

## Karl Haendel

### *Doppelgänger*

**Opening reception:** 16 November 2018, 6 – 9 pm

**Exhibition:** 17 November – 22 December 2018

Wentrup Gallery is pleased to present Karl Haendel's second solo exhibition with the gallery, titled *Doppelgänger*, opening on November 16, 2018. Since the start of his career Haendel (b.1976) has used drawing to discover connections between seemingly disparate nodes of cultural data, drawing attention to the overlaps between the social, political, and personal. Through formal manipulation and repacking of pre-existing imagery, Haendel explores how our culture uses images to produce opinions, values, and beliefs and how the images we produce reflexively re-shape these frameworks.

However, this exhibition is not really an exhibition, it might be better described as two exhibitions in one, or perhaps, an exhibition with a split personality. Upon entering the gallery you are immediately confronted with a wall interrupting your path, forcing you to choose which way to go—left or right. Wentrup gallery is bisected by a wall, and each half of the space appears just like its other half; the drawings in both spaces are identical in size and medium, framed in the same manner, and hung in the same configuration. You are never able to view a work next to its twin, or indeed the whole exhibition at once because a wall is in your way. But there is a doorway through this wall, and when you emerge on the other side, you are back where you just were. Or are you? Or is it? Things are just slightly off, and upon closer inspection, the drawings are all just a bit different, varying in composition, representation, perspective, tonality or orientation. It's weird. Slightly strange, but still familiar. Or as Freud would call it, "Das Unheimliche."

The idea of the 'Doppelgänger' emerges from romantic literature at the end of the eighteenth century and refers to an entity that possesses the likeness of another — an (almost) identical look-alike. Doppelgänger imagery was often used to examine the duality of human nature or a lack of a true fundamental identity. Examples in literature include Robert Louis Stevenson's fictional character from 1886, the friendly Dr. Jekyll, who is possessed by a split personality with an opposite nature, the violent Mr Hyde, or Dostoyevsky's *The Double*, whose protagonist encounters an identical look-alike, who possesses all the charm and confidence that he lacks, leading to his own madness and eventual replacement by his stand-in.

Haendel's Doppelgänger drawings include *Child King 1*, depicting French King Louis XIV as a teenager and dressed elaborately as the God Jupiter, and *Child King 2*, depicting the son of Louis XV (Louis, Dauphin of France), peacocking similarly in extravagant attire. In these drawings Haendel reminds us that some of today's world leaders, whose monarchical tendencies, garish taste, and accumulation of wealth through birthright and plunder, have their historical antecedents. Doppelgängers do appear, sometimes side-by-side, sometimes centuries apart, yet they are no less freightening.

# WENTRUP

Drawings are fundamentally mimetic. By their nature they are imitations, of things in the world or concepts in mind. According to Plato, all artistic creation is a form of imitation. Although drawings appear to be “unique”, they are in fact copies, always missing the thing the artist tries to capture, and always inadequate. Within the history of art and representation, the original is bound up with the fact that it is also a copy. It’s all iteration, and communication is only possible because language, be it visual, written, or spoken, is always a copy. The recognition and exploration of this fundamental problem – that we are always dealing with copies yet always seeking and striving for the original–has been central to Haendel’s work for 18 years. This installation, which is both original and copy, and neither here nor there, is Haendel’s clearest distillation of this concept. – *text by Gawain von Mallinckrodt*

His work *Arab Spring (Postscript) #2* is currently on view at the newly opened Palais Populaire in Berlin for the exhibition *The World on Paper*, where highlights from the Deutsche Bank Collection are on display.

Haendel’s work was featured earlier this year in *A Slice through the World: Contemporary Artists’ Drawings* at the Drawing Room, London, and Modern Art, Oxford.

Karl Haendel (b. 1976) received a BA from Brown University in 1998, a MFA from UCLA in 2003 and attended the Whitney Museum Independent Study Program.

He has had solo exhibitions at Museo de Arte de El Salvador; Locust Projects, Miami; Lever House, New York; LAXArt, Los Angeles, and the Museum of Contemporary Art (MoCa), Los Angeles; the Utah Museum of Contemporary Art, Salt Lake City; The Box, Wexner Center for the Arts, Columbus.

Haendel was featured in the 2015 Biennial of the Americas, Denver; the 2014 Whitney Biennial, New York; the 12th Biennale de Lyon in 2013; Prospect II, New Orleans in 2011; and the 2008 and 2004 California Biennials, Orange County Museum of Art, Newport Beach.

His work has been included in group exhibitions at the Kunsthalle Emden, Emden; Kunstvereniging Diepenheim, Diepenheim; Kunsthalle Bielefeld, Bielefeld; Modern Art Oxford, Oxford and the Drawing Room, London; Castello di Rivoli, Turin; the Astrup Fearnley Museum of Modern Art, Oslo; Serpentine Gallery, London; Reykjavik Art Museum; MRAC Sérignan; Philbrook Museum of Art, Tulsa; Rose Art Museum, Brandeis University; Aspen Art Museum; the Indianapolis Museum of Art, Indianapolis; the Drawing Center, New York; the Henry Art Gallery, Seattle; the New Museum, New York; the Fundación/Colección Jumex, Mexico City; the Guggenheim Museum, New York; the Museum of Modern Art, New York; the Rubell Family Collection, Miami; and the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles.