

# Wilhelm Sasnal

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‘An artist must be aware of the world and the society which he or she is part of. I do not believe that painting is a solitary practice or anything to do with withdrawing from society.’

Wilhelm Sasnal

This exhibition starts with a selection of paintings made between 2005 and 2011. All are painted after photographs, either taken by the artist himself or sourced online. Their subject matter ranges from impressions of contemporary family life—such as the artist’s son in the sunshine at the seaside—to news images or motifs drawn from art history.

An important part of Sasnal’s process is choosing the image on which to base a particular painting. The semi-abstract shape in *Masi* (2006), for example, is inspired by the sign of the corner shop where the artist first met his wife, while the beauty of *Agathe Kanziga Habyarimana* (2010) stands in disturbing contrast to her role in the Rwandan genocide of the mid-1990s. Similarly, *Bathers at Asnières* (2010) not only pays homage to Georges Seurat’s famous depiction of suburban life in 19th century Paris, but also recalls stories, told to the artist by his grandmother, of people bathing in the river during the hot summer preceding World War II.

All of Sasnal’s work is underpinned by a profound sense of struggle. This struggle with painting is the central theme in the painting of Saturn painted and erased over the course of seven days, and in *Hardship 1–4* (2009), where two attempts at painting the same motif are paired with two monochrome canvases.

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