, Poland, and lives and works in Krakow. In 2009-2010, he had retrospectives at K21 in Düsseldorf, Germany and Centro De Arte Contemporáneo, Málaga, Spain. Major solo shows include *Wilhelm Sasnal*, Sara Hildén Art Museum, Tampere, Finland, 2010; *Years of Struggle* at the Zacheta National Gallery, Warsaw, Poland, 2007; *Matrix*, The Berkeley Art Museum, Berkeley, USA, 2005; *Wilhelm Sasnal*, The Locker Plant, Marfa (TX), USA; Camden Arts Centre, London, 2004; and Kunsthalle Zürich, Zürich, Switzerland, 2003.

Breakfast screening with the artist  
Tuesday 12 October from 10am

Free performances  
Tuesday 12, Thursday 14, Friday 15 October at 10.30am