

'A story about ordinary love and a lot of trees'

*...Model neighbor who dares to go outside the box -
Dirk De Wachter about Andrej Babenko's art*

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Andrej Babenko

Born in 1974, June 23 in Boyarka, Ukraine.

This Belgian artist of Ukrainian origin grew up in an environment permeated by Soviet propaganda. Babenko is captivated by the Russian realistic classical painting school, as well as the forbidden rock scene of the 80s. At the age of fourteen, he flees his parental house in Ukraine and goes to St Petersburg, where things get out of hand. He finds a safe haven in Belgium through political asylum and with a view to job security, he enrolls for a degree in graphic design, which allows him to indulge in the design of high-profile posters for Flanders Opera. Yet, Babenko cannot deny his true passion and – coming from street art and performance art – throws himself heart and soul into painting, which he has been doing ever since.

Babenko's works are maximalist and neo-expressionist. The dualism and mysticism of Russian female poet Hippius at the time of the Russian revolution, and of Bulgakov, are recurring themes in his art. He depicts today's society where those themes are still at play, with all its contrasts, struggles and hypocrisy. The paintings are explosions of colour and drama, made with oil and spray paint on canvas. Recurring elements are the contrasts between different societies (USSR, eastern Europe, western Europe) and his different personalities (from punker in a Soviet prison cell to good father of two children). His paintings are a whirlwind of figures and characters, some good and some controversial, reflecting life in general, as well as the internal demons he is facing. Especially in times of the coronacrisis, fears and worries have become very actual. It is interesting for an artist - whose natural state is one of isolation - to observe people's behaviour when general isolation is imposed; it is a good breeding ground for artistic research. Another link between Babenko's art and the coronacrisis is the power of nature - in his paintings, and in the form of its swift recovery and return to the cities in the absence of human activity. It is testimony to the pollution brought about by man, even at small scale. At the same time, it is encouraging to see nature's power for recovery - it is a ray of light in this crisis, much like the light that is present in Babenko's works.

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EDUCATION

2004 - 2008 Master in Visual Arts, Karel de Grote Hogeschool, Antwerp, Belgium

2008 Erasmus, Master in Visual Arts University of the West of England, Bristol, UK

2002 - 2008 Painting & Drawing, Royal Academy for Fine Arts, Antwerp, Belgium

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2020

Babenko Graffiti workshop, Zomer van Antwerpen, Antwerp, Belgium

Le Garage lab, supporting Italy during the Corona Crisis, Trento city, Italy

Babenko Graffiti workshop & solo by Andrej Babenko, Museum Dr. Guislain, Gent, Belgium

2019

Babenko De Wachter & Pawlowski, Museum Dr. Guislain, Gent, Belgium

Babenko Graffiti workshop & installation by Raoul De Keyser and Andrej Babenko, S.M.A.K. Ghent, Belgium

Performance Andrej Babenko & Robert del Naja (Massive Attack), Brussels, Belgium

2018

Babenko, De Wachter & Pawlowski, S.M.A.K. & Stu Bru, Art Marathan, Ghent, Belgium

Babenko De Wachter & Pawlowski, Hasselt, Belgium

Andrej Babenko & Mauro Pawlowski, Kunstvestdagen, Mechelen, Belgium

Babenko De Wachter & Pawlowski, Kunsthal Extra City, Antwerp, Belgium

Andrej Babenko Luciano Benetton 2016, BOZAR, Brussels, Belgium curated by Marianne Van Boxelaere

Join The Dots / Unire le distanze, Italy

“Wall of fame”, Gallerie Ecoled’olargue, South of France

Vrijzinnig Centrum De Geus, Harelbeke, Belgium

2017

Performance Andrej Babenko & Maksim Galkin, Amsterdam, the Netherlands

Performance Andrej Babenko & Vyacheslav Butusov, Amsterdam, the Netherlands

“An Artist’s wife’s hallucination”, 't Lastig Portret, Antwerp, Belgium

“An Artist’s wife’s hallucination”, SD Worx, Antwerp, Belgium

2016

“An Artist’s wife’s hallucination”, Gallery Campo & Campo, Antwerp, Belgium

2015

“Between Dream and Reality”, Atrium Madou Tower, European Commission, Brussels, Belgium

“Between Dream and Reality” with performance by Mauro Pawlowski ‘dEUS’, Gallery Campo & Campo, Antwerp, Belgium

Andrej Babenko, Galery Van Campen & Roctus, Antwerp, Belgium

2014

“Portraits”, University of Leiden, Leiden, the Netherlands

"Babenko & James Ensor", Galery Campo & Campo, Antwerp, Belgium

2013

Street Art Action - Free Pussy Riot commissioned by Pussy Riot & Banksy, Antwerp, Belgium

Performance ‘Occupy Atelier’ Ruimte Morguen, Antwerp, Belgium

Performance at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Antwerp, Belgium

Andrej Babenko, Galery Van Campen & Roctus, Antwerp, Belgium

Performance at Tate Modern, London, UK

2012

Babenko Live painting, Pure Evil prints, Ann Vancoillie Viool’ “Fish&Chips”, Antwerp, Belgium

“Portraits”, University of Antwerp, Antwerp, Belgium

“Contemporary Art Sucks”, Designcenter De Winkelhaak, Antwerp, Belgium

2010

Fundraising gala Flanders Opera, Antwerp, Belgium

“Tegen de Stroom” Flanders Opera, Antwerp, Belgium

GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2017

Portrait of Luciano Benetton ‘Imago Mundi’, Venice Biennale, Italy

Art project signposts, Flemish government, Brussels, Belgium

Exhibition and Auction Bernaerts Auctions, Antwerp, Belgium

“Museumnacht & Cultuurmarkt van Vlaanderen”, Ongezien#2, Oude Havenhuis, Antwerp, Belgium

Window project BorgerRio, Antwerp commune, Belgium

“Museumnacht”, Volksmuseum, Antwerp, Belgium

2013

“Night at the Museum”, Moscow, Russia

“Common Art Fest”, Scheld’Apen, Antwerp, Belgium

“Land of Milk and Money”, “Byrrh” Brussels, Belgium

2012

“Art 4 peace stencils-peaceful World”, Cut Up Galerie, Germany

Doel, Belgium

2011

Galery Campo & Campo, Antwerp, Belgium

2009

Galery Campo & Campo, Antwerp, Belgium

2008

“Out of Control”, Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Brussels, Belgium

Publications

2020

TheArtCouch Belgium – lockdown studio views – studio Andrej Babenko – May 5, 2020

Le Garage lab, Andrej Babenko – invited guest at atelier - supporting Italy while Crown Crisis – expo paintings & concept, Trento city, Italy – April 14, 2020

2019

De Morgen, interview met Andrej Babenko – December 5, 2019

<https://www.demorgen.be/tv-cultuur/deze-punkschilder-performt-met-mauro-pawlowski-en-dirk-de-wachter-in-oekraïne-was-ik-uitschot-hier-modelburger~b1791bfc/>

Opera out of the box 2009-2019, the Cahn Years at Opera Vlaanderen, 9789077207666 page's 45, 53, 215, 332-333, 352, 718 – April 24, 2019

2018

S.M.A.K. – December 22, 2018

<https://www.vrt.be/vrtnws/nl/2018/12/21/een-mechelen-in-vuur-en-vlam-of-plopsakerstparade-hier-kunt-u/>

Bad Republic #PKP18ART een sound performance van Mauro Pawlowski en Dirk De Wachter met live schilderijen van Andrej Babenko – August 18, 2018

<https://www.badrepublic.be/festival-special/2018/08/pukkelpop-2018-de-festivalstad-is-er-klaar-voor/>

Sven Gatz Flemish Minister of Culture in front of Babenko paintings – August 17, 2018

<https://twitter.com/hashtag/pkp18art>

Bukowski's poetry brought by Dirk De Wachter, portraits by Andrew Babenko and music by Mauro Pawlowski. A wonderful performance at 21h45 at THINK TANK. #PKP18ART – August 17, 2018

Spasibo Magazine, Kunstenaar Andrej Babenko: seks, Google, rock-n-roll – March 1, 2018

<https://spasibo-magazine.com/article/kunstenaar-andrej-babenko-seks-google-rock-n-roll>

Knack Weekend - Kunstenaar Andrej Babenko: 'Het gaat niet om schoonheid, je moet iets voelen als je mijn werk ziet'

2017

100% expo - De intensiteit van het schilderen - Andrej Babenko

Barbarians and Poets - Contemporary Artists from Belgium, Imago Mundi Benetton Collection, 978-88-99657-45-1 page's 28, 34-35

Art04, Vrijzinnig Centrum DE GEUS

#HomART - A heart for art 2017, Rotary International

2016

Babenko, Catalogue Campo & Campo

Babenko Belgium - Between Dream and Reality, European Commission

2015

Gazet van Antwerpen, Interview with Andrej Babenko and Mauro Pawlowski - April 15, 2015

http://www.gva.be/cnt/dmf20150419_01637107/werken-van-babenko-en-performance-van-mauro-pawlowski-bij-campo-campo

2012

ATV, Babenko - Contemporary Art Sucks

2008 - 2010

Vlaamse Opera - Posters and illustrations

DRAFT:

2017

Barbarians and Poets - Contemporary Artists from Belgium, Imago Mundi Benetton Collection

Art04, Vrijzinnig Centrum DE GEUS

#HomART - A heart for art 2017, Rotary International

2016

Babenko Belgium - Between Dream and Reality, European Commission

Babneko, Catalogue Campo & Campo

2012

ATV - Babenko - Contemporary Art Sucks

2008 - 2010

Vlaamse Opera - Posters and illustrations

VIDEOS ABOUT ANDREJ'S PROJECTS

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=02Ci21MUnck>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=02Ci21MUnck&feature=youtu.be>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AN6sB5sfdbk>