FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
August 24, 2017
Contact: Clare I. Rogan, Curator
Davison Art Center, Wesleyan University
crogan@wesleyan.edu
860-685-2966
http://www.wesleyan.edu/dac

WESLEYAN UNIVERSITY’S DAVISON ART CENTER PRESENTS

SASHA RUDENSKY: ACTS & ILLUSIONS

Wednesday, September 13, through Sunday, December 10, 2017

Opening reception and gallery talk with the artist on Wednesday, September 13

(MIDDLETOWN, CT) – Wesleyan University’s Davison Art Center presents the exhibition Sasha Rudensky: Acts and Illusions from Wednesday, September 13, through Sunday, December 10, 2017. For more than a decade, Sasha Rudensky has traveled back to Russia and the post-Soviet territories with her camera, shooting the aftermath of the Cold War and its ongoing reverberations. Her photographs present the world as experienced by a generation that has come of age since Vladimir Putin’s rise to power in 1999—a time of political upheaval, ideological uncertainty, and unchecked materiality. Sasha Rudensky: Acts & Illusions presents twenty-four photographs together with a video installation, revealing an unsettling view into contemporary life in the New East.

The public is invited to attend the Opening Reception and Gallery Talk on Wednesday, September 13, 2017 from 5:00 to 7:00 pm at the Davison Art Center, located at 301 High Street on the Wesleyan campus in Middletown, Connecticut. There will be a gallery talk at 5:30 pm by Sasha Rudensky. The opening reception is free.

The exhibition will be closed from Friday, October 20, through Wednesday, October 25; and Monday, November 20, through Monday, November 27, 2017.

In her first series, Remains, 2004–2007, Rudensky presents society and history through empty interiors and evocative landscapes. Elegiac in tone, the photographs
describe an order interrupted, a state in decay. In Bus Station, Sevastopol, Ukraine, 2004, a partial bust of Lenin rests in a corridor among potted plants and a mirror, a monument at once cared for and degraded. Through the use of light, filtered from the sides, and the formal repetition of closed and open doors, Rudensky conveys a moment that is beyond documentation.

Shifting between truth and illusion, banality and decadence, and theatricality and observation, the images in Rudensky’s later series, Tinsel and Blue, 2009–2015, revel in the contradictions of post-Soviet society. In Night Market, 2012, the Pyrrhic triumph of materialism glows from a convenience store set among Soviet-era apartment blocks. Game Room, 2010, centers on a young choirboy in his white robes playing table tennis at home. The rebirth and political influence of Russian Orthodoxy are part of the minutiae of daily life. In Snake Handlers, 2014, three young men display a boa constrictor from an illegal zoo, a snake available for appearances at private parties and events. It is unclear whether the men or the snake present the greater menace. With Splitting, 2011, we see the tension of one man, demonstrating his search for strength within a run-down apartment. With empathy, precise use of light, and impeccable formal control, Rudensky connects the viewer to the hopes and uncertainty of young people in this shifting world.

Sasha Rudensky is a Russian artist residing in the United States. Her work was featured in reGeneration 2: Photographers of Tomorrow Today (2010) organized by the Musée de l’Elysée, Lausanne, Switzerland, and she has exhibited widely in the United States, Europe, and Asia. Her solo show Tinsel and Blue was exhibited at Sasha Wolf gallery in New York City in 2016. Her work is held in public collections including those of the Musée de l’Elysée, Yale University Art Gallery, and the Center for Creative Photography in Tucson. Rudensky received an MFA from the Yale University School of Art and a BA from Wesleyan University. In 2013 Rudensky was awarded the Aaron Siskind Individual Fellowship grant. Her photographs have been published in the New York Times Magazine, Aperture, Art Forum, The Guardian, Der Spiegel, and PDN. She is an Assistant Professor of Art at Wesleyan University, and is represented by Sasha Wolf Projects in New York City.

RELATED EVENTS:

Wednesday, September 13, 2017, 5:00–7:00 pm
Opening reception.
Conversation in the gallery at 5:30 pm with Sasha Rudensky
Free and open to the public.

Tuesday, September 26, 2017, 5:00 pm
*At the border of truth: Photographing the New East*
Sasha Rudensky, Assistant Professor of Art
Ring Family Performing Arts Hall, Center for the Arts

Assistant Professor of Art Sasha Rudensky will give an artist’s lecture focusing on her series of photographic and video projects completed in Russia, Ukraine, and the greater New East region, between 2004 and 2017. These projects examine the slow dissolution of Soviet consciousness, the ideological vacuum left in its wake, and reconstitution of new post-Soviet identities.

Wednesday, November 1, 2017, 5:00 pm
Panel Discussion
Ring Family Performing Art Hall, Center for the Arts

Panel discussion of the social and political changes in the former Soviet Union over the last two decades. Speakers will include Sophie Pinkham, author of *Black Square: Adventures in Post-Soviet Ukraine* (W.W. Norton & Company, 2016); Sasha Rudensky, Assistant Professor of Art; Peter Rutland, Colin and Nancy Campbell Professor in Global Issues and Democratic Thought, and Professor of Government, of the College of Social Studies, and Russian, East European, and Eurasian Studies (REES); Victoria Smolkin, Assistant Professor of History, the College of Social Studies, and REES; and moderated by Clare Rogan, Curator, Davison Art Center, and Susanne Fusso, Chair and Professor of Russian, East European, and Eurasian Studies. Sponsored by the Russian, East European, & Eurasian Studies Program, and by the Davison Art Center.
Gallery hours are Tuesday–Sunday, 12–4 p.m. (closed Mondays; also closed October 20–25 and November 20–27). The gallery is open to the public free of charge. The Davison Art Center is located at 301 High Street on the campus of Wesleyan University in Middletown, CT. For further information, phone (860) 685-2500 or visit the DAC website at www.wesleyan.edu/dac.

The Davison Art Center was established at Wesleyan University with the founding gifts of George Willets Davison (B.A. Wesleyan 1892). Today it holds approximately 18,000 prints and 6,000 photographs in one of the foremost collections of prints and photographs at an American college or university.

Editors: Digital images suitable for reproduction are available in an electronic (PDF) press release on the web at www.wesleyan.edu/dac/exhb/press.html; for further information please contact Clare Rogan, DAC Curator, at (860) 685-2966 or at crogan@wesleyan.edu. Below are the captions for those images. Please note that the images may be used only in direct connection with this press release or with other timely coverage of the exhibition it concerns.


Please note that this image may be used only in direct connection with this press release or with other timely coverage of the Davison Art Center exhibition it concerns.

© Sasha Rudensky. Courtesy of the artist and Sasha Wolf Projects.