



ANDREJ BABENKO



Portfolio of the Artist

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Andrej Babenko is een Belgische kunstenaar van Oekraïense afkomst. Zijn werk is bekend om zijn tastbare plasticiteit en expressiviteit.

Vanuit zijn natuurlijke, turbulente creatieve talent vertrekt Babenko van de realiteit en plooit hij zich terug op het existentiële en mythologische. Zijn schilderijen zetten de toeschouwer heel even op het verkeerde been. Ze zijn complex en vragen tijd en aandacht om de gelaagdheid en verschillende perspectieven te kunnen ontwaren.

In zijn werk toont Babenko vandaag wat morgen belangrijk kan zijn.

Babenko's stijl beslaat een brede waaier: van pop art, comics, neo-expressionisme en graffiti op canvas tot klassieke schilderijen en tekeningen. In hun diversiteit vormen al deze stijlen toch één geheel in zijn werk, net als de wereld en het leven zelf. Dankzij zijn migratieachtergrond slaagt Babenko erin om met grote gratie uitersten samen te brengen: het folkloristische van zijn Oekraïense achtergrond en het conceptuele van België.



In zijn artistiek laboratorium experimenteert en vernieuwt Babenko met open vragen over het menselijk bestaan. De weerspiegeling van de menselijke ziel in zijn werken is onvergelijkbaar.

Hij vraagt zich af waarom de geschiedenis zich telkens herhaalt, hoe hij als kunstenaar in een derde wereld oorlog is terechtgekomen, hoe de mens zich staande houdt in de rat race en de jachtige economische realiteit van onze maatschappij en hoe het kan dat rust en privacy luxe zijn geworden. Tegelijkertijd maakt hij gebruik van licht als magische metafoor voor de toekomst, voor een betere wereld zonder oorlogen, epidemies en klimaatopwarming. Andridiada is een betere planeet!

Andrej Babenko is a Belgian artist of Ukrainian descent. His work is known for its tangible plasticity and expression.

Based on his natural, turbulent creative talent, Babenko departs from reality and focuses on the existential and mythological. His paintings briefly mislead the viewer. They are complex and require time and attention to discern the different layers and perspectives.

Through his work, Babenko shows today what is important tomorrow.

Babenko's style covers a wide range: from pop art, comics, neo-expressionism and graffiti on canvas to classical paintings and drawings. In their diversity, these styles form one whole in his work, just like the world and life itself. Thanks to his migration background, Babenko manages to bring together extremes with great grace: the folkloric of his Ukrainian background and the conceptual of Belgium.



In his artistic laboratory, Babenko experiments and innovates with open questions about human existence. The reflection of the human soul in his works is incomparable.

He wonders why history keeps repeating itself, how he ended up as an artist in a third world war, how people survive in the rat race and the hectic economic reality of our society and how peace and privacy managed to have become luxury goods. At the same time, he uses light as a magical metaphor for the future, for a better world without wars, epidemics and global warming. Andridiada is a better planet!

Babenko is a Belgian visual artist of Ukrainian descent. He grows up in an environment permeated with Soviet propaganda. Socialist realism reigns: stately art depicting Soviet reality in its most heroic form to portray the ultimate dream of communism as the governing regime.

During his early school years, Babenko keeps a scrap book with the latest news from the newspapers Izvestij and Pravda. He spends his after-school hours in drawing school, where he is named the best painter, draftsman and lino-cutter. His artistic talent will continue to play a crucial role in his life: on the one hand to escape reality and find peace and quiet, on the other to decipher reality in all its complexity, in and through the creative process.

Using gouache he makes wall newspapers in which he incorporates his experimental photos. The small bathroom of barely five square meters functions as an improvised dark room: photos are developed between the bath, sink, toilet and washing machine. When someone needs to use the toilet, the folding table above the toilet is emptied to make room for more mundane needs.

In 1986 - Babenko is 12 years old - the unthinkable happens: nuclear reactor 4 of Chernobyl explodes. The entire family temporarily flees to North Ossetia. Despite the difficult circumstances the stay proves to be a great source of inspiration for the artist.

The family visits the work of the painter Aivasovsky, known for his seascapes and coastal scenes. In nature, Babenko marvels at the sight of vultures and rainbow bee-eaters, indulges in swimming in the ice-cold Terek and dreams away at the view of the snowy peaks of the fairytale Kazbek and Elbrus. This new, exotic world is reflected in countless drawings in his sketchbook. Unfortunately, destruction is not far off here either. Tensions between the Ingush and Ossetians lead to street fights and Babenko unexpectedly ends up in an offshoot of a fight. At the residential block he is staying in, he is not only targeted as a foreigner, but also considered deviant. With his sketchbook full of bird portraits and nature scenes, the artist personally experiences the fighters' stance towards the sensitive outsider that is Babenko.

Love for nature is a common thread through Babenko's life. Back in Kyiv, he finds an injured gray heron and nurses it in his bedroom. He does the same with a nest of newborn squirrels. The artist marvels at the exotic fauna and flora in the Red Data Book, his favorite USSR nature encyclopedia documenting rare and endangered animal and plant species. During his migration to Belgium, Babenko loses his precious copy, but thanks to a Russian musician friend - Nik Rock N Roll - he manages to get his hands on a second-hand first edition of the book.

About the artist

From an early age, Babenko feels like an outsider. He falls short of the ideal of the sporty, spartan Soviet boy and prefers to indulge in daydreaming and drawing. It becomes more and more difficult to reconcile the imposed uniformity and hypocrisy of the Soviet ideal with his own otherness, sensitivity and interests. He radically withdraws from the Soviet idea and flees his parental home towards Saint Petersburg. In search of freedom and breathing space, he feeds on the art and culture he comes across. He becomes a member of a punkband, for which he writes cynical poems based on the absurd theater of Daniil Harms. The band MVD will later grow into the renowned Brati Gadukini. At the same time, he continues to draw and paint and remains inspired by the classical school of Ukrainian and Russian painters and writers who in turn have their roots in Greek mythology: Ivan Kotliarevsky Eneida, Taras Shevchenko, Gogol Vii, Bulgakov and Malevich.

After many wanderings in Russia and Ukraine, Babenko emigrates to Belgium, where he continues to develop his talents. He obtains a diploma as a free, artistic graphic designer, illustrator and painter and after his studies gets selected from more than 150 candidates to start working at Opera Ballet Flanders. Under the direction of intendant Aviel Cahn, Babenko leaves his mark on the visual material of the institution, ranging from banners and posters to program booklets and seasonal brochures. The artist guides the artistic process from concept to execution. For each production, he creates one or more drawings or paintings based on the concept, on which the visual material is based. Several of those drawings are in the private collection of Aviel Cahn. Another one is the best-selling piece at a charity gala organized by the opera house.

Driven by the success of his work at Opera Ballet Flanders, Babenko pursues his career as a full-time independent artist. Armed with his keen powers of observation, his work denounces the hypocrisy of people and society and pokes fun at the toxic positivity ideal. He depicts the alienation he experiences when he looks life's absurdity straight in the face. And always there is the feeling of being the eternal outsider: in his native country he did not live up to expectations, and also in his host country he remains the outsider. His work breathes deep humanity. In contrast with today's desire for manufacturability, perfection, digitization and artificial intelligence, Babenko pleads for more humanity. Personal experiences of the artist are elevated to universal feelings through his work. Look for the subtle elements that harbor the naive conviction of the existence of a better world, of hope and of a suffering that can be alleviated: a bird of paradise, a blue morpho or the floral motif on the wallpaper in his grandmother's house. Similarities with (neo)romanticism are easily detected in Babenko's choice of themes and visual language.

Over the years, Babenko experiments with a variety of materials, from watercolor, acrylic and oil paint over markers, gouache and Chinese ink to stencils and graffiti spray cans. His work evolves from the somewhat underground style in the early years to increasingly systematically substantiated and finished creations. During the corona period, he returns to his roots and invests in his further development by taking a year-long course in classical Russian drawing and painting techniques.

About the artist

He learns to prepare canvases after the old fashion, with gelatin and pigment. He makes freehand drawings with graphite and charcoal, with interlocking primitive geometric figures, according to the golden ratio, in crossed or parallel perspectives. He develops them with pure pigment and pencil, searching for the light, the shadow and the mid tones. Tempera and watercolor powder add colour, and a rather unusual combination with glaze layers in oil paint brings depth. The whole is finished with graffiti spray cans as in his earlier years and a layer of varnish. The final result refers to the classic icons, in a contemporary rendition.

With the start of the war in Ukraine, Babenko, a restless soul by nature, again faces a major psychological challenge. With his entire family in and around Kyiv - and the impossibility of helping them - the artist is once again in the wrong place in the world. He starts his largest work to date, a canvas of 6 by 2 meters. The fear for the safety of his family, the reports of fallen friends and the harrowing stories of former classmates about their flight with their children drive the artist to despair. He continues to work to give structure to his life and thus to survive. In the process he finds comfort, and meaning in the meaningless. It is confirmed once again: painting helps him to escape reality and find peace and quiet, but also to face that reality razor-sharp. Art offers comfort, but above all it is a silent, dear friend.

Babenko has shown his work in S.M.A.K., Dr. Guislain museum, M HKA, ExtraCity, at Pukkelpop and at various private institutions. In addition to classical exhibitions, he has been involved in museal crossover projects with live painting, music and poetry. In that context he collaborated with, among others, Mauro Pawlowski, Dirk De Wachter and Aleksey Gorbunov.

Hans Willemse, collection editor at the museum of contemporary art Antwerp, describes Babenko's work as follows: *"What is special about his work is the striking synergy of styles and cultures. He mixes spray cans and oil paint, combines punk with jazz, and creates wild compositions with classical patterns. He is East and West, past and present, and slightly ahead of time. One reads Jheronimus Bosch or Brueghel in his work, but above all a lot of Babenko. It should come as no surprise that he was always "the best draftsman in class" at school. Unraveling origin, identity and artistic influence by different political-cultural backgrounds can only lead to new insights, both for the artist and the viewer. Art is the most important school of learning; by looking closely one learns to understand "*

Babenko is listed in the [Artist Database](#), the Belgian list of professional artists and art heritage.

New website <http://www.babenkobelgium.com>

About the artist

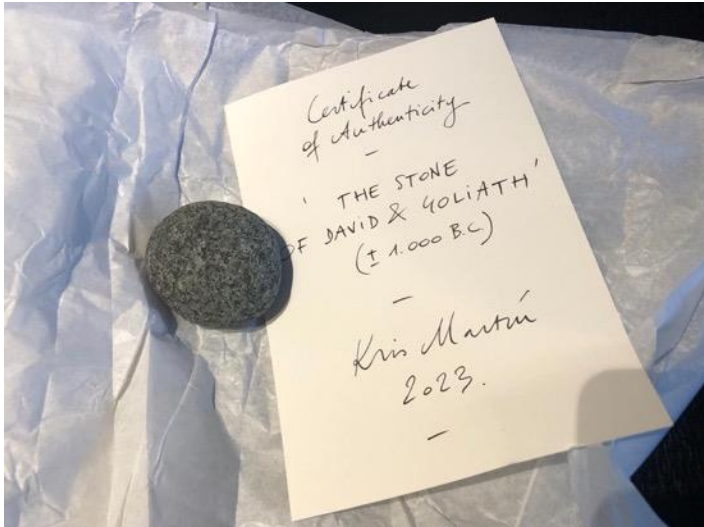
Art Armor

Art Armor is an art-charity project set up in Ukraine and supported by President Zelensky. Ukrainian and international artists are invited to create a work of art on an authentic armor plate, which is subsequently put up for auction in London. The proceeds of the auction are used for the purchase of defence material such as de-mining equipment, bulletproof vests and helmets.

Babenko and fellow artist Kris Martin were invited to participate in this project for Belgium. The work was exhibited at S.M.A.K. Ghent,



David and Goliath, spray paint on armor plate, stone with certificate of authenticity, 2023





Babenco at S.M.A.K. Ghent talking about the project and his work with meuseum director Philippe Van Cauteren, fellow artist and project collaborator Kris Martin and the Ukrainian embassy to Belgium



The story of David and Goliath is one of the best-known and beloved stories of the Old Testament. The brave David goes into battle with the almost three-meter-tall fighter Goliath. David wins the battle by a well-aimed stone from his sling.

With the allegory, Babenko and Martin refer to the war in Ukraine and the giant that the country is fighting against. The armor plate comes from a bulletproof vest worn by a Ukrainian fighter. The certificate of authenticity gives the impression that the original stone of David, more than three thousand years old, is on display. For a moment, the viewer is misled, concluding eventually that there is nothing new. There is just history repeating itself.

Babenko, Ukrainian by descent, has committed himself to the Art Armor project in the hope of keeping the war in Ukraine in the spotlight. The artworks from the project will be auctioned. The proceeds will be used to support Ukraine.



Броньированная
Класс защиты - 4
(ДСТУ В 4103-2002)
Лист № 1/1
Вирб № 604

ART ARMOR

plate
#065



Certificate
of Authenticity

THE STONE
OF DAVID & GOLIATH
(± 1.000 B.C.)

Kris Martin
2023.

Practical Info [Buy your ticket here](#) en ▼

S.M.A.K.



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↵ Andrej Babenko & Kris Martin in the entrance hall of S.M.A.K.

Andrej Babenko & Kris Martin in the entrance hall of S.M.A.K.



S.M.A.K. stelt kunstwerk voor Oekraïne tentoon

Het S.M.A.K. zal de volgende twee weken een werk tentoonstellen van de Oekraïense kunstenaar Andrej Babenko en Kris Martin. Het werk kadert in het Art Armor-project, een artistiek liefdadigheidsproject dat opgezet werd in Oekraïne en ondersteund wordt door president Volodymyr Zelensky.

Kunstenaars maken hun werk op originele borstplaten van soldaten als statement tegen de oorlog. Na Gent verhuist het werk naar Londen, waar het geveild wordt. De opbrengt gaat naar steun voor Oekraïne.

Het werk van Babenko en Martin is een combinatie van een met graffiti bespoten borstplaat en een steen, waarbij een echtheidscertificaat ligt als zou dat het 3.000 jaar oude wapen van David zijn. De kunstenaars verwijzen hiermee naar het verhaal van David en Goliath, of het kleine Oekraïne dat het moet opnemen tegen de reus Rusland.

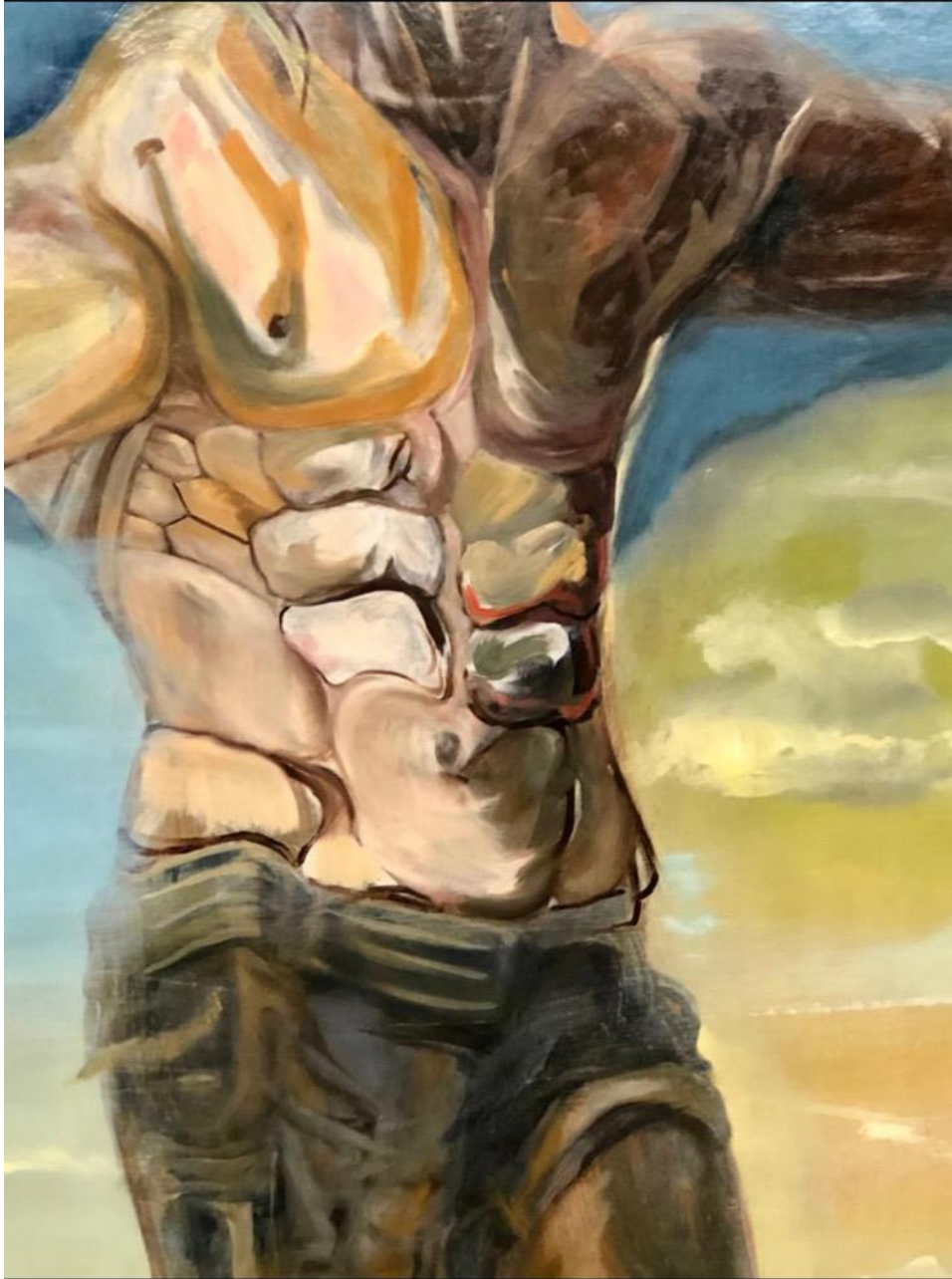
“Heel even wordt de toeschouwer hiermee misleid, om uiteindelijk vast te stellen dat er niets nieuws onder de zon is. Er is alleen de geschiedenis die zich herhaalt”, zo klinkt het. (DM)



Paintings



UA22022022/Fata Morgana, oil and spray paint on canvas, 650 x 210 cm, 2022



Detail from UA22022022/Fata Morgana, oil and spray paint on canvas, 650 x 210 cm, 2022



UA22022022

Babenko began working on this monumental work of art on 22/02/2022 in response to the alarming reports of an impending war in Ukraine, and two days before the start of the actual offensive. The artist's entire family lives in Ukraine. The fear for his family's safety, the reports of friends killed in action and the harrowing stories from former classmates about their flight with children drove the artist to despair at times. Still, he continued to work to bring structure to his life in order to stay sane. In the artistic process, he found solace, and meaning in the meaningless.

Although this iconic work was made during the war, positivity and light prevail. This was a conscious and deliberate choice by the artist: the painting serves as a kind of antidote to the terrible images that come at us daily.

The artwork contains numerous references to Ukraine: from Pechersk Lavra (the Caves Monastery) in Kyiv over the traditional costumes of women to the vulture falcon, the national bird of Ukraine. These elements refer not only to the artist's background and loving memories, but also to the burning wish that Ukraine and Ukrainian culture will eventually prevail.



Detail from UA22022022/Fata Morgana



Detail from UA22022022/Fata Morgana



The first premonition
 Inspirational sketch for UA22022022/Fata Morgana

Detail from UA22022022/Fata Morgana

*In the artistic
process, he found
solace, and
meaning in the
meaningless*





Detail from UA22022022/Fata Morgana

I sob

I feel so sorry for Sergei and his family - I can't calm down now

Sitting on the balcony, smoking, drinking wine

Even my husband is afraid to approach me

There was hope, since April he had disappeared,

but they hoped that maybe he would show up somewhere

I now remember how he once told me how he envied you and me, our love

I need to cry

We are alive, thank God, but Gavrilyuk is no more

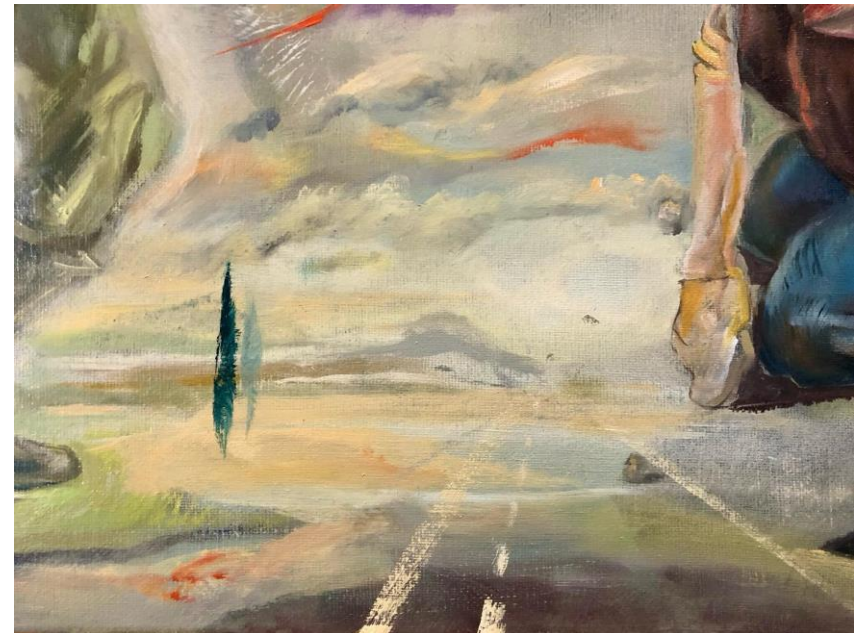
His wife will never hug him again



Whatsapp message from Babenko's
schoolfriend reporting on the death of their
common friend Gavrilyuk in the war, 10
February 2023



Drone, oil paint on canvas, 60 x 80 cm,
2023





Free drawing, inspiration for Donbass drone



Babenko at Planerskoe, Crimea, 1980



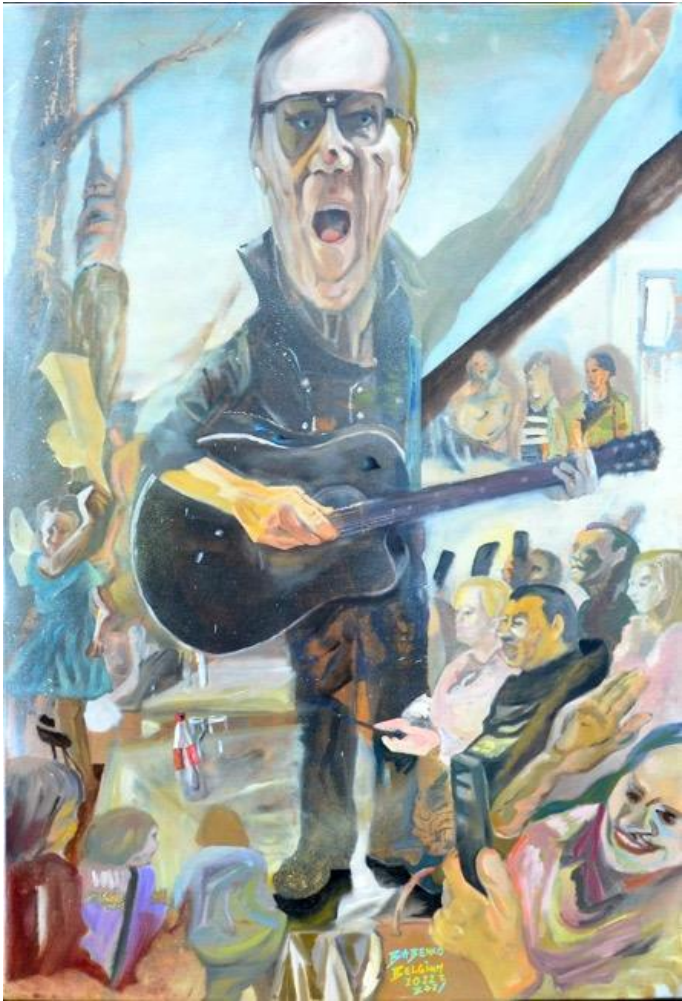
Performance by Aleksey Gorbunov in front of Babenko's work at exhibition The World is Burning, Mol, Belgium, 2022

Babenko and Gorbunov, a celebrated Ukrainian actor and musician, immediately hit it off when they first met in 2014. Babenko's silk screened T-shirts made it on screen in one of the tv series Gorbunov acted in at the time in Moskow. As a consequence of the war in Ukraine, Gorbunov was forced to flee the country and took up residence in the Netherlands.

This brought the two artists in more frequent contact, with Gorbunov performing at the finissage of the exhibition of The World is Burning, where Babenko's paintings were on display. 'Aleksey Gorbunov' is Babenko's painting resulting from that collaboration. The two artists have since worked together on several projects, amongst which a number of charity events for Ukraine.

Left: Aleksey Gorbunov, oil paint on canvas, prepared in traditional fashion (gelatinized, base layer application and polished), 80 x 120 cm, 2023

Winner of Teravarna 6th portrait talent prize award



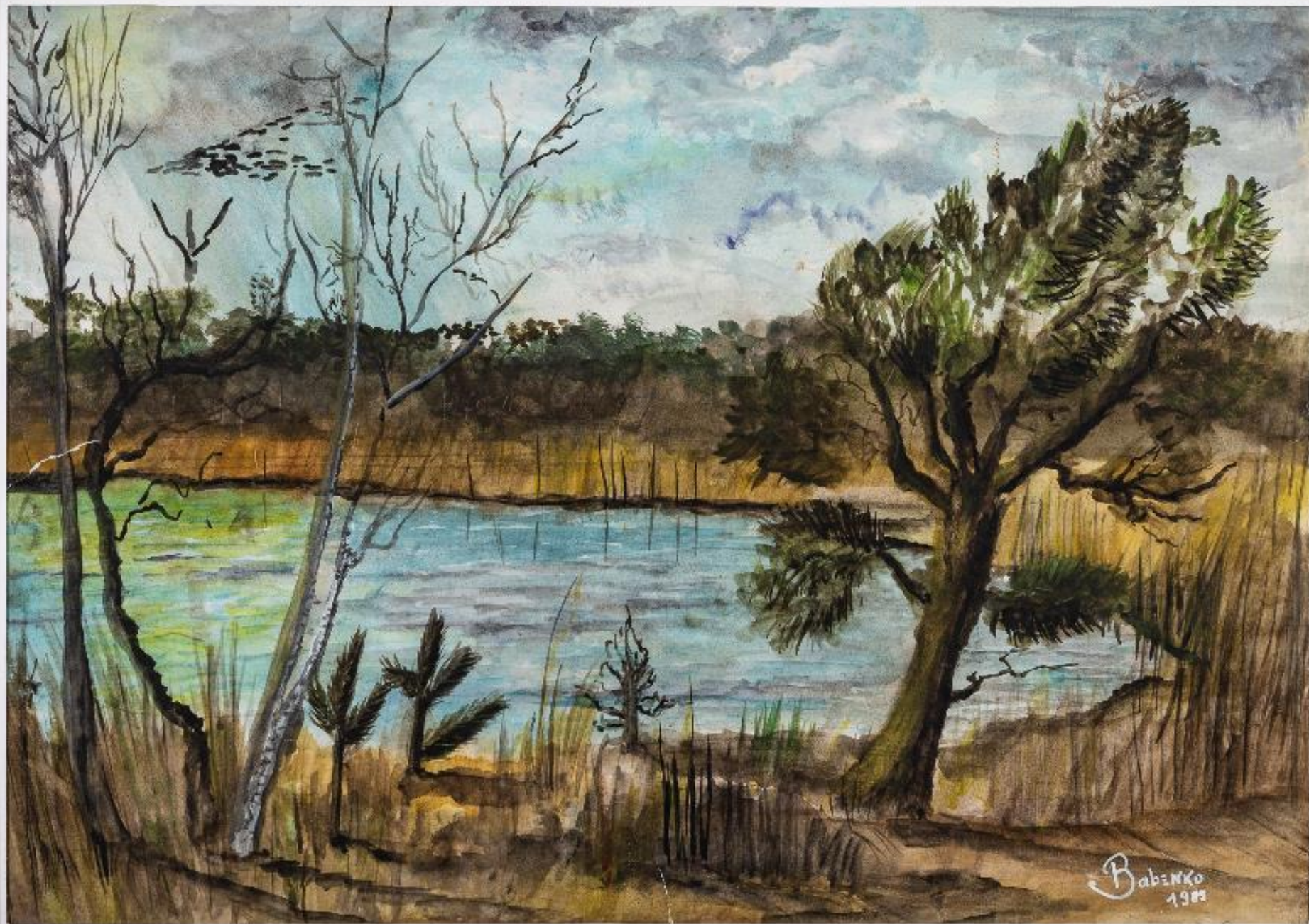


Babenko started this work in 2010. The original design depicted Bessarabian market in Kyiv, the place where his mother used to work for many years. However, the painting remained stagnant and was never finalized. Babenko's mother unfortunately passed away in 2023. Due to the war, the artist could not attend her funeral and support Babenko's family in Ukraine during this difficult time. The artist returned to the original work to process his grief. The final result is a universal ode to all Babuschkas.

Song for Babuschka, acrylic paint, tempera, spray paint and marker on paper, 63 x 49 cm, 2010 - 2024

On April 26, 1986, reactor 4 of the Chernobyl nuclear power plant exploded. It was the worst nuclear disaster to date. A resident of Kyiv, just 100 km away from Chernobyl, Babenko, along with countless other children, was temporarily placed in host families in Ossetia and on the Caspian Sea. There he often went out with a sketchbook, on the one hand worrying about the disaster and its consequences, while on the other enjoying the nature and bird populations of his temporary residence. Both these sides are reflected in this watercolour drawing.

Tsjernobyl, aquarel on paper, framed, 70 x 50 cm, 1986





Old Boyarka church, cut on birch bark, framed,
20 x 16,5 cm, 1988



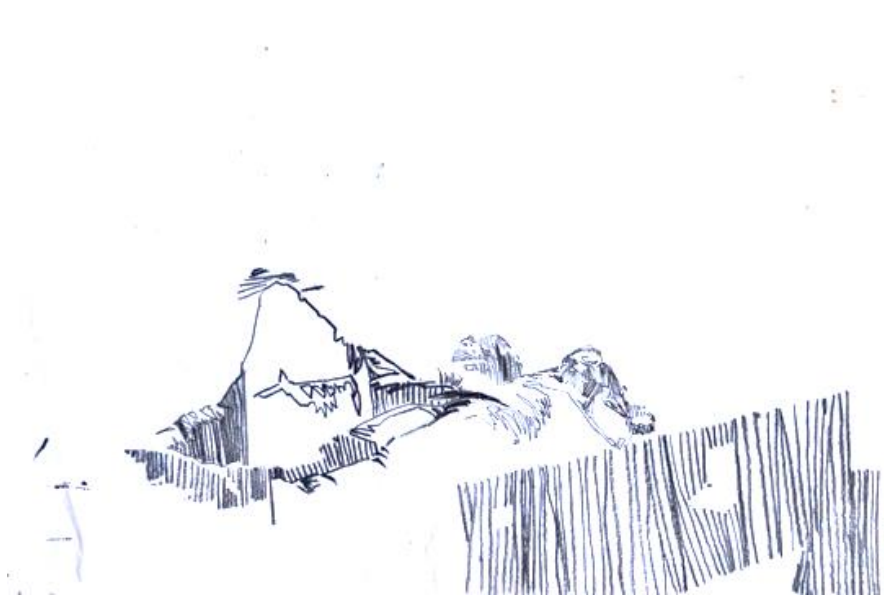
Nationalestraat, oil & spray paint on canvas, 60 x 80 cm, 2014



Ghaza gift shop, oil paint and spray paint on canvas, 120 x 80 cm, 2014 - 2024



Imagine, oil paint, markers, and spray paint on canvas, 250 x 125 cm, 2014



Preparatory sketches for Imagine

Imagine on display at VCR gallery, Antwerp, 2014



Putting up the painting 'Imagine op de Meir' at its new owner, not far from the street it was inspired by. Happy it found such a good home!

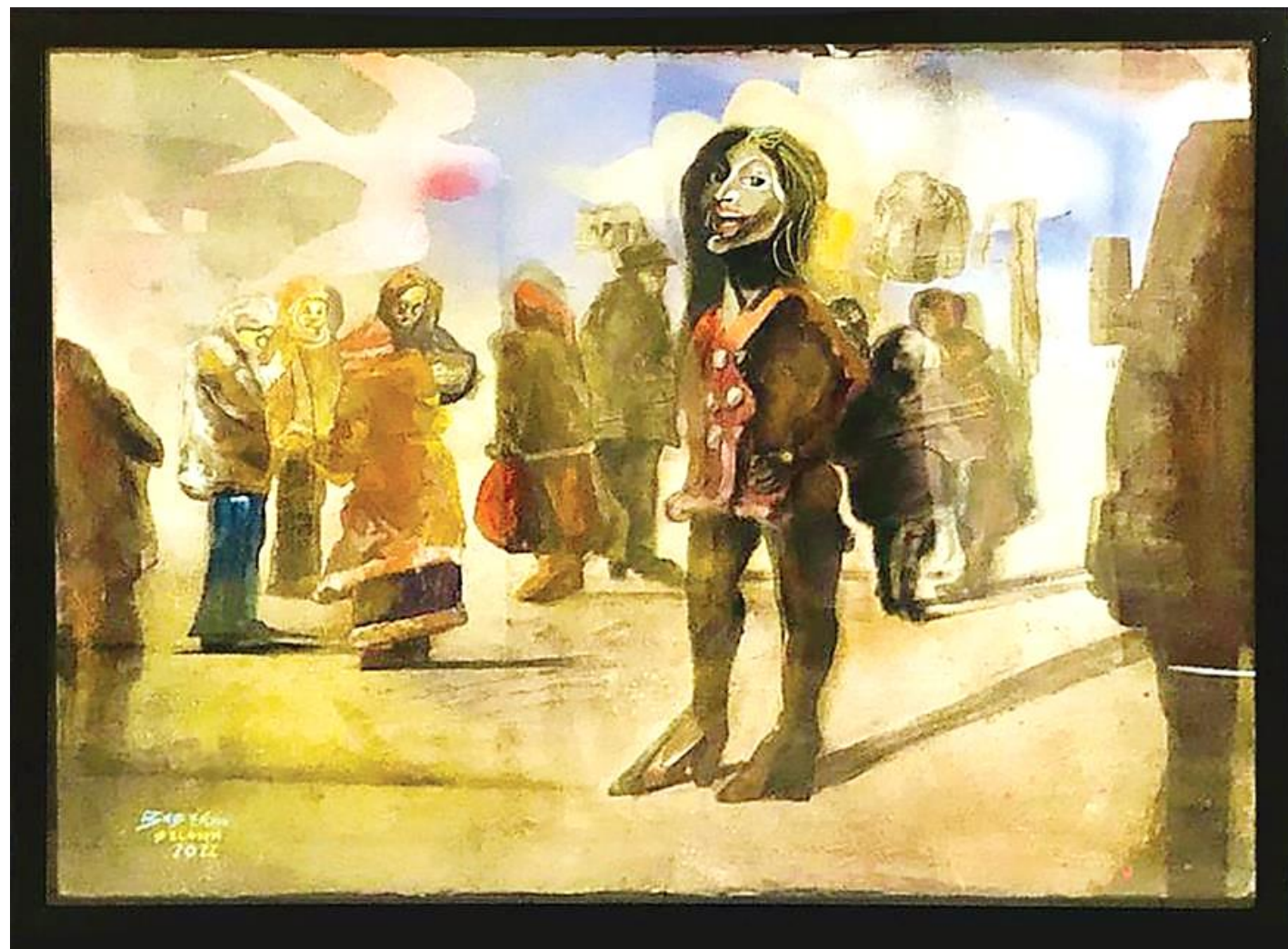
Komsomolskaya, a station on the Sviatoshynsko-Brovarska line of the Kiev metro, was one of the stops on Babenko's journeys to and from central Kyiv, where he took a stand against the ruling power as a teenager and punk. This led to arrests and physical intimidation by the police on more than one occasion. In 1993 the name of the station, which still referred to communism, was changed to the politically neutral name Chernihivska.

Metro Komsomolskaja, acrylic paint and marker on paper, 80 x 60 cm, 2010
In private collection





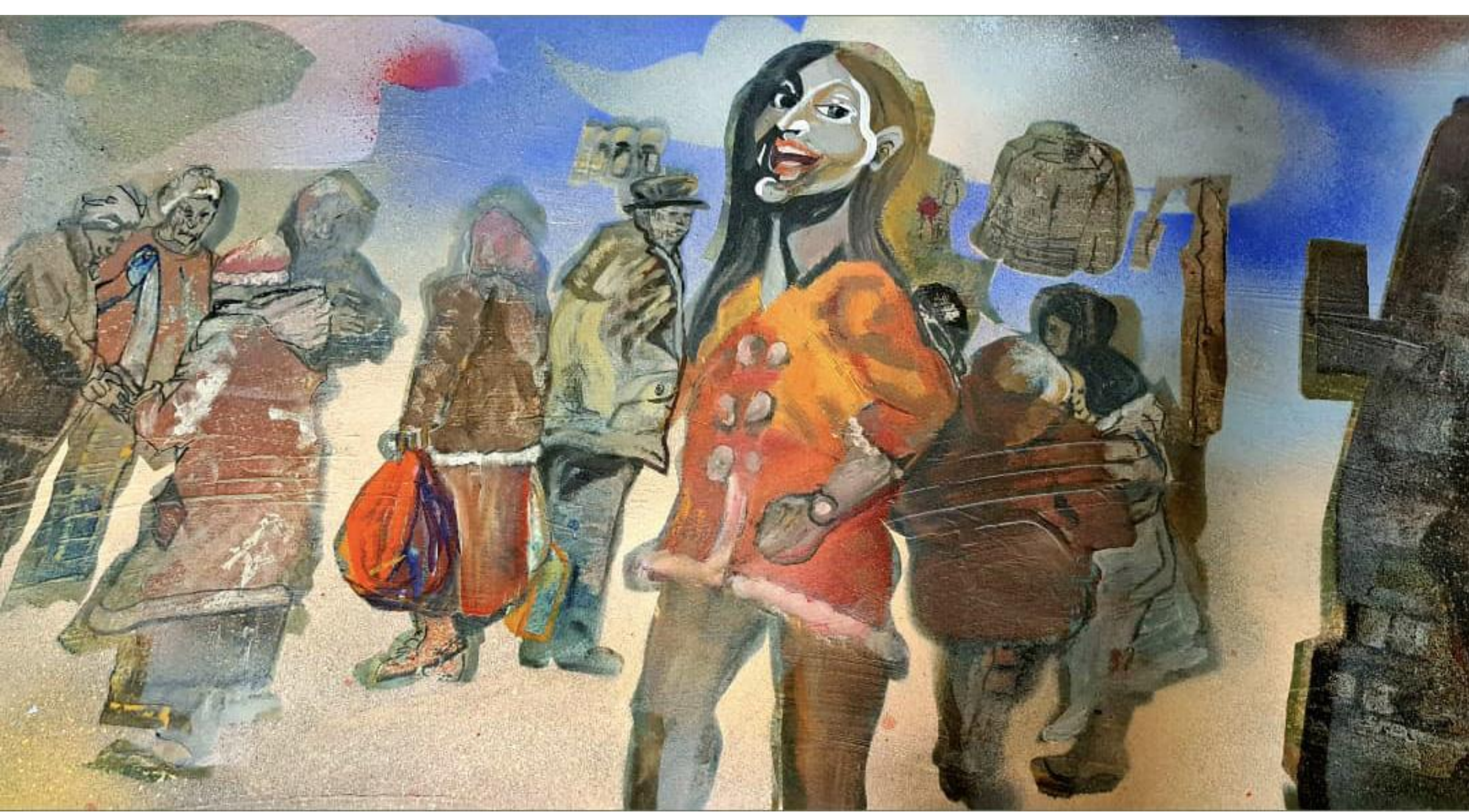
Study for Kyiv Pionerskoja

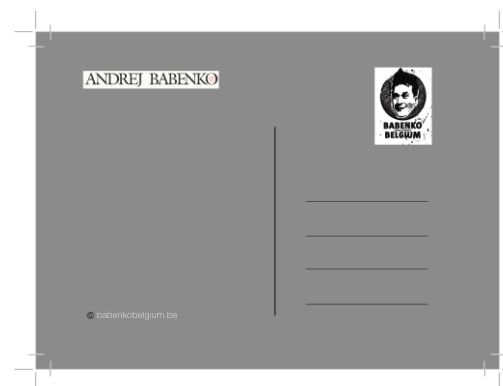
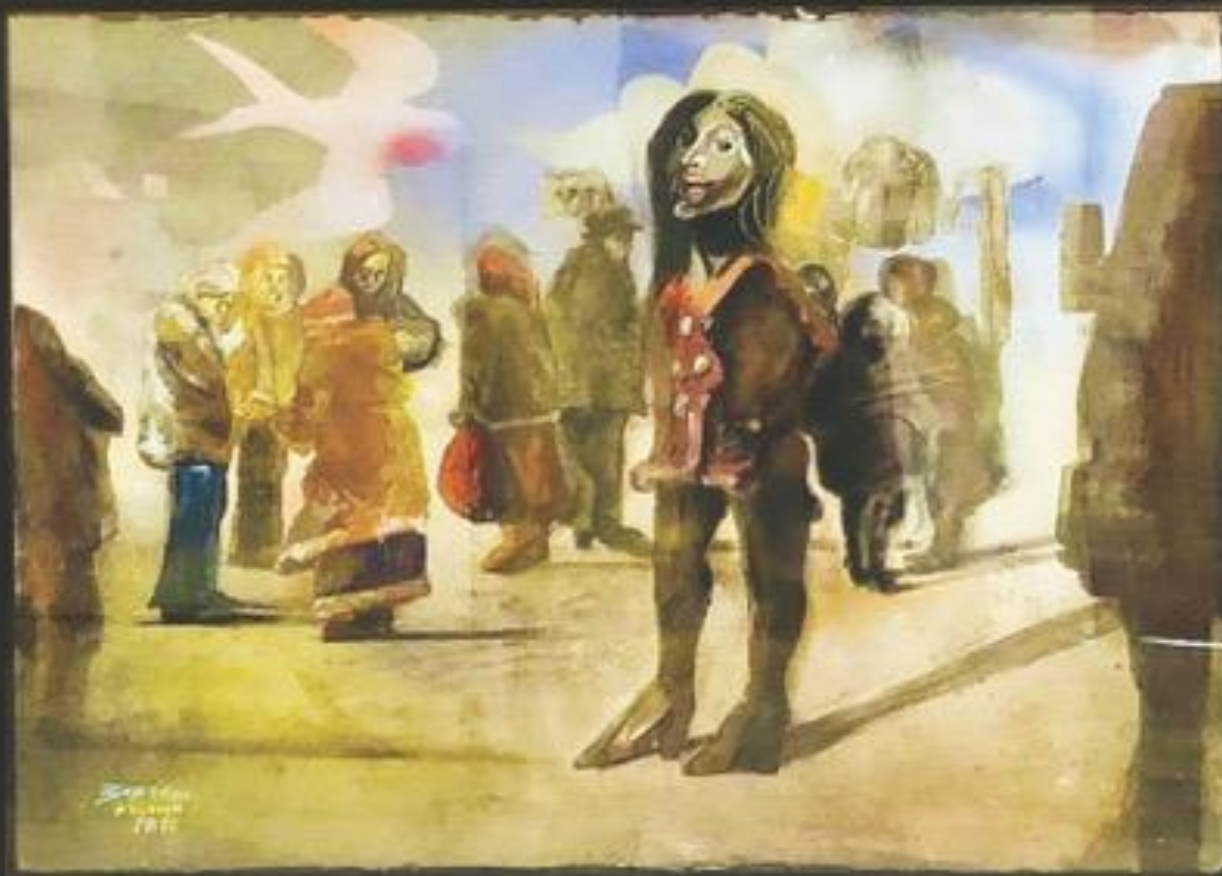


Kyiv Pionerskoja, acrylic paint and marker on paper, 80 x 60 cm, 2010

Shopping street & fashion academy, oil paint, tempera and
spray paint on canvas, 80 x 80 cm, 2014-2022







Kyiv Metro Pionirskaja, postcard



The Very Same Munchhausen,
painting in progress , oil paint on canvas, 60 x 90cm, 2020



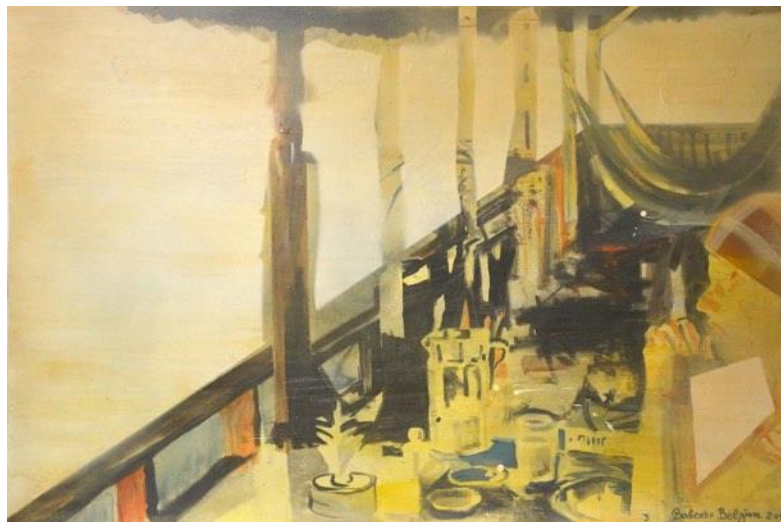
Sketch for The Very Same Munchhausen, pen on
paper, 2020



Billboard, acrylic paint and marker on paper, 70 x 50 cm, 2005



Top left: Malevich' black square,
oil & spray paint on canvas,
120 x 80 cm, 2011



Top right: Rainforest dream,
oil & spray paint on canvas,
120 x 80 cm, 2011



Bottom left: Holiday, oil and
spray paint on canvas, 120 x
80 cm, 2011

In private collection of Tom
Van Dijk, Belgian actor



Bottom right: Boats, oil and
spray paint on canvas, 120 x
80 cm, 2011

In private collection



Antwerp South, oil & spray paint on canvas, 120 x 80 cm, 2018, in progress



Study and documentation for Antwerp South



Paradise, acrylic & oil on canvas, 120 x 80 cm, 2009
In private collection



The painter's dear wife, acrylic, oil & spray paint on canvas,
120 x 100 cm, 2009
Reworked 2023

City haze, oil and spray paint on canvas, 90 x 30 cm, 2014

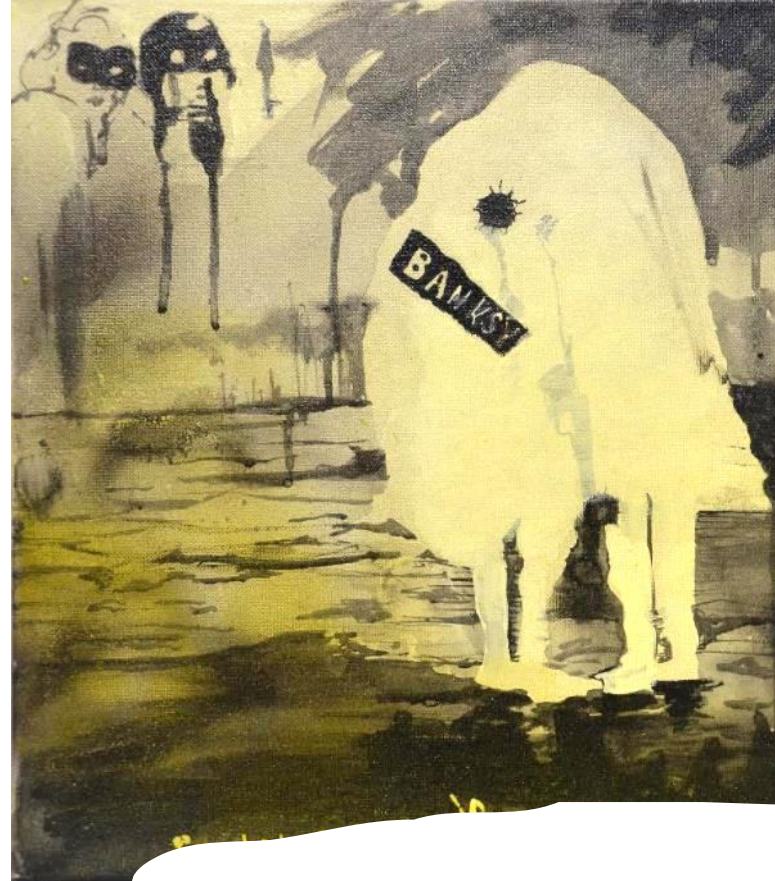


Eilandje, oil and spray paint on canvas, 100 x 80 cm, 2011

Oh, that sweetness, oil and spray paint on canvas, 80 x120 cm, 2015



Banksy Dream, silk screen and paint on canvas, 40 x 50 cm, 2014



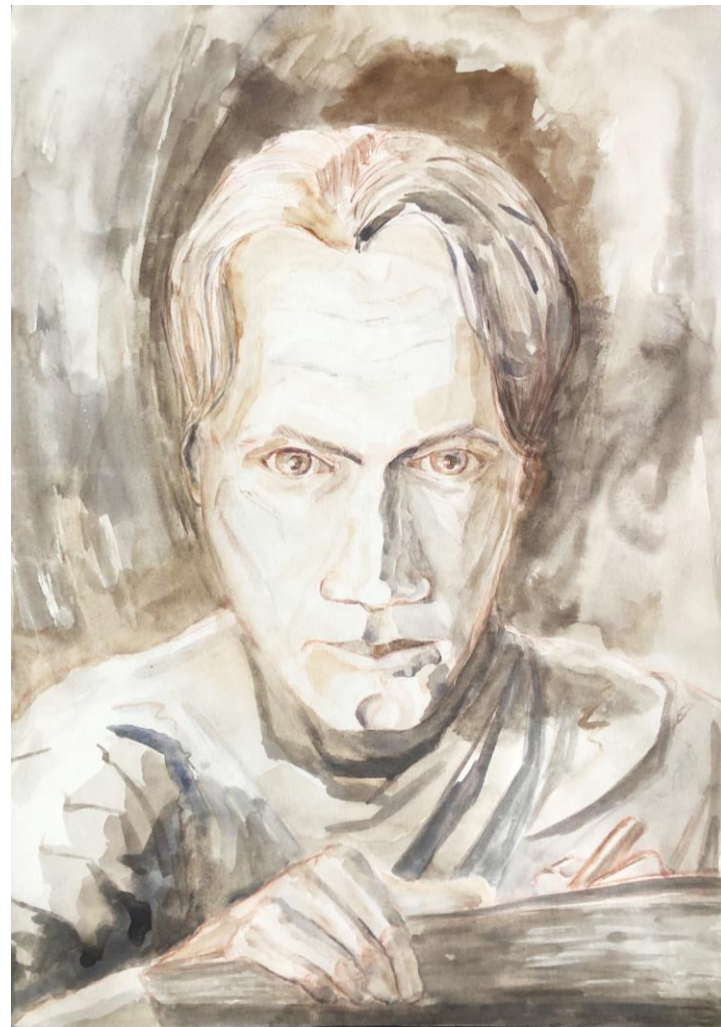
Details from

Oh, that sweetness, oil and spray paint on canvas, 80 x 120 cm, 2015

Banksy Dream, silk screen and paint on canvas, 40 x 50 cm, 2014

Eilandje, oil and spray paint on canvas, 100 x 80 cm, 2011

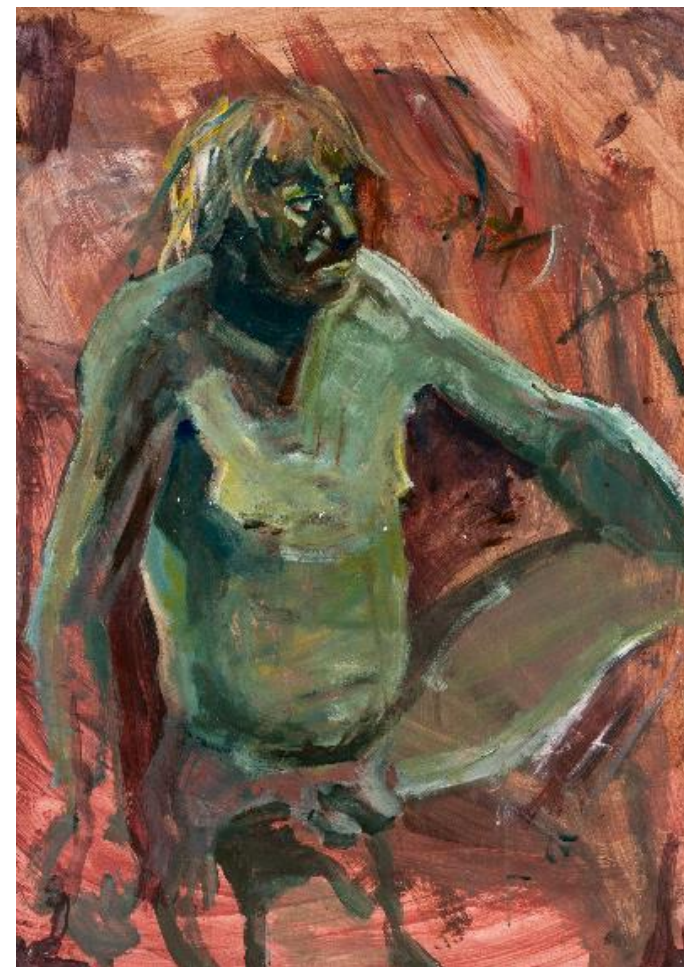
City haze, oil and spray paint on canvas, 90 x 30 cm, 2014



Self-portraits

Acrylic paint on paper, 29 x 39 cm, 2001

Aquarel on paper, 29 x 39 cm, 2001



Studies, oil paint on paper, 70 x 90 cm, 2004
Royal Academy for Fine Arts, Antwerp



Kiev bazar
 acrylic paint, marker, pigment & spray paint on paper,
 framed, 80 x 60 cm, 2009
 In private collection



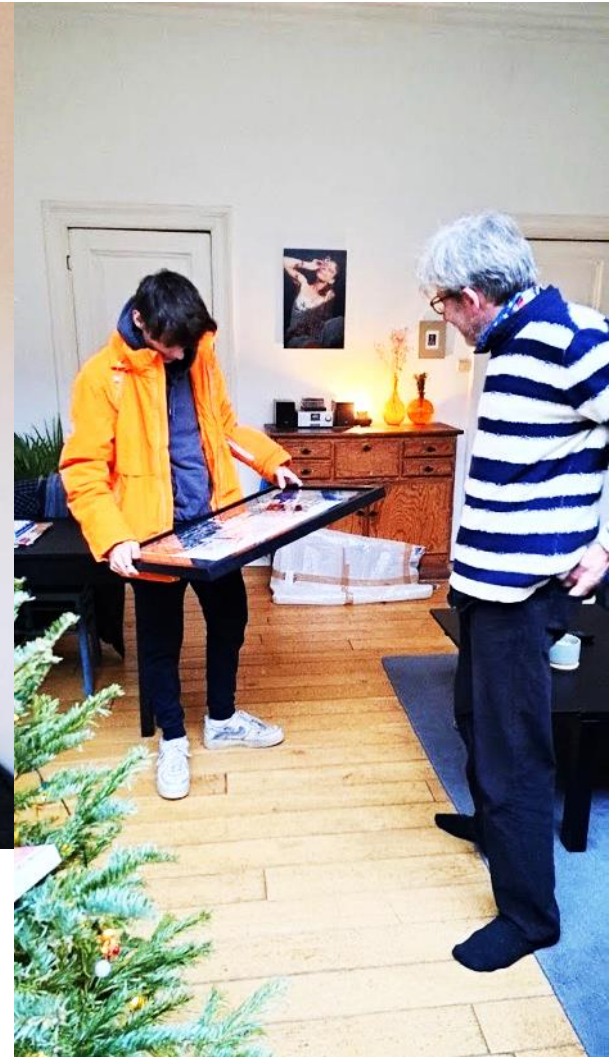
Costa-Rica pub,
 acrylic paint, marker, pigment & spray paint on paper,
 framed, 80 x 60 cm, 2009
 In private collection
 Berlin & Japan



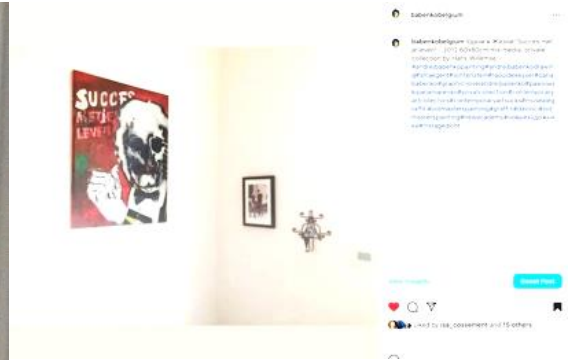
*“He is East
and West,
past and
present, and
slightly
ahead of
time”*

Hans Willemse, Museum of Contemporary Art, Antwerp

Skyline, acrylic paint and marker on paper, 80 x 60 cm, 2004



Private collection of Hans Willemse - 10 paintings, drawings, T-shirts of Babenko



Succes met je leven (Good luck with your life),
stencil, collage, spray paint, 60 x 80 cm, 2011

Private collection of Hans Willemse

Andrej Babenko & Pure Evil collaboration,
London, 2011 after Banksy movie 'Exit through
the Gift shop'



Fashion girl, acrylic paint and marker on paper, framed, 70 x 50 cm, 2005
In private collection

Babenko made this work in response to a study assignment: 'What did you dream last night'? He had arrived in Belgium a few years earlier, had difficulties with the language and was poor. With a weekly budget of barely 50 euro, he was dependent on food banks. Buying supplies for school assignments was often not an option at all. On more than one occasion this led to negative reactions from teachers. There were however also other teachers and students who helped him: selling a drawing to a mentor for 50 euro allowed the artist to go on for another week. It was however not the money of the sale which kept him going. Rather, it was the moral support, the appreciation of his work, the recognition of his talent and the support of his career choice.



Grab the bull by the horns, acrylic paint and marker on paper, framed,
59 x 42 cm, 2004



I Appreciate Art, cut copy paper, paint stick, pencil, spray paint & acrylic on 2 canvases, 160 x 60 cm, 2011





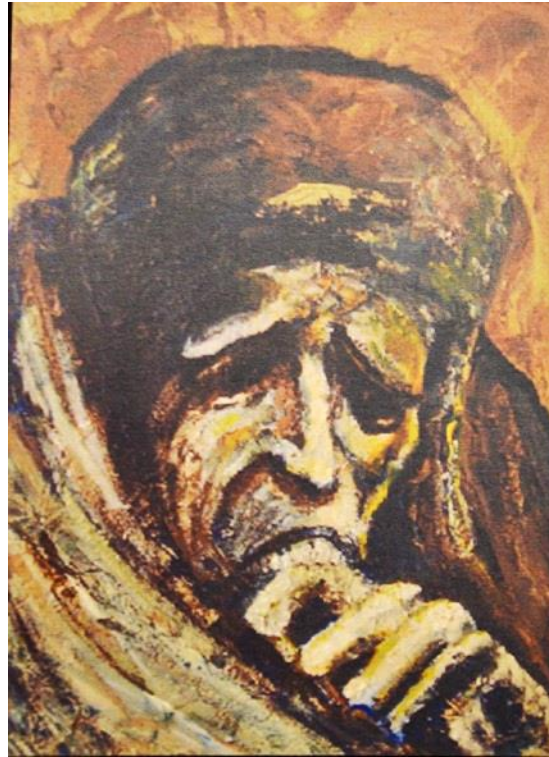
Hendrix, Rubens & Babenko, 140 x 100 cm, industrial & spray paint, pencil on canvas, 2011

Inspired by Ensor's masks

Hirst, Michelangelo & Babenko, 120 x 80 cm, silkscreen gold & white paint, spray paint on canvas, 2011



Studies, oil paint on paper, 73 x 55 cm, framed (top right), 70 x 90 cm (left), 2004
Royal Academy for Fine Arts, Antwerp



Famine, acrylic paint on canvas, 60 x 80 cm, 2004



Bottom: study inspired by song of Viktor Tsjoj Neo
Romantica,
oil paint on paper, 297 x 210 mm, 1990
Fine arts school, Boyarka, Ukraine



Study, oil paint on paper, 73 x 55 cm, 2004

Royal Academy of Fine Arts, Antwerp

*The thought that feelings
become softer does not
apply to me. I never had
that feeling.
Each love is added to the
older ones.
It becomes a multiplication.*

Resurrection, acrylic paint on cardboard, framed, 70 x100 cm, 2020-2022

In private collection



5th
FIGURATIVE
International Juried Art Competition
February 2023

WINNERS



Andrey Babitskiy



Andrey Babitskiy



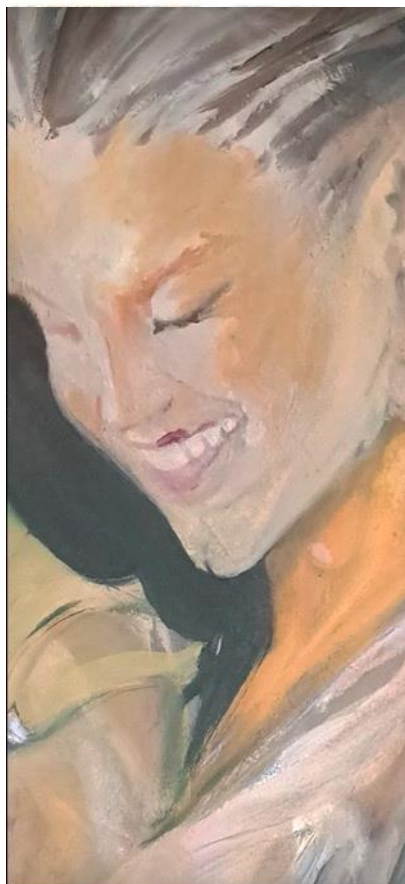
Andrey Babitskiy



Andrey Babitskiy



Andrey Babitskiy



Франц Егорьевич Дыков / Frant Bohumil
Doubek (Czech, 1865–1952) "la ryanerov" / "At
the Toilette", 1931 r. Xanct, macro / Oil on ...
See more



Perfect for you, oil and spray paint
on cardboard, framed, 70 x 100 cm,
2020 – 2023

Winner of Teravarna LA 6th

Figurative Honorable Mention Award





...After staring at the canvas for one hour, he gets up from his chair.
The difficult part is the fact that those women are intelligent and mature.
Cold coffee is standing on the windowsill.
He knows that.
You won't believe it, but this morning two peacocks were looking at each other
far over the eave.
A male and a female. Now they have flown away.
Peacocks exist in three varieties: the blue (*Pavo cristatus*), the green (*Pavo muticus*) and the ones from Congo (*Afropavo congensis*). They belong to the
family of the pheasant.
Coffee is his new decision.
It brings his mind to a certain point: how to go beyond his thoughts.
Unexpectedly he returns to old habits.
Nothing stronger than a female quire.

The thought that feelings become softer, doesn't count for me. I never had that
feeling.
Each love is added to the older ones.
It becomes a multiplication.
It's no delight.
Are you really not that sensible?...

Forgiveness, oil & spray paint on canvas, 70 x 70 cm, 2020.

Made to order. In private collection.

Forgiveness is Unforgiveness, by Dirk De Wachter, 33:22 min.

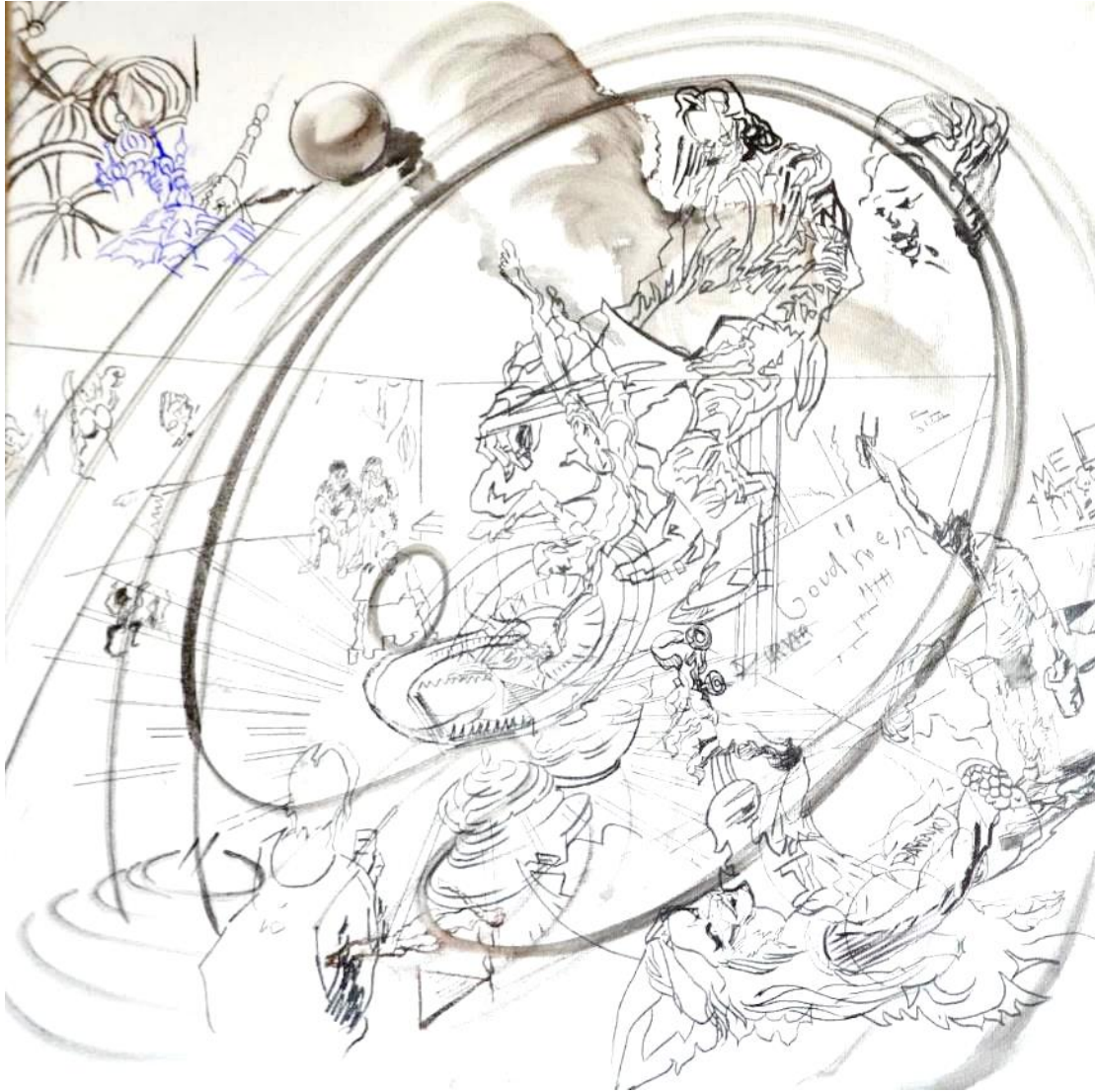


Despite the reference to war, this work was made well before the outbreak of the war in Ukraine. The painting represents Babenko's personal and professional tribulations during the corona pandemic. In addition, the colours of the painting are reminiscent of the necklaces with brightly coloured sea shells that were sold by the Black Sea in Crimea, the Babenko family's annual summer holiday destination. Much to his regret, however, the artist was never able to afford such a necklace as a child.

On top of the canvas is a cloth with traditional Ukrainian embroidering from mama and the words 'Make borscht not war'; references to John Lennon and Banksy are evident. The work also refers to the collaboration of the artist with Mauro Pawlowski and Dirk De Wachter, mostly in the form of live performances, with Babenko painting live, De Wachter reciting poems and Pawlowski providing the music. The trio performed in S.M.A.K. Ghent, in Extra City Antwerp and at Pukkelpop among others.

Make borscht not war, 60 x 60 cm, oil paint on canvas + textile, 2021



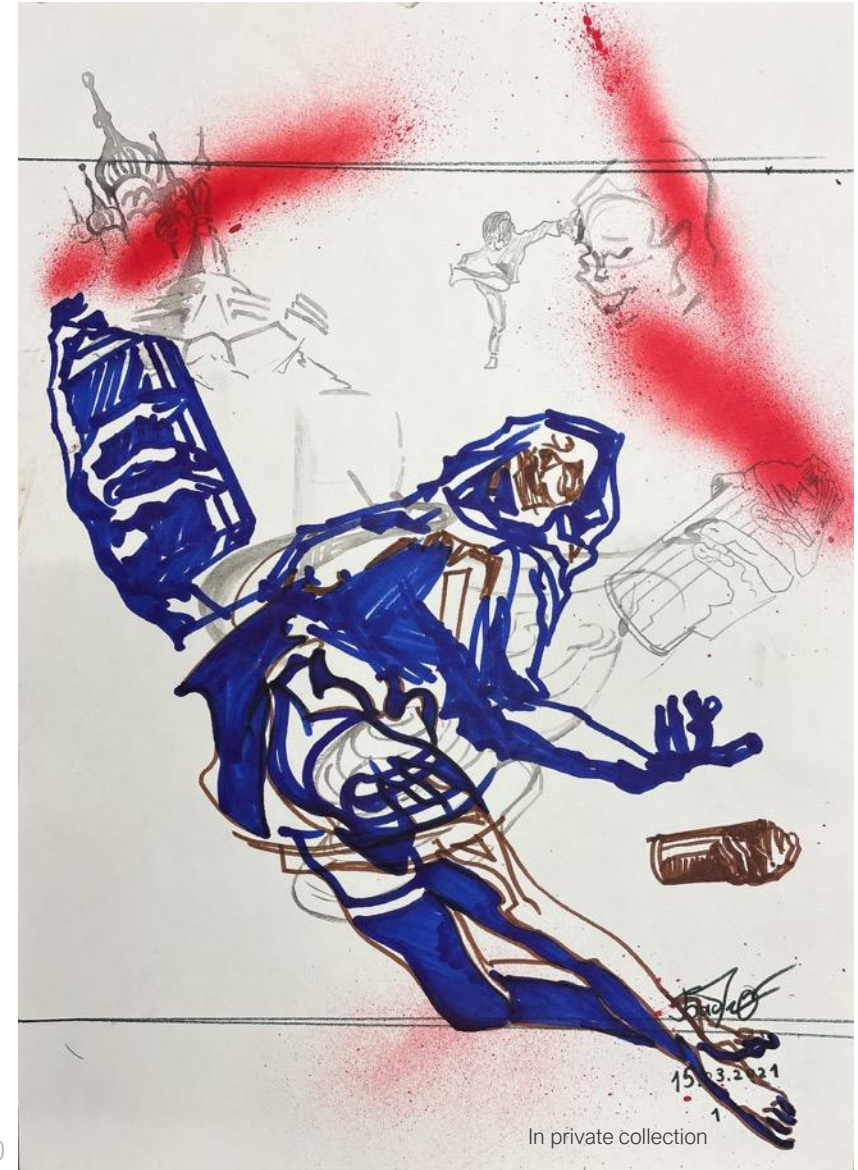


Studies for Make borscht, not war (previous page)





Sketches on paper A4, A3
for Make borscht, not war, '2020





Make borscht not war on display at Spuitwater, an exhibition at M HKA Inbox, Antwerp, 2021

Photo © Christine Clinckx



Cherson, 70 x 70 cm,
oil & spray paint on canvas, 2023



Sketches, pen and pencil on paper, aquarel on paper, Sardinia, 2022



Geraniums, aquarel on paper, 28 x 21 cm, 2022. Sold at fundraiser for Ukraine, 2023

Babenko edited this existing canvas portraying Vladimir Lenin. The canvas was originally bought in the 1980s in Moscow by H. Willemse, guest curator at Museum of Contemporary Art Antwerp (M HKA), former curator of the late Panamarenko's oeuvre and personal friend of Babenko. Willemse donated the work to Babenko for editing or processing in his art. The work shows an expressive reflection of the war aggression and associated emotions. It carries a message from one Vladimir (Lenin) to the other (Putin): "Vladimir, I am the star, and you are a cunt"!

The picture of these works was used for the project [Postcards for Ukraine](#), to which the artist was introduced by fellow artist Kris Martin and in which artist Jonathan Meese also participated.

Vladimir to Vladimir, spray paint on Lenin painting, 80 x 120 cm, 2022

Target, spray paint on painter's palette, 30 x 40 cm, 2022. In private collection





Галерея у Мюнхені продає листівки в обмін на допомогу Україні



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Munich, Bayern



amalnews.ua Майже два роки тому мюнхенський галерист Йоганнес Шперлінг та його сестра Франциска Ле Мер започаткували благодійний проект: вони попросили художників з усього світу створити "Листівку для України". Свій внесок митці почали надсилати майже одразу – у вигляді намальованих, надрукованих або маркованих листівок. За цей час продали близько 150 маленьких творів мистецтва й зібрали понад €50 тис.

Проект активно існує і зараз. Листівки можна придбати за пожертву у розмірі €350 або, за бажанням, за вищою ціною.



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Галерея у Мюнхені продає листівки в обмін на допомогу Україні



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amalnews.ua Майже два роки тому мюнхенський галерист Йоганнес Шперлінг та його сестра Франциска Ле Мер започаткували благодійний проект: вони попросили художників з усього світу створити "Листівку для України". Свій внесок митці почали надсилати майже одразу – у вигляді намальованих, надрукованих або маркованих листівок. За цей час продали близько 150 маленьких творів мистецтва й зібрали понад €50 тис.

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Фото – Postcards for Ukraine

#galleriesperling #postcardsforukraine #Мюнхен

PIU 001 Andi Fischer - PIU 002 Tom Król - PIU 003 Monica Bonvicini - PIU 004 Nick Oberthaler - PIU 005 Malte Zenses - PIU 006 Erin Jane Nelson - PIU 007 Marcel van Eeden - PIU 008 Arturo Herrera - PIU 009 Mark Wallinger - PIU 010 Kerstin Brätsch - PIU 011 Paul Hutchinson - PIU 012 Andrew Gilbert - PIU 013 Erik van Lieshout - PIU 014 Goshka Macuga - PIU 015 Spiros Hadjijanos - PIU 016 Michael Craig-Martin - PIU 017 Julius Heinemann - PIU 018 Kerstin von Gabain - PIU 019 Richie Culver - PIU 020 Ben K. Voss - PIU 021 Christiane Blattmann - PIU 022 Gregor Hildebrandt - PIU 023 Mark Handforth - PIU 024 Thomas Geiger - PIU 025 Kasper König - PIU 026 Amelie von Wulffen - PIU 027 Kathrin Sonntag - PIU 028 Jonathan Meese - PIU 029 Nedko Solakov - PIU 030 Alina Chaidarov - PIU 031 Max Frintrop - PIU 032 Kasia Fudakowski - PIU 033 David Ostrowski - PIU 034 Halle Redjaian - PIU 035 Thomas Scheibitz - PIU 036 Jakob Kolding - PIU 037 Berit Schneiderit - PIU 038 Markus Vater - PIU 039 Cezary Poniatowski - PIU 040 Hamish Pearch - PIU 041 Sveta Mordovskaya - PIU 042 Norbert Bisky - PIU 043 Beni Bischof - PIU 044 Jens Kothe - PIU 045 Sam Durant - PIU 046 Maya Hottarek - PIU 047 Jannis Marwitz - PIU 048 Jonathan Monk - PIU 049 Sophie Utikal - PIU 050 Andreas Schmitten - PIU 051 Ana Navas - PIU 052 Justin Cloud - PIU 053 Kendall Geers - PIU 054 Adam Horvath - PIU 055 Talisa Lallai - PIU 056 Adrien Missika - PIU 057 Oliver Osbourne - PIU 058 Tai R - PIU 059 Elif Saydam - PIU 060 Henning Strassburger - PIU 061 Uwe Henneken - PIU 062 Pakul Hardware - PIU 063 Özlem Altın - PIU 064 Martyn Cross - PIU 065 Karin Sander - PIU 066 Gerwald Rockenschau - PIU 067 Emanuel Seitz - PIU 068 Ivana Basic - PIU 069 Birke Gorm - PIU 070 Subodh Gupta - PIU 071 Rodrigo Hernández - PIU 072 Joakim Ojanen - PIU 073 Tomás Saraceno - PIU 074 Stefan Fuchs - PIU 075 Anna McCarthy - PIU 076 Thaddeus Strobe - PIU 077 Eva Fábregas - PIU 078 Billy Childish - PIU 079 Friederike Feldmann - PIU 080 Thomas Ruff - PIU 081 David Claerbout - PIU 082 Zuzanna Czebatul - PIU 083 Harold Ancart - PIU 084 Siro Cugusi - PIU 085 Sarah Lucas - PIU 086 Martin Kohout - PIU 087 Loup Sarion - PIU 088 Liu Shiyuan - PIU 089 David Horvitz - PIU 090 Lutz Braun - PIU 091 Rosa Barba - PIU 092 Hank Schmidt in der Beek - PIU 093 Anne Fellner - PIU 094 Leo Park - PIU 095 Julie Mehretu - PIU 096 Bettina Samson - PIU 097 Tobias Rehberger - PIU 098 Karla Black - PIU 099 Thomas Schütte - PIU 100 Nina Beier - PIU 101 Oskia Guthrie - PIU 102 Kris Martin - PIU 103 Megan Plunkett - PIU 104 Julian Rosefeldt - PIU 105 Bianca Kennedy - PIU 106 Roger Ballen - PIU 107 Daniele Milvio - PIU 108 Pierina Másquez - PIU 109 Justin John Greene - PIU 110 Erwin Wurm - PIU 111 Gabrielle Goliath - PIU 112 Daniel Gustav Cramer - PIU 113 Andrej Babenko - PIU 114 Johanna Dumet - PIU 115 Sven Drühl - PIU 116 Paul Sochacki - PIU 117 Nilbar Güres - PIU 118 Peter Schuyff - PIU 119 Wolfgang Matuschek - PIU 120 Marcel Dzama - PIU 121 Jitka Hanzlová - PIU 122 Przemek Pyszczyk - PIU 123 Ernst Yohji Jäger - PIU 124 Jasmin Werner - PIU 125 Matthias Dornfeld - PIU 126 Peter Piller - PIU 127 Stephanie Temma Hier - PIU 128 Seth Price - PIU 129 Hannah Sophie Dunkelberg - PIU 130 Jordi Ribes - PIU 131 Tanja Nis-Hansen - PIU 132 Michael Wesely - PIU 133 Johnny Izatt-Lowry - PIU 134 Monster Chetwynd - PIU 135 Bernd Ribbeck - PIU 136 Ryan Mosley - PIU 137 Mickalene Thomas - PIU 138 Clayton Schiff - PIU 139 Thomas Zipp



Postcards for Ukraine Andrej Babenko, 2022

14,8 x 10,5 cm
sold

Enquiry



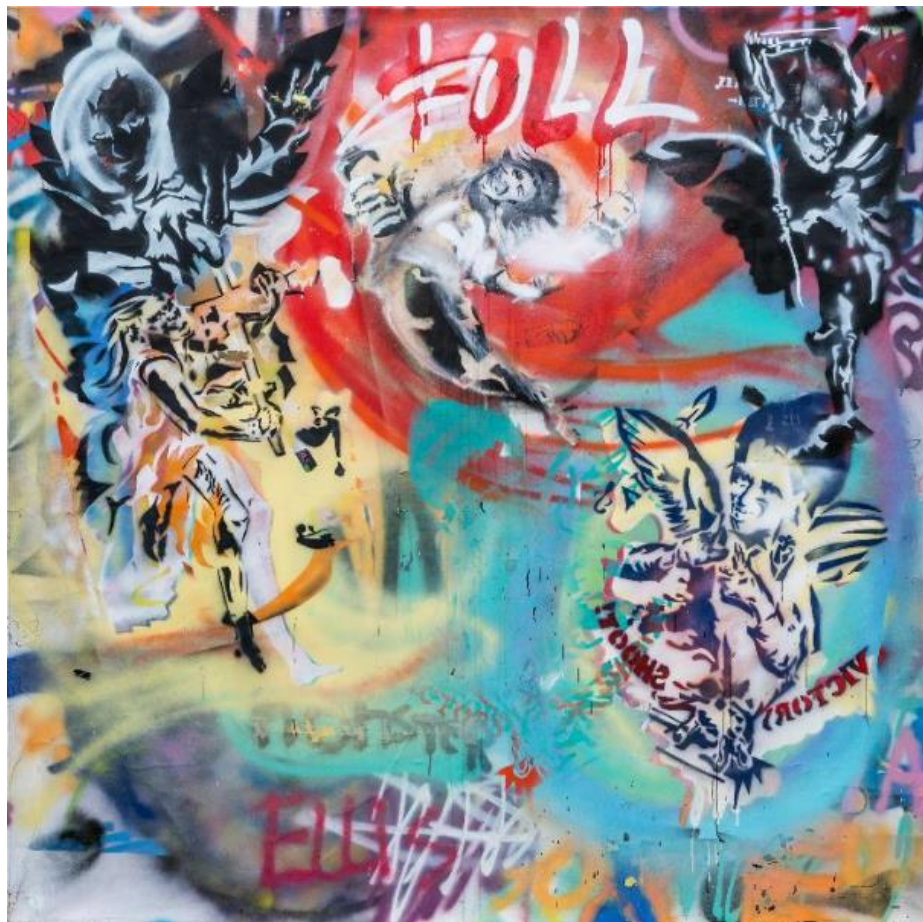
Project Postcards for Ukraine

<https://www.instagram.com/postcardsforukraine/>

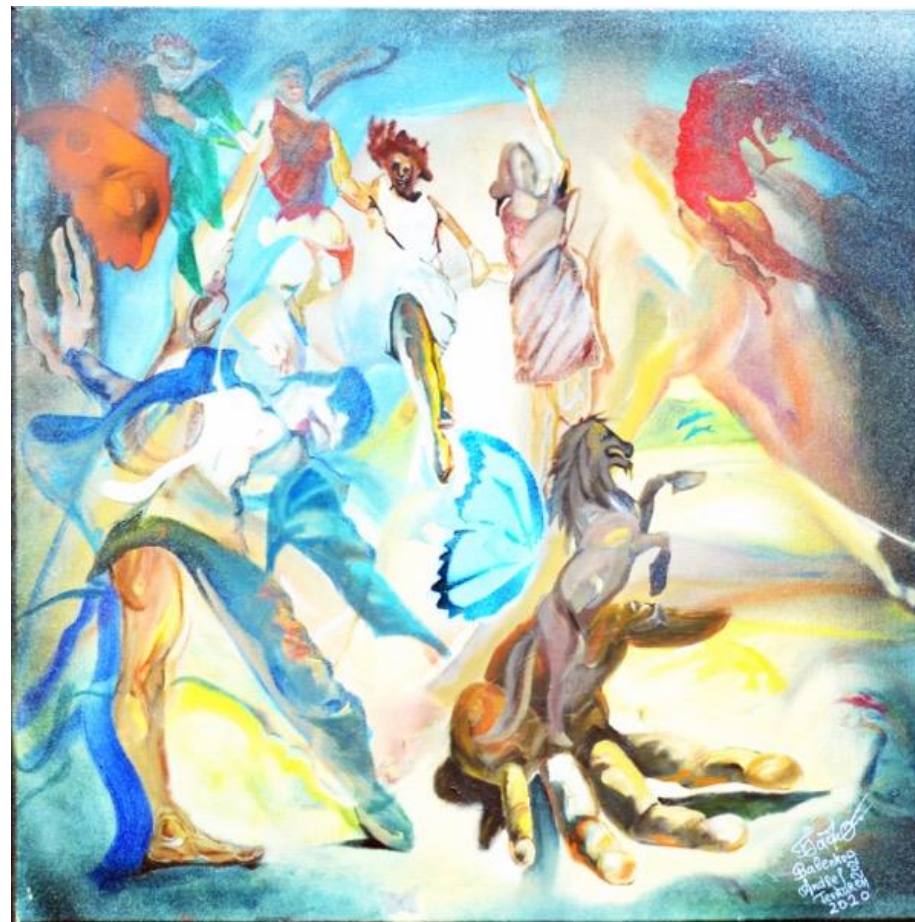


Kirill Death Icon

[#кирил](#) [#смерть](#) [#kirill](#) [#death](#) [#icon](#) [#moskow](#) [#ukrainart](#) [#babenkobelgium](#)
[#babenkobelgiumgraffiti](#) [#contemporaryart](#) [#babenkopainting](#) [#nft](#)



Great barrier reef, oil and spray paint on canvas,
210 x 210 cm, 2021



War is Over, oil paint on canvas, 60 x 60 cm,
2020 - 2023



Small text label below the circular artwork.





UA22022022 at exhibition The World is Burning,
Mol, Belgium, 2022



Fauna and Flora





Study, aquarel on paper, 51 x 36 cm, 2005



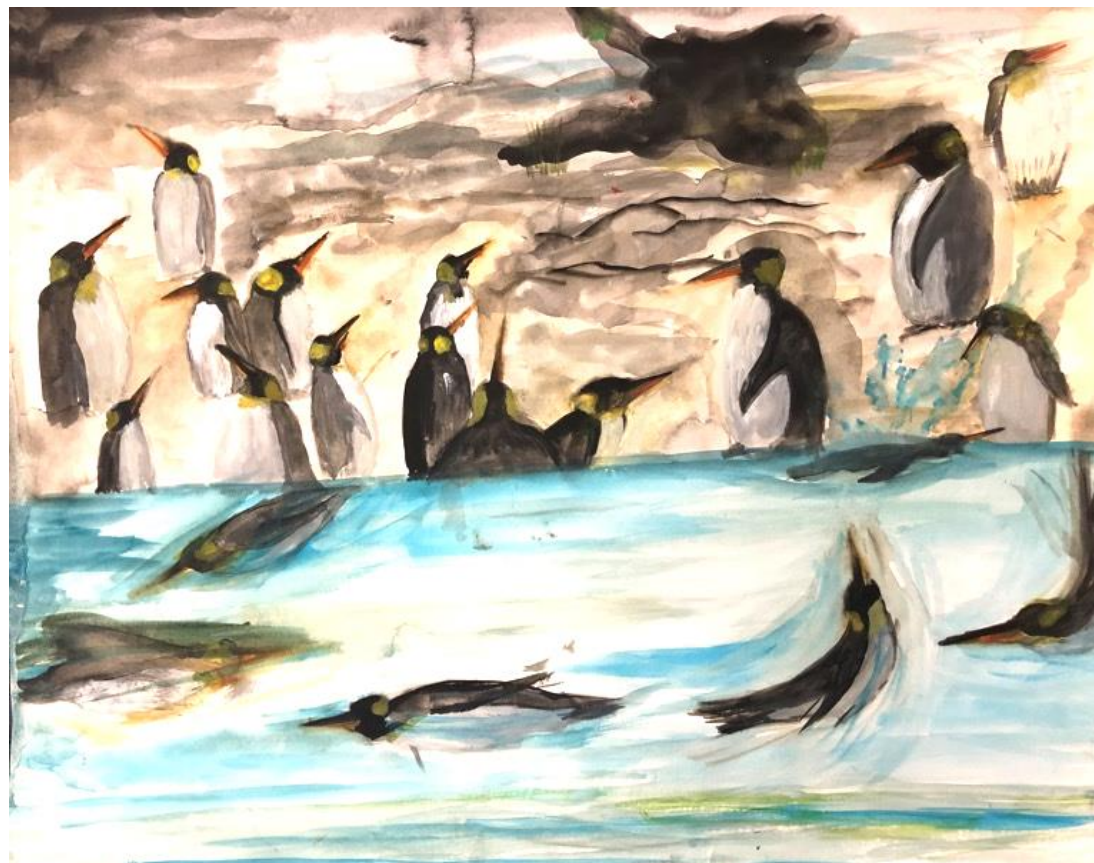
Studies for Tour Elentrik Tervuren, 100 x 80 cm, aquarel on paper, 2021



Study, stone print, ink on paper,
framed, 70 x 90 cm, 2003
Royal Academy for Fine Arts Antwerp



Study, pen on paper, 53 x 36 cm, 2003 Antwerp Zoo,
Flamingos: 'Some stand on two legs and some on one'
Royal Academy for Fine Arts Antwerp



Study, aquarel on paper, 51 x 36 cm, 2005



Study, pen on paper, 41.5 x 29.5 cm, 2004



Study, aquarium, aquarel on paper, 51 x 36 cm, 2004



Studies, pen on paper, 53 x 36 cm, 2003, Antwerp Zoo,

'Apen in A'pen'

Sint Lucas Antwerp

- What is the story of the aras?
- I love birds, all birds. But aras are my favourite. You just got to love them for their bright colours, especially when you come from the cold, snowy, white Kyiv.
- But why then all those shades of grey?
- Well, that is because they emigrated, to Belgium. I suppose it is their camouflage, their way of trying to fit in.

Top left: Ara, oil and spray paint on canvas, 50 x 60 cm, 2015

In private collection

Bottom left: No one can touch the ara (Part 2), oil and spray paint on canvas, 40 x 50 cm, 2015

Right: No one can touch the ara, oil and spray paint on canvas, 80 x 120cm, 2015





Portraits



Boris Grebenchikov



Ilse Liepa



Dirk De Wachter, Antwerp, 2019,



Boris Grebenchikov, Antwerp, 2015



Lee Ronaldo, Ghent, 2017



Sergey Shnurov, Düsseldorf, 2018



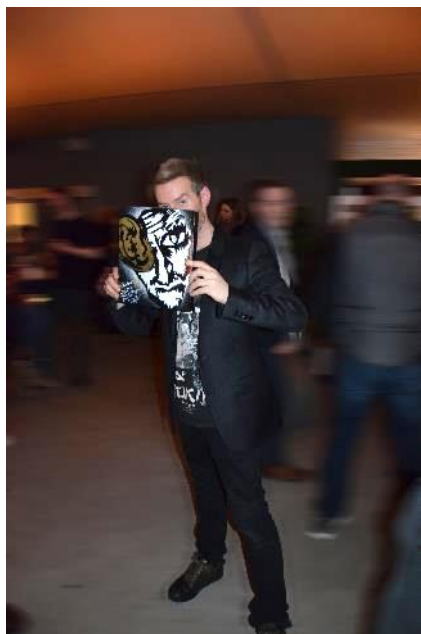
Yuri Shevchuk, Antwerp, 2016



Ilse Liepa, Brussel, 2017



K. Honselaar & V. Butusov, Amsterdam, 2017



Babenko & Robert Del Naja aka 3D (Massive Attack)
 Portraits, stencil and spray paint on canvas, 24 x 30 cm, 2019



Luciano Benetton, stencil, spray paint and charcoal on canvas, 10 x 12 cm, 2017
Venice Biennale, BOZAR Brussels



Portrait of Mauro Pawlowski, musician, with whom Babenko collaborated on several occasions, mostly in the form of live performances together with Dirk De Wachter. Babenko did live painting, De Wachter recited poems and Pawlowski provided the music. The trio performed in S.M.A.K. Ghent, in Extra City and at Pukkelpop inter alia.

Mauro, Chinese ink on paper, framed, 100 x 70 cm, 2018

In private collection





Portraits, oil and spray paint on canvas, 120 x 80 cm, 2012

Einstein (in private collection), Schubert (in private collection), von Beethoven, Wittgenstein (in private collection), Mozart (in private collection)



Exhibition 'Full House', Antwerp, 2021
Curated by Hans Willemsse



Exhibition at VCR gallery, Antwerp, 2013



Sketch collage, Mauro Pawlowski, marker and tape on paper,
50 x 70 cm, 2018



Aleksey Gorbunov, silk screen on T-shirt, post card, 2015 - 2022





It was however not the money of the sale which kept him going. Rather, it was the moral support, the appreciation of his work, the recognition of his talent and the support of his career choice.

John Coltrane, oil and spray paint on canvas, 80 x 120 cm, 2015

In private collection



Miles Davis, oil &
spray paint on
canvas, 120 x 80
cm, 2014-2021.
In private collection.

*“How
cheerful it is
to reside in
your fears”*

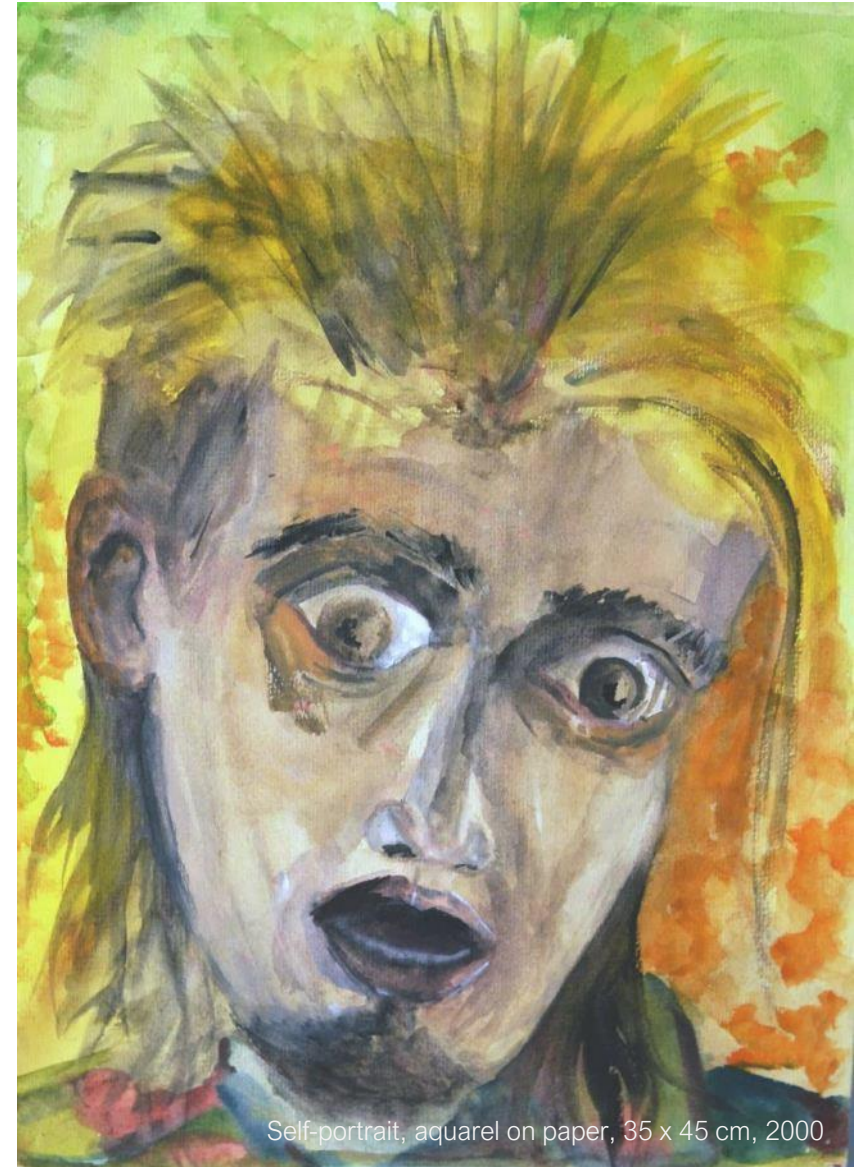
Statement by Oksana Mas, who took an interest in Babenko's works when the two met at the opening of an exhibition in Belgium. Mas is a renowned Ukrainian contemporary artist with offices in London, Zürich and New York

Humanoid amphibian, 54 x 65 cm,
aquarel on paper, 2000





Sergei Yankovski & Ilse Liepa, Brussels, 2017
"Jump to Freedom" - a story of the life of the great ballet
star leading soloists of Moscow Bolshoi Theatre



Self-portrait, aquarel on paper, 35 x 45 cm, 2000



A splash of colour

Babenko created these works in a turbulent period. In 2013, his father died by suicide. Not long after, in 2014, the Maidan Revolution took place in Ukraine. Already then, the artist had a foreboding that this could lead to a major war. While it turned out not to be the case immediately, the fear and foreboding found their way in his paintings. Besides death and the threat of potential war, there was also life: Babenko's daughter and son were born in 2014 and 2015, respectively. Two joyful and intense events which at the same time exposed him to the feelings of crushing responsibility and vulnerability of a parent.



The works are monumental. They reflect daily life, contain socially critical elements and show the artist's inner demons. They are a whirlwind of personas, colour, drama and melancholy. Babenko combines layers of oil paint in an explosive, organic manner with the speed of graffiti techniques.



An interesting fact is the change in perception that has taken place over time among some viewers, in particular Ukrainian acquaintances and friends of the artist: while the paintings were sometimes considered gloomy, explicit and somewhat frightening when they were just created, today, many Ukrainians see them as the perfect representation of the world they live in as well as of their inner world. In contrast, Babenko's most recent work, UA22022022, which was made in full wartime, despite its obscure subject matter, deliberately contains a lot of light and hope, as a representation of what the future may hopefully look like.





Belgian night, oil and spray paint on canvas, 250 x 200 cm, 2014



Slide, oil and spray paint on canvas, 200 x 160 cm, 2015

“The special thing about his work is the striking synergy of styles and cultures. He mixes spray paint and oil paint, combines punk with jazz, and creates wild compositions with classical patterns”.



Soaring in a dance over the ordinary, oil and spray paint on canvas, 250 x 200 cm, 2015



Two Andrejs, oil & spray paint on canvas, 250 x 200 cm, 2014

100 years of solitude, oil and spray paint on canvas,
245 x 200 cm, 2014





Pilgrim - from Boyarka to
Brussels, oil and spray paint
on canvas, 125 x 140 cm,
2016



Action, oil and spray paint
on canvas, 220 x 200 cm,
2015



The Artist's Wife's
Hallucination, oil and spray
paint on canvas, 120 x 120
cm, 2016



If I could Be a President, oil
and spray paint on canvas,
120 x 120 cm, 2016



Exhibition at Campo & Campo, Antwerp, 2020



Exhibition The World is Burning, Mol 2022

From left to right:

Slide, oil and spray paint on canvas, 200 x 160 cm, 2015

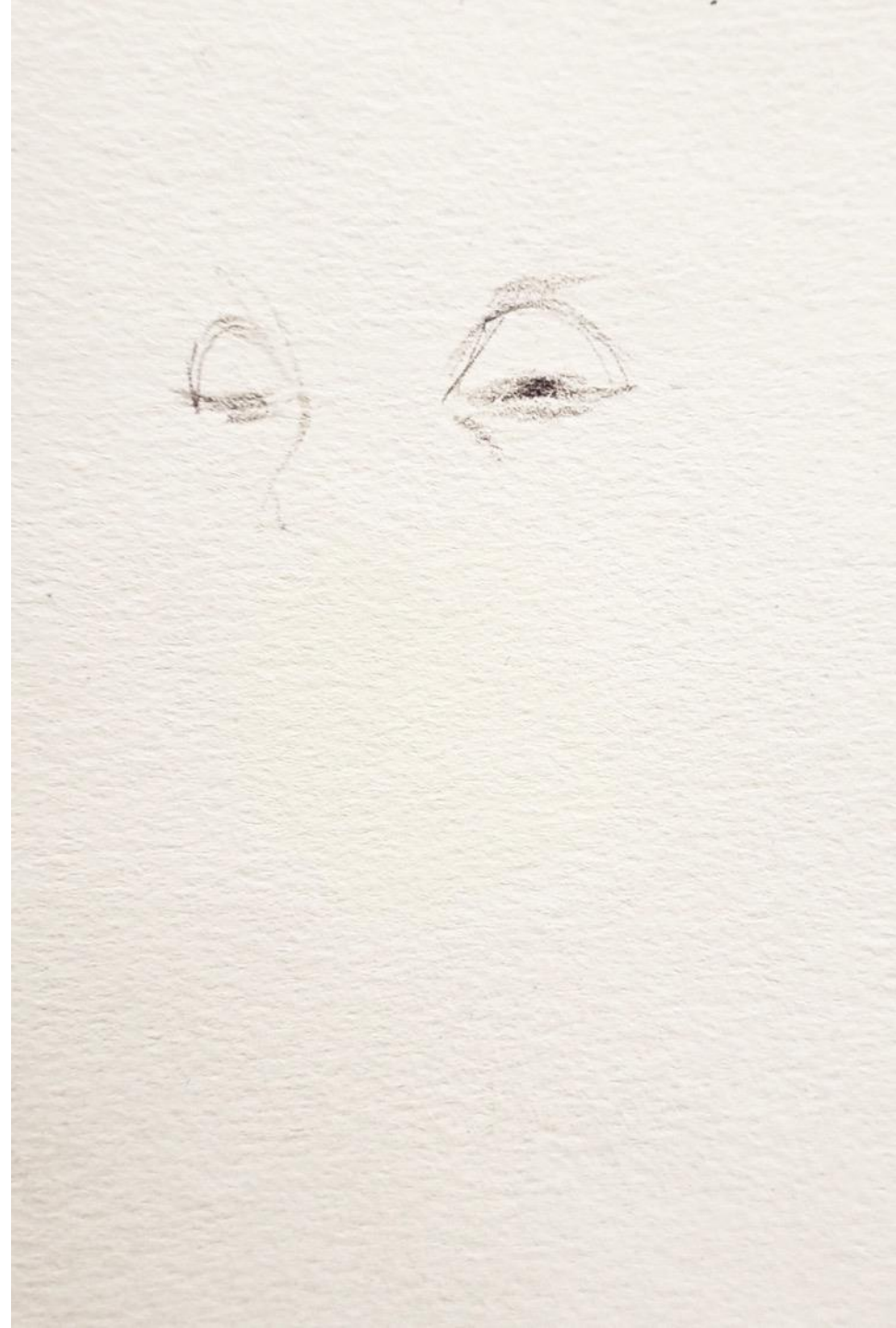
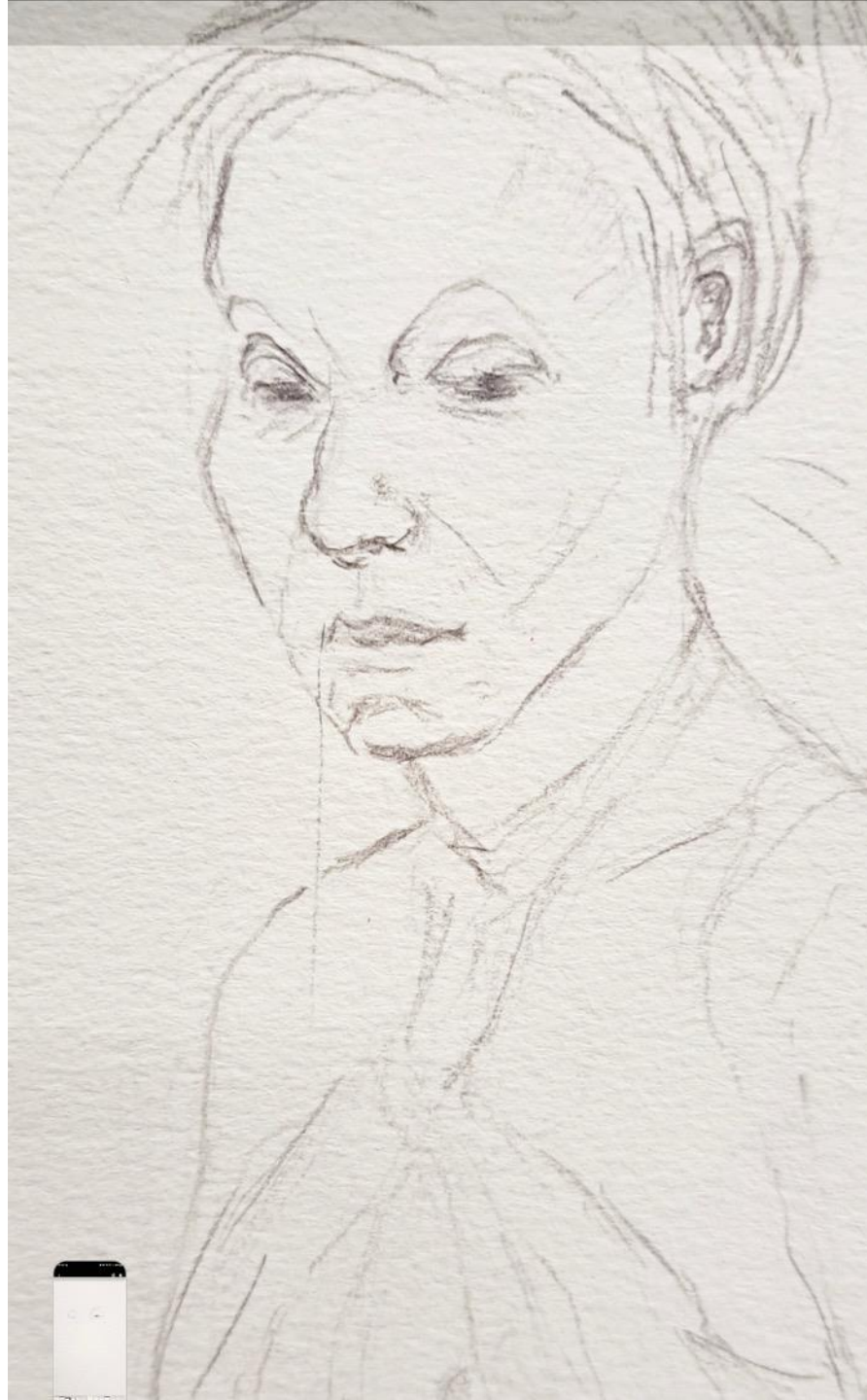
Soaring in a dance over the ordinary, oil and spray paint on canvas, 250 x 200 cm, 2015

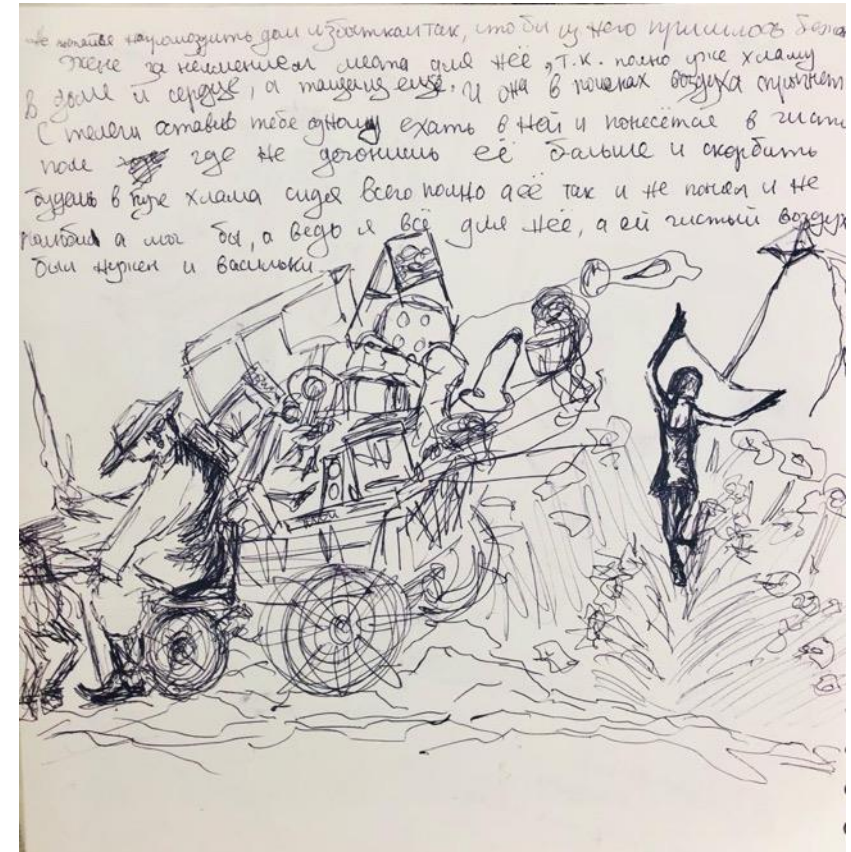
Belgian night, oil and spray paint on canvas, 250 x 200 cm, 2014

100 years of solitude, oil and spray paint on canvas, 245 x 200 cm, 2014



Sketches and drawings





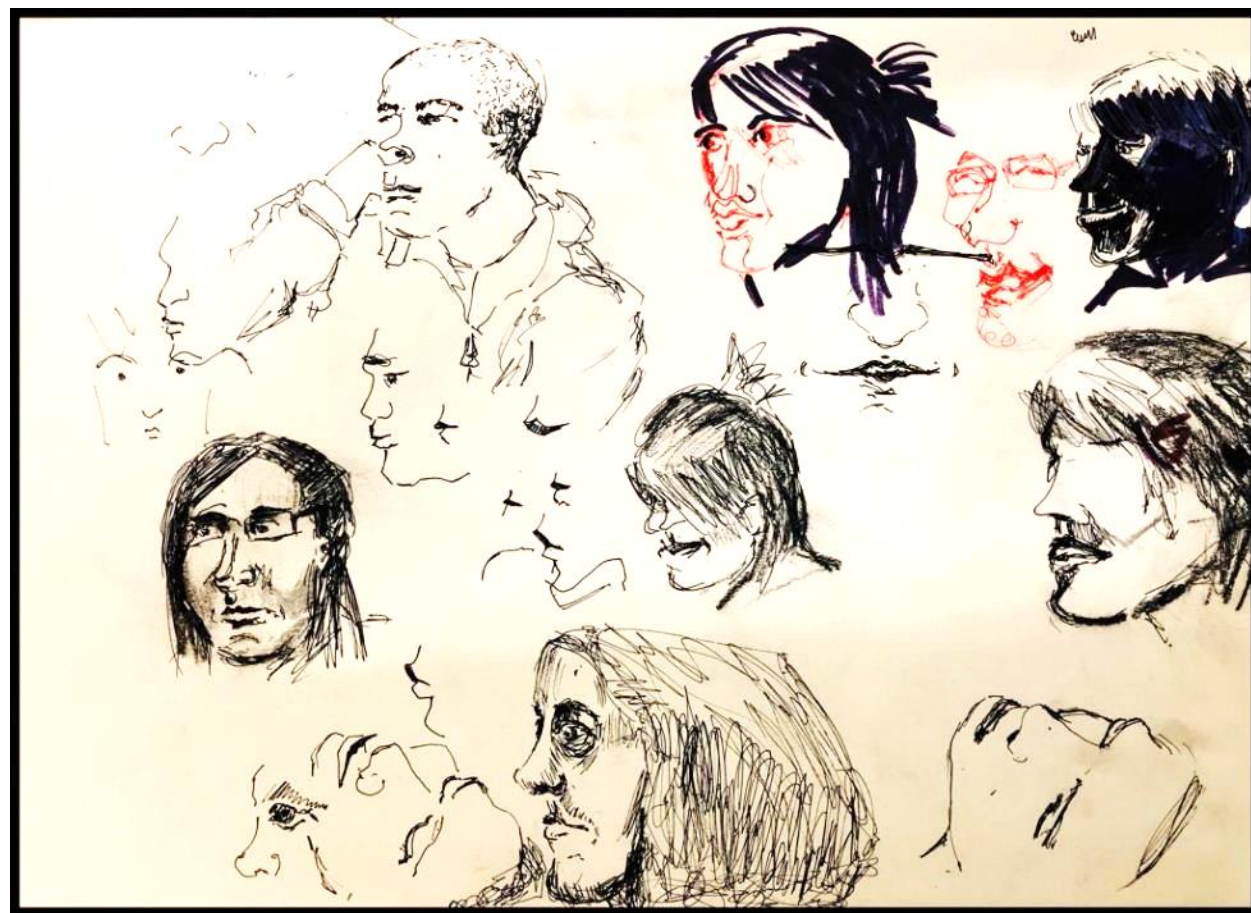
Left: sketch, pencil on paper, A3, 2001, Kunsthumaniora, Antwerp

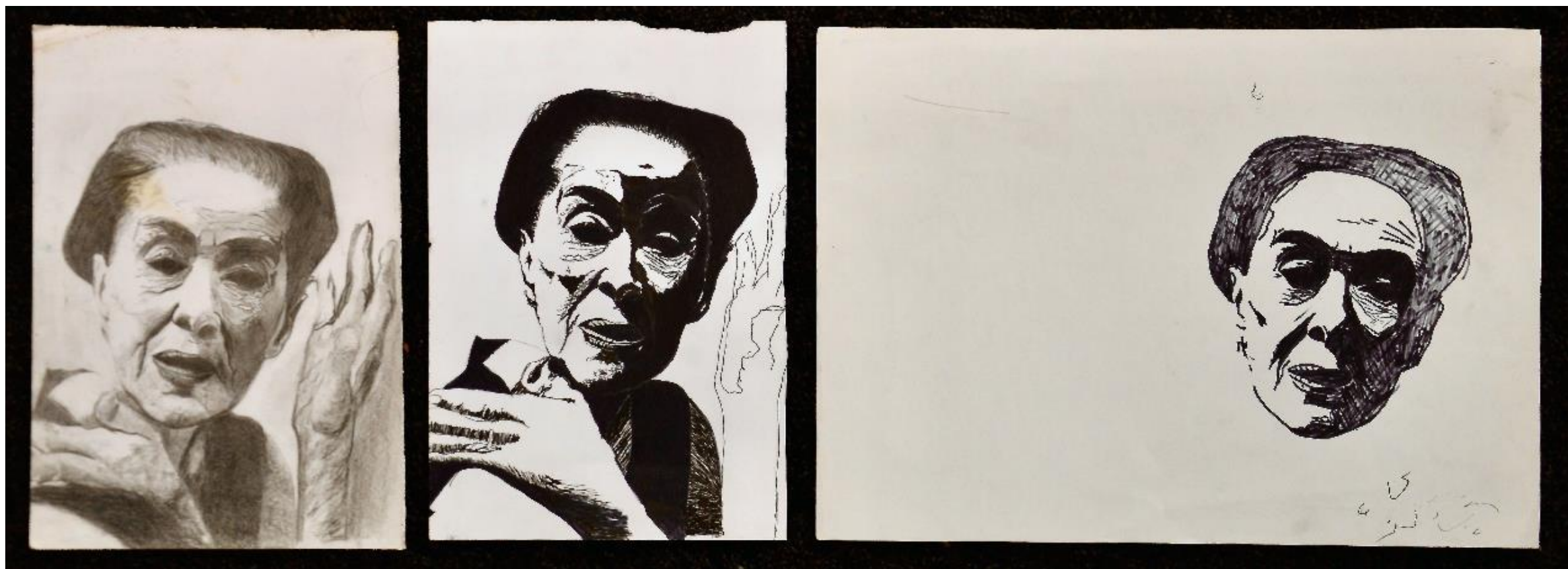
Right: sketch, pen on paper, 20 x 20 cm, 2003, Royal Academy of

Fine Arts Antwerp



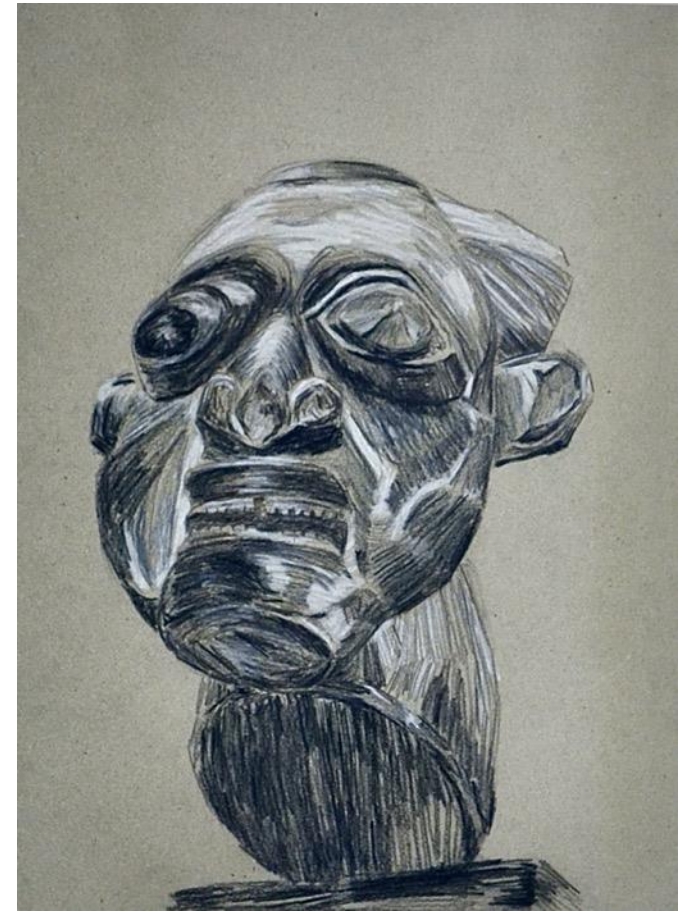
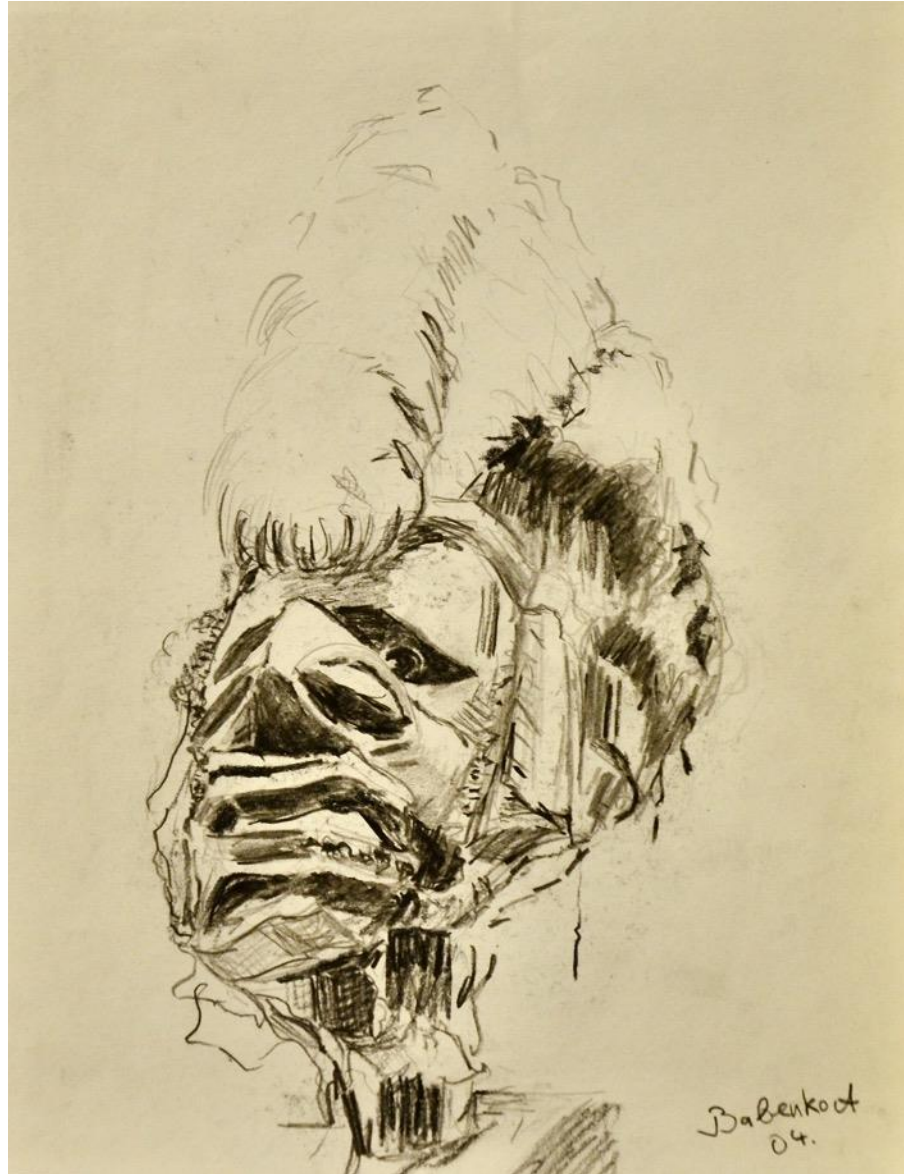
In the void, sketches on paper, charcoal, digital, A3
For Babenko biography book, 2022





Study, pencil, pen and marker on paper, A5, 2001

Kunsthumaniora, Antwerp

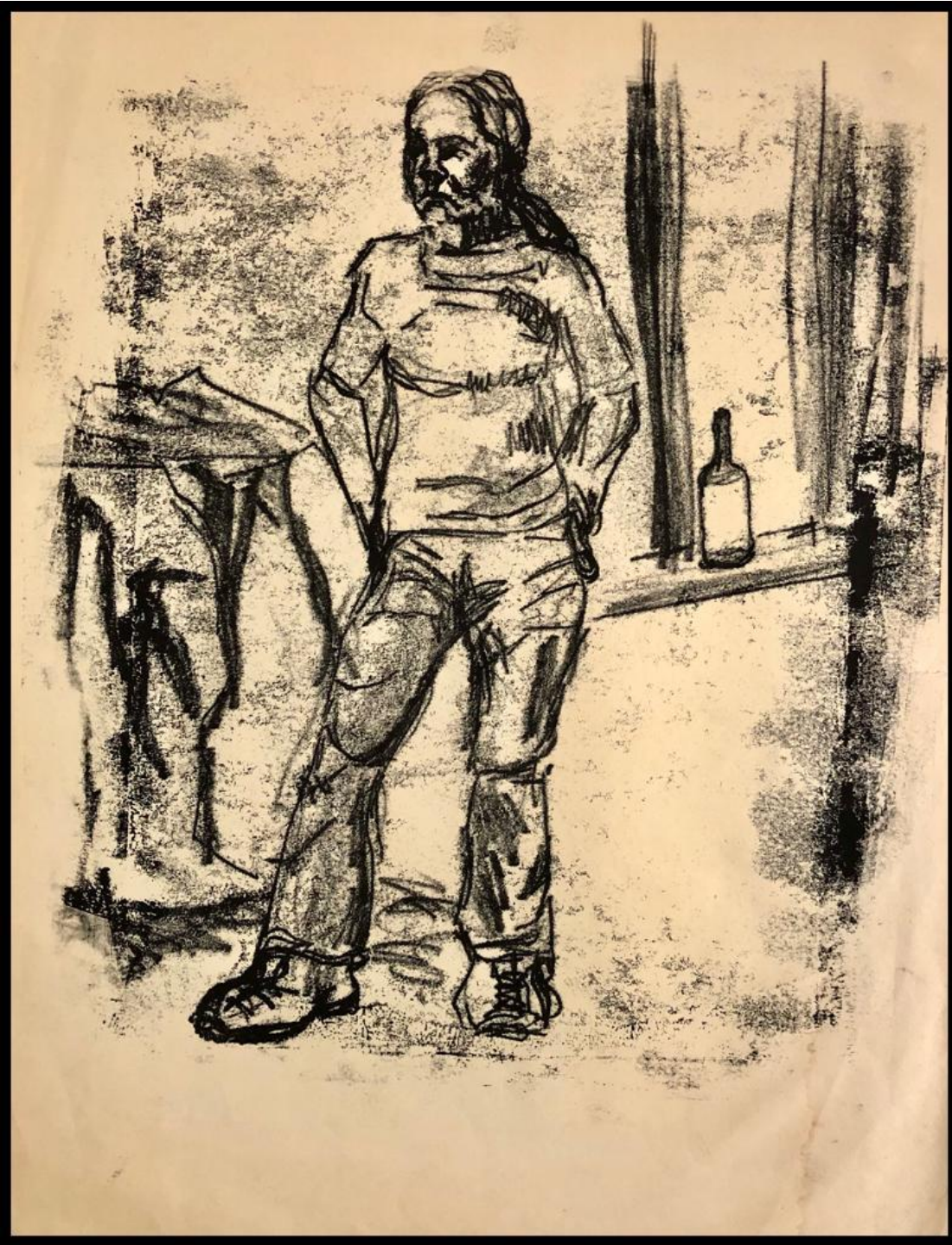


Mask, sketches on paper, ethnographic
museum, pencil on paper, A3, 2004
Sint Lucas Antwerp



Model drawings, pencil on paper,
aquarel on paper, A3, 2004
Royal Academy of Fine Arts,
Antwerp





Model drawings, monotype
on paper, aquarel on paper,
210 x 297 mm, 2004
Royal Academy of Fine Arts,
Antwerp



Babenko made this life drawing of a former partner whom he lived with in a backstreet in Antwerp when he first arrived in Belgium. She was a professional dancer with a background in Ukrainian folk culture. During the drawing she was embroidering.

The artist presented the drawing at his final exam at the Royal Secondary School of Arts in Antwerp. One of his teachers unexpectedly and spontaneously bought the drawing from him when setting eyes upon it, recognizing the undertone of eastern European iconography. He urged Babenko to pursue a career in fine arts. While Babenko's creative and artistic spirit was ever present in his subsequent endeavours and professional undertakings, it still took several years before the artist actually took the final leap to pursue a full time professional career in fine arts.

Life drawing, 210 x 297 mm, colored pencils on paper, 2000



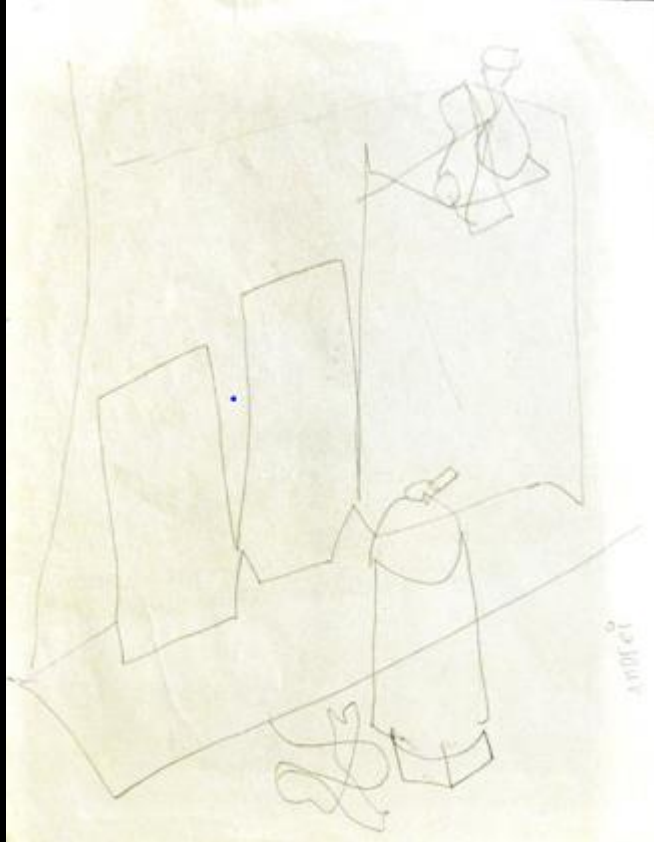


Babenko created the visual material for Flanders Opera for two years. This drawing was a first design for a poster for *The Rage of Life*, an opera describing the descent into insanity of a man who cannot believe that his loved one has died. Recently, the drawing became very topical again personally for the artist with the war in Ukrain. Babenko also found a kindred spirit in a representative of the Ukrainian embassy, who claimed to have had exactly the same sentiment when seeing the drawing at an exhibition.

The drawing is a homage to Chagall's painting "Above the City". The design was in the end not retained for the poster, and another work by Babenko was used instead.

Rage of Life, mixed media on paper, framed, 80 x 60 cm, 2009

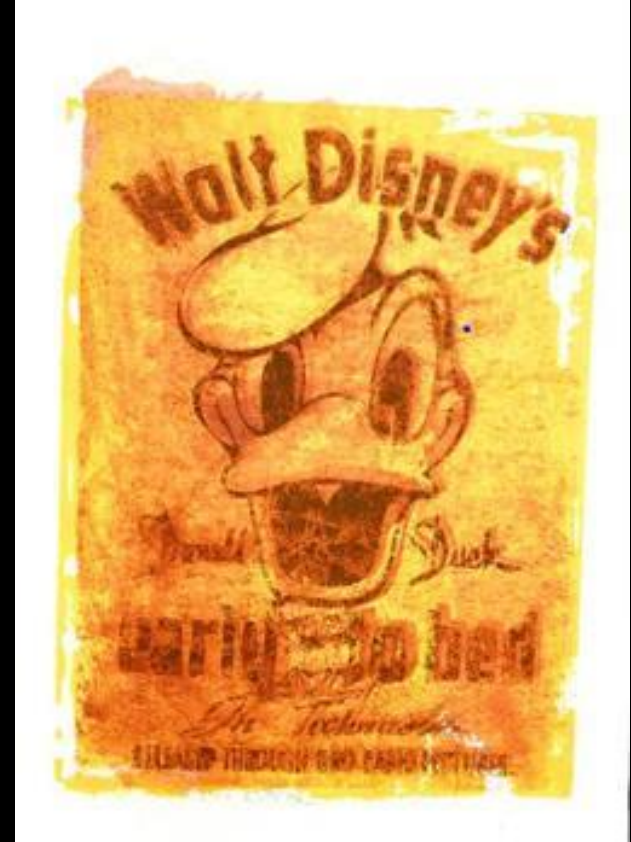




Blind drawing study, pencil on paper, 297 x 420 mm, 2001
 Royal Academy of Fine Arts, Antwerp



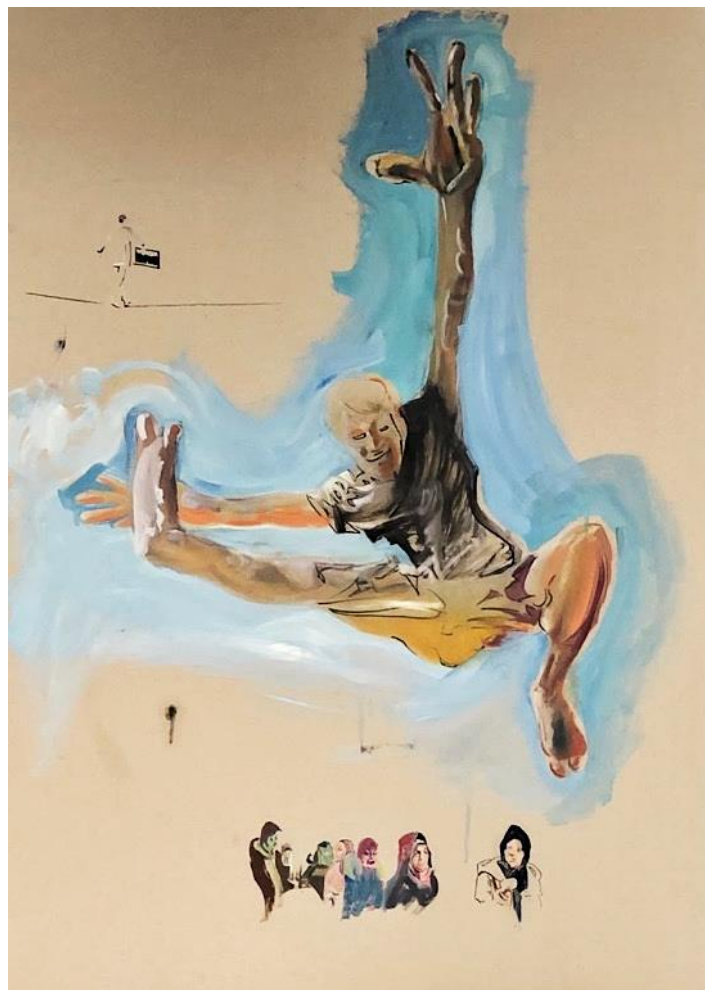
Model drawing study, ink on paper, 297 x 240 mm, 2001
 Royal Academy of Fine Arts, Antwerp



Walt Disney, screen print, 297 x 240 mm, 2001
 Royal Academy of Fine Arts



*“The unraveling
of origin,
identity and
artistic
influences of
different
political-cultural
backgrounds
can only lead to
new insights,
both for the
artist and the
viewer”.*

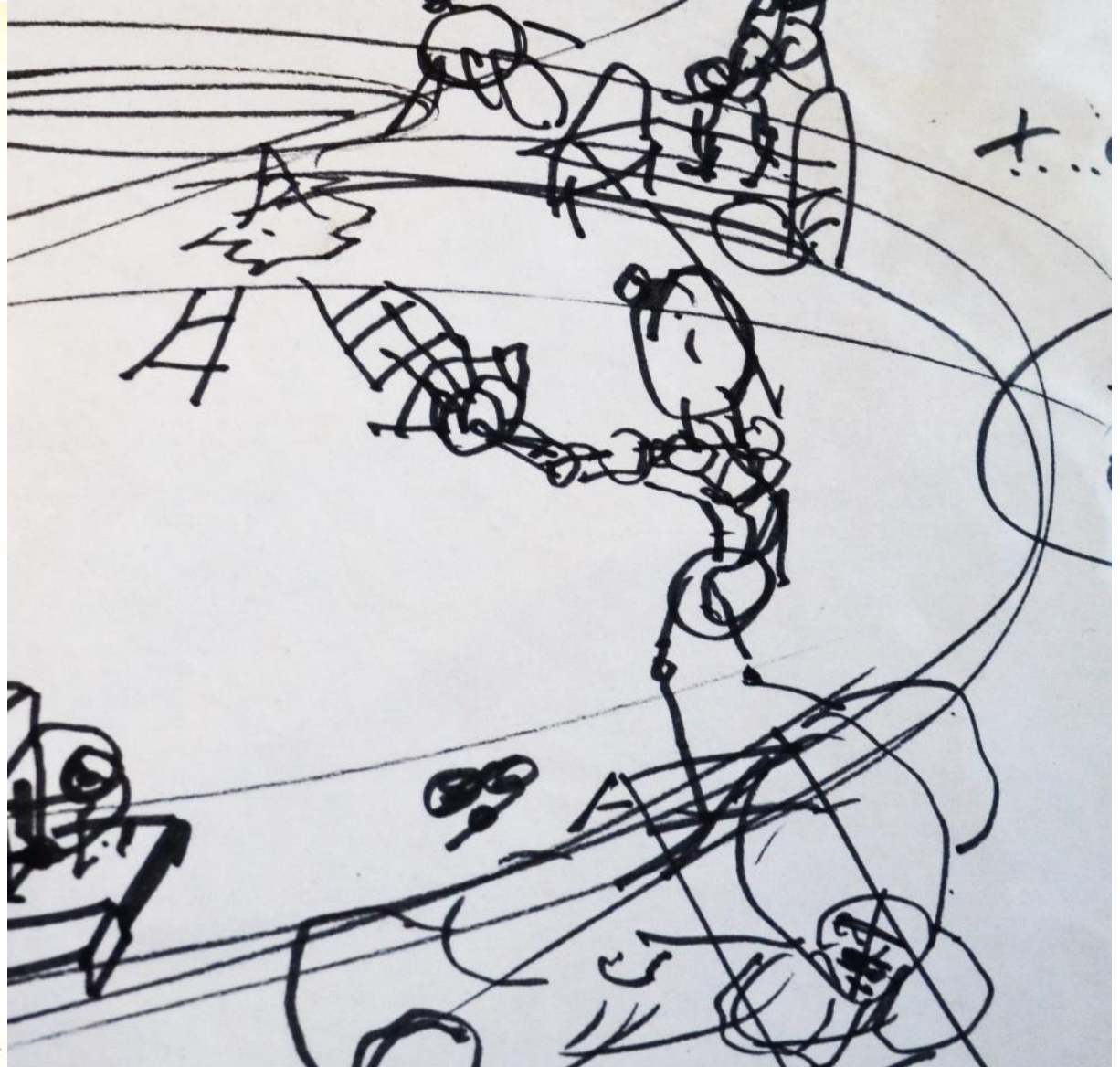


Kozachok, Gopak

Free sketches, pencil, acrylic paint and aquarel on cardboard, 70 x 100 cm, 2020



Paint your dream, free sketch, marker on mika & on paper, A3, 2021





Run away from home, dad will draw, free sketch, marker on paper, A3, 2020



Light box invention, free sketch, marker on paper, A3, 2020



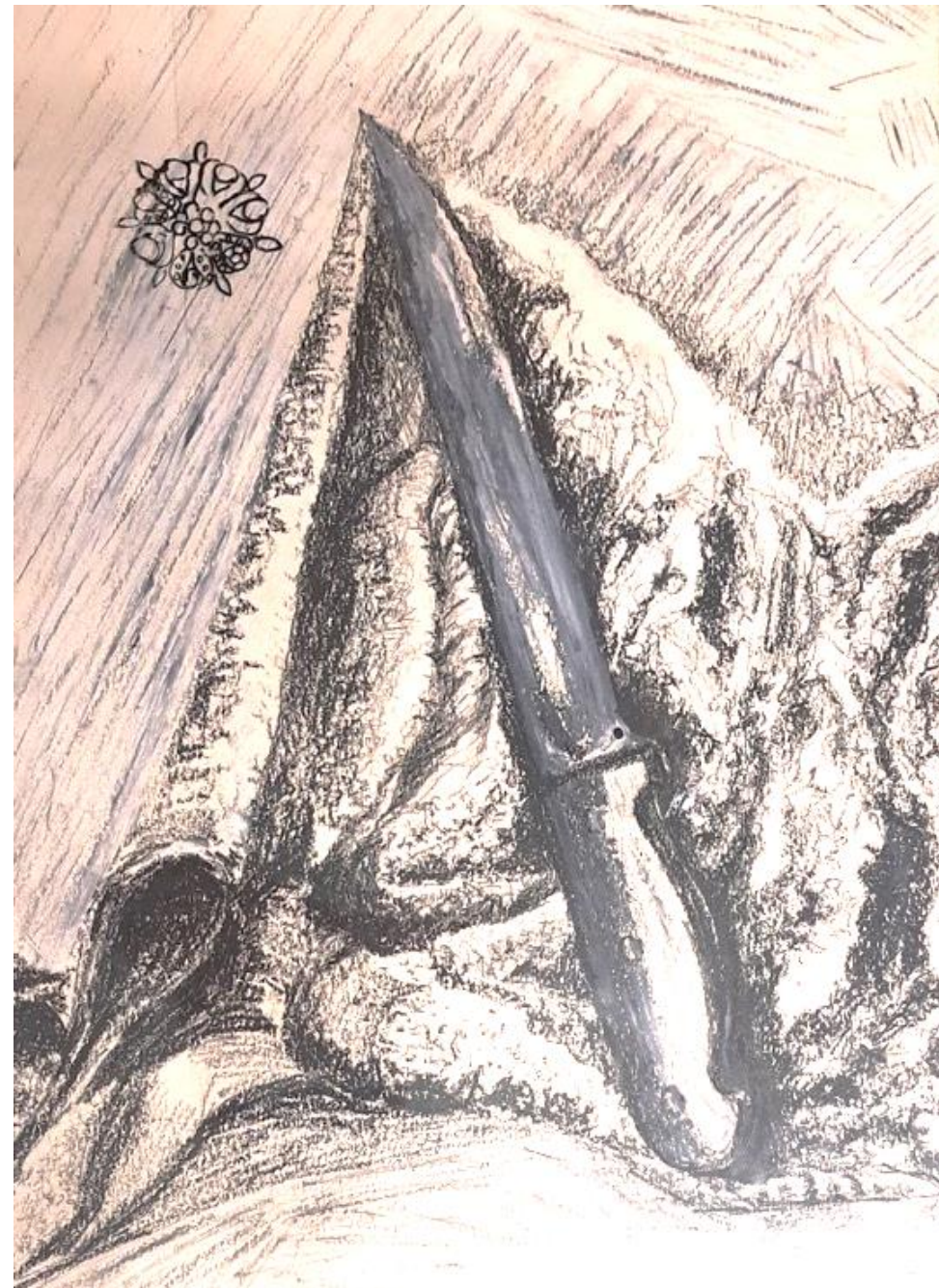
Left: Stepan Bandera finds himself in Schindler's List, marker on paper, A3, 2014

Right: Stepan Bandera, silkscreened T-shirts, 2014



Left: Study, Chinese ink, marker
and chalk on tracing paper,
30 x 40 cm, 2014

Final painting in private collection



Right: Brotherly love - will, oil
pencil on paper,
297 x 420 mm, 2001



Left: Pionirs today, marker on paper & silkscreen on paper, A3, 2014



Right: Pictures of Babenko, Boyarka, 1991

Sketch, Dirk de Wachter, Mauro Pawlowski, Andrej Babenko & The Muse
@ Pukkelpop, marker on paper, 200 x 200 cm, 2018

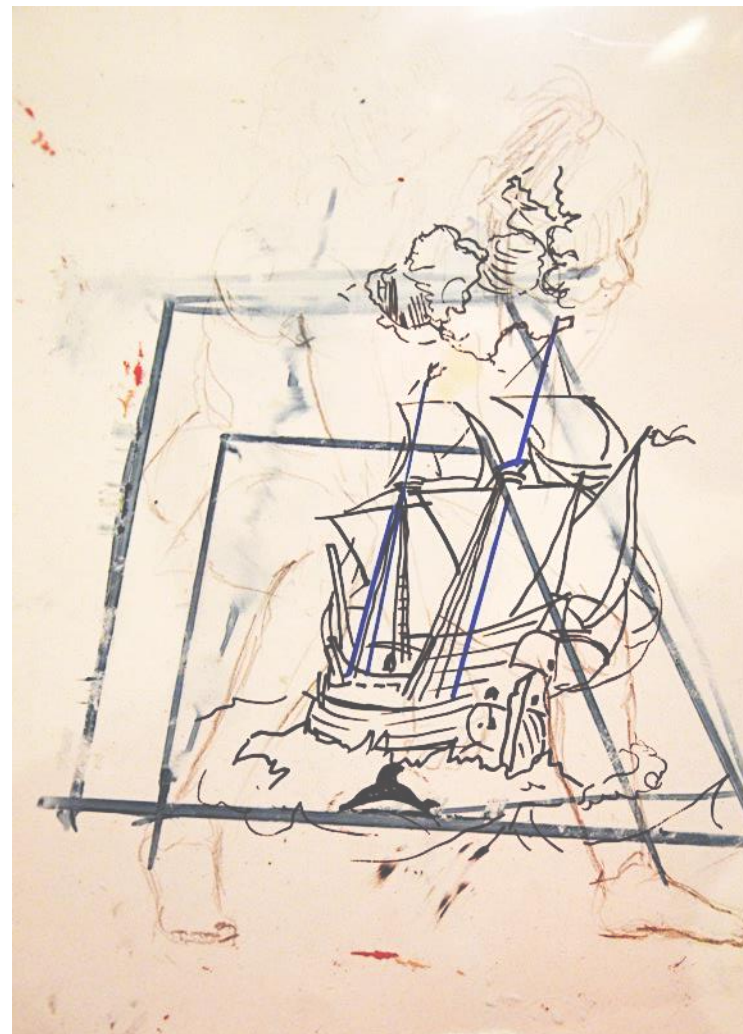




Papa, nails and screws, free sketches, pencil on paper (left), marker on cardboard (right), 100 x 70 cm, 2018, 2020



Live model drawing, charcoal on paper, A3, 2000
(retouched in 2023)



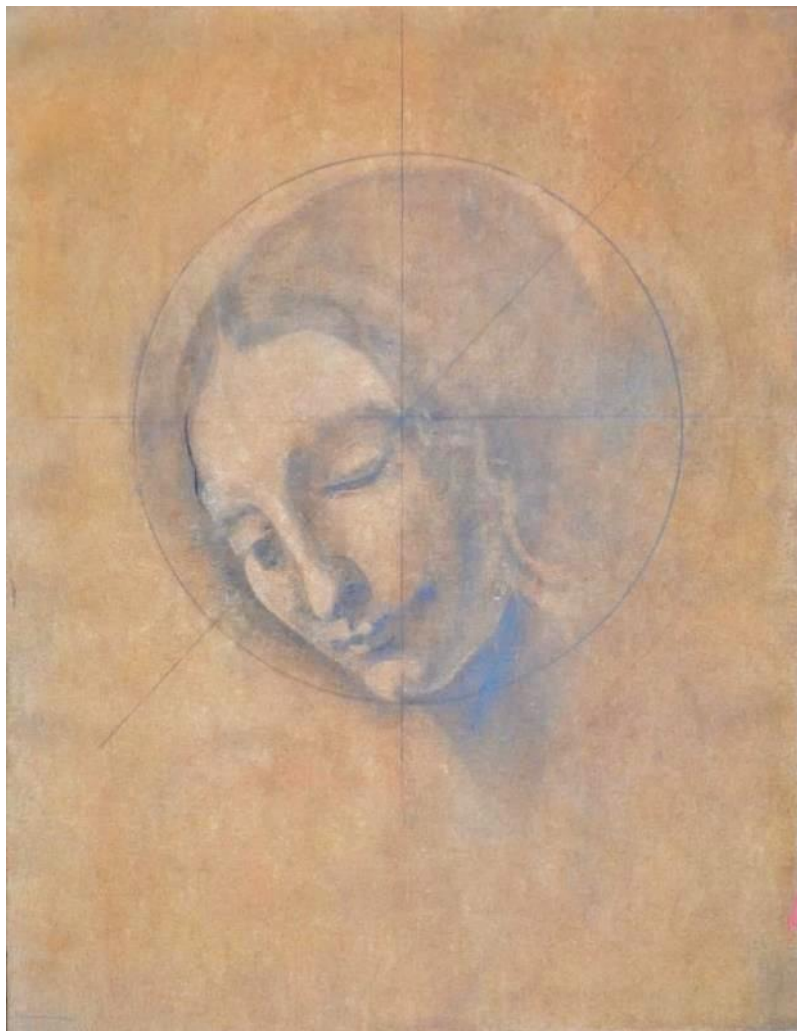
Angel of death, pirate boat sketch on top of model drawing,
marker on paper, A3, 2018



Various drawings and live model pencil on paper, A4, A3, 2000, 2020

Artisanal techniques





Study, graphite powder on paper, 25 x 30 cm, 2021



Study, graphite powder on paper, 420 x 297 mm,
framed, 2021



Supermodel, graphite powder on gelatinized canvas,
60 x 90 cm, 2022



Babenko and supermodel Anouck Lepère met in 2020 at the artist's exhibition at gallery Martin Van Blerck in Antwerp. As it turned out, Lepère had just had a photo shoot for the cover of Vogue Ukraine. Babenko made a free artistic interpretation of that cover image, with a reference to Mona Lisa. The icon had already figured in the artist's earlier works, notably in a poster design for die Schöpfung for Flanders Opera.





Left: Kiss his ring, pure pigment powder & oil, canvas on panel,
27 x 31 cm, in progress

Right: Hand wash, pure pigment powder & oil, canvas on panel,
41 x 41 cm, in progress



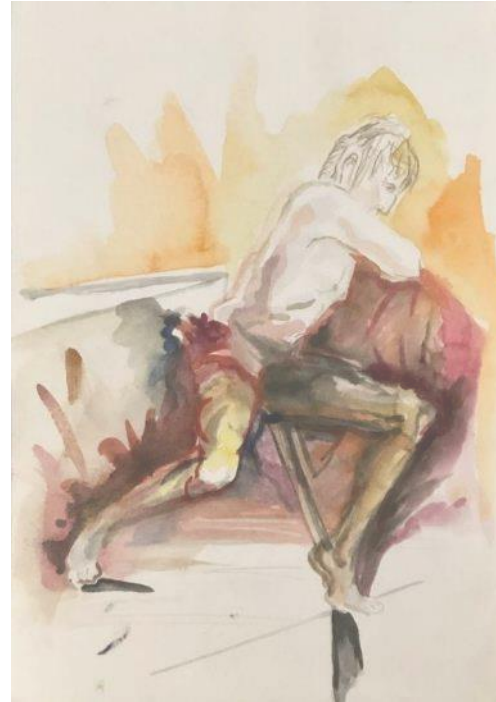
Left: Babenko in Crete, 2022



Middle: Babenko in Crimea (1980) and Kyiv (1988)



Right: Drawing, marker, acrylic paint, graphite powder and tempera on paper, 59 x 42 cm, 2002, 2022 – in progress



Left: Angel of Death, charcoal, tempera and oil paint on canvas,
60 x 60 cm, in progress

Middle and right: inspiration and study for Angel of Death



Left: Universal bench, graphite powder & tempera, 26 x 41 cm, in progress

Right: inspiration for Universal Bench, Babenko at Desna river, 1988

Flanders Opera



Andrey Babenko, art works
2009 & Season 2009 - 2010





COLOPHON OPERA OUT OF THE BOX

CONCEPT
CURATED BY
EDITED BY

Aviel Cahn
Bruno Devos
Chris Van Camp

AUTHORS
Giorgio Battistelli
Calixto Bieito
Mien Bogaert
Jan Henric Bogen
Manuel Brug
Gerhard Brunner
Piet De Volder
Ute Haferburg
Filip Huysegems
Luc Joosten
Christian Jost
Händl Klaus
Stephan Moens
Johan Thielemans

ARTISTS
Andrej Babenko
Maurizio Cattelan
Carl De Keyzer
Pierpaolo Ferrari
Veerle Frissen
Hans Op de Beeck
Ward Swart
Koen van den Broek
Kati Heck, courtesy of
Tim Van Laere gallery Antwerp
and Sadie Coles HQ London

PHOTOGRAPHERS

Babenko designed all visuals for Flanders Opera for the 2009-2010 season, the year in which the Swiss Aviel Cahn became director of Flanders Opera. The aim was to develop a very distinct style that sticks out and that would unmistakably be associated with the Opera. The choice for graffiti posters combined with controversial images did not go unnoticed by the media. The poster for Samson et Dalia got published in The New York Times.



Babenko at
work at Flanders
Opera





The New York Times

ABROAD

In Belgium, Samson Gets a Makeover

Give this article



20



Marianna Tarasova and Torsten Kerl as the title characters in the Flanders Opera's production of "Samson et Dalila."
Annemie Augustijns

By Michael Kimmelman
May 6, 2009

The opera ends when the Philistines celebrate their victory in the pagan temple of Dagon by mocking Samson, now blinded and shorn of the hair that gave him his strength. He calls on God one last time to help him topple the pillars that bring the temple down on his enemies and himself.



An ad shows a Palestinian boy throwing stones.
Annemie Augustijns

Top: Banners Samson et Dalila at Flanders Opera Antwerp

Bottom: New York Times on Samson et Dalila production by Flanders Opera, 6 May 2009

and end all of art.
hip of the two was
topic of the round
t collapsed. Mr.
that effective politi-
ds strong convic-

tion, Mr. Nitzan said that myths
and biblical stories provided a
useful lens through which to see
today's problems more clearly.
Who could gainsay either idea?
As Richard Taruskin, the

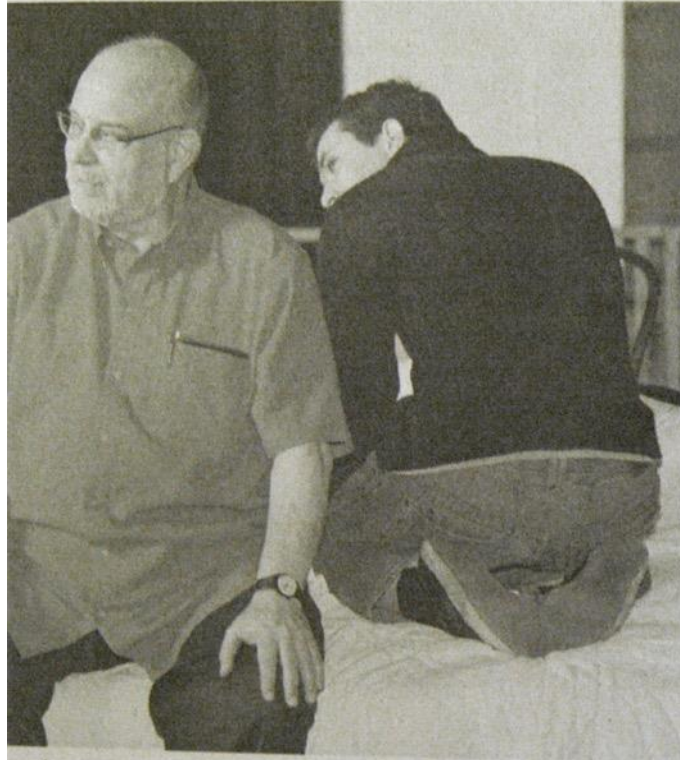
American musicologist, has writ-
ten in the context of Soviet com-
posers like Prokofiev and Shosta-
kovich, there's an unfortunate
tendency in certain quarters of
the music world to try to divorce

Which partly explains how, of a
spring evening, a panel discus-
sion apropos of a 19th-century
French opera devolved into a
shouting match about life-and-
death matters, with warnings
from that irate businessman, who
identified himself as a Jewish en-
trepreneur with family going
back generations in Antwerp.
When the round table ended, he
made a beeline for Mr. Cahn, at
the moment arguing gamely with
me on behalf of the opera. I tried
vainly to evaporate. Red faced,
spewing insults and standing
nose to nose with the Flanders
Opera's general director, the
businessman predicted the pro-
duction would stir up anti-Semi-
tism, which festers just below the
surface here, he said, to which
the flustered impresario blurted
out that if the situation for Jews
were really so precarious here,
they should leave.

Oy.

He would have done better to
thank the man for believing that
opera matters so much.

And for not punching his lights
out.



The opera's directors, Omri
Nitzan, far left, an Israeli, and
Amir Nizar Zuabi, a Palestin-
ian; above, an ad shows a Pal-
estinian boy throwing stones.



Kristin,
ers com
Bravo's

The Fashi

Bravo, T
Eastern
tral time

J. D. Roth,
Greener, e
Tung, co-e
by 3 Ball P

WITH: Isa
Fern Malli

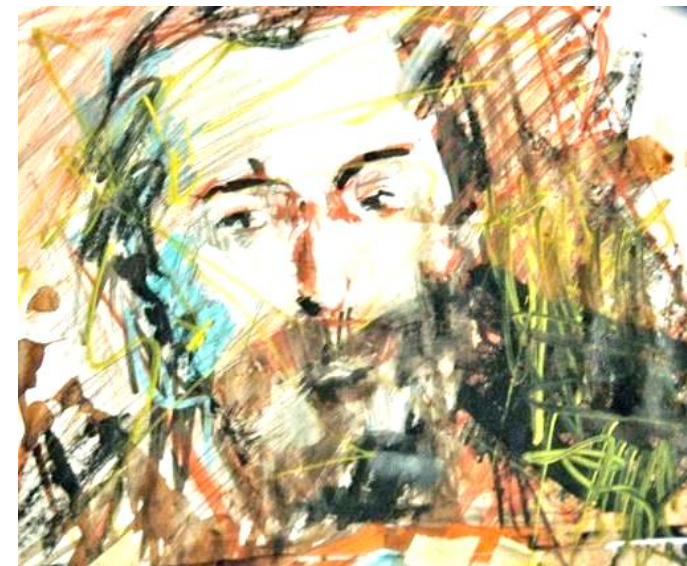
ONLINE:

An ex
nytim



For each opera production, Babenko drew or painted an illustration capturing the mood of the opera and serving as a basis for the visuals: posters, banners and program booklets. Three of Babenko's illustrations got auctioned at the annual benefit, Jevgeni Onegin being the best-selling item of the event. A fourth one is in the private collection of Aviel Cahn, director of Flanders Opera (currently Berlin)

- Top left: Wozzeck
- Middle: Madame Butterfly
- Top right: Jevgeni Onegin
- Bottom left: Candide
- Bottom right: Rage of Life



Illustrations for Flanders Opera, 2009

Left: Benjamin Britten

Top middle: Verdi & Puccini

Bottom middle: Mahler

Top right: Saint-Saëns



Illustration for Candide, marker, tape, acryl paint and spray paint on paper, 80 x 60 cm, 2009

Program booklets Flanders Opera, 2009 - 2010

Drawing for Die Schöpfung Drawing, pen on tracing paper, A4, Flanders Opera, 2009



25. scheetsen.	17. jacht	het voetbal
26. hardlopen.	18. zwemmen.	de voetbal sport
27. badminton.	19. windsurfen.	
28. squash.	20. paardrijden / jumping.	het plein (grasveld)
29. alpinisme beklimmen.	21. waterkisten.	het stadion.
30. vissen.	22. roeien.	het veld.
31. gewichtheffen.	23. duiken.	de voetballen.
32. worstellen.	24. waterpolo.	
33. gewichtssport.		
34. schermen.	1. hij zag alles wat hij voel en denkt.	
35. boogschieten.	2. bij hevige emotie (bang, nerveus, verliefd...)	
36. belicht.	3. ergens bang voor zijn. Samenpers.	
37. roeswatsen.	4. hij haast alles wat hij denkt.	
38. schaatsen.	5. hij had geen moed meer (bang)	
39. on-line skating.	6. ik moet erover praten (problemen).	
40. autoracing.	7. iemand iets nadrukkelijk zeggen.	
41. rally.	8. karol zijn	
42. zeilen.	(van je hart een steen maken)	
43. vliegen.	9. niets durven, geen moed hebben.	
44. deltavliegen.	10. met veel inzet en overgiving	
45. zweefvliegen (parus).	11. als iemand ergens vol van is, enthous	
46. gymnastiek.	is, wil hij daarover praten.	
47. lagelstokken (gymnastiek).	12. liefdes verdriet / als je erg	
48. handjuggling.	val verdriet hebt.	
49. atletiek.	13. erg lief, vertederend zijn voor	
iets / iemand begripen =	14. iemand	
= iets goed wel weten.	15. iemand moed inspreken.	

Venz mij is 't iender = dat blijft gelijk.
 das niet rokent ei tussen die twee para).
 tranen - curen

amag [surat] mas afreel n. mlon

Ze plukten. Ze aten
 De aarde beefde in haar ingewand
 Van nieuwe pijn, Natuur zuchtte opnieu
 De lucht betrok, bij doffe donder weenden
 De regendroppels om het plegen van
 Fatale erfsonde.

Zij keken om en zagen heel de oostkant
 Van 't paradijs, pas nog hun blijde woonplaats;
 Daar zwaaiden nu die vlammenkling, de poort
 Vol wapenvuur en bange droomgezichten.
 Snel wisten zij hun eerste tranen af.
 De wereld lag nu voor hen, om een rustplaats
 Te vinden, door Voorzienigheid geleid;
 Zo gingen zij, onzeker, hand in hand,
 Met trage tred eenzaam hun weg door Eden.

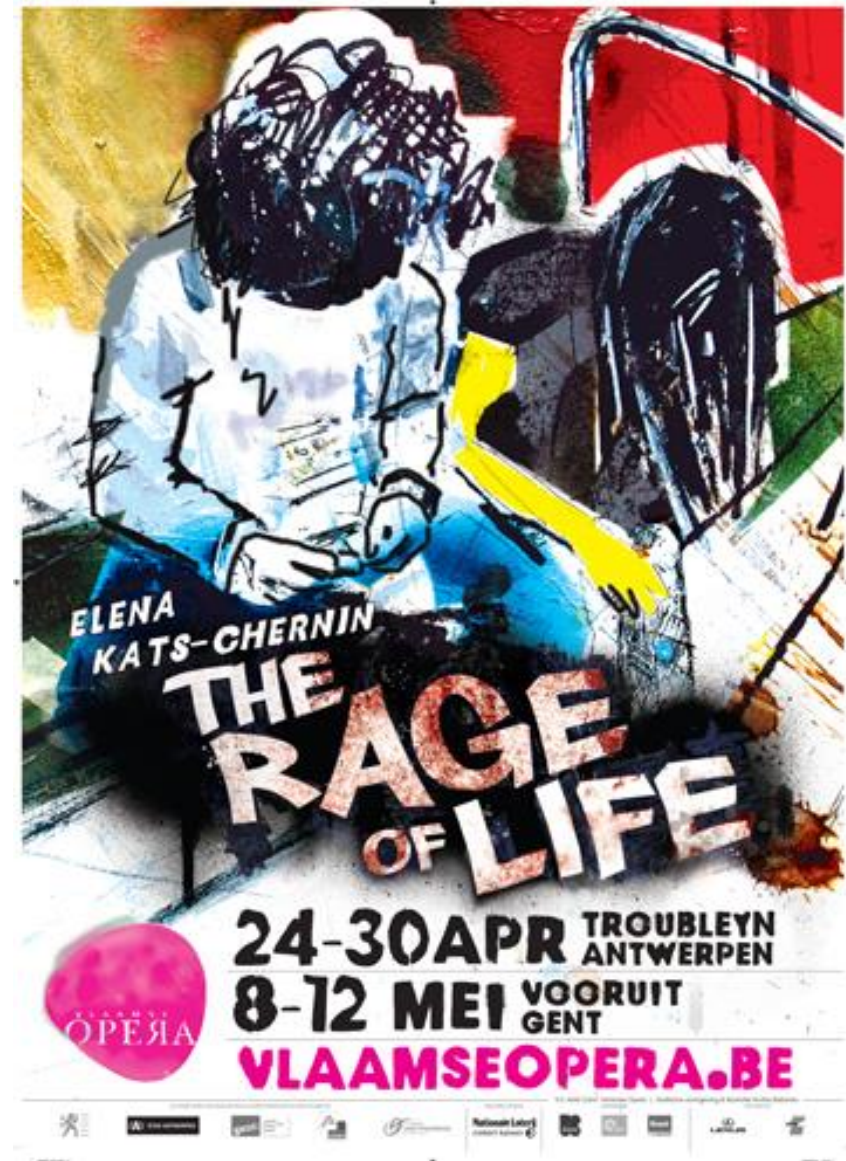
John Milton | Het paradijs verloren

Babenko's Dutch course when he arrived in Belgium

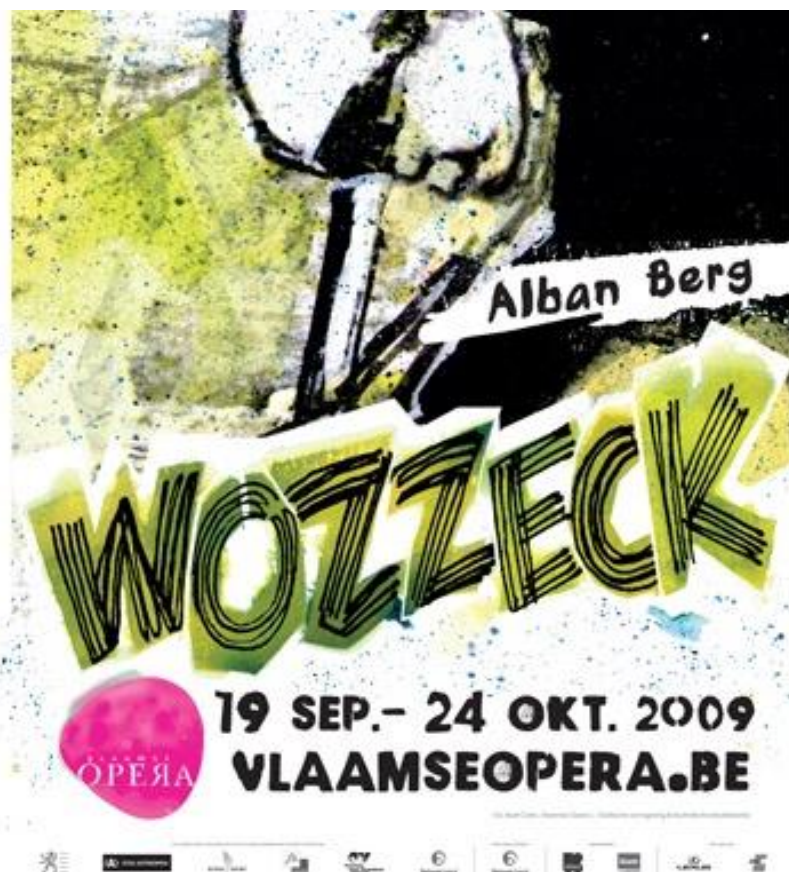
Back cover programme booklet Flanders Opera



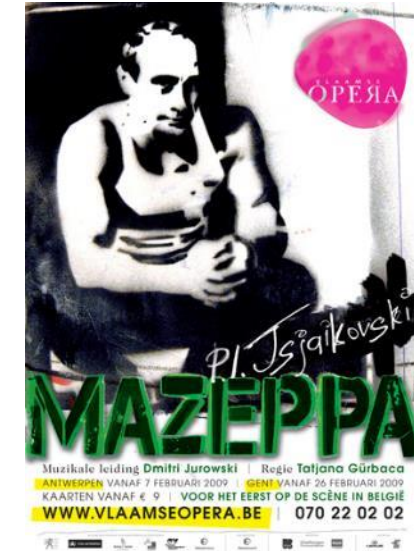
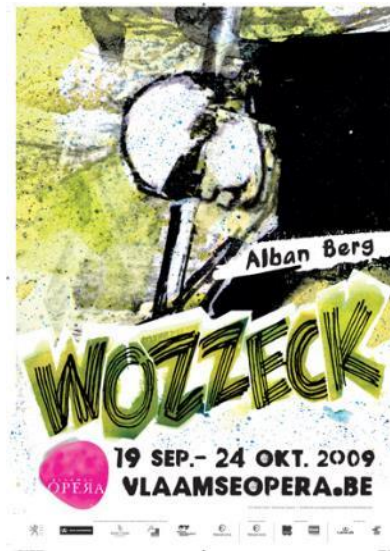
Illustration for Rage of Life, marker, tape, acryl paint and spray paint on paper, 80 x 60 cm, 2009



Poster for Rage of Life, 2009



Illustration, poster and program booklet for Wozzeck, 2009





Gala Flanders Opera



Boutique Babenko



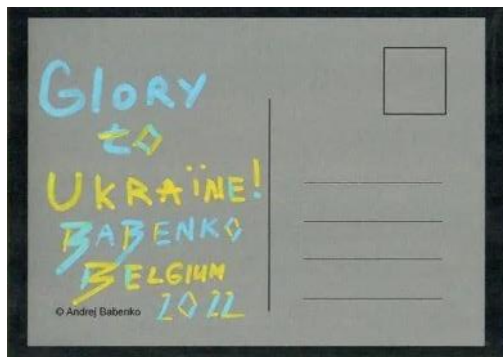
Babenko make this handmade, leather bound booklet during his time at the University of the West of England, Bristol, 2008

Galery VCR in Antwerp commissioned this boulder with Babenko for a charity project
Marker and spray paint on boulder, 2013



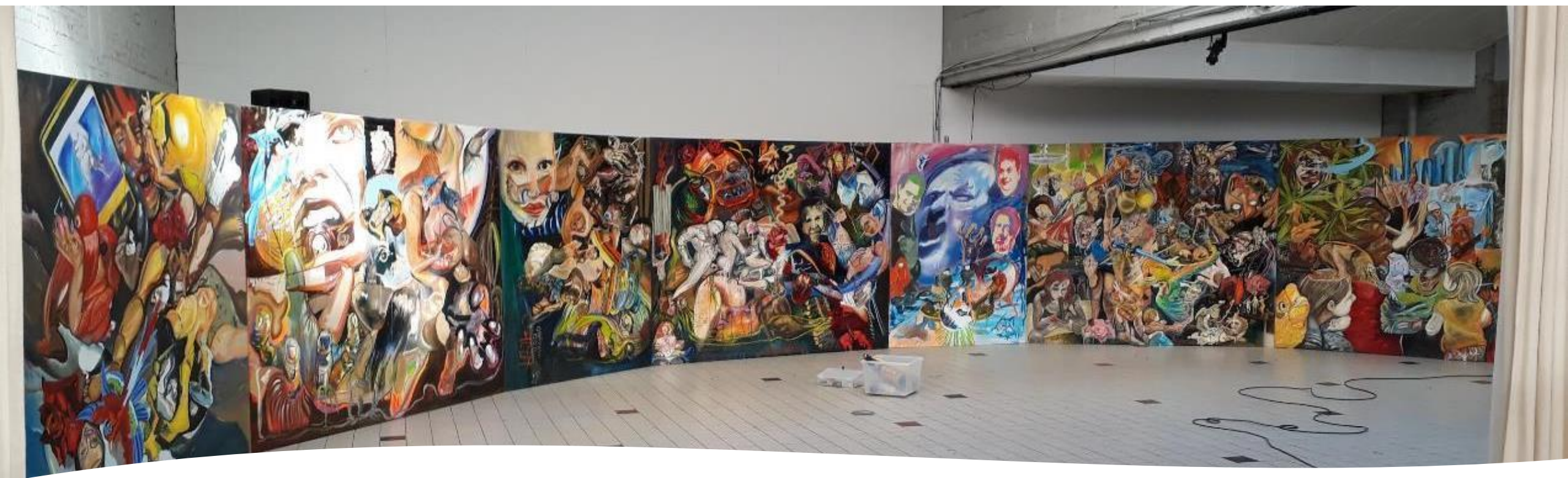
Fundraising event for
Ukraine, together with
Aleksey Gorbunov, 2023

Babenko donated five
paintings for sale; free
donations were collected in
return for postcards



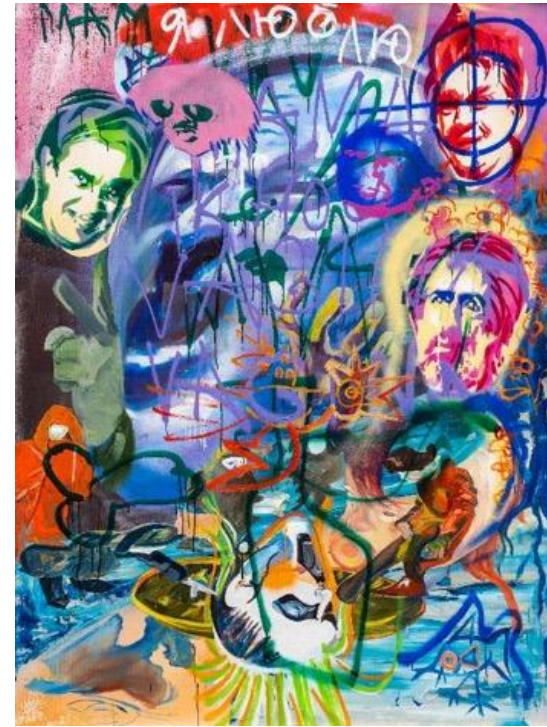


People, places
& publications



Line-up for Babenko, De Wachter, Pawlowski, a crossover project at Extra City, Antwerp, 2018

Previous page: Babenko, De Wachter, Pawlowski at Pukkelpop, 2018



Top left, middle, bottom left: Babenko, De Wachter, Pawlowski, S.M.A.K. Ghent, 2018
 Top right: Babenko, De Wachter, Pawlowski, spray paint on canvas, 125 x 200 cm, 2018
 Bottom right: Babenko, De Wachter, Pawlowski, Pukkelpop, 2018



PARTNERS

Andrej Babenko

www.babenkobelgium.be

Deze Belgische kunstenaar van Oekraïense afkomst groeide op in een gemeenschap die nog het best te omschrijven valt als een communistische commune met Sovjetpropagandabeelden alom. Op zijn veertiende slaat hij de deuren van zijn ouderlijk huis in Oekraïne dicht en maakt hij een artistieke undergroundpunkwandeling in St-Petersburg, alwaar hij het te bont maskert en via politiek asiel een veilige haven in België vindt. In Antwerpen schrijft hij zich met het oog op jobzekerheid, voor een studie als grafisch vormgever in en na zijn afstuderen mag hij zich volop uitleven met spraakmakende "punk" affiches voor de Vlaamse Opera.

Maar voor deze zelfgenoegende ambitieuze independent punk artist knipt het bloed waar het niet gaan kan en hij stort zich met gave en goed – komende van de street art en performance art – op de schilderkunst. Daarbij accepteert hij echter niet blindelings de heersende gewoonten en opvattingen van de kunstscene. Integendeel, die hedendaagse kunst verdient toch wel een rake klap! En die deelt hij uit, met de performance Contemporary Art Sucks, naar het gelijknamige schilderscanvas waar deze woorden op staan geolied en waarmee hij op de letterlijke en figuurlijke kunstbarricaden gaat staan. Of wil hij gewoonweg communiceren: 'Ik ben de beste!'

Zijn grote olieverfschilderijen presenteren zich op het eerste zicht als een bacchanal van lijnen, vlakken, vormen en kleuren met een theatrale wervelwind van herkenbare afbeeldingen en figuren. Kortom: een mix van ingrediënten die ulmondend in een Apocalyps. Schildersrij: expressief, los-uit-de-pols-geschilderde-dikke-olieverf-verfstreken in frisse bonte tot oplichtige (fluo)kleuren, weergegeven in een klassieke figuratieve beeldtaal, afgewisseld met stukken sjabloon. Stel je doeken voor onvoel beweging. Intuïtief doch doorsicht. Met duidelijke graffiti en streetart-influences. Is het fantastisch op speed? Is het een hallucinerende trip op spacecake?



Workshop Raoul De Keyser, given by Babenko at S.M.A.K. Ghent, 2019



Opening of exhibition The World is Burning, Mol 2022



The World is Burning featured seven artists. The exhibition attracted more than 2000 visitors over 5 weekends, including the Ukrainian embassy, Aleksey Gorbunov and Dirk De Wachter. Babenko's work was incredibly well received, not only by the visiting audience, but also by fellow artist Raymond Minnen, one of the participating artists.

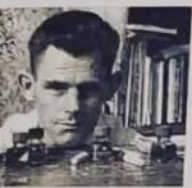
Top: Kataryna Bilotil, Ukrainian embassy, giving a speech at The World is Burning, 2022

Bottom left: newspaper article about The World is Burning, featuring Babenko

Bottom right: Dirk De Wachter and spouse attending the opening of the exhibition



in-
nationale
n, geboren in Mol. Art Cum
mag ook als eerste het
ere grootwarenhuis Alma
positieruimte gebruiken.



Paepen, 2020-21

Maar Carolus Paepen (2004) mocht dan wel in 1922 het levenslicht zien, dde na tal van omzwerv- n Brussel waar hij het leel van zijn leven door- Maar de familie Paepen n uitgebreide familie in telt Cum Laude-lid Rik and. "Zo is de bekende Pascal Paepen een ach- n Carolus. Pascal heeft ng geschreven voor on- is."

re school in Mol-Mille- urolus Paepen op door lent. "Maar hij heeft n geen enkele artistie- t genoten", vertelt Rik d. "Als kunstenaar is rekte autodidact. La- bevriend geraakt met n, de befaamde etser. hem zeker niet type- Kempens kunstenaar. uit die typische Kem-appen geschilderd. is trouwens ook niet talent. Hij was bo- reven grafisch kun- blonk in zeer gede- ten. Een mogelijke loed is wel dat hij ten- en heksenver- kindertijd in zijn werken heeft ver-

e expo, *De Wereld* it een gedicht dat n schreef. Het ude bij de rode pepsexpo: oorlog Carolus zelf heeft nder de Tweede vertelt Rik Van eft zware tijden een werkkamp et concentratie- enwald. Na de et meer in staat was een wrak." eningen waren

“Carolus Paepen verwerkte zijn tijd in Buchenwald in zijn kunst”



De tentoonstelling vindt plaats in de voormalige supermarkt Alma. FOTO BERT DE DEKEN



De Oekraïense kunstenaar Andrej Babenko bij zijn monumentaal werk dat een tegengewicht moet zijn voor de oorlog in zijn land. FOTO BERT DE DEKEN

Oekraïense kunstenaar Andrej Babenko: “We willen terug naar een land met vrede”

Cum Laude heeft rond Carolus Paepen nog acht andere kunstenaars verzameld wier werken verwijzen naar oorlogen en conflicten. Een van hen is Andrej Babenko, een Oekraïner die al sinds 1999 in België woont en werkt. Hij stelt in Mol voor het eerst een monumentaal werk tentoon dat hij maakte na het uitbreken van de oorlog in zijn land. “Ik ben er twee dagen voor de inval van Rusland aan begonnen”, vertelt hij. “Het is een zware bevalling geweest waaraan ik zeven maanden gewerkt heb. Ik wilde bewust geen oorlogstafereel maken. Ik heb een romantisch beeld gemaakt van het vroegere Oekraïne. Het moet een tegengewicht zijn voor de gruwelbeelden die we elke dag te verwerken krijgen. Mijn hele familie woont nog in Kyiv. Ik heb dagelijks via Skype nog contact met mijn moeder. Sommige bevriende kunstenaars zijn gesneuveld in Marioepol. Met dit schilderij wil ik een tegengewicht maken.”

Alechinsky en El
Vooral in de jaren
Paepen zijn hoo-
stenaar. “Hij was
het Brusselse e-
belangrijke gale-
Van Brabant. “E-
groepstentoonste-
te namen als Piet
James Ensor. D-
ven uitvoerig o-
toonstellingen.
hij nog in Duit-
en zelfs New Yo-
“Hij heeft vee-
gaat. Byl verder
op tv. En in Cami-
mentaire over h-
in de vroegere M-
is er ooit een f-
toond. Later he-
pen gemaakt v-
zen van Zjef V-
zijn nooit uitge-
“Hoewel hij n-
dendaagse kun-
gewerkt met s-
fitti - is hij in-
raakt”, stelt
“Zijn werk lag
goed in de m-
deze expo ee-
Hij verdient h-

Oude Alma
Alvast de loc-
stelling is uni-
de 'oude Alm-
grootwarenh-
Van Hoofstra-
zullen het pa-
zegt Karel B-
de gemeente-
vestigd. Het
tijdje leeg en
lie Troukens
schikking ge-
aantal vrijw-
verbouwd t-
unieke exp-
jaren gaan c-
vinden.”
STIJN JANSSE

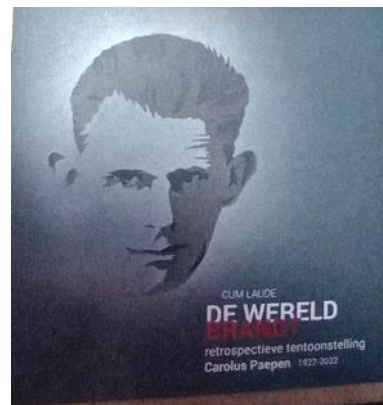
De Wereld
ber tot 11 de-
Edmond Van
open tijden
ken van Car-
benko (Oekr-
Groot (Nede-
Haldermans
ria/Hoogen-)



Left: Newspaper article about exhibition The World is Burning, Mol, 2022

Top right: Kataryna Bilotil, Ukrainian embassy, attending the exhibition

Bottom right: Dirk De Wachter attending the exhibition



Catalogue The World is Burning, 2022



Fundraising gala for Ukraine at Laarne castle. Attended and contributed to by Kris Martin, Wim Delvoye, David Claerbout, Michaël Borremans, Peter Bernaerts, Jan Hoet Jr and Philippe Van Cauteren among others



Inauguration of the C-Power wind farm in Hippodrome, Ostend, 2013

Live action painting by Babenko Belgium; signed Elio di Rupo (picture) (prime minister 2011 – 2014), Johan Vande Lanotte, Melchior Wathelet and 300 VIPs



[The artist at work](#)



Studio visit by Ukrainian embassy and Aleksey Gorbunov

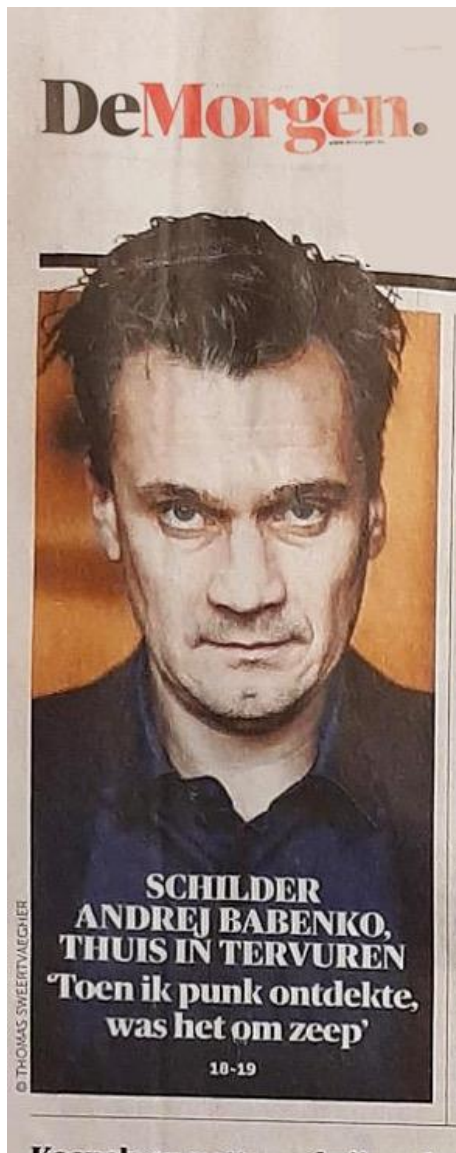




Aleksey Gorbunov visiting Babenko's studio



Studio Babenko



Interview Babenko, De Morgen, 5 December 2019

Elke week kijken we binnen in de werkplek van een kunstenaar.
 TEKST NATHALIE BLANC & FOTO MARILEN VAN ELS

Elke week kijken we binnen in de werkplek van een kunstenaar.
 TEKST NATHAÏLE BLANC & FOTO MARLEEN VAN ELS



1974 J. Polym. Sci. Polym. Chem. Ed. 12:1111-1122

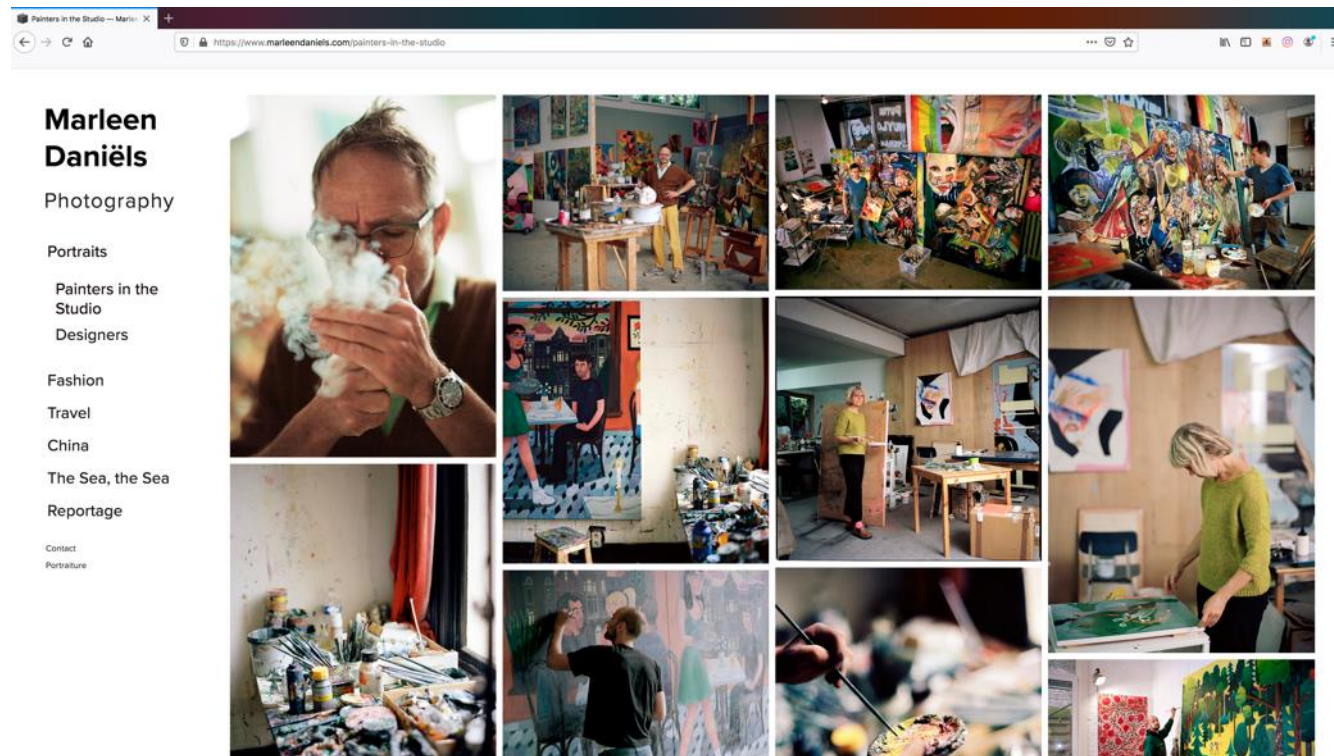
[illegible][illegible]

in de kerk. Het is een teken dat wat ik
mezelf aanmat. Wat je op het
doek ziet, is altijd mijn verhaal.
Mijn gevoel met de wereld. Zo nu
en dan probeer ik de taal met een
andere taal te praten. Het is anders,
maar wel een belangrijk uitdruk-
king.

De afname in de hoeveelheid van de afvalstoffen die naar de afvalverwerkende bedrijven wordt afgevoerd, kan worden toegeschreven aan de afname van de hoeveelheid afvalstoffen die worden afgevoerd naar de afvalverwerkende bedrijven. De afname van de afvalstoffen die worden afgevoerd naar de afvalverwerkende bedrijven kan worden toegeschreven aan de afname van de hoeveelheid afvalstoffen die worden afgevoerd naar de afvalverwerkende bedrijven.

[illegible]

Op 21 februari kun je in de Kunsthal
Extraktiv infiltreren in een congresper-
manence, met schiedboekjes van Babenka
mizenky van Maura Pawlowski en
gedichten van Charles Bukowski.
voorgelezen door Dirk De Wachter.
Babenka belijnt een extractivisme



Dag Andrej,

het leven gaat zijn gang, hopelijk gaat alles goed in dat van u?

OK om die twee gesprekken te voeren. Ik zeg dit na enige aarzeling zoals je wel gevoeld hebt. Uw werk schrikt me namelijk wat af, het chaotische ervan overweldigt mij danig. Ik heb zelf heel veel last van chaotisme, na al die jaren kan ik dat enigszins bedwingen met mijn dagelijkse arbeid, hier in mijn ateliers.

Ik heb uw portfolio bekeken, uw statement en intenties gelezen. Ondertussen ben ik benieuwd naar wat we elkaar te zeggen zullen hebben.

Beste groeten,
Anne-Mie

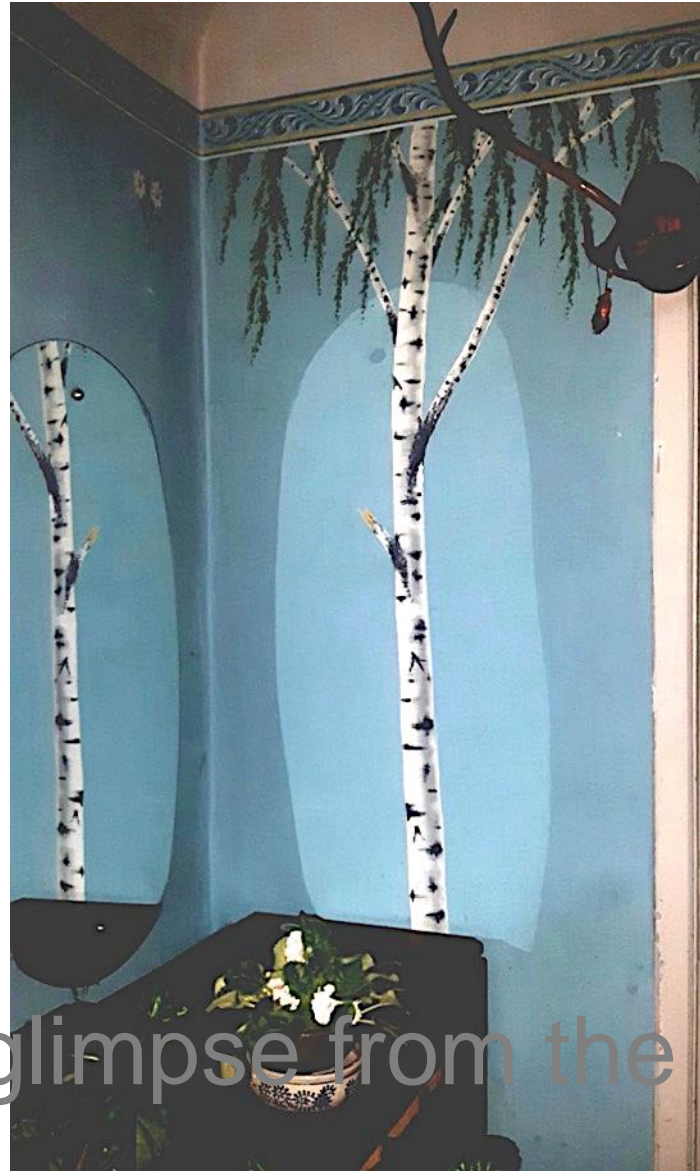
Website Marleen Daniëls, photographer of painters in their studio, used for interview Knack Weekend

Email Anne-Mie Van Kerckhoven to Babenko, 10
September 2021



**ANDREJ
BABENKO**
een kleine reconstructie
in woord & beeld

Provisional cover for Babenko's biography, written by Hans Willemse, to be published



A glimpse from the past

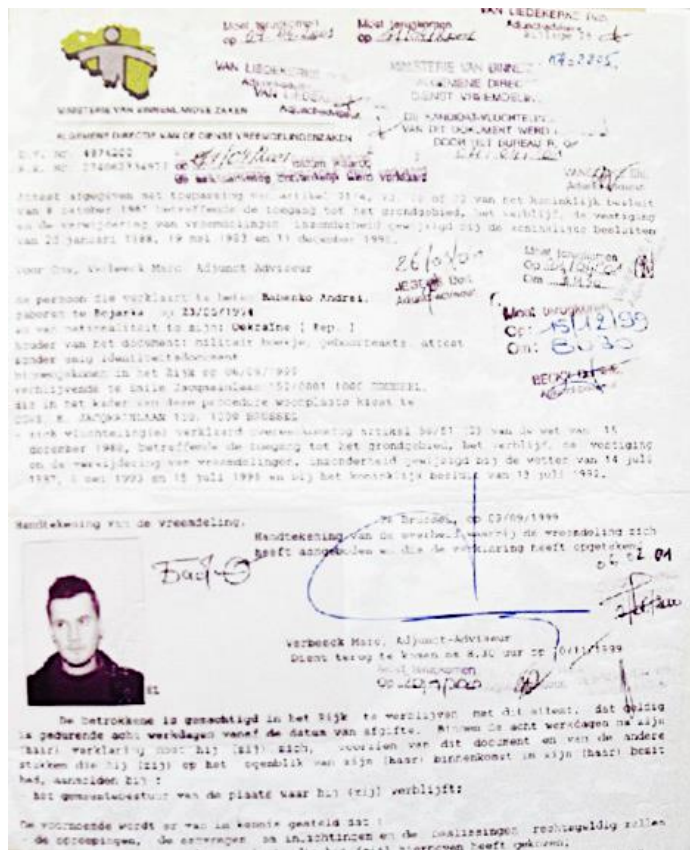


Wallpaper, antlers and floral calendar in Balenko's late grandmother's house

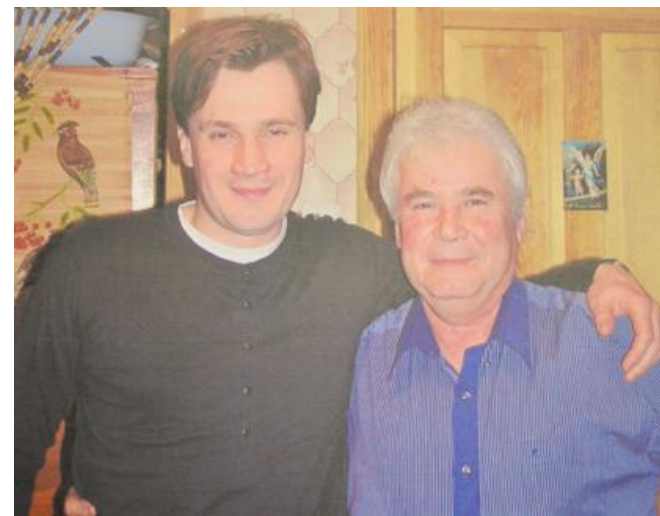


Left: Babenko with cousin Olga and the wounded grey heron he found and nurtured
 Middle: primary school at Khotyanivka
 Right: secondary school graduation





Left: residence permit Babenko, 1999; Middle: girlfriend visiting hometown Kiev - paintings from early years on the wall; Right: birthday party, 1996



Family gatherings; colourful mail



*I am a
contemporary
artist,
manoeuvring
on the edge of
desires to be
together in
search of
freedom*