

kurimanzutto

presents



Wilhelm Sasnal

Opening May 21, 2011 from 12 pm to 2 pm

May 24 - July 16, 2011

tuesday to thursday from 11 am to 6 pm

friday and saturday from 11 am to 4 pm

kurimanzutto is pleased to announce its first exhibition with Wilhelm Sasnal and the first painting show, ever in the history of the gallery.

Wilhelm Sasnal's painting from 2011 shows the famous canvas by James Rosenquist, "White Bread" from 1964, as seen by the Polish painter at the National Gallery of Art in Washington. Four slices of lightly toasted bread and a knife spreading butter – the image is one of the many pop art symbols of American consumerism and the food cult but, at the same time, it is a work about painting itself, presenting the gesture of laying paint on a surface. With this image in the background, the painting in Sasnal's work is just as much an object of consumerism.

The pop art gesture is again seen in the pieces dedicated to Teresa Lewis, a woman who on September the 23rd of 2010 was executed at the Greensville Correctional Center in Virginia, by means of a lethal injection. Her last meal consisted of two fried chicken breasts, sweet peas with butter, a Dr Pepper and German chocolate cake for dessert.

In the fall of 2002, Teresa Lewis managed to talk her two young lovers into murdering her husband and Charles her stepson. As a veteran of the war in Iraq, Charles Lewis had an insurance policy for 250,000 USD. Teresa was the main beneficiary in case of the death of both men. When the case was revealed, she was found to be the mastermind behind the operation and sentenced to death. The verdict, however, was seen as controversial, among other aspects, due to Teresa's low mental capacity (IQ of 72). A number of institutions and individuals appealed in her defense, including Amnesty International and writer John Grisham. Teresa Lewis was the twelfth woman on death row to have been executed since 1976 in the United States.

The three portraits of Teresa Lewis, created on the basis of photographs found on the Internet, do not fit the image of a criminal plotting in cold blood. Two of them show her from before the crime, as an average overweight woman, the third –a collage with a colored-up computer printout– is an image of the hollow-cheeked Lewis, her last photograph taken before death and very much in contrast with the first two images.

The only one to keep Lewis company at the exhibition is an employee of an oil drilling rig. The painting was created on the basis of a photo the artist found on his friend's profile on a community portal "Drilling Rig" (2010). Oil, as the indicator of contemporary economy, is seen in three other canvases titled "Petroleum" (2010). Two of them show fantastic landscapes, evoking associations with the oil countries of the Middle East – deserts, sand dunes, sunspots and black spots of oil. But they also remind us of the ecological disaster in the Gulf of Mexico from April 2010, caused by the explosion on the BP's Deepwater Horizon oil rig. The third painting, "Petroleum", features colorful oil spills, more reminiscent to *art informel*.

Besides oil, the most important energy carrier and a significant factor responsible for economic growth, the selection of works at the exhibition also includes other paradigmatic points of reference, without which it would be difficult to describe the world – a Chinese container ship "China Shipping" (2008), a schematic contour of the United States "USA" (2010), but also the standard of "The Kilogram from Sèvres" (2006) as well as a cross (2010).