Correspondences: Bosch & Kantor. Maxim Kantor: The Last Judgment Julia M. Nauhaus

Maxim Kantor's Artistic Evolution

Maxim Kantor draws, paints, writes, reads, creates puppets and busts[3], and prints etchings, lithographs, and artist books. He teaches at Oxford, organizes symposiums, and is one of the most vocal opponents of the Putin regime, which has placed him on a list of Russia's enemies. He also criticizes Western liberals and intellectuals. Such a universal artist – one that unflinchingly follows his own artistic convictions and truths with no regard to the spirit of the times or the art market – is rare in today's world. Born in 1957, Kantor received international recognition in 1997 when he represented the Russian Federation at the Biennale in Venice with a solo exhibition. Prior to this, he organized one-day anti-Soviet exhibitions in Moscow at the end of the 1980s. At that time Kantor was discovered by Henri Nannen who invited him to Germany. This was followed by exhibition tours in Europe and the USA and the publication of extensive exhibition catalogues. Kantor lives in Berlin and London, from time to time in the USA, and for the past few years he has made his home on the Île de Ré, an island off the west coast of France. Initially, he frequently returned to his birthplace Moscow but left Russia for good in 2014 in protest of the annexation of Crimea.

Kantor grew up surrounded by European literature and philosophy that his father, the philosopher Karl Kantor, introduced him to. He admired Vincent van Gogh, Francisco de Goya, and many other Western European artists. As a boy, he copied Delacroix and Rembrandt; these painters appeared more real to him than his surroundings. He always carried Delacroix's diaries and van Gogh's letters in his pocket.[4] Yet despite Kantor's affinity for Western European art, he is also extremely well-versed in Russian literature.[5] He rightly calls himself a European artist because of his deep ties to Renaissance humanism and Judeo- Christian traditions. He is well-acquainted with Plato, Dante, Erasmus of Rotterdam, Kant, and Goethe, to name just a few.

Maxim Kantor's multi-faceted paintings and graphic works encompass

portraits, landscapes, still lifes, satirical images with political references and critiques of our times, and more recently, an increasing number of religious representations.[6] He himself says that he can only paint and draw what he is familiar with. Kantor calls himself a realist. He is a keen, perceptive observer of prevailing circumstances and political developments. He addresses painful issues and draws our attention to serious failings, whether through his paintings, printed works, or writings.

His early career attests to a proximity to German Expressionism and magic realism; however, this observation is too narrow. The brilliant colours and aggressive brushwork seen in the rapid painting style of his early pieces are expressive, but they testify more to his connection to artists such as Grünewald, Goya, and van Gogh than they do to twentieth century German Expressionism. Although one sees certain similarities to Dix and Grosz in his graphic cycles, the artist himself has a greater affinity to Max Beckmann and it is probably not a coincidence that both created illustrations for Goethe's *Faust*, Part 2. The magic realism label appears to apply even less: in the 1980s and 1990s, Kantor painted the bleakness, melancholy, and greyness he saw every day outside his own door. He says that in the West, people interpreted his paintings as an indictment of the "Russian hell", but he was more interested in giving his "everyday heroes" a face and a voice, in other words, those people that did not forget their humanity despite the totalitarian regime.[7]

Kantor's concept of art is both subjective and symbolic. He can only capture on canvas or paper what he is dealing with internally. His art is therefore an expression of his internal world and his perception of the external world. In an interview in 2016, he said, "I do what I always did: to follow events and to try to find the most convincing form to express the times."[8]

In terms of the symbolic components of his art, Kantor refers to Thomas of Aquinas, according to whom there are four levels to interpret an image: "the common, the allegoric, the symbolic (or analogue) and the theological way. Knowing, that a certain spiritual hierarchy exists even in art; I nevertheless think that these four levels, even though necessary, are not equal."[9] The artist described the phases of his decades-long career in a

letter to his friends in 2013 as follows:

"[...] You remember that I started as a critic of a totalitarian state. It was due to my experience of life in Soviet Russia. I painted red houses, prisons, lagers, underground trains, hospitals, cheap bistros, yards surrounded by gloomy buildings, wastelands, lonely people, portraits of those who still keep a human face even if they are surrounded by awful reality. The main hero was my Father, the main symbol was Job, the central picture of this period was the *Red State* (fig. 7). I call the paintings from this time "Red Period". More or less all these topics find their place in my graphic album *Wasteland* – which was a sort of compendium to my work from the 1970s to the 1990s, a summary of nearly 20 years of work. Reality since that time has changed. The Soviet system did tumble down and new forms of society appeared. Russia collapsed, Europe has changed, too. It was a time of hope but also a time of lost orientations. What is going to happen? The world was broken but it was unclear what we would build on the ruins. It was a romantic but scary time. I depicted the ruins and the changes – that's when I painted *Crows Over Garbage*, *Broken Tree* (fig. 25, p. 30 and fig. 10 p. 17), and *Face with Scar*. Slowly the construction of the New World became clear. And it became obvious that it was not going to be a paradise and a democratic blossoming. New greed and cruelty appeared in society. New forms of oppression and even a new war started. Also, I have got acquainted with life in Europe – since in the last twenty years I lived and worked in Berlin, London, Paris. And I tried to see the problems of humanity not only from the side of Russia, but also from the side of the West. And I saw that here we do not have fewer unsolved conflicts and hidden skeletons in our closets. The new graphic album of that period was called *Metropolis* and it became a summary of my works through all these years – ten years. The central works of this time are the canvases *Stray Dogs*, *Prodigal Son*, *Babel Tower*, *Crows*, *Lonely Trees*, *Newspaper* (fig. 28, p. 35), *People in Masks*. The central works are *Structure of Democracy* (fig. 8) and *Requiem for a Terrorist*. I called this period Works of a New Empire. It embraces the period from the late 1990s to 2008. In the last few years it became clear that a certain cycle has come to a conclusion not only in Russia, but in the whole world. Not only the Soviet socialist system went to pieces but also the construction of financial capitalism, the

promises of democracy, the expectations of globalisation – all became uncertain. The world came to a deep crisis, a crisis that is not only economical but also intellectual. As a matter of fact, we can see that the so-called progressive art is not able to reflect all current changes. The vocabulary of art is still connected to the period when the so-called democracy opposed the so-called totalitarianism. It became clear that both these social circumstances were parts of one construction and now this construction is damaged and shaken.

The summary of the works I made in the last years can be found in my latest album *Vulcanus*. And the main topic of these years is the image of Atlantis (figs. 20, 21, p. 27) You remember that Plato told us the story of the State of Atlantis sinking in the ocean. And this image became central in my latest works.

It happens that in the last years I have spent more and more time on an island near the shore of Charente in France called the Ile de Ré. I chose this island not accidentally, but with certain reasons. I do not believe in the development of the present civilization. However, I do not like the so-called exotic countries and locations. My deep conviction still is that only the culture of Europe, Renaissance, Humanism, which developed in the context of European institutions may save the world – even if the world is having bad times now. And this island of Ré became the very special symbol of this conviction. It shows me low tides – when the ocean pulls back/withdraws and it shows me great tempests and strong winds (fig. 9). It shows shells – like abandoned houses on the empty shore and it shows me trees standing strong in spite of the wind. My basic conviction is that art has to survive through these years by touching the basic elements of being, by returning to them. And it's those elements – like water, wind, ocean, sky – it's those elements which have been forgotten during the time of our wild run for progress – that we have to recall. [...]"[10]

It must be noted that trees have always played a major role in Kantor's work and have always had symbolic meaning, from his 1997 *Broken Tree* to a more recent cedar leaning against the wind. (figs. 10, 11)

The "New Empire" period was followed by "The New Bestiary", also the

title of an exhibition shown in 2016 in Luxembourg, Bamberg, and at the Kunsthalle Emden. I should add that since he began living on the Ile de Ré, the ocean has begun to play a major role in Maxim Kantor's work, whereas portraits, still lifes, and trees retain their place in his creations. Even before the flood of refugees arrived in Europe, refugees appeared in Kantor's work in 2014 (fig. xx, p. xxx). He painted himself and his family against the backdrop of his own experience of leaving his home. In 2016, in *Europe at the crossroads*, he expressed himself in detail and critically examined the issue of refugees in Europe, the handling of the so-called "refugee crisis", and Christianity and Islam.[11] The artist has recently turned his focus increasingly to religious themes. He has painted several large works for the parish church of St. Merry in Paris, *Augustinus Sanctus and St Francis* for den Vatican (fig. p. xxx) and *Crossing the Red Sea* in 2013. (This painting is also a reference to both Biblical and contemporary history with its allusion to the refugees that are attempting to reach Europe by crossing the Mediterranean).[12] To fully appreciate the artist Maxim Kantor, it is important to realize that he not only writes articles but also novels, short stories, and plays. Without a doubt, he is among those rare talents who can both paint and write. He himself does not see a difference between these two artistic forms of expression and perhaps it is not a coincidence that there is only one word in Russian, the language that he writes in, for the words 'to paint' and 'to write'. In a 2017 interview, he said:

"I began writing when I was five and drawing when I was six. When I was six I wrote my first novel of a sort. Later, like most others, I wrote poetry and plays. When I was thirteen, I had a talk with my father. I remember that long evening; we walked for hours through the streets and talked about whether I should be an author or an artist. My father said to me that there is no method to becoming a professional writer, that was nonsense. If you have something to say, you will say it anyway. If there is something in you that cannot remain hidden, then you will write a book. Learn how to be an artist; every good author needs experience and an occupation.

When I was fourteen, I was expelled from school because I produced anti-Soviet murals with my articles and verses. I was summoned to appear

before the police, there was a trial and I was sentenced to one year of labour – I had to carry suitcases at train stations. I was only able to continue my education during evening classes; my classmates were thirty and forty years old. It was a good experience and it distanced me somewhat from my contemporaries. I began to draw dramatic anti-Soviet pictures. And I became an artist, but the words always stayed with me. When I was twenty-three, I wrote two plays; I wrote my first novel at twenty-five. By the way, the woman who typed up the book for me (it was an anti-Soviet novel of course) was the same one who typed *The Gulag Archipelago* for Solzhenitsyn. She was very old at the time. The novel was very naive. Thank God that became clear to me.

After that, I didn't write anything for many years. But where does the interest to be an artist and publish short stories come from? I wait until something happens and then I simply cannot remain silent anymore. I was forty-four which I wrote the novel *A Drawing Textbook*. It was the first, and I believe the strongest analysis of what had happed with Socialism, the Russian empire of totalitarianism, and the democracy project. [...]

A Drawing Textbook is my first novel, but the second part of my family saga. The same protagonists appear in *Red Light*. *Red Light* is the first part, even though it was written later. The same thing happens in my pictures: I also paint the same saga again and again; you can find the same heroes and characters that I describe in my books. I don't make any distinctions between my two forms of expression. I draw, and I write every day. The ideas remain the same."[13]

In the novel *Red Light* in particular, Maxim Kantor skilfully wove the story of his own family and the stories of three other families into major historical events. The history of individuals is just as momentous and important as that of major events.

The Four Paintings in the Exhibition

In the following, I would like to address Maxim Kantor's last sentence and show how the works presented in the exhibition *Bosch & Kantor* are related in terms of motif to each other and to Kantor's overall body of work – and to that of Hieronymus Bosch. The four paintings were created in

2015, 2016, and 2017/18. Maxim Kantor completed his *Last Judgment*, which he had been working on for over a year, just a few weeks before the opening of this exhibition. The selection of other paintings to be displayed alongside this work and Hieronymus Bosch's *Last Judgment* triptych was not easy. Kantor chose these works because they are all based on the Bible and Christian traditions. His father, Karl Kantor, not only made sure that his son was acquainted with the works of Hieronymus Bosch, Pieter Bruegel the Elder, and many works of philosophy and literature, he also taught his son the history of art through interpretations of the Bible. Kantor's father, who was Jewish, may have leaned towards atheism, but he later became a Christian. In a conversation with his son, he highlighted the significance of the story of Christ as a man and God's importance to mankind, a myth that engendered human history and all existence.[14] In this discussion which took place in 1995, Maxim Kantor stated that he did not believe in God – which his father disputed at the time – but after the death of his mother, who was Russian-Orthodox, he joined the Catholic Church. His road to the Christian faith was long but logically consistent and was ultimately based on his childhood experiences and the fact that the Bible played the same role in the Kantor family as did Dante's *Divine Comedy*.

Maxim Kantor wrote:

"My father began teaching me the history of art by interpreting the Bible. Not of course the way the Russian Orthodox church did, far from it! Father viewed Christianity alongside Kant's Categorical Imperative, and Holy Scripture was read at home at the same time as Shakespeare and Dante. [...] For me, it is important to be a part of the Jewish intellectual tradition. Although I am not Judaic, I often read the Bible."[15]

The Last Judgment

Since the artist himself as well as Vittorio Hösle and Eckhart Gillen have all addressed and interpreted Kantor's *Last Judgment* (fig. p. 83) in detail, I would like to limit myself to a few remarks and highlight its "correspondence" to Hieronymus Bosch's *Last Judgment* altarpiece. First, I believe that the artist, who created likenesses of himself and his family in the painting, made an important reference when he said that he has spent

his entire life dealing with the history of his family. His own family history has served as his model for history in general. In an interview in 2017, Kantor said, “History, whether world history or our very own personal one, was a normal topic of conversation. This may have been the only subject of our conversations: just our experiences, history, and our duty to save face.”[16]

In 1998, Kantor explained:

“It was many years ago when I had first made up my mind to write a story of my family. It began with a very simple wish. I piteously felt that my people, those who are dear to my heart, are mortals. This feeling of mortality was aggravated by the fact that I was used to sensing my family as some community in opposition to the Soviet regime and power. And this opposition did not bode well, of course. Their features were all the more dear and valuable to me as I could discern some feeling of doom about them. That is why I began to paint portraits as if they were tombstones. In these early portraits there is a conscious orientation towards the pictures of the mummies of Fayum. Further on, I developed a somewhat wider attitude, and I came to realise that the story of my family is part of some other story. And, consequently, I switched my story to another dimension, to another scale. I wanted to write the history of the society, the history of the country. I felt that the intimate candour and the private compassion signify very little without the compassion to the other people’s destiny, and that there is no little history without major history. My family had always been a point of departure for me. And I gradually turned these familiar images into the typical characters of the chronicle.

I began to describe various situations, eventually intensifying their symbolic undertones. From the portraits of my heroes I gradually passed to the portraits of their things, then to their swellings, to their life scenes and, ultimately, to the general picture of the world around them. Eventually, I found myself writing a book with chapters and paragraphs where every picture was a part of the whole although it was quite independent. It so happened that all the pictures are more or less connected with one plot. [...] As to the main point of this strategy I would single out the deliberate combination of the symbolic and of something very private, intimate.”[17]

A reproduction of Honoré Daumier's painting *Family on the Barricades* (1848, Prague, National Gallery) hung above Maxim Kantor's bed when he was a child. As a boy, he saw his own family represented in this family, a family which was against the Soviet regime. As a child, Maxim Kantor eavesdropped on his parents and their friends, who were dissidents in the 1960s, passionately discussing the freedom that did not exist in the Soviet Union. Kantor formulated his goal as follows: a struggle for the freedom of the individual against an impersonal collective. Kantor saw how Daumier was able to portray people so heroically that the bourgeoisie automatically looked like laughable caricatures. It was a matter of contrast and comparison. Kantor believes that a person does not appear laughable or trivial if we have nothing to compare them to. "If we don't know what a face looks like, we can never appreciate the monstrosity of a mask."[18] For example, in his own work we find the two paintings *My Family* and *Politburo* from 1982 and 1983 (figs. 12, 13). Kantor owes this dialectic and symbolism to the convictions and education of his father, who believed that a union of free individuals could be a model for the construction of an entire society.[19] Maxim Kantor stated this once again in his essay *Family vs. Empire* for the catalogue of the Gdansk exhibition in 2016.[20] Karl Kantor's influence on his son cannot be underestimated. There is a reason that a 2017 interview with Maxim Kantor was titled "Who am I without my father?"[21] The artist stated, "As Virgil once said: all my own poems are crumbs from the great banquet of Homer. I can say the same of my father. Everything that I have made is just a small part of what I have learned. The long saga that I write and draw is the story of my father. He lived to be forgotten but I want to make him immortal."[22] (fig. 14)

In 2012, Maxim Kantor wrote in *The Language of Resistance*:

"The life of my family, our relationships, and the love between us: this is what makes up a whole history, which I opposed to the anonymous history of society. In every picture, I painted portraits of those who were dear to me. If I had not loved or cared for them, I would have been incapable of saying exactly what it was that I was defending against impersonal collective forces."

In Kantor's painting *The Last Judgment* – which, incidentally, he did not

create as a direct reaction to Hieronymus Bosch – the artist portrayed his family, not just because he knows and loves these faces, but because they act as representatives of universal ideas. At the same time, Kantor explains that "Christian humanism is embodied in the idea of the family, a union of people who are free and equal, united by the bonds of love and compassion." He continues, "The family is a model of the republican ideal of society; the family stands up to the Empire by definition. Ever since the Renaissance, painting exists in order for one free man to give his hand to another free man. To give his hand in spite of death, in spite of fate. Art is a dialogue between two people – father with son, friend with friend, lover with lover. Art has been given to us so that we can stand up to oblivion and heathenism."[23] As early as 1995, the artist had determined that Renaissance humanists were better Christians than the clergy.[24] For Kantor, humanism and Christian faith are inseparably linked.

What is striking in Kantor's *Last Judgment* is that except for the mother holding the younger son, the seven figures are separated from each other. They do not look at each other, they do not touch; each person is trapped in his or her own world. This can be seen in many of his paintings, especially his early group portraits. The greatest sense of intimacy can be found between father and son. Usually the figures gaze at or past the viewer; contact between them is rare. For a long time, the shift in society toward isolation, egotism, and a lack of concern for others has been criticized. Maxim Kantor addressed this early on in his work.[25]

In Hieronymus Bosch's *Last Judgment* altarpiece, the sinners being tormented by demons, devils, and monsters are painted in separate scenes. Things do not look much better in Heaven: Both groups of apostles stand removed from Christ the judge; hardly any are looking at him. Christ himself is staring straight ahead and the inferno of martyrdom and agony that covers four-fifths of the painting does not appear to affect him at all. Above to the left, the kneeling Mother of God is just as isolated as John the Baptist who is leaning indifferently on a cloud. It appears doubtful whether any sinners can truly appeal to these heavenly figures in the hope of salvation (fig. 15).

Like Bosch, a traditional iconographic depiction of the Last Judgment has

taken a back seat in Kantor's work (see the essay by E. Gillen in this catalogue). Contrary to tradition, Bosch dispensed with the Archangel Michael, who divides good souls from the bad. In the upper centre of Kantor's work, we see a pair of scales. Like Bosch, he placed this subject in the upper section of the painting. The rainbow upon which Christ the Judge is seated in Bosch's work appears as an incidental detail in Kantor's painting without its usual colours.

One obviously formal connection between the two works by Bosch and Kantor are the angels who are sounding the Day of Judgment on their trumpets. Maxim Kantor commented on them in his essays (see p. xxx). The motif of angelic trumpeters is not new to this work: they appeared in the 1991 painting *Trumpeting Angel*[26], in *Newspaper* (2004, fig. p. xxx), and in *Civil War/The Third Seal* (fig. p. xxx).

The Last Judgment sheet from the *Metropolis* portfolio of 2003/04 (fig. 16) should be mentioned here. The angels with trumpets can be seen, but there is no judge or Archangel Michael. Instead, a seraph and a dark masked man with a whip confront each other. Between the seraph's legs, a naked, chaotic mass of men, women, children, and elderly people stream toward the viewer and return beneath the legs of the "devil" in an eternal cycle. It is impossible to distinguish between good and evil. The situation appears nearly as hopeless as in the work Bosch created five hundred years ago. Here, heavenly paradise is a tiny spot of light in the upper left of the central panel; barely discernible angels are escorting just a few of the saved. Incidentally, in Kantor's work the sinners are just as naked as in the Bosch painting. In the painting Kantor created around fifteen years later, he refers to the Fall of Man and the expulsion of Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden, scenes that take up the left panel of the altarpiece in Bosch's work. In Kantor's painting, we must look closely to find it: it is a drawing in one of the open books on the table (fig. 17). This scene is the Expulsion from the Garden of Eden, like Saint George and the Dragon on the second open book (fig. 17). It appears in other paintings, such as *Garden of Knowledge* from 2016 (fig. 18) and the large central panel for the *Adoration of the Magi* triptych that Kantor created for the common room at Pembroke College in Oxford – another parallel to Bosch, who also addressed this

biblical story.[27]

Furthermore, Kantor's painting is linked to Bosch's work by the self-evident integration of chimaeras and monsters. In both works, they appear lifelike and primarily populate the lower sections of each painting. Maxim Kantor indicates that the human-rat creatures are bankers and politicians. The human-chicken monster is a caricature of the author Dmitry Bykov, the pig lady is a "portrait" of Ekaterina Degot, an art historian, critic, and curator.[28] Although they are critical of the Putin regime, they are following fashion. From Kantor's point of view, they serve the oligarchs and ultimately support the system that brought Putin to power in the first place. When Bykov gives concerts in London that are paid for by Gazprom, a company belonging to Putin, it throws a more than questionable light on his oppositional role. As a result, Kantor calls people like Bykov a disgrace to the opposition.[29] This attitude has not harmed the careers of Bykov or Degot; on the contrary, Degot was appointed director of the renowned festival *Steirischer Herbst* in the summer of 2018.

The pigs on the crumpled newspaper pages that the painter himself is holding refer to human stupidity and perfidy (fig. 29, p. 36). I will return to the pig motif below. The rocking dragon on which Kantor's older son Peter is seated appears very alive and is coming to aid the dragon in the book whom Saint George is about to defeat. A "source" for the depiction of toys that come to life is Hans Christian Andersen.[30] It is striking that in Kantor's work the monsters and chimeras are only cavorting on the floor whereas in Bosch's painting they dominate two of the triptych's panels.

The Flight Into Egypt

A uniting and oft recurring theme in Kantor's work is the Tower of Babel shown in brilliant red brick with gaping black windows. In *The Last Judgment* the tower appears as a black-and- white drawing on a piece of paper that the old man, Kantor's father, is bending over. The painting *The Flight Into Egypt* (fig. p. 85) could also be titled "The Tower of Babel" since the figures of Joseph and Mary holding the child on the donkey are small and difficult to see at first glance. They are traveling upward on a path that appears to end at a tower. Whereas medieval gargoyles can be

seen protruding from the towers at the upper left, three crosses symbolizing Golgotha rise skyward from the platform of a tower at the right. The medieval gargoyles appear in the paintings for the church of St. Merry (figs. p. 69 and p. 65) and recently in illustrations for Goethe's *Faust* (fig. 19) as well. Kantor himself admits that he is increasingly drawing closer to Gothic art (see p. xxx). In the left foreground behind a row of houses, seven figures are walking in a circle with their hands behind their backs. Three "donkey scholars", two pigs, and Saint Jerome lounge in the centre foreground. Jerome's plush, friendly lion appears to want to play with a blue dragon (fig. p. 84). The artist says that he has dreamed of a red brick tower ever since he was young.[31] In 2004 and 2005, he created paintings titled *The Tower of Babel* followed by an etching in his *Metropolis* cycle the same year, and a silk-screen print in his illustrations for Heinrich von Kleist's *Hermannsschlacht* in 2013 (fig. 20).

The artist has also linked the biblical story of the Tower of Babel to Plato's tale of Atlantis, the city that sank into the ocean. In 2009, he created the painting *Atlantis*, and his graphic cycle *Vulcanus* contains a lithograph titled *Atlantis* (2010). In 2011, Kantor painted *Sinking Atlantis*. Although *Cathedral in the Ocean* is not constructed of red brick, its form is similar to that of the *Tower of Babel* (fragment, 2013, see fig. p. xxx), as well as the 2012 painting *Atlantis* (fig. 19). In 2016, the red tower appeared in the middle of a dense wood.[32] It must be mentioned that not only the Atlantis pictures reference the Greek philosopher Plato, the painting *State* (see fig. p. xxx) does as well. Without a doubt, the ancient world is important to the artist. He also referred to ancient mythology in his painting *Laocoon* of 1989/90, and in his graphic work *Hekata* in the *Metropolis* portfolio of 2003/04.[33] In 2009, he created *The Fates (Moirai),* and in 2014 *Minotaur*.[34] In an interview in 2016, Kantor said, "I think it is very important to retain this penetration of ancient culture into our own times. It is one of the most important points in the development of art."[35]

Digression: The Symbolism of Colour

The Tower of Babel is painted in the same brilliant red as the room where the seven people find themselves in the *Last Judgment*. Red is the defining

colour in Kantor's work to date. His affinity to Expressionism is repeatedly referred to, but he himself sees this similarity primarily in the symbolic way the Expressionists treated colour, analogous to his own works.[36] He admits that colour has always held symbolic significance and that he has never applied colour without careful consideration.[37]

In 1982 at 25, he painted *Red House* (fig. 22), which gave its name to the dissident group of artists that held one-day exhibitions in Moscow. This red house appears repeatedly – in *The Last Judgment* it is shown at the upper left with its roof on fire. In addition, Kantor painted *Red City* and *Butyrka Prison* in the early 1980s.[38] Red also dominates *Canteen* (1989), *Crows Over the City* (1990) and the relief *Cry* (1990/91). In 1993, he created *Woman in Front of a Red House*, *Elena*, and prior to that in 1991 he painted *State*, in 1992 *Job* and *Civil War* (fig. p. 32), in 1993 *Two Versions of History* and *End Game*, and in 1994 *Fight* in addition to many other works.

Several of the paintings show black figures in front of a red ground, establishing a tie to ancient Greek vase painting. Examples of this include the first version of *State* (1991, fig. p. 14), *Ruins of the Empire* (1992), and *Rebellion of the Pygmies* (1994, fig. 23), a painting highly charged with symbolism. Karl Kantor called it his favourite in 1995, and Vittorio Hösle sees this work as an allegory of the catastrophe that can befall an established regime: Kantor captured how totalitarian tendencies can appear in a democracy if it is not founded on individual responsibility.[39] In 1997, Kantor created another *Red House*, followed a few years later by *House Without a Host* (2001) with echoes of Picasso, *Dirty Street* and *Pierrot and Harlequin* – a double portrait of his parents seated in front of a red wall. In his graphic cycle *Wasteland*, the artist placed a portrait of his father and a self-portrait in front of red buildings. In *Wasteland*, he deliberately and selectively made use of the colour red. The only colours are black, the white ground of the paper, and the selective use of red in a few small details. Here Kantor combined etching with aquatint relief. Incidentally, this graphic cycle is also seen as a "comprehensive biographical and intellectual effort" that "continues the tradition of Christian art using current image forms"[40] in reference to the philosopher Pyotr Chaadayev

and Dante. This portfolio of prints contains *Red Light*[41] (fig. 24), also the title of Kantor's latest novel, which has been translated into German and French. It also presents many correspondences to Bosch. These are topics for another time since we do not have the scope to address them here. Maxim Kantor has described the symbolism of the colour red in his work several times: In his early works red stood for pain, life, history, and extreme loneliness. For Kantor, the red houses were a symbol of lost life, an existence where there is no longer a difference between home and prison, private and public, life and death.[42] The red house can also be a symbol of intellectual and moral resistance to a totalitarian system.[43] He wanted to paint his figures like tongues of flame.[44] Red is also the colour of power, blood, and resistance, but also of danger, and the colour of Soviet power.[45] According to the artist, red also has religious significance in Russian icons. Vittorio Hösle sees a transformation in the meaning of Kantor's colours. In Kantor's New Bestiary period, red stands for integrity, but the red sweater of the father figure could also signify solidarity with humanist Socialism. He refers here to the painting *Leviathan* (2015) where Karl Kantor can be seen in the skeleton of a whale.[46] In Kantor's most recent work, the contrast between red and blue appears to be more important: the red Tower of Babel glows in front of a blue sky and stands on blue earth (in *Atlantis* it sinks into a blue ocean). Blue has gained importance in Kantor's work since he began living on the Ile de Ré. The ocean has become for him "a second library." In 2013, he exhibited his marine pieces in Venice along with his Atlantis works. Kantor can observe the ocean every day, but it took him a long time to begin painting it. His palette changed. "It is less social, but not less symbolic."[47] The artist continues, "Blue is the colour of space, it's the colour of thought. It's a really spiritual colour" and realized that his "earlier paintings are reconstructions of history, but right now I paint the ocean as history, as time. So I see in this raw element of our being this essential power that of course you can perceive as nature, but even more as a symbol of being."[48] Intense blue-red contrasts appeared in 2004 in *Tower of Babel*, in 2010 in *Way of the Cross,* in 2014 in *Refugees* (fig. p. 76) and *Saint Thomas von Aquinas* (unfinished), and in the 2015 Dante portrait (fig. p. 42). However, in the painting *Crows Over the City* (1990, fig. 25) black

crows fly over purple-blue rubbish bins in front of a red background, with red, concentrically arranged rows of buildings.

Although *The Last Judgment* shows an interior and not the ocean, a sophisticated balance between red and orange and blue draws our eye: the mother, wife, and father are wearing blue clothing. The rocking dragon is blue-red, the teapot on the floor is blue, through the windows we see a dark-blue universe (or the ocean?), even the human-appearing angels with their trumpets are wearing blue (prison) clothing. In contrast, the room is red – suggesting Hieronymus Bosch's burning landscape and fires of Hell – as is the rainbow. The oldest son sitting on the window sill with a book is wearing red, signifying John the Evangelist who traditionally wears the colour, whereas the Virgin Mary wears blue, allowing us to interpret Kantor's wife as Mary. The brown-black clothing of the artist indicates parallels to Joseph the carpenter, who is traditionally seen in this colour. Vittorio Hösle and Eckhart Gillen address the interpretation of Kantor's family as the Holy Family in detail in their essays. Kantor appears to have executed the contrast between the symbolic and ambiguous interpretations of the colours red and blue consistently in *The Last Judgment*.

A somewhat different colour palette is seen in the two paintings *The Temptation of St. Anthony* and *Civil War*/*The Third Seal* even though red and blue still appear; however, these works are dominated by various shades of pink and brown.

Civil War/*The Third Seal*

In 1992, Maxim Kantor created a painting titled *Civil War* (fig. 26). It shows men dressed in black wedged together attacking each other in front of a red background: "Man is wolf to man." The painting *Civil War* created in 2018 has been given the additional title *The Third Seal* (fig. p. 87) and refers to the apocalypse. The Book of Revelation describes the opening of the third seal:

"When the Lamb opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature say, "Come!" I looked and there before me was a black horse! Its rider was holding a pair of scales in his hand. Then I heard what sounded like a voice among the four living creatures, saying, "Two pounds of wheat for a day's

wages, and six pounds of barley for a day's wages, and do not damage the oil and wine!"

For Maxim Kantor, this section of the apocalypse implies that society will become increasingly divided into rich and poor, where the rich will become richer and the poor, poorer. This development can only be followed by war; however, it will be a war of slaves.[49] Therefore, the arms and legs of all the figures in Kantor's image are locked in medieval wooden stocks. These were used to punish criminals by publicly humiliating and mocking them. The two men with their axe and knife are not the only ones locked in the stocks, the animals, a cow, crow, and dog; the small boy; the toy Punch; the blind man; the man reading a book; and even the angels in the sky blowing their trumpets are as well.

It is possible to see parallels here to Kantor's *Last Judgment*. In that work the figures are not locked in the stocks but are they not imprisoned in their isolation and lack of communication in the burning red room? Freedom is also the theme of *Civil War/The Third Seal*. In 1995, Karl Kantor stated that art is an expression of freedom and the striving for freedom. At that time, his son realized that he rarely felt free when he painted or drew. He felt as though he were driven by a feeling of responsibility or duty. Only when he looked at a painting with his father did he come close to feeling the happiness of freedom. Karl Kantor added that the feeling of freedom presupposes dependency. There is no freedom without slavery in its various forms.[50] For that reason, the animals, children, and toys in Kantor's painting are also locked in wooden stocks (fig. p. 86).

The Temptation of St. Anthony

The story of the devil tempting Saint Anthony also inspired Hieronymus Bosch – and his followers – to create pictorial worlds. Among Bosch's major works are a signed triptych of the *Temptation of St. Anthony* that can be found today in Lisbon (fig. 27). Saint Anthony (c. 251–356) is considered to be the original hermit and the Father of All Monks, which is why he is also known as Antonius Abbas. The primary source for the story of his life comes from a biography written in Greek in late antiquity by Athanasius von Alexandria (c. 298–373). Traditional depictions in painting

were usually based on shorter, popular versions such as those found in the *Legenda Aurea* or in *Der Heiligen Leben* (The Lives of Saints). Bosch's depiction was most likely based on the Latin or vernacular *Vitas Patrum* (*Lives of the Desert Fathers*, in Dutch *vader boeck* or *Leven der heiligen vaderen*). In the second half of the fifteenth century, the Netherlands experienced a final monastic flowering. New monasteries were founded, and reforms were carried out. An increased number of copyists led to the widespread dissemination the above collections of legends. Bosch may have found a copy in the Dominican houses in his hometown of 's-Hertogenbosch. The Gregoriushuis of the Brethren of the Common Life in the town holds a manuscript of the *Vita Patrum* from around 1450 and a 1478 printed version in Latin from Nuremberg can be traced to the Hermitage of Saint William.

Bosch shows the three most important events in the life of Anthony from left to right on three panels: his admission to the life of a hermit, how he overcame the temptations presented by demons and devils, and his attainment of inner peace. The many scenes are not easy to decipher. Whereas in Matthias Grünewald's work (the Isenheim Altarpiece, which was created for the Monastery of St. Anthony), the demons physically attack Saint Antony, Bosch's Temptation of St. Anthony deals with "rejecting images that plague the mind."[51] The demons around Anthony can be seen parodying the Holy Mass with a sermon, music, communion, and donations to the poor. Parodies of holy activities and figures were not unusual during Bosch's time, nor were they rare in didactic writings. On the right panel of the triptych, Bosch shows us the saint seated on a grassy bank with an open book of Holy Scripture in his hands. He has found inner peace and is not disturbed by what is happening around him. Anthony is presented to viewers as an example for the proper way to live as a follower of Christ in the Christian sense. Like Saint Christopher, Saint Anthony was one of the most venerated saints among all social classes in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries and Bosch's depictions of Saint Anthony were copied and imitated by many artists.

Anthony is the patron saint of farmers and domesticated animals, swineherds and butchers. St. Anthony's fire, a widespread skin disease in the Middle Ages, was named after him. His attribute is a pig. The Order of

St. Anthony (founded in 1095 in southeast France as a lay brotherhood) had the special privilege of letting their pigs run free; on the Feast of Saint Anthony they slaughtered a pig and distributed it to the poor. Regarding the powerlessness of the devil, Anthony said to a student, "But if they had power not even against swine, much less have they any over men formed in the image of God."[52] Whereas in the life of the saint, Anthony is accompanied by a single pig, the saint in Maxim Kantor's painting (fig. p. 89) is surrounded by a whole group of pigs. The saint – again a portrait of Kantor's father – is sitting on a fish, reading a book, unfazed by what occurs around him, not even by the dragon that approaches him and whose image fills the picture. One pig has placed its hoof on the saint's leg, thereby marking it as "St. Anthony's pig". The other pigs, however, appear to emanate from the saint's visions. At the right, we seen three upright pigs; one is wearing glasses, a reference to pompous intellectuals. The giant dragon walks on and between fish-like and rat-like creatures – like those that frequently appear in Bosch's paintings. In the sky, we see two dragons with human heads and bat wings, along with a man in a boat, more fish, and at the upper left, a naked person who appears to be sinking into water and not the sky. In Bosch's works, fish are transformed into mounts and appear in the sky. The fish is an ancient Christian symbol that Bosch parodied multiple times. At the right edge of the painting, Kantor visualized the well-known ancient saying "big fish eat little fish."[53] The bigger fish here has human legs and is being skewered on a fork by one of the pigs (fig. p. xxx). The rights of the powerful prevail to the detriment of the "little man", a characteristic trait of humanity society. The pigs at the right also appear very human. Human figures with pig-like faces appeared early in Kantor's work, and he believes that the faces of several Russian dictators are similar to pigs.[54] According to a statement by the by the painter, pig-like faces can be found in the 1982 painting *Politburo* (fig. p. 21) and in *Ball of Thieves*, *Morning Round-Up*,[55] *Four Riders* (2002), *Structure of Democracy* (2003/04), and *Newspaper* (fig. 28). Moreover, in this painting we see references to the apocalypse with the angels of the Last Judgment and the words "Revelatio Iohannis Apostili" at the upper right edge of the image. Salome with the head of John the Baptist on a plate also appears, along with the pope and a cardinal who are being threatened by a three-headed dragon symbolizing Satan. As in Bosch's

paintings, gallows with hanged figures can been seen. Politicians are wearing masks; two men with pig heads and raised arms are riding on men in black masks. In addition, the contrast between Islam and Christianity is addressed (below left). Pig(heads) also appear in *Flight Into Egypt* and other paintings created in 2016: *Doctor of Philosophy, Piscatores Hominum* (here we are confronted by a pig and a donkey, the donkey also appears in *Flight Into Egypt*), *Le Déjeuner sur l'herbe (after Manet)*, *Brown Spring*, and *Dragon Kurdupel*. Pigs can also be found in *The Last Judgment* on the crumpled papers that the artist holds in his hand. He is obviously pondering human stupidity (fig. 29). In the Middle Ages, pigs represented a whole series of vices: ignorance, selfishness, unchastity, gluttony, impureness, and immoderateness. Converted sinners were also depicted as pigs. In Gottfried von Straßburg's Tristan epic from around 1210, the boar stands for power and courage but also for aggressive sexuality and menace. In Hieronymus Bosch's St. Anthony triptych, a worldly musician with a pig head is seated on an owl (fig. 30). In the Middle Ages, owls symbolized the vices of ignorance and earthly music. A priest, who is holding a large book in his hand, has a pig head and as such is characterized as immoral and false (fig. 31). In Maxim Kantor's work, pigs primarily embody human stupidity and selfishness. We are reminded of Gottfried Benn's famous line, "The pride of creation, the pig, and man" and George Orwell's *Animal Farm*.[56] There are also references to bestiaries which were used in classical antiquity and the Middle Ages to illustrate human traits and behaviour using animals. However, none of the inhuman half-man, half-beast creatures that surround Saint Anthony in Kantor's painting appear dangerous or threatening. In contrast, the giant dragon wearing a crown on its head that nearly fills the image is very menacing. It symbolizes pure evil and embodies all the wickedness that humans are capable of. It crushes everything in its path. Like the pigs, the dragon motif also appears frequently in Kantor's work. The dragon has even been turned into a puppet[57], and has been given the face of Vladimir Putin. The head of the dragon often resembles a skull; the dragon brings nothing but death and rot. In his 2014 artist's book *The Ballads of Robin Hood*, a pig and a dragon play badminton (fig. 32). Dragons are the main figures in other works in this artist's book, including *Battle* and *He Is Always*

There.[58]

Without a doubt, the dragon refers to the dragon of the apocalypse, the symbol of Satan and evil. The Book of Revelation states:

"[...] Behold an enormous red dragon with seven heads and ten horns and seven crowns on its heads. Its tail swept a third of the stars out of the sky and flung them to the earth. The dragon stood in front of the woman who was about to give birth, so that it might devour her child the moment he was born. [...] Then war broke out in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back. But he was not strong enough and they lost their place in heaven. The great dragon was hurled down – that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him."[59]

Here John describes the War in Heaven which Bosch also portrayed in the Garden of Eden panel of his *Last Judgment* altarpiece. Kantor's devilish dragon is reminiscent of a similarly destructive diabolical monster that crushes everything underfoot: in 1937, Max Ernst painted two versions of his *L'ange du foyer*. It is one of the few paintings by the artist that did not refer directly to current events, in this case the Spanish Civil War (where three of Maxim Kantor's uncles were killed). Even though Maxim Kantor never engaged closely in Surrealism, there are certain "underground" references to Max Ernst. Both artists see Bosch, Bruegel, Goya, Grünewald, Gauguin, and van Gogh as their role models. Max Ernst also painted a Last Judgment and frequently included Christian themes, particularly in his early work – often in an unsettling way.[60]

In the upper section of the right panel of Hieronymus Bosch's St. Anthony triptych is a knight fighting a black dragon. A parallel to Maxim Kantor can be found here as well. Saint George fighting the dragon appears repeatedly in his work, as in the *Last Judgment* described above or on a panel of the triptych *Adoration of the Magi* (fig. 33), as well as the paintings *Grail* (2015, g) and *Chivalric Romance* (2016, fig. 34), a self-portrait in front of an Oxford backdrop. In this painting and in *Adoration of the Magi* the artist is looking at a book showing a knight fighting a dragon;

in *Chivalric Romance* we can also read the words “Lancelot du Lac”, a reference to the medieval knights of King Arthur’s Round Table. The story of Sir Lancelot was told in Old French in the thirteenth-century novel *Lancelot du Lac*. Because of his love for King Arthur’s wife Guinevere, Lancelot was judged unworthy to complete the quest for the Holy Grail.

It should be noted here that Maxim Kantor has probably painted and drawn himself more times than any other artist, including those who have created numerous self-portraits. If Kantor’s family is not in a painting, then he can be found there himself. This holds true in his most recent illustrations of Goethe’s *Faust*.

In the 2016 catalogue for *The New Bestiary*, Maxim Kantor referred to dragons as follows:

“As a child, I saw dragons. Then they disappeared. I even had the impression that dragons no longer existed. People said they had never existed in nature and that the elderly had made everything up. Stalin, Hitler – it goes back a long way... Besides, Stalin’s crimes have been exaggerated; there were neither camps nor deportations nor denunciations... Or else it was all a very long time ago. Remember, if you will, the blessed period around 1989, when everyone was intoxicated by the omnipresent victory of democracy and when the historian Francis Fukuyama suggested, in his book *The End of History and Last Man*, that humanity had reached the end point of its ideological evolution.

All the same, no more dragons. The magic forest of Europe was now in the grip of peace, which was going to last forever. [...] Henri [Nannen] and I compared the dark legends of Germany and Russia and the mythological bestiaries of our two cultures. ‘How similar our ancient myths are!’, we said: all those monsters thirsting for blood, those mindless masses, the nationalism, the totalitarian society, the beating of drums. If it is easier for us to understand one another today, it is because we share the same legends. And from now on, the monsters are over. [...] The dragons had flown away for good. [...]

Thirty years have passed. And the dragons are emerging once more. They were never very far away, but simply went to ground for a while. That’s

what dragons always do. Monsters wait for us to forget them – and then attack peaceful and inoffensive people. Trolls and orcs, the dragons' unruly manservants, are back. Witness the enraged crowds in the public square. [...] The dragons are just as they appear in the stories; they take whole towns and countries prisoner, breathe fire and claim possession of hearts and souls. And the people turn into beasts and grow claws. Under the influence of some bestial and tribal instinct, they are ready to tear themselves apart at the nation's call or on the orders of the hierarchy. [...] In the Middle Ages, scholars and monks wrote treatises on dragons. These books were called bestiaries and helped familiarize people with the monsters populating the earth. Medieval art relegated dragons and demons to the roofs of cathedrals, turning them into gargoyles, and portrayed Saint George and Saint Michael vanquishing the forces of Evil. Just like scholars and monks, artists were inspired by the example of Saint George."[61]

Accordingly, Maxim Kantor sees himself as Saint George, who fights against the dragon, sounds the warning, and repeatedly depicts it in his paintings. The reference to the legends of King Arthur and Sir Lancelot again refer to the Middle Ages: In the legends of King Arthur, the Holy Grail promises blessedness, eternal youth, and nourishment, in the Christian tradition it refers to the cup used in the Lord's Supper and the Eucharist. Kantor combined both in his painting *Grail* (fig. 35).

Conclusion

Thanks to his father, the artist has an extensive knowledge of history[62], philosophy, and literature. Maxim Kantor is a passionate reader; he cannot imagine life without the books that frequently appear in his paintings. He can still recall his father reading to him as a child. The dialectic of opposites between portraits of familiar loved ones and crowds of strangers, between family and the state, are also constant elements in Kantor's work, as is the symbolic use of colour. One can describe Maxim Kantor as a symbolic realist. He himself his work in proximity to medieval symbolism and the medieval art in cathedrals. When he paints seascapes, he does it like a medieval artist who paints passions as he said in 2016.[63] The ocean is a symbol of time and history; beaches, trees, and bushes are elements of existence. Tempests are symbols of the stormy times in which we live, a

world that is beginning to totter. Kantor is interested in the basic elements of existence, the fundamental passion of life. When he paints still lifes of shells or animal skulls, they are also symbols of human existence. The still lifes pick up on the vanitas themes found in Dutch Baroque still lifes.[64] (fig. 36)

Although the "prince of satire", as he has been called, has withdrawn from depicting clearly political subjects, he will always remain an alert observer of social and political events. His concern for the preservation of human values has come to the fore in the past few years. In the conversation with his father in 1995, the artist pointed out that everything that he does and how he does it is related to Christian culture. Even a painting such as *Politburo* from 1982 implies a reference to the Last Supper (fig. p. xxx), the twelve prisoners (*The Twelve*, 1988) recall the twelve apostles, and in his father and son paintings, Maxim Kantor sees parallels to God the Father and Christ.[65] His background in Christian art and values shape his entire body of work, even though he has not depicted Christian subjects such as saints and the Crucifixion until recently.

To this effect, his 2017/18 painting *The Last Judgment* can be viewed as a logical culmination of his development. At the same time, along with the portraits of his family, this painting forms another chapter in the "saga" that Maxim Kantor paints and writes. With its monsters, "politician and banker rats", the trumpeting angels that recall the surviving prisoners of the camps and the terror of totalitarian regimes, and pigs as symbols of human stupidity, this painting is also a critical statement of our reality.

[3] See Borovsky 2016 and the images in Gdansk 2016, 160 f., exhibition catalogue, and Luxembourg/Bamberg/Emden 2016, 158–161. Exhibition catalogue.

[4] See Interview 1998, 16.

[5] In an interview with Margret Stuffmann (in response to a question on his relationship to German Expressionism), Kantor referred to Russian Expressionism and mentioned Mayakovski, Filonov, Platonov, Goncharova, Shostakovich, Larionov, and others. Ibid., 18. See also Zinoviev 1995, 16.

[6] On this aspect of his latest work, see Hösle 2004, 100, Teal 2016, and Berten 2016.

[7] See his statements in Interview 1998, 14 f.

[8] Interview 2016, 185.

[9] Osnabrück/Venice 2004 i.a., 6. Exhibition catalogue.

[10] Kantor 2013,78 f.

[11] See Kantor 2016 c.

[12] *Ecce Homo* was created in 1990. In 1991 and 1992, Kantor created two paintings titled *Job*. This is the earliest evidence for his engagement with Christian tradition, whereby the 1989 work *Peter and Paul* which consists of several fragments may refer to Saints Peter and Paul (fig. Luxembourg/Berlin i.a. 1995, 62. Exhibition catalogue). The assertion by Ignace Berten that the 2003 painting with the head of John the Baptist is Kantor's first religious painting is erroneous (Berten 2016, 61).

[13] Interview 2017, 18–20.

[14] Karl Kantor in conversation with Maxim Kantor in Kantor/Kantor 1995, 142. Karl Kantor discussed in detail Matthias Grünewald's depiction of Christ in the Isenheim Altarpiece.

[15] Interview 2017, 26.

[16] Ibid., 22.

[17] See interview 1998, 13f.

[18] See Kantor 2012, n. pag. (beginning).

[19] See Kantor 2016 b, 6.

[20] See Kantor 2016 b.

[21] The conversation quoted above between father and son is very insightful, see Kantor/Kantor 1995. Quote from Interview 2017, 17.

[22] Ibid., 22

[23] Both quotes from Kantor 2016 b, 10.

[24] See Kantor/Kantor 1995, 141.

[25] See also Hösle 1995, 12.

[26] e-mail from M. Kantor to the author, 27 August 2018.

[27] Four depictions of the Adoration of the Magi exist by Bosch and his workshop: a triptych in Madrid, Museo Nacional del Prado (Fischer 2016, no. 6, 354–357) executed by Bosch's

own hand, as well as other paintings in Anderlecht, Erasmushuis (ibid., no. 24, 416–418), New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art (ibid., no. 25, 418– 420) and in Philadelphia, Philadelphia Museum of Art (ibid., no. 23, 414–416) which have been attributed to his workshop.

[28] Maxim Kantor in an e-mail to the author, 4 September 2018.

[29] Maxim Kantor in an e-mail to the author, 5 September 2018.

[30] Maxim Kantor in an e-mail to the author, 4 September 2018.

[31] Maxim Kantor in an e-mail to the author, 17 August 2018.

[32] On the Atlantis images, see Borovsky 2013. The 2016 painting *Tower in Forest* has been reproduced in Gdansk 2016, 110. Exhibition catalogue.

[33] Reproduced in Luxembourg/Berlin 1995, 169. Exhibition catalogue, and ibid., 110.

[34] Reproduced in Venice 2013, no. 31, 67. Exhibition catalogue and Luxembourg/Bamberg/Emden 2016, 39. Exhibition catalogue.

[35] Interview 2016 a, 184.

[36] Interview 1998, 20.

[37] Maxim Kantor in an e-mail to the author, 4 September 2018.

[38] The building was erected at the end of the eighteenth century. The prison was already notorious in the nineteenth century for its terrible conditions. Following the October Revolution, it primarily housed political prisoners; it was a transit station for inmates to be sent to the Gulag. In 1940, the writer Isaak Babel was executed here. By the time of Stalin's death in 1953, up to 7000 people had been executed here. The Butyrka remains a remand prison to this day.

[39] Hösle 1995, 13.

[40] Goeschen 2001, 152.

[41] It is no. 70 and the final work in the cycle, see Frankfurt am Main/Lisbon i.a. 2001, n. pag. Exhibition catalogue.

[42] Interview 1998, 16.

[43] Berten 2016, 60.

[44] Interview 1998, 20.

[45] Interview 2016, 151.

[46] Kantor 2016 a, 16.

[47] Interview 2016, 183.

[48] Ibid., 183.

[49] Maxim Kantor in an e-mail to the author, 19 July 2018.

[50] Kantor/Kantor 1995, 148.

[51] Fischer 2016, 107. The entire examination of Bosch's St. Anthony triptych according to Fischer 2016, 99–139.

[52] Quoted in Fischer 2016, 114.

[53] This saying was also executed in a drawing by Pieter Bruegel the Elder which can be found in the Albertina in Vienna. It also appears in Maxim Kantor's lithograph *Devourers of Sharks* in the *Vulcanus* cycle, 2010. Gdansk 2016, 155. Exhibition catalogue.

[54] Maxim Kantor in an e-mail to the author, 27 August 2018. See also the lithograph *Keep Russia Safe* from the *Vulcanus* cycle: Putin is seated on Stalin's lap. His face has pig-like features. Gdansk 2016, 154. Exhibition catalogue. See also the central panel of *Adoration of the Magi*. On Stalin and Putin, see Interview 2017, 31.

[55] Maxim Kantor in an e-mail to the author. 27 August 2018.

[56] Kantor is acquainted with Benn and referred to Orwell himself in an e-mail to the author, 27 August 2018. One is also reminded of caricatures by Jean Ignace Isidore Gérard Grandville (1803–1847) in which salon lions, newspaper elephants, money vultures, philosopher owls, and other half-man, half-animal creatures appear in his *Métamorphoses du jour* (1828/29). He also illustrated the fables by La Fontaine. However, Kantor was not acquainted with Grandville's caricatures.

[57] See fig. in Luxembourg/Bamberg/Emden 2016, 159. Exhibition catalogue.

[58] Ibid., 130 and 129.

[59] Revelation 12: 3–9.

[60] The painting *The Last Judgment* was created by the artist in 1919 and may have been a reaction to World War I, in which he participated (120 x 167 cm, missing, black-and-white reproduction in Quinn 1976, 56). In 1913, Ernst painted a very expressive *Crucifixion* (oil on paper, Cologne, Wallraf-Richartz-Museum, see ibid., colour fig. 39). One of Ernst's most famous paintings is *The Virgin Chastises the Infant Jesus Before Three Witnesses: André*

Breton, Paul Eluard and the Artist, 1926, oil on canvas, 196 x 130 cm, Cologne, Museum Ludwig. The artist was excommunicated by the Archbishop of Cologne when this painting was first exhibited. (See fig. and explanation in Berlin 1999, 92 f. Exhibition catalogue). Reproductions of the two versions of *L'ange du foyer* in Berlin 1999, 164 f. Exhibition catalogue.

[61] Kantor 2016 a, 12 f.

[62] Maxim Kantor's novel *Krasnyj Svet* (Red Light) testifies to his extensive knowledge of twentieth century Russian and German history. He spent years conducting research in archives for this novel. Unfortunately, the German translation has been abridged by several hundred pages so that little remains of the documents that the author quotes here.

[63] Interview 2016, 182.

[64] Kantor has repeatedly painted still lifes, and here we can follow his artistic development, see Interview 2016, 184 f.

[65] Kantor/Kantor 1995, 140.

[66] Interview 2016, 157.

[67] Ibid.

[68] Gdansk 2016, 49. Exhibition catalogue. A reproduction of the 2007 *Crucifixion* can be found on p. 50.

[69] Interview 2016, 185.