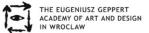


Walter Rindone

THE IMPRINTED AND THE REPRINTED IMAGE

The Eugeniusz Geppert Academy of Art and Design in Wrocław Faculty of Graphics and Media Art







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The Eugeniusz Geppert Academy of Art and Design in Wrocław Faculty of Graphics and Media Art

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Doctoral thesis in the field of the arts, in the discipline – fine arts and art conservation

Author: Walter Rindone Promoter: Prof. Christopher Nowicki



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INTRODUCTION

The scope of this dissertation is to demonstrate the outcomes of the artistic research based on image manipulation and image reproduction processes conducted at the Studio of Serigraph Printmaking of the Eugeniusz Geppert Academy of Art and Design in Wrocław, headed by Doctor Marta Kubiak.

The basis of the work is a reflection on images as carriers of sensory information and their symbolic nature. The role of images on the diffused aestheticization brought by the ever-accelerating systems of society and the implications that follow, such as the misuse of images to create distorted representations of reality are also addressed.

Such reflections culminated in an artistic project entitled "The Black Series". It consists of the reinterpretation of images from a 1843 edition of the Bible illustrated by the French artist Paul Gustave Doré. These original images are altered by the use of techniques such as collage, and an experimental image reproduction process called anastatic printing.

The contents of this dissertation describe the ideas and every step of the process leading to the creation of the project and are divided into three thematic sections. The first section delves deep into the ideas and the sources of reflections which inspired the project. The second section describes the historical, theoretical and practical outcomes of the research on the experimental printmaking process named anastatic printing, as well as the personal experience acquired during the time spent in perfecting this technique. The third section - the conclusive section - displays the body of artistic works which constitutes "The Black Series."

The research work documented in the following pages aims to investigate the nature of the image and raise questions about the implications of the diffusion of images as a consequence of the ever-accelerating systems of society.

Section 1 CONCEPTS

MANIFESTO - THE BLACK SERIES

Today's society is iconocentric. Images have a central role in information distribution and with the spread of imaging technologies, they have replaced the word.

Since they were the product of an expansive and time-consuming activity that required skills developed through learning and life experience, the number of images that an average medieval man would have seen throughout his entire life was around a few dozens. Information revolutions triggered by important innovations such as Gutenberg's printing press and computer networking, led to the exponential growth of information and the dramatic increase of its diffusion rate. Up until the point where today, people are overwhelmed by thousands of images every day.

Industrialization has resulted in an increase in the production and diffusion of commodities and their aestheticization, as well as of images made to advertise them. In an article published in 2007 titled "Anywhere the Eye Can See, It's Likely to See an Ad," the New York Times reported the estimations of a market research firm, showing that a person living in a city 30 years ago saw up to 2,000 ad messages a day, compared with up to 5,000 in 2007. Today the number could reach up to more than 10,000.1

¹ https://www.nytimes.com/2007/01/15/business/media/15everywhere.html [access: 23/05/21].

Diffused aestheticization comes along with paradoxical implications that gives rise to the need for reflection about the very nature of the image. Reflections on the basis of which, the artistic work presented in this dissertation was created.

If men from the Middle Ages recognized an image as just an artifact, a counterfeit of the real, when technological advancements such as photography and reproduction processes enabled the diffusion of copies, the distinctions between the original image and its representation begin to blur. In post-modern culture, with the extreme proliferation of visual information the distinction between reality and its representation no longer exists, since the representation precedes and even often determines the real.²

Paradoxes of a reality augmented by information systems in the Age of the Anthropocene - the geological epoch characterized by the significant impact of humanity on the planet's ecosystems³ - are at the heart of the on-going artistic project described in the following chapters.

The project is entitled "The Black Series," and consists of a series of artworks produced by the association of solely recycled images. The aim is to alter the meaning behind illustrated Bible stories through the implementation of found imagery coming from any sort of informational medium, ranging from printed sources, such as books and magazines, to the internet.

THE PRINCIPLE OF COLLAGE

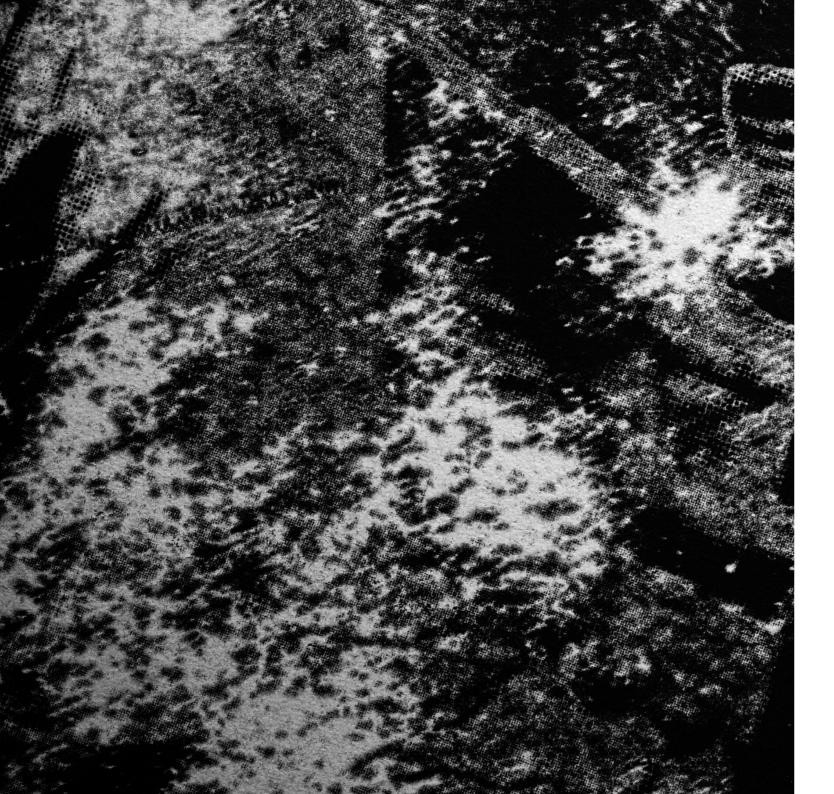
Although the word collage is often used to identify the practice of pasting paper into a surface, when it is associated with certains phenomena of art, it assumes a deeper and more complex meaning. Deriving from the French term papier collé - literally translated as "glued paper" - it was first introduced by the cubist painters Georges Braque and Pablo Picasso, which created a series of artworks involving pieces of paper pasted onto the surface of drawings and paintings.¹ The simple gesture of implementing a real-world object onto a painted surface had a significant impact in the development of avant-garde art of the earlier twentieth century. Not only fragments of paper, artists began to implement tridimensional elements into their artworks, subverting common conceptions of what is essential to make art.

Collage, photomontage, assemblage, ready-made, installation art. They all share a common set of peculiarities that are in contrast with the traditional modes of artistic production. The most important is the appropriation of fragments taken from reality, which are relocated in a new contest or assembled into a whole. The logic which originates such an activity opposes the conception that the process of creating an artwork starts with an image that exists only in the mind of the artist, which materializes during the realization.

Whether it is the assembly of photographic pieces into a whole or a urinal mounted in the context of an exhibition, the process of collage and the techniques derived - based on dislocation and relocation of found material - require the viewer to make sense of the physical and philosophical gaps in between the fragments. By linking the connections and becoming intellectually involved, he is no longer just a passive observer but an active participant in his personal understanding of the work.

² Baudrillard, Jean, Simulacra & Simulation, Michigan, Univ. of Michigan Press, 1994, p. 1. 3 https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-019-01641-5 [access: 23/05/21].

¹ Seitz, William Chapin, The art of assemblage, New York, The Museum of Modern Art, 1961, p. 6.



A NEW DIMENSION

Even before the inclusion of real objects into their paintings, Cubist logic to deal with reality, challenged the observer to mentally respond to the vision of images made out of numerous fragments. In the same way as it happens with any sort of collage, the interpretation of a cubist painting requires the viewer to decode and connect the various components into a relational order and consequently construct a means of interpreting the image. The theories derived by the complex nature of this interaction represented a significant paradigm shift in the art world. So significant, that it changed the way artists made art and set the stage for many new artistic phenomena which led to redefine what can be considered art.

These changes happened in parallel with other revolutionary perspective shifts in almost every field of science and philosophy, in that particular moment in history when technologization of man and nature and the monstrous acceleration of life and each individual's stream of experience proved reality to be more complex than ever. The almost simultaneous confluence of many important innovation and discoveries - from motion-picture to X-ray technologies; from wireless telegraphy to psychoanalysis - along with new notions about space and time, radically transformed the way that modern man experienced and perceived the external world, and even suggested that an invisible reality existed just beyond the reach of human perception. From the 1880s to the 1920s, the popular fascination with the concept of a higher dimension, be that

¹ Rosa, Hartmut, Social Acceleration: A New Theory of Modernity, New York, Columbia University Press, 2013.

physical, spiritual or psychological, which is readily apparent in the vast number of articles and the books, became the answer to the complexity of the modern society.²

Recent studies have made clear how many modern artists focused on the attempts to represent the concept of the fourth dimension and its implication. Specifically, what our three dimensional universe might look like from the perspective of a four dimensional being. In his book titled Einstein, Picasso: space, time, and beauty that causes havoc, professor Arthur I. Miller shows how the most important scientist of the twentieth century and the most important artist believed that art and science are means for exploring worlds beyond perceptions and appearances, and that the innovations they introduced arose not only from within their respective fields but from larger currents in the intellectual culture of the times.

Pasting objects onto the canvas is the ultimate attempt to utilize a three dimensional object in the quest to capture the concept of the fourth dimension, of higher dimension of consciousness which question the very nature of art.

THE GAP IN BETWEEN THE FRAGMENTS

"The Industrial Revolution and its consequences have been a disaster for the human race. They have greatly increased the life-expectancy of those of us who live in "advanced" countries, but they have destabilized society, have made life unfulfilling, have subjected human beings to indignities, have led to widespread psychological suffering (in the Third World to physical suffering as well) and have inflicted severe damage on the natural world. The continued development of technology will worsen the situation. It will certainly subject human beings to greater indignities and inflict greater damage on the natural world, it will probably lead to greater social disruption and psychological suffering, and it may lead to increased physical suffering even in "advanced" countries".

- Theodore John Kaczynski, from 'Industrial Society and Its Future'

In 1995, the American terrorist and serial killer known as the Unabomber sent a letter to The New York Times claiming that he would have ceased his actions if they would have published his now infamous anti-technology manifesto entitled "Industrial Society and Its Future". The Unabomber - whose real name was Theodore John Kaczynski, a former mathematics professor - builded and mailed bombs to apparently random targets over a period of time between 1978 and 1995, causing the death of three people and severely injuring twenty-four other.

² Henderson, Linda Dalrymple. The Image and Imagination of the Fourth Dimension in Twentieth-Century Art and Culture. "Configurations 17", no. 1, 2009, pp. 131-160.
3 Mille, Arthur I. Einstein, Picasso: Space, Time, and the Beauty That Causes Havoc, New York, Basic Books (Perseus), 2001.

Using bombs - hence technological devices - to support an antitechnological cause represents the quintessential paradox of modernity. Just as it is the publication of an essay against technology through the main publishing media, which imply vast industrial processes. Similar attitudes are described by Peter Berger, Brigitte Berger and Hansfried Kellner in their book entitled "The Homeless Mind", an indepth analysis about the implications of modernization processes on human consciousness and the relationship between identity and the structure of society. "[...] Once established, modern consciousness is rather hard to get rid of" claim the authors, and continue: "Its definitions of reality and its psychological consequences are dragged along even into the rebellions against it, providing the ironic spectacle of an assault on modernity by people whose consciousness presupposes the same modernity." ¹

In the same book, the authors use the words "mechanisticity" and "componentiality" to illustrate how certain modes of thinking generated by institutionalized technologization and economic expansion - including those mentioned above - are consciously and/or unconsciously implemented into everyday life. Taking as an example the automobile assembly line concept - first introduced by Henry Ford in 1913 - they illustrate how the new models of technological production based on a machine-like functionality became not only processes of making things, but methods for everyday reasoning in a reality that appears reduced to self-contained units. "[...] This apprehension of reality in terms of components is essential to the reproducibility of the production process as well as to the correlation of men and machines. For example, each of several hundred cogs involved in a day's work is [...] a unit freely exchangeable with every other unit, at least for the purpose at hand. Reality is ordered in terms of such components, which are apprehended and manipulated as atomistic units. Thus, everything is analysable into constituent components, and everything can be taken apart and put together again in terms of these components." ²

As society shatters and crumbles, reality appears more complex and unstable, causing Individuals to experience the loss of context of their thoughts and actions, and thus resulting in a certain degree of disorientation and/or alienation. But modernity occurs whether it is embraced or rejected, and the same inevitably happens in the context of Art, since the latter has always been, and forever will be, a reflection of its time. The approach to chose in order to make sense of the discontinuity given by the juxtaposition of contrasting elements, regardless of their nature - whether they are fragments of life or fragments of paper - is up to our minds. As well as the Shock induced by the gaps in between the atoms of a fragmented reality does not necessarily have a negative connotation. It can be instead necessary to utter level of comprehension.

¹ Berger, Peter et Berger, Brigitte, Kellner, Hansfried, *The Homeless Mind: Modernization and Consciousness*, New York, Irvington Pub, 1973, p. 192. 2 Ibid, p. 31.

BETWEEN THE UNCANNY AND THE SUBLIME

From early Stone Age tools to nanotechnology. From the global spread of Johannes Gutenberg's printing press - which made written and graphic contents accessible to a much wider audience - to the world wide web and social media networking. From the first integrated circuit to quantum computing and artificial intelligence. Since when humans first learned to control fire and began to rely on their own inventions, the evolution of humankind shifted from biological evolution to technological evolution. Until the present moment, the rate of technological changes, and the implications that follow, keep accelerating exponentially toward what the Intelligentsia suggests will be the next stage of the evolutionary process: the Technological Singularity - when at some point in the near future, technological advancements will lead to unprecedented changes that will irreversibly transform life as we know it.¹

What may appear to be the greatest of all myths of technology - the merging of humans and machines - is rapidly coming into being. Brainchip interfaces that can be surgically fitted underneath the skull, directly onto the surface of a human brain,² and nanobots that can be injected into the bloodstream, find already their applications in medicine and are being tested on animals before trials on humans.³ And despite we are

[access: 23/05/21].

¹ Kurzweil, Ray, The Singularity is Near, New York, Viking Books, 2005, p. 15.

² www.cnbc.com/2020/08/28/elon-musk-demonstrates-brain-computer-tech-neuralin-k-in-live-pigs.html [access: 23/05/21].

³ https://www.ft.com/content/57c9f432-de6d-11e7-a0d4-0944c5f49e46



still far from answering the empirical question whether machines can one day become conscious, self-learning systems are integrated in most of our digital devices.

The new Age of Man is made of Tech Giants and flourishing technological gardens of hyper-connectivity, where robots, artificial intelligence and transhumans are meant to become the new Demigods. Scientific and technological advancements play a fundamental role in each individual's life. They broaden knowledge, make bodies less vulnerable and nourish the hope for a better future. And yet, industrial exploitation, environment and climate crisis, forced migrations - to mention a few - are dramatically and irreversibly transforming the Planet.

The COVID-19 outbreak has accelerated changes that were already in the course of happening. Its long-term consequences in conjunction with other global events have highlighted the ambivalent nature of the myth of technology, which inspires hope, as well as awe and fear. Now more than ever, it is clear how progress - for the better or worse - affects not only the environment, but also our health, our mind and soul, redefining what it means to be human.

The paradoxical implications of human activities and their impact on the planet. Actions to organize cultural and religious systems and society. Consumerism as the new ritual dimension of man. Spirituality in the upcoming age of godlike machine intelligence. These are just some of the questions and challenges that form the background of the artistic projects presented in the section of this dissertation entitled "The Black Series," an on-going series of artworks where both fictional and real-life characters deal with the consequences of their action and the risks posed by their own creations.

Section 2 AMASTATIC PRINTING

THE IMPRINTED AND THE REPRINTED IMAGE

The artistic method involved in the realization of almost every artwork that constitutes "The Black Series" is an alternative way of performing the printing technique named anastatic printing. Anastatic printing is a method of producing facsimiles of old prints and it began to appear in Europe at the turn of the nineteenth century. In his publication titled "A Technical Dictionary of Print Making," André Béguin describes it as a "reproduction process which copies a text (a.n.: or an image) that has already been printed with ink. The verso or back of the original is wetted with a solution of water and rubber to which some drops of sulfuric acid have been added. The recta, or front side, is then inked. The printer's ink used will only be caught in the places where the original was inked. This system is above all used as a transfer system onto stone, wood, or metal. The original is, however, lost in the process." 12

In his Dictionary, Béguin also mentions how Alois Senefelder used this process in a great number of tests when perfecting his first lithographic technique. This culminated around 1776 with the discovery of the basic techniques of chemical lithography. "It was thus thanks to research done on anastatic transfers, inks with oil bases, and various other solutions that lithography was invented" claims Béguin, who reports Senefelder's words: "I owe my discovery of chemical lithography to these tests because the reprinting of paper onto a stone depended, above all, on the greater or lesser attraction of one substance to another." ³

¹ Béguin, André, A technical dictionary of print making, France, André Béguin, 1981.

² https://www.polymetaal.nl/beguin/mapa/anastatic.htm [access: 23/05/21]

³ Ibid.

Used as a way to produce accurate copies of books and illustrated works and kept secret for a long time, the anastatic process later evolved and was perfected, and developed by Carl Friedrich Baldamus, the German inventor Werner Siemens, and the British engineer Joseph Woods. It received a Patent on June 6, 1844, entitled "Improvements in Producing Designs and Copies, and in Multiplying Impressions either of Printed or Written Surfaces." Willem's contributions included the design of self-acting presses moved by steam power that can be considered as a forerunner of the modern photocopying machine.⁴

The American writer, poet, and editor Edgar Allan Poe wrote an enthusiastic article entitled "Anastatic printing," published in the Broadway Journal on April 12, 1845, where he presented the new then-innovative process as a groundbreaking invention that would have enabled authors to quickly and cheaply publish their own texts including drawings, avoiding the expensive typesetting process. Before concluding the article about the eventual need for further copyright laws, he wrote: "At present the literary world is a species of anomalous Congress, in which the majority of the members are constrained to listen in silence while all the eloquence proceeds from a privileged few. In the new regime, the humblest will speak as often and as freely as the most exalted, and will be sure of receiving just that amount of attention which the intrinsic merit of their speeches may deserve".⁵

Poe foresaw the benefits of self-publishing and equal access to information and knowledge, anticipating innovations later made possible by the internet and social media networking. However, both the enthusiasm of the promoters and the arising concerns about the danger posed by such a high-quality facsimile method were not meant to last for long. The new invention failed to deliver a financial return and over time was superseded by other processes.

Anastatic printing is nowadays used in many fine art printmaking studios as a fast and easy way to transfer an image onto a printing plate that is consequently processed and printed onto artistic paper. However, skipping the step of transferring the image onto the matrix and imposing it directly onto fine art paper makes this process a powerful means of expression. This subject is a matter of study at the Mixed Media Printmaking Studio of the Strzemiński Academy of Art in Łódź, Poland which is headed by professor and artist Sławomir Ćwiek. This is the studio where the research work documented in this dissertation began to take form. In Łódź, the knowledge about this process has been taught by professor Witold Warzywoda and re-adapted by prof. Ćwiek to produce large format prints and is performed as follows:

The matrix for the transfer is obtained by printing a black and white image on paper with a toner-based printer, such a photocopier or a laser printer. Inkjet printers will not work as their ink is wet, contrary to the dry toner inks which are pressed and heated onto paper. Then this printed image is laid down on a glass or plexiglass surface and soaked with a specific solution of water, gum arabic and few drops of nitric acid. This solution is absorbed by the unprinted areas of the paper and expelled by the toner image. When oil-based printer's ink is rolled onto this treated paper the ink is resisted by the solution retaining areas of the paper and retained only by the areas with toner. Then the rolled-up ink bearing paper can be transferred to a desired flat surface by hand or with a printing press.

The mutual resistance of oil-based ink and water is the simple, basic principle behind what became the first reproduction technique able to create perfect facsimiles. It was one of most influential discoveries since the Printing Revolution.

Using anastatic reproduction methods in the making of my "Black Series" is a natural consequence of the nature of the project. A project which is based on the reworking of illustrations by Paul Gustave Doré, taken from an edition of the French translation of the Bible published in 1843, known as La Grande Bible de Tours.

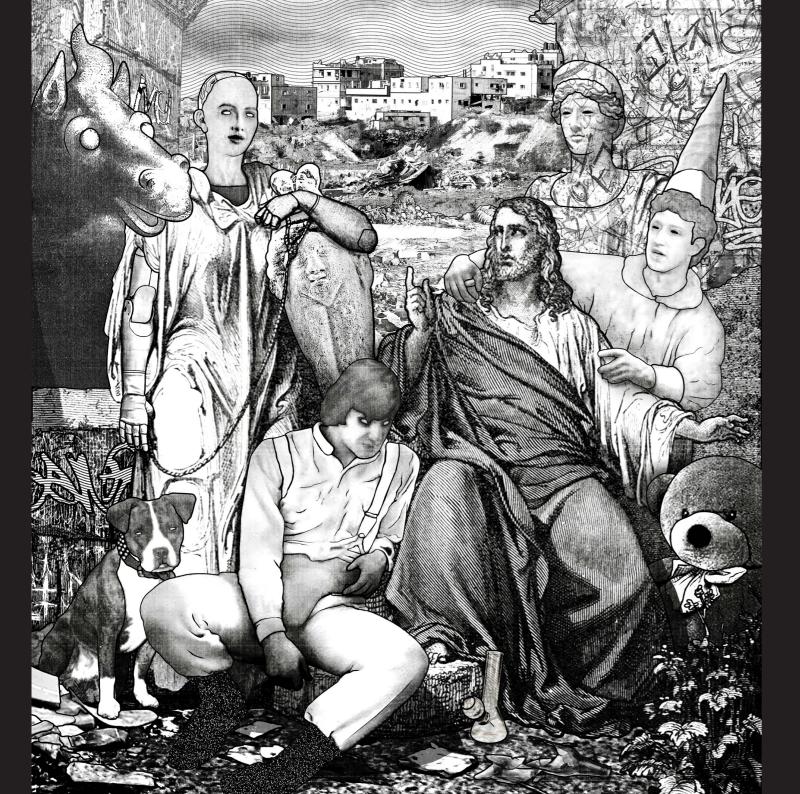
⁴ Pole, William, *The Life of Sir William Siemens*, London, J. Murray, 1888, pp. 54-58. 5 Poe, Edgar Allan, *Anastatic Printing* "Broadway Journal," vol. I, no. 15, April 12, 1845, pp. 231

Section 3 THE BLACK SERIES

The Black Series is the title of the on-going project consisting on the alteration of biblical illustrations by the French artist, printmaker, and illustrator Gustave Doré. The artworks are produced by the association of solely recycled images which are printed using the paper plate anastatic printing technique.

The series is divided into five volumes realized in a period of time between 2017 and 2021. The project first began to take place during the internships at the Mixed Media Printmaking Studio of the Strzemiński Academy of Art in Łódź, and become the main subject of the doctoral research conducted at the Eugeniusz Geppert Academy of Art and Design in Wrocław, where the series was extended.

The following pages displays a selection of artworks produced during the doctoral studies.



The Black Series Vol. 5 TALES FROM THE DEEP, DARK WEB

The Black Series culminates with the chapter realized during the Academic year 2020/2021 entitled *Tales from the Deep, Dark Web*.

Arouse from a reflection on the ambiguos power of images in the age of hyperconnectivity, *Tales from the Deep, Dark Web* is a chronicle of the second coming of Jesus Christ in a future world between reality and imagination, where both fictional and real-life characters face the consequences of their action and the risks posed by their own creations.

On the left: The Great Talk

2021

Paper Plate Anastatic Printing

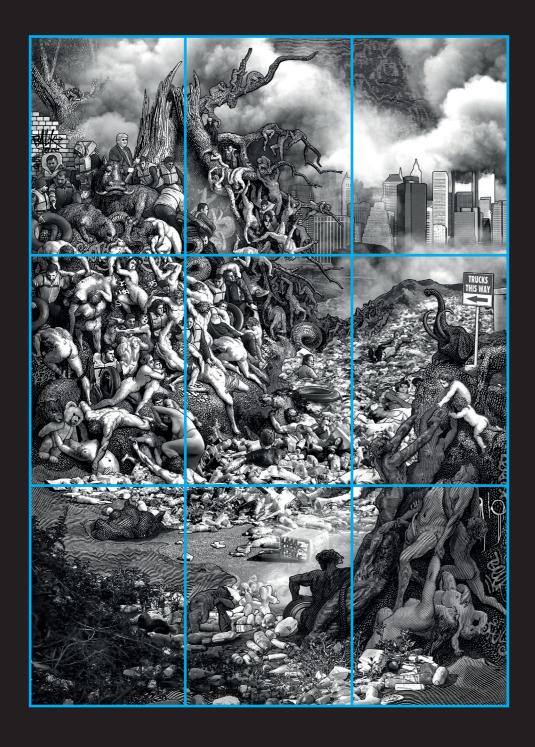
100x140 cm



The Head of John the Baptist Lost in the Anthropocene 2021, Paper Plate Anastatic Printing, 140x100 cm



The Head of Holofernes Lost in the Anthropocene 2021, Paper Plate Anastatic Printing, 140x100 cm



The Black Series Vol. 4 THE TIDE

12,6m2 of paper, divided into nine, each measuring 100x140 cm; *The Tide* is an artwork of collaged cut-outs and found images **imposed onto** Gustave Doré's woodcut depicting the world destroyed by water, taken from *La Grande Bible de Tours*, originally published by Mame in Tours, France, 1866.

Realized between January and March 2019. This work was displayed for the first in January 2020, during the solo exhibition entitled *The Tide*, held Galeria Imaginarium of the Łódź House of Culture.

This work features, ridicules and pays homage to; La Gioconda, Donald Trump, Warhol's Campbell's Soup Cans, Delacroix's bodies of the fallen, those lost at sea, Koons Balloon Dog and the Twin Towers.

The use of symbolism permeates all of my artistic work. My use of symbolism reflects my use of collage with juxtaposed images. Each person has his own interpretation of what each symbol means. I would like everyone to form their own opinion and enjoy these works for what it means to them. I use symbolism to guide the viewer to a deeper understanding of not only my work but to initiate some deeper investigations and positive reactions to problems that face modern society and humanity.

The Tide

The Tide - Tryptic #1

Installation view

Photo taken by Jarosław
Darnowski during the Vernissage
of the solo exhibition titled *The Tide*, Imaginarium Gallery, Łódzki
Dom Kultury, Łódź, 31/01/2020.



The Tide

The Tide #2 - Detail

2019

Paper Plate Anastatic Printing

100x140 cm



The Tide

The Tide - Tryptic #2

Installation view

2019



The Tide

The Tide #5 - Detail

2019

Paper Plate Anastatic Printing

100x140 cm



The Tide

The Tide - Tryptic #3

Installation view

2019





The Black Series Vol. 3 **VILLAINS ARMAGEDDON**

Series of artwork made of collaged cut-outs and found images imposed onto Gustave Doré's woodcuts from *La Grande Bible de Tours*, originally published by Mame in Tours, France, 1866. and from John Milton's *Paradise Lost* originally published by Cassell, Petter, and Galpin, London, 1866.

Realized between September and November 2018, the works were displayed for the first time during the solo exhibition entitled *The black Series Vol.3 - Villains Armageddon*, held at Akademicki Ośrodek Inicjatyw Artystycznych in Łódź on december 2018, except the work titled *The Death of Abel*, realized in january 2020 and displayed for the first time during the solo exhibition entitled *The Tide*.

Photo taken by Khrystyna Vanivska during the Vernissage of the *Villains Armageddon* exhibition.

Villains Armageddon

Spleen

Installation view

2018



Villains Armageddon

Spleen #1 - Detail

2018

Paper Plate Anastatic Printing

140x100 cm



Villains Armageddon

Spleen #2

2018

Paper Plate Anastatic Printing

140x100 cm



Villains Armageddon

Spleen #2 - Detail

2018

Paper Plate Anastatic Printing

140x100 cm



Villains Armageddon

The Death of Abel

2020

Paper Plate Anastatic Printing

140x100 cm



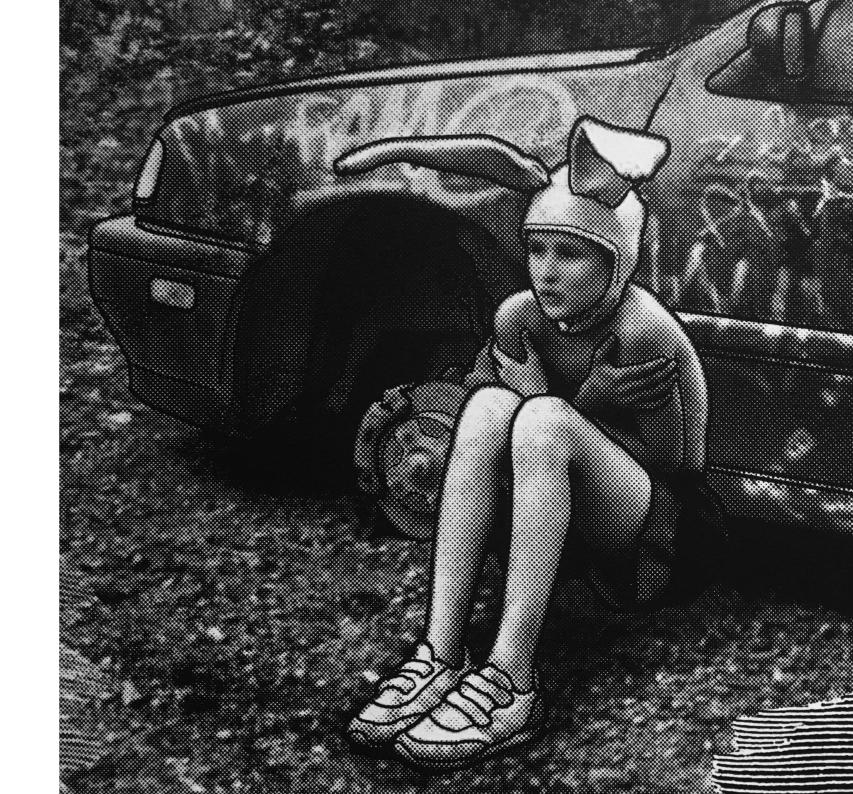
Villains Armageddon

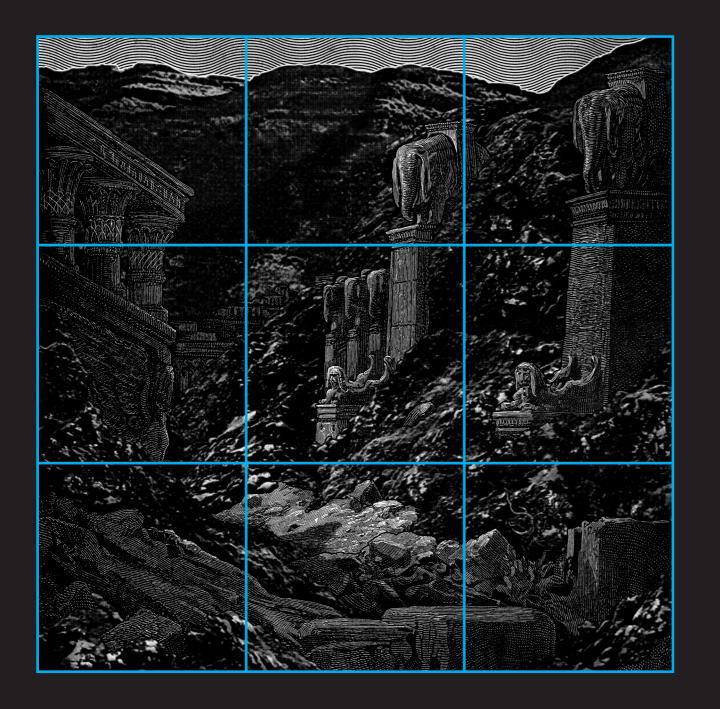
The Death of Abel - Detail

2020

Paper Plate Anastatic Printing

140x100 cm





The Black Series vol. 2 **SHADOWS OVER BABYLON**

7,7 m² of paper divided into nine, each measuring 72x71 cm; Shadows Over Babylon is an artwork of collaged cut-outs and found images imposed onto Gustave Doré's woodcut depicting Babylon fallen, taken from La Grande Bible de Tours, originally published by Mame in Tours, France, 1866.

Realized between March and September 2018. Displayed for the first in October 2018 during the solo exhibition entitled *Shadows Over Babylon*, held at *Ośrodek Kultury Górna, Łódź*.







Shadows Over Babylon

Shadows Over Babylon

Installation view

Photo taken by Jarosław
Darnowski during the Vernissage
of the solo exhibition titled *The Tide*, Imaginarium Gallery, Łódzki
Dom Kultury, Łódź, 31/01/2020.

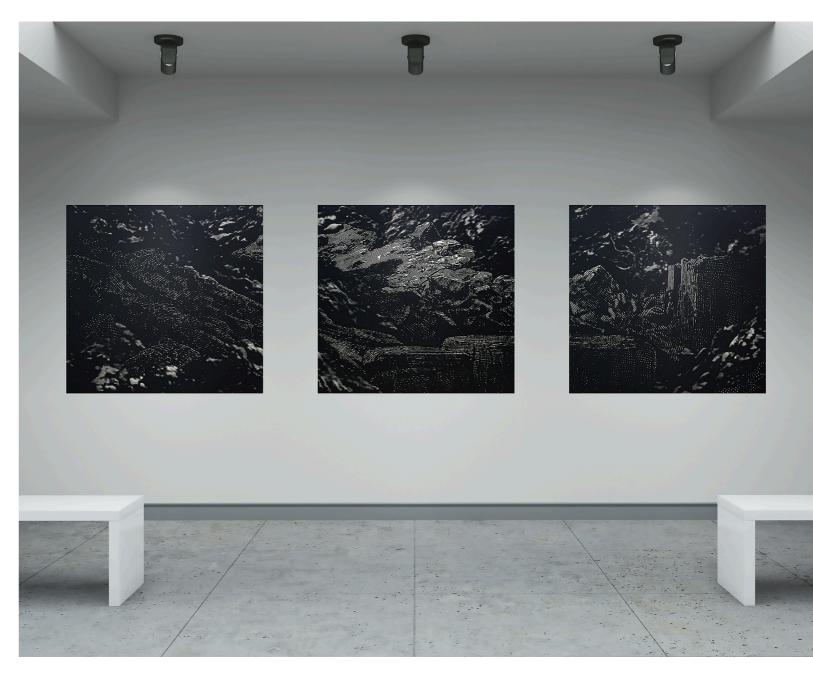


Shadows Over Babylon

Shadows Over Babylon - Tryptic #1

2018

Installation view



Shadows Over Babylon

Shadows Over Babylon #2

2018

Paper Plate Anastatic Printing

72x71 cm



Shadows Over Babylon

Shadows Over Babylon - Tryptic #2

2018

Installation view



Shadows Over Babylon

Shadows Over Babylon #5

2018

Paper Plate Anastatic Printing

72x71 cm

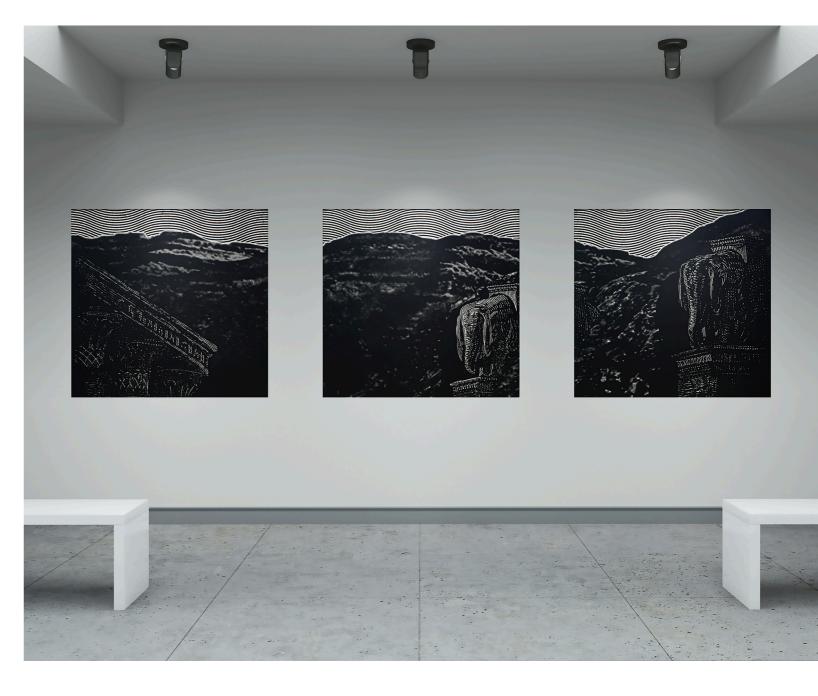


Shadows Over Babylon

Shadows Over Babylon - Tryptic #3

2018

Installation view



Shadows Over Babylon

Shadows Over Babylon #9

2018

Paper Plate Anastatic Printing

72x71 cm



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