



Correspondences

Bosch & Kantor

4 October 2018
to 20 January 2019

Maxim Kantor:
The Last Judgment



Correspondences

The heart of the Paintings Gallery of the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna is *The Last Judgment* by Hieronymus Bosch (c. 1450/55–1516). This triptych is among the world's most important art works from the period around 1500. Many aspects of the altarpiece continue to puzzle scholars to this day, and it is indisputably the collection's main attraction.

Our exhibition series explores correspondences between Bosch's altarpiece and works by a range of artists. In temporary shows at regular intervals, works by different artists are set in a dialogue with the *Last Judgment*, revealing surprising connections between the various media and works, and offering a variety of perspectives on Bosch's painting. Whether the pieces on show are paintings, graphic works, sculptures, video works, or photographs, these dialogues allow visitors to discover new facets of Bosch's 500-year-old masterpiece.

Born in Moscow in 1957, the painter, graphic artist, sculptor, and writer Maxim Kantor became famous in 1997 when he represented the Russian Federation at the Venice Biennale. This was followed by exhibitions in Europe and the USA. Kantor's diverse range of work includes portraits, landscapes, still lifes, religious depictions, and images that criticize politics and the times in which we live. The artist himself says that he has spent his entire life addressing the history of his family.

His own family history has served as a 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.«

His father, Karl Kantor, not only made sure that his son was acquainted with the works of Hieronymus Bosch and Pieter Bruegel the Elder, he also taught him the history of art through interpretations of the Bible. It is therefore not surprising that Kantor's creative work is based just as much on Renaissance humanism as it is on biblical stories. In his later years, the artist converted to Catholicism, nevertheless his family's Jewish roots retain their importance.

Painted in 2017/18, his *Last Judgment* has emerged from this combination of personal and general history, humanism and Christian traditions.

Bosch did not create a traditional Last Judgment; it is a morality painting that dramatically reveals to Christian viewers the punishment that awaits the seven deadly sins – the entire central panel is dedicated to this theme.

Kantor's painting shows seven people in a burning red room, all members of his family. The artist himself said, »I painted my Last Judgment as a normal everyday occurrence that happens each day and at every hour; the tribunal sits in judgment and the angelic trumpets sound literally every day like the



The Last Judgment, 2017/18, oil on canvas, 325 x 270 cm
© Maxim Kantor

beeping of car horns. We read the newspaper and chat with our neighbours while our daily routine runs its course – yet in inner reality, this day is playing out the final court session. The Last Judgment is taking place here and now, in our innermost self.«

Kantor's flaming red room also refers to the burning landscapes and blazing fires of hell found in Hieronymus Bosch's work. A formal connection between the two works are the angels who sound the Day of Judgment on their trumpets, and the chimaeras and monsters.



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The Flight Into Egypt, 2016, oil on canvas, 230 x 170 cm
© Maxim Kantor

In addition to Kantor's *Last Judgment*, which will be presented in public for the first time, the painting *The Flight Into Egypt* will be on display. This piece depicts a gigantic red tower, the Tower of Babel, a motif that appears repeatedly in Kantor's work. In *The Temptation of St. Anthony*, Kantor refers to the legend of the saint; this is also a theme that Hieronymus Bosch painted several times. A portrait of Maxim Kantor's father can also be found in this painting. He is reading a book and appears entirely unfazed by the giant dragon, the incarnation of evil and Satan.

Maxim Kantor in front
of one of his paintings in
St. Merry, Paris, 2017



Maxim Kantor

1957 Born on 22 December in Moscow, Russia

1975–1980 Attends and completes his diploma at the
Moscow Polygraphic Institute

1983 Finds an independent artist group that later becomes
known as *Krasnyj Dom* (Red House)

1987 First international exhibitions in Milan, Berlin, and
other places

1990 Begins writing

1998/99 Travelling exhibition with stops in Frankfurt am
Main, Whitewater/Wisconsin, Chicago, Miami Beach,
Belfast, and Luxembourg

1997 Represents the Russian Federation at the 47th Biennale
di Venezia with a solo exhibition

2005 Resides in Western Europe and Russia, first in London
and Berlin, and later on the Île de Ré off the west coast of
France

2013/14 Publishes artist's books with illustrations on H. von
Kleist and Robin Hood. Leaves Russia after the annexation
of Crimea. Receives a commission from the Vatican to paint
St. Thomas Aquinas for the Pontifical Academy

Since 2013 Honorary Fellow at Pembroke College in Oxford,
Visiting Fellow at St. Antony's College

2016 Retrospective at the Kunsthalle Emden. Becomes a
German citizen. Receives a commission from the Federal
Foreign Office in Berlin for two paintings

2018 His novel *Krasnyj Svet* (Red Light) is published in
German. Completes an artist's book with lithographs on
Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's *Faust* (Parts I and II)

www.maximkantor.com



The Temptation of St. Anthony, 2015, oil on canvas, 190 x 190 cm
© Maxim Kantor

Cover:

Details from Hieronymus Bosch: *Last Judgment Triptych*,
c. 1490–c. 1505, oil tempera on oak

© The Paintings Gallery of the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna
and Maxim Kantor: *The Last Judgment*, 2017/18, oil on canvas
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The exhibition will be accompanied by a catalogue.

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hosted by the Theatermuseum

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daily 10am–6pm, closed Tuesday
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