

For this fifth solo exhibition at Anton Kern Gallery, Polish artist Wilhelm Sasnal has selected a group of paintings and works on paper around the theme of Kodak, the now defunct film and camera manufacturer. Some works make direct references to specific products, advertisements and to Kodak's founder George Eastman, others create a "capture the moment" atmosphere addressing issues of picture-taking and picture-making.

It comes as no surprise that a painter and filmmaker like Wilhelm Sasnal would make Kodak the subject of his work. Since their invention, film and cameras have fascinated and challenged painters. Specifically, as Kodachrome film gained a reputation for its reproduction of "true colors", the idea of reality, naturalism and truth in painting has been reformulated by artists in various ways. In addition, the Kodak pocket camera's ability to capture a fleeting moment, along with the branding of the so called "Kodak moment" has liberated everyday photographers and created a universal culture of vernacular images that has the potential to turn ordinary events into private historical moments.

Sasnal's position in regards to all of this is one of analytic observation and intuitive transformation. Known for his wide range of painterly methods, evident in these new paintings, Sasnal's work deals with the underlying and subconscious presence of the history of an image, place or situation. As much as the artist is indebted to the physicality of film stock and cinematography, including its many visual effects, Sasnal creates every image as a singular event, both in his chosen motif and in the pictorial mode in which it is painted. Despite their subject's universal nature, these works are delicate and precise, yet also singularly striking reflections on the nature of personal and collective memory. Sasnal's paintings capture the fleeting moment twofold, once as a moment brought to a halt, quite like a photograph, and secondly as an unraveling of sub-conscious layers of meaning and history, quite beyond the capability of photography.

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