

Anton Kern Gallery

Wilhelm Sasnal

April 22 – May 20, 2017

Opening reception: April 22 from 6–8pm

Anton Kern Gallery presents its inaugural exhibition at 16 East 55th Street with new paintings by the Polish artist Wilhelm Sasnal. This prescient grouping of works features portraits of prominent politicians, such as Hillary Clinton, Angela Merkel, Marine Le Pen, and former UN leaders: Ban Ki-moon, Kofi Annan, and Kurt Waldheim. Alongside these political portraits are scenes of a serene and contemplative character: a winter sky in Poland, a pile of discarded rubber tires, or rock formations near Southern Israel's Mitzpe Ramon.

The double histories of such political figures are explored through the depiction of Angela Merkel in her youth as an East German, Hillary Clinton's past position as First Lady, and the passing of the torch from Jean-Marie Le Pen to his daughter Marine as the president of the French National Front. Sasnal's attempt to connect the past with the present is strikingly exemplified in the portrait of former UN Secretary-General and President of Austria, Kurt Waldheim, whose hidden complicity in Nazi war crimes was exposed late in his career.

The motivation to engage with present events is rooted in the desire to dissect the past. Sasnal approaches the potency of these figures and geographies through their inherent network of narrative and formal references, and his interest in how images that seem straightforward in one context are made elusive in another.

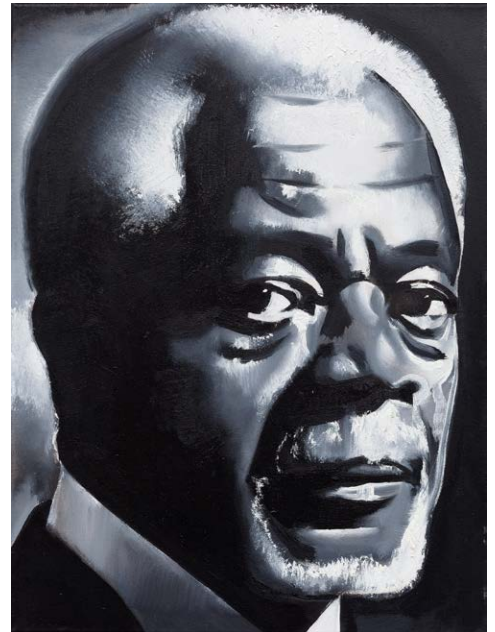
Wilhelm Sasnal (b.1972 in Tarnow, Poland) lives and works in Krakow, Poland. Also known as a filmmaker with his wife Anka Sasnal, their feature length movie, *The Sun, the Sun Blinded Me* premiered in 2016 at the 69th Festival del Film Locarno in Switzerland, followed by festivals in Warsaw, Montréal, Sevilla, and São Paulo. Recent group exhibitions include *L'arte differente: MOCAK al MAXXI*, Rome, Italy; *Medicine in Art*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Krakow, Poland; *Happy Ending*, FRAC Champagne-Ardenne, France; *Generational: Polish Art in Marl*, Skulpturenmuseum Glaskasten, Marl, Germany; and *The Regional Collection of Contemporary Art*, Warsaw National Museum, Poland (all 2016). This is Wilhelm Sasnal's seventh solo exhibition at Anton Kern Gallery.

About 16 East 55th Street:

The gallery is pleased to debut its new home at 16 E. 55th Street, a converted five-story townhouse, whose redesign has been led by New York's Studio MDA. The new building will include three floors of exhibition space, and two for gallery administration. The largest, ground floor gallery includes an extra tall 22-foot wall, a prominent feature of the new space. The second floor gallery includes a balcony overlooking the first floor and the three gallery floors are all accessible through a refinished staircase, as well as an elevator with a bespoke interior commissioned by Italian designer, Martino Gamper. The new gallery will also be christened with commissioned new artworks: a staircase by Scottish artist Jim Lambie on the private top floor, and a flag from British artist David Shrigley, mounted to the new building's facade.

Built in the 1930s, 16 East 55th Street housed one of the first boutique hairdressers in New York, rumored to cater to the Roosevelt Family. The building remained as a hairdresser for many years prior to being split into a multiple occupancy building that housed the same antiques dealer for 40 years prior to Anton Kern Gallery's occupancy. We look forward to welcoming you to our new home, situated at the historic center of the New York art scene.

Upcoming Exhibition: Ellen Berkenblit, May 25 - July 7, 2017



Kofi Annan, 2015, oil on canvas, 15.75 x 11.81 inches.



UN, 2015, oil on canvas, 63 x 86.6 inches.

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Gallery Hours

Tuesday through Saturday, 10am – 6pm