

“ILYA KABAKOV, CHARLES ROSENTHAL, AND ‘THE VOID’ OF A SOVIET
PAST”

by

ERIN LEIGH RIGGINS

(Under the Direction of Nell Andrew)

ABSTRACT

This thesis examines Russian-American artist Ilya Kabakov’s complicated relationship to artistic identity through his invented Charles Rosenthal character. In a move rarely seen in a fine arts context, in several postmodern installations Kabakov attributes his own paintings to the fictional Rosenthal. The works primarily consist of Soviet Socialist Realist images that feature strange blank, white portions. I argue that these white spots are a visual device evolved from Kabakov’s 1993 *School No. 6* installation, and that they are directly connected to the artist’s 1981 essay, “On the Subject of the Void.” Through an analysis of these works and their voids, this thesis explores Kabakov’s own concerns with Soviet history, Jewish heritage, childhood, Russian history, and the vocation of painting.

INDEX WORDS: Ilya Kabakov, Soviet art, Socialist Realism, Charles Rosenthal,
“the void,” Soviet history, Russian history

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DEDICATION

For my dad, Dr. Herbert Lee Riggins, III. Thank you for always believing in me.

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I. Introduction

Since childhood, Russian-American artist Ilya Kabakov has grappled with a “no identity complex.”¹ In his professional art practice, the artist has confronted the issue of artistic identity through a number of installations for which he constructed elaborate narratives about fictional artist-characters from Soviet-era Russia. Wall text in these exhibitions details the life of the fictional artist who is to be understood as the creator of the artworks on view. Most of Kabakov’s artist-characters are outsiders. They do not belong to established artistic movements, but rather draw from various Soviet styles to create idiosyncratic paintings that defy traditional categories. Unappreciated in their time, Kabakov’s invented artists are always discovered and celebrated only after their fictional deaths. In a move rarely seen in a fine arts context, in these installations Kabakov defers authorship and attributes his own paintings to these artist-characters. By straddling the line between creator and documentarian, curator and onlooker, artist and historian, Kabakov raises significant questions of authenticity for the Soviet (and post-Soviet émigré) artist.

Charles Rosenthal

To better understand the artist’s complicated relationship to artistic identity, this study focuses on a particularly decorated character from Kabakov’s oeuvre, Charles Rosenthal. Rosenthal first appeared in the 1999 Art Tower Mito exhibition, *Life and Creativity of Charles Rosenthal*, and later in MOCA Cleveland’s 2004 exhibition, *An*

¹ Kabakov described his so-called “no identity complex” in a 1999 interview with art critic Yusuke Nakahara. “Dialogue: Ilya Kabakov and Yusuke Nakahara, Art Critic,” in *Life and Creativity of Charles Rosenthal (1898-1933)*, ed. Eriko Osaka (Mito, Japan: Contemporary Art Center, Art Tower Mito, 1999), 65.

*Alternative History of Art: Rosenthal, Kabakov, Spivak.*² In these installations, which are meant to be viewed as Rosenthal's posthumous retrospective, works are organized to reflect the largely chronological progression of Rosenthal's oeuvre. This study focuses on the MOCA Cleveland show, where Rosenthal's works spanned eight rooms. Each room displayed works that characterize a specific period in Rosenthal's life and that have their own set of issues and goals, of which the viewer is made aware through wall texts, fabricated letters, and diary entries, penned by Kabakov.

In line with Kabakov's own Jewish and Ukrainian origins, exhibition texts written by Kabakov reveal that the fictional Rosenthal was born Sholom Rosenthal to a Jewish family in the Ukraine in 1898. Rosenthal studied at the Vitebsk People's Art School under the direction of Kazimir Malevich. Mirroring Kabakov's own emigration from Soviet Russia to the West, Rosenthal rejected his Suprematist teachings at Vitebsk in 1922 and left the Soviet Union for Paris, where he changed his name from Sholom to Charles. Unnoticed by the public during his lifetime, Rosenthal's works were discovered after his premature death in a car accident in 1933, rejoining the narrative with the real artist in year Kabakov was born.³

The paintings presented in Kabakov's installations as the work of Rosenthal have been widely interpreted through their relationship to modernist avant-garde painting, and yet, most of the Rosenthal works engage the style and subject matter of Soviet Socialist Realism.⁴ Even more striking in these paintings is that each of them features a blank

² The MOCA Cleveland exhibition, in addition to showing works of the fictional Rosenthal, presents two of Kabakov's other artist-characters: Ilya Kabakov (b. 1933)—a fictional character who is separate from the real Kabakov—and Igor Spivak (b. 1970).

³ Ilya Kabakov, "About Charles Rosenthal (1898-1933)," in *An Alternative History of Art: Rosenthal, Kabakov, Spivak*, ed. Thomas Kellein and Bjorn Egging (Bielefeld, Germany: Kerber Verlag, 2005), 13.

⁴ Kabakov himself trained in the State-mandated style of Socialist Realism at the Surikov Institute from 1951-1957. Matthew Jesse Jackson, *The Experimental Group: Ilya Kabakov, Moscow Conceptualism, Soviet Avant-Gardes* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010), 14.

white portion or area of removed canvas. In the MOCA Cleveland exhibition, the works were grouped as series dating to a particular year, each exhibiting a unique form of blank spot. For example, *At the Meeting* (1926/1999) (Fig. 1), a painting from the only titled series, *Twelve Commentaries on Suprematism*, presents a large, nearly-blank canvas upon which a rectangular Socialist Realist image is overlapped by two flat, geometric forms. Alternatively, Rosenthal's 1930 series includes paintings like *At the End of the Workday* (1930/1996) (Fig. 2), in which long a rectangular portion of canvas has been cut away to reveal white light emanating from a lightbox installed beneath the work. From the 1932 series, the painting *They are Discussing the New Plan* (1932/1997) (Fig. 3) depicts four Soviet officials gathered around a table to examine a document or map. Yet, as with other works from this series, their area of focus is obscured by a large, irregular portion of blank white canvas upon which we can read the faint graphite contours of an underdrawing.

The Rosenthal paintings form a nuanced oeuvre through a diverse range of works whose blank spots are as significant as their painted surfaces. Up to now, however, scholars have discussed almost exclusively the few works in the *Twelve Commentaries on Suprematism* series and have commonly argued that the Rosenthal paintings represent a battle between Suprematism and Socialist Realism, despite a lack of Suprematist reference in works outside this series. Robert Storr characterizes Rosenthal as Malevich's contemporary, and asserts that the Rosenthal paintings are where "abstraction and realism duel to a draw."⁵ The paintings' blank, white portions, which are often discussed generally, rather than specified in individual works, tend to be compared both visually and conceptually to Kazimir Malevich's *Suprematist Composition: White on White*

⁵ Robert Storr, "Blinded by the Light," in *An Alternative History of Art: Rosenthal, Kabakov, Spivak*, ed. Thomas Kellein and Bjorn Egging (Bielefeld, Germany: Kerber Verlag, 2005), 144.

(1918). Matthew Jesse Jackson, who has written extensively about Kabakov, also aligns Rosenthal with Malevich, yet makes no mention of the painting's white areas.⁶ Boris Groys offers a varied list of possible meanings for the white portions which includes Suprematism, "pure light", and Russian snow.⁷ Significantly, after going through the interpretations just mentioned, Groys concludes that the white also marks the "abstract, empty space of memory."⁸ Indeed, what I hope to demonstrate in this study is that the memory of a Soviet past is the crux of the Rosenthal works and that their blank portions are vital in exploring this memory.

II. "The Void"

A surprisingly overlooked 1981 essay by Kabakov, "On the Subject of 'The Void'," reveals that the artist may have already theorized not only what these white areas might signify, but also what he meant by a "no identity complex."⁹ Kabakov wrote the essay during a month-long trip to Czechoslovakia; at the age of 48, this trip was only his second time outside of the Soviet Union.¹⁰ In Czechoslovakia, one of the most liberal communist countries of the 1980s, Kabakov was struck by the experience of looking at the Soviet Union from the outside. It was from there that "the void" first became visible for the artist.

In the essay, Kabakov theorized Soviet consciousness as "the void," which he describes as a vast, pulverizing volume that transforms all that is living to its antithesis.

⁶ Jackson, "Alternative Artists @ Alternative Institutions," in *An Alternative History of Art: Rosenthal, Kabakov, Spivak*, ed. Thomas Kellein and Bjorn Egging (Bielefeld, Germany: Kerber Verlag, 2005), 212.

⁷ Boris Groys, *History Becomes Form: Moscow Conceptualism* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2010), 133.

⁸ Groys, *History Becomes Form*, 133.

⁹ Curiously, Kabakov's essay is rarely discussed in current scholarship and has never been mentioned in relation to the Rosenthal works. Only Matthew Jesse Jackson refers to the essay in his 2010 monograph to convey biographical information and examine the intellectual approaches of the Moscow Conceptualists. Jackson, *The Experimental Group*, 176.

¹⁰ Jackson, *The Experimental Group*, 176.

The void's Soviet inhabitants suffer from a permanent state of what Kabakov refers to as double-consciousness in which they live on two opposing planes: the first embodies one's "unofficial" self and one's relations with others; the second represents one's "official," or public, self under the "state-system."¹¹ Indeed, in the Soviet Union, Kabakov led an artistic double life: he participated in underground art movements with other "unofficial" Soviet artists of the Moscow Conceptualist group, yet by day he worked in an "official" capacity for the State as a children's book illustrator. Kabakov also may have experienced another layer of double-consciousness as a result of being both Jewish and Soviet—"unofficially" Jewish, yet "officially" Soviet.¹² Importantly, in Kabakov's characterization of these opposing planes, the "official" second plane cancels out, or voids, the "unofficial" first, sucking all life from it like a vampire.¹³ As such, one's identity in "the void" can never be authentic—a phenomenon to which Kabakov may have been referring when he claimed a "no identity complex." This perpetual state of inauthenticity leads to a particular displacement and alienation in which one can create neither identity nor meaning. In "the void," there is, "no history, no legacy, no continuity"; thus, a crisis of signification plagues its Soviet inhabitants.¹⁴

The term "void" is a translation of Kabakov's word "пустота" in the original Russian text, which can convey various meanings. Kabakov's description of "the void" at the start of his essay fits with the most straightforward interpretation of "пустота" as

¹¹ Ilya Kabakov, "On the Subject of 'The Void'," *Total Enlightenment: Moscow Conceptual Art 1960-1990*, ed. Boris Groys, Max Hollein, Manuel Fontan del Jundo, (Hatje Cantz Verlag: Ostfildern, 2008), 367.

¹² Kabakov was born to a Jewish family in Ukraine in 1933, just on the heels of Stalin's state-enforced famine that devastated the country. Religion of any kind was outlawed under Stalin, so most Soviet Jews never openly discussed their heritage. During WWII, Kabakov and his mother were evacuated to Uzbekistan, where Kabakov was accepted into a satellite version of the Leningrad Academy of Art. David A. Ross, *Ilya Kabakov* (London: Phaidon Press, Limited, 1998), 4.

¹³ Kabakov, "Void," 369.

¹⁴ Ibid.

nothingness, an empty cavity, or vacuum.¹⁵ When, at the end of the essay, Kabakov discusses different ways that Soviet people cope with life in “the void,” however, he evokes the monastic interpretation of “пустота,” as the transcendence of material reality.¹⁶ Here, the essay identifies an approach to “the void” through a “mystical-religious attitude” toward the lack of worldly attachments and the human soul.¹⁷ “пустота” can also refer to scientific phenomena such as cosmological vastness or an empty set in mathematics.¹⁸ Finally, Kabakov also characterized “the void” as a disease from which its inhabitants perpetually suffer.¹⁹ The essay, by contrast, reads as a strategy of recovery, giving form to an aspect of Soviet life that would otherwise be lost to “the void.” After emigrating to the West in 1988, I would argue that Kabakov continued to give form to “the void” as a means of recovering his Soviet past in his 1990s-early 2000s installation work.

III. Socialist Realism and the Western Canon

Because “the void” is thoroughly connected to Soviet identity, it follows that we also must examine the prevalence of a Soviet Socialist Realist style in Rosenthal’s paintings, a feature often glossed-over by scholars who are eager to compare Rosenthal to the Suprematism of his supposed early teacher, Malevich. Groys alone points to a mutual influence of Suprematism and Socialist Realism in Rosenthal’s paintings. For Groys, post-revolutionary Suprematism and Socialist Realism signify the same thing: the negation of the individual artist in favor of a collective artistic style.²⁰ Groys asserts that

¹⁵ V. K. Müller, *English-Russian Dictionary*, (Moscow: Soviet Encyclopedia Publ. House, 1967), 345.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Kabakov, “Void,” 372.

¹⁸ V. K. Müller, *English-Russian Dictionary*, 345.

¹⁹ Kabakov, “Void,” 372.

²⁰ Groys, *History Becomes Form*, 132.

Kabakov chose to combine two authorless styles of Russian art to underscore his interest in the destabilization of individual artistic authorship. And yet, it is difficult not to see Groys' interpretation as a revisionist account of Socialist Realism that links it to the Russian avant-garde. In doing so, he negates how being forced to work in the Socialist Realist style by totalitarian regime might shape an artist's conception of his own artistic identity.

Traditional Western conceptions of modernism tend to exclude Soviet art forms after the Russian avant-garde movements of the early 20th century. Clement Greenberg's positioning of Socialist Realism as the avant-garde's opposite, kitsch, in his authoritative 1939 essay "Avant-Garde and Kitsch" still resonates today. Kabakov therefore gains validation within the art historical canon if scholars can align his work with the West's notion of painterly modernism, dismissing his Soviet heritage. Yet by 1962, Greenberg's high-modernist moment, Kabakov had abandoned easel painting after failing to complete what he dubbed his "masterpiece," a work on which he tirelessly labored from 1957-1961.²¹ Jackson has argued that, for Kabakov, the idea of painting—which had dominated his early training at the Surikov Institute in Moscow—became insurmountable, something that would require him to create "forms of false consciousness."²² Painting a masterpiece, a clearly modernist proposition, was unattainable for Kabakov in 1962. As an official children's book illustrator, Kabakov used colored pens to create flat, legible scenes that exhibit none of his painterly techniques (Fig. 4). As an unofficial artist, Kabakov created works of conceptual art, such as his exploration of semiology with *Pipe, Stick, Ball, and Fly* (1966) (Fig. 5).

²¹ Kabakov's "masterpiece" is described in greater detail in Jackson, *The Experimental Group*, 29-31.

²² *Ibid.*, 32.

Significantly, Kabakov's mature art practice began with this failed encounter with modernist painting. With the Rosenthal works, Kabakov questions the act of painting itself. Still unable author his own paintings after leaving the Soviet Union—and perhaps still plagued by feelings of inauthenticity—Kabakov invents characters to paint for him. Yet, with their white voids, these works speak to the impossibility of completing the painterly illusion. Skeptical of the modernist myth of “pure” painting, Kabakov has Rosenthal paint primarily in the Socialist Realist style—a form of painting that perhaps feels more meaningful to him.²³ In fact, Kabakov stated in 2003 that, “Despite the existence of the most magnificent achievements of world painting, in essence I feel that the only type of art with which I am connected is Socialist Realism.”²⁴ In a post-Greenberg art world, Kabakov's redemption of Socialist Realism through the Rosenthal character functions as an act of self-recovery—born of the need to reconcile his long-time struggle with authenticity.

Recent exhibitions, such as Tate Modern's 2017 *Red Star Over Russia: A Revolution in Visual Culture 1905-1955* and *Socialist Realisms: Soviet Painting 1920-1970* held at Rome's Palazzo Delle Esposizioni in 2011, call for a more holistic approach to Soviet art. Scholars Matthew Cullerne Bown and Christina Kaier insist that art made under the Soviet regime cannot be ignored within the history of art. Bown contends that Soviet art must be considered within the political and social contexts of its making.²⁵ Kaier calls for a new methodology with which to study Soviet art that begins with

²³ Kabakov addressed his ambivalence toward modernist painting in 1995 when he stated, “Modernism has to do with an extraordinary confidence on the part of the individual artist in their own genius, a confidence that they are revealing some profound truth and that they are doing it for the first time.” Robert Storr, “An Interview with Ilya Kabakov,” *Art in America* (January 1995), 67.

²⁴ Kabakov interview with Groys, cited in Boris Groys and Max Hollein, eds. *Dream Factory Communism*. (Ostfildern-Ruit: Hatje Cantz Verlag, 2003), 35.

²⁵ Matthew Cullerne Bown, *Socialist Realist Painting* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 24.

shedding our “deeply-ingrained modernist blinders.”²⁶ Kaier argues that we must grant some agency to the Soviet artists working within the State-run system by considering Soviet art from the perspective of the psychic process of the artist.

Groys’ reading of Suprematism and Socialist Realism in the Rosenthal works leaves more than the experience of the Soviet artist unacknowledged. It also does not consider how the juxtaposition of the two Soviet styles acts not as a battle for dominance between modernism and Socialist Realism, but as a double-consciousness that reveals yet another glimpse of “the void.” In fact, the context of postmodern installation allows Kabakov to create a narrative through which he can engage the Socialist Realist style of his Soviet past—a style that otherwise likely would not be viewed as a relevant form of expression on the early-2000s international art scene. Reflecting the state of double-consciousness described in his essay on the “void,” Kabakov provides an alternative history for Socialist Realism by creating an opposing plane on which the art form can carry forward its visual tradition.

IV. *School No. 6*

By following the evolution of the “the void” as a strategy of recovery from one of Kabakov’s earlier post-glasnost works to the Rosenthal paintings, I argue that voiding in the Rosenthal works allows Kabakov to pose questions about the Soviet artist’s role in creating cultural meaning and continuity. In 1993, Kabakov transformed an army barracks in the Texas desert into an abandoned Soviet schoolhouse titled *School No. 6*. The building itself is in a state of decay: peeling strips of paint curl up from the walls, windows are boarded-up, and the ceilings are crumbling. Inside, a thick coat of dust

²⁶ Christina Kiaer, “Fairy-Tales of the Proletariat, or, Is Socialist Realism Kitsch?” in *Socialist Realisms: Soviet Painting, 1920-1970*, ed. Fiana Balakhovskaia (London: Thames & Hudson, 2012), 185.

covers disheveled desks and bookcases; flashcards, photograph, postcards, maps, and trash form the various piles of debris on the dirty floor.

As a place where consciousness is shaped, Kabakov's choice to create a school is apt for exploring his theory of "the void." In the midst of disarray, portraits of Marx and Lenin remain in their places on a wall of the "ideological education" room (Fig. 6). On another wall, a list written in Russian titled, "Rules and responsibilities for the behavior of the students 1st -4th grade of School no. 6," instructs students to "study diligently," "listen attentively," and "try to learn more about laborers and their professions and the October Revolution." An announcement board features an application for the All-Union Leninist Young Communist League (Komsomol) (Fig. 7). Predicated on molding the minds of the Communist future, a Soviet schoolhouse is perhaps the original site of "the void." A state-run institution, it is the first public space for the Soviet child, where he or she is instructed in and must uphold Soviet ideology.

Relics of Soviet ideology in the form of discarded postcards of famous Socialist Realist paintings litter the dusty floor (Fig. 8). Fictitious pupil testimonials penned by Kabakov pay tribute to the Russian painter Ilya Repin (a 19th century artist widely considered the forerunner of Socialist Realist painting and importantly the painter Greenberg singles out as the epitome of anti-avant-garde kitsch). Portraits of prominent Soviet figures, including a reproduction of Isaak Brodski's portrait of the Socialist Realist writer Maxim Gorki (1937) (Fig. 9), gather dust in cobwebbed corners. A photograph of the late Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev next to two officials captured mid-salute dates the abandoned schoolhouse to sometime after 1964 (Fig. 10). The disordered presentation of these sunnily optimistic images and memories of Socialist Realism in a seemingly post-apocalyptic structure underscores their absence from the history of art.

In this place where one goes to learn and create meaning, Kabakov presents a crisis of signification conceptually similar to the double-consciousness described in his 1981 essay. Voided spaces in the form of seventeen empty frames carefully placed throughout the *School* installation are regularly juxtaposed by red flags that recall the small, semaphore flags used by the Russian Navy to transmit information between ships. These pairings carry various and at times very specific connotations. One arrangement greets viewers on either side of the building's façade where two tattered red flags cross beneath a vertically oriented, empty wooden frame (Fig. 11). In the former Soviet Union, portraits of Stalin and other communist leaders were often flanked by crossing red flags and displayed on building facades in a manner that before the revolution was reserved for icons of patron saints. During the Thaw, a period that ensued from Khrushchev's 1956 denunciation of Stalin's "cult of personality" and as we will see is very significant for the Rosenthal paintings, Stalin's image was scrubbed from Soviet visual culture. In paintings of Party events, the dictator's face was painted over, and his portraits removed from building facades. On the façade of the School installation, therefore, Kabakov's voided official portrait makes direct reference to this phenomenon of repressed history.

Other instances of the pairing of red flags and voided spaces in the installation need not have such recognizable placement to create meaning. At the entrance to *School No. 6*, announcement boards featuring photographs of pupils, and pictures of Moscow with captions like, "The view from the Kremlin," are flanked by red signal flags and more empty frames (Fig. 12). With these pairings, Kabakov again juxtaposes an object used to convey meaning, the semaphore flag, with a symbol that points to the absence of meaning, the empty frame. Viewed in the post-Soviet context of the installation's conception, these symbols speak to the problem of creating cultural or historical meaning

when a country disappears, or, as *School No. 6* implies, when the country has been abandoned.

From *School No. 6* to Charles Rosenthal

Kabakov's use of voiding techniques is directly connected to his theory of "the void," and reveals a deep concern with the possibility—or impossibility—of maintaining and participating in Soviet artistic and historical lineage. In the *School* installation, conceived in 1991-92 just after the collapse of the Soviet Union, Kabakov reflects the voided status of the Soviet state and its history. The juxtaposition of red flags, symbols that produce meaning, and empty frames, symbols of voided meaning, demonstrates the "two planes in opposition" described in Kabakov's essay where the creation of meaning seems unattainable.

On the heels of *Schoolhouse*, the 1996-2001 works by Kabakov's Charles Rosenthal give his voiding an additional set of issues. Kabakov made the significant choice to portray a Soviet émigré artist working in a Soviet style that in Rosenthal's life was still in its formative stages, defined in the Soviet Union only in 1934, a year after his death. As a diaspora artist preempting his country's official style from abroad, a style that has been shunned by the canon in the West, the Rosenthal character poses questions about the artist's role in bridging gaps in history and artistic traditions once the artist views his native country from the outside. Yet, how can this be achieved by an artist who was once an inhabitant of "the void," where, according to Kabakov, there is "no history, no legacy, no continuity"?²⁷ Can an inhabitant of "the void" create identity in a state of double-consciousness?

²⁷ Kabakov, "Void," 371.

V. The Rosenthal Works

The Door (1917)

If we read the Rosenthal paintings chronologically using the dates assigned by Kabakov, we find a range of forms through which the painter comes up against “the void.” Works from 1915-1917 feature a type of voiding in which the painted image is revealed to overlie a second framed but voided space beneath or underneath. *The Ripped-Off Landscape* (1916/1998) (Fig. 13) depicts a Soviet ferry boat boasting a large red flag and red sign with white lettering reading “Glory to the Great Stalin” just as it passes through an archway at the dock. Yet this exalted scene is interrupted in the upper righthand corner where the canvas is purposefully peeled away from its wooden frame to reveal blank, white space underneath. *The Door* (1917/1998) (Fig. 14) similarly presents a void via a door hinged to a frame with a painted an image of a passenger train gliding through the mountainside. When installed in a gallery, the painted door may be opened so that it is replaced by the blank white wall behind it, now similarly contained by the doorframe.

In the painted image on *The Door*, the passenger train cuts a diagonal path through the composition, coasting along a bucolic tree-lined route. White, billowing clouds fill the light blue sky and the mountainous terrain recedes toward an indigo horizon line. Because Russia’s only extant mountain ranges are those that define its borders in an otherwise topographically flat country, the painting likely depicts passengers leaving Russia. As the Rosenthal narrative demonstrates, many artists emigrated from Soviet Russia in the early 1920s after the Soviet regime had effectively crushed artistic opportunities through the establishment of organizations for artistic

censorship and a sharp rise in chauvinism.²⁸ Dated the year of the October Revolution, 1917, I propose that Rosenthal's work is meant to anticipate his own emigration in 1922, as well as the mass emigration set in motion by the revolution. Indeed, the work's format—a door—signifies passage from one place to another. The idyllic depiction of the passenger train perhaps points to the prospect of a bright future abroad. Yet, when opened, *The Door* becomes “the void,” suggesting both the artificiality of the painted image, and, more significantly, Kabakov's theory of the “the void” as only fully visible to the Soviet citizen from abroad.

In the 1920s, large numbers of Soviet artists also emigrated from the Soviet Union because of anti-Semitism.²⁹ Since Rosenthal continues to paint in the same style but westernized his name once in Paris, his Jewish identity seems the likely reason Kabakov made his a story of emigration. Indeed, many of dates in Rosenthal's biography correspond to significant events for Russian Jews. Rosenthal's birth year, 1898, was a terrible period for Jews in imperial Russia. Born in Ukraine, Rosenthal would have experienced the awful conditions in the Pale of Settlement during this time.³⁰ Following the 1881 assassination of Tsar Alexander I for which Jews were blamed, the Russian Jewish population experienced a new wave of anti-Semitic laws and pogroms.³¹ 1922, when Rosenthal left for Paris, marks the end of the Russian civil war when anywhere

²⁸ For more on Soviet arts organizations and committees, see Bown, *Socialist Realist Painting*, 86.

²⁹ According to Igor Golomshtok, Soviet artists' emigration Union was at a high point in the 1920s. In addition to seeking more artistic freedom, many artists leaving the Soviet Union during this time represent a large faction of Jewish immigration. “The History and Organization of Life in the Soviet Union,” in *Soviet Émigré Artists: Life and Work in the USSR and the Unities States*, 17.

³⁰ In order to prevent Jews from “contaminating” the rest of the population, the government decreed that they could reside only in Russia's fifteen western provinces known as the Pale of Settlement. In these areas, Jews were restricted from owning land and shunned from educational and professional institutions due to strict quotas enforced by authorities. Zvi Gitelman, “Russian Jewry Before the Holocaust,” in *Bitter Legacy: Confronting the Holocaust in the USSR*, ed. Zvi Gitelman (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997), 1-2.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 3.

from 50,000 – 200,000 Jews were killed.³² Finally, 1933, when Rosenthal died and the real Kabakov was born, was the year in which Stalin launched a state-enforced famine in Ukraine and Hitler rose to power in Germany.³³

Significant in this timeline is the deliberate lack of overlap between the lives of the fictional Rosenthal and the real Kabakov. Rosenthal must be dead for Kabakov to create a seemingly objective, yet counter-factual, narrative through which he can examine Soviet art and history. Of course, while appearing like the detached author of the Rosenthal narrative, Kabakov delves into deeply personal aspects of his own identity as a Jewish Soviet émigré artist. When asked if he ever had a sense of his own Jewish identity, Kabakov stated, “We all belonged to the Soviet religion...One of the qualities I saw in the Soviet people was the feeling of their own inadequacy, the feeling that somewhere beyond the border, there existed a real, more authentic, life.”³⁴ Forced to suppress his Jewish identity in the Soviet Union, Kabakov is only able to explore this part of his heritage from an outside vantage point. Inventing Rosenthal and making paintings “in character,” as it were, provides a means to cope with the aftermath of a voided identity.

Most of the atrocities committed against Russian Jews remain unacknowledged to this day. The suppression of Jewish identity played a role in the often glossed-over history of Jews in the Soviet Union. In order to protect themselves in increasingly anti-Semitic climates, Jewish emigrants often adopted pseudonyms to conceal their identities, like Kabakov’s Sholom Rosenthal who became Charles in Paris.³⁵ Considered within the context of Jewish emigration, then, voiding in *The Door* also references personal themes

³² *The Soviet Story*, directed by Edvins Snore (Riga, Latvia: Labakar, 2008), DVD.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ross, *Ilya Kabakov*, 8.

³⁵ Gitelman, “Russian Jewry Before the Holocaust,” 4.

of voided Jewish identity, as well as broader issues of a voided Jewish history in the wake of the revolution.

Naptime at the Children's Sanitorium (1930)

Kabakov's exhibition texts state that around 1930 Rosenthal started to experience visions of "luminescent energy" that come from "both without and within."³⁶ A fabricated excerpt from Rosenthal's diary reads, "From beyond the entire surface of the painting...flows a steady, warm, overflowing sort of granular light...It's as though I'm swimming in this radiation."³⁷ Accordingly, the series of paintings from 1930 presents a voiding in which portions of canvas are cut away to reveal white light shining from light boxes installed behind the paintings. In these Socialist Realist paintings, voiding takes an abstract, geometric form located either along the edges or corners of the works. The juxtaposition of painterly realism and abstract forms presents another form of double-consciousness that also raises the issue of the authenticity. However, it is not a question of which art form is more authentic than the other, but rather can the two coexist while retaining their authenticity? Despite Greenberg's later 1960s declarations that abstraction is the only form of "pure" and authentic art, Rosenthal's works make subtle correlations between abstraction and Socialist Realism.³⁸ In the works, the cut away geometric shapes often mimic shapes within the painted image. From this series, *Harvesting Apples* (1930/2001) (Fig. 15) depicts a scene of proletariat labor rendered incomplete for the viewer by a square portion of voided canvas from which light shines in the lower righthand corner. The cut away square portions echo the square apple crates depicted in the painted scene. *At the End of the Workday* (1929/1996) has been similarly voided,

³⁶ Kabakov, "About Charles Rosenthal (1898-1933)," 16.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Clement Greenberg, "Modernist Painting," *Art and Literature* (Spring, 1965): 34-54.

replacing a large rectangular portion at the bottom of the image with white light. Again, the rectangular area mimics the rectangular table and door portrayed in the Socialist Realist image.

In these works, Rosenthal forces the question of how light functions symbolically in works of art. Again, the theme of double-consciousness arises through the juxtaposition of artificial light shining through the cut-away geometric forms and the light portrayed in the painterly image. One reading of this juxtaposition may point to the artifice of these images, as neither the painterly light nor the artificial light is real. However, given Kabakov's choice to present Rosenthal's diary entry characterizing light as "luminescent energy," I am drawn to believe that here there is a purposeful association between labor and "the void" in the form of light. By proposing a link between labor—a hallmark of Socialist Realist proletariat images—and "luminescent energy," these works frame labor as a means of transcendence. Perhaps drawing upon the monastic denial of worldly comforts described in Kabakov's essay on "the void," these depictions of labor suggest hard work as a way to overcome the psychological constraints of "the void." Indeed, as an art form that highlights the dignity of labor, the 1930s works reveal Socialist Realism to have a significance beyond its painterly artifice.

A third work from the 1930 series, *Naptime in the Children's Sanitorium* (1930/1997) (Fig. 16), depicts three children sleeping in twin beds situated in the corner of a room and separated by two wooden nightstands. Windows on either side of the room's corner reveal outdoor greenery through slightly-raised white curtains, and red handkerchiefs lie on each of the nightstands as the children's mark of Soviet distinction. Within the painted image, light originates from both inside and outside of the room. From outside the room, sunlight comes through the windows to flood the floor between the

children's beds. Yet the interior of the room features a strange all-over treatment of light, suggesting the "luminescent energy" described in the exhibition texts that comes from within the room. In the context of naptime, the possibility that this glowing interior light comes from a candle or lamp is unlikely. Indeed, the warm light somehow reaches almost every part of the room in a way that could not be obtained by a candle or lamp, for even the room's corner appears fully lit. Both the placement and the absence of shadow adds to the peculiar treatment of light. The flower vase on the nightstand to the right casts no shadow at all. At the same time, the sleeping child's face in the center of the composition is cast nearly entirely in shadow, and to the left, light only partially illuminates the face of the child facing the same direction.

This curious depiction of light is paired with a triangular portion of voided canvas at the bottom-left of the image through which white light emanates from the light box installed behind the canvas. As with other works from this series, the triangular voided shape correlates to the triangular folds of cloth hanging over the nightstands in the painted image. The void, manifest as light, again invites the viewer to transcend the illusion of the painted surface and experience pure luminescence. As mentioned, spiritual transcendence, a phenomenon to which Rosenthal might have been referring in his diary when he wrote of "swimming in this radiation," offers a means of survival in the "the void." Inhabitants of "the void" who take this approach find salvation and the search for a higher truth easier to come by when they live in a place "of evil, deceit, and nonbeing."³⁹

Children's sanatoriums served various purposes under socialized medicine in the Soviet Union, but chief among them was to house orphans and shape them into the "New

³⁹ Kabakov, "Void," 370.

Soviet Child.”⁴⁰ With the exception of WWII, the Soviet Union’s orphan population was at its largest during Stalin’s first Five Year Plan (1928-1932), which devastated the country’s economy.⁴¹ Orphaned Soviet children comprised the country’s most vulnerable group, making them the best candidates for experiments of the new Soviet system. By virtue of their young age, Soviet children represented the future of the Soviet project and were cast as active participants in its formation. Soviet institutions provided children with strict ideological education that by 1930 promoted principles of Marxism-Leninism-Stalinism. The All-Union Leninist Young Communist League (Komsomol) reinforced this ideological education to shape citizens of the new society. Members of the organization wore small red emblems featuring a profile view of Lenin and often adorned red handkerchiefs around their necks, like those depicted in Komsomol posters (Fig. 17).

For the Soviet child coming of age in “the void”, the creation of a personal identity seems thwarted from the start. Like most things in the new socialist society, Soviet childhood was seen as collective rather than as a specific period of development for an individual human being.⁴² As such, the child must navigate Soviet life on two opposing planes: the plane of collectivity, as well as on the plane of the repressed self. Soviet orphans often experienced a rather literal loss of personal identity in which they didn’t remember their names, families, or birth dates in the midst of poverty and starvation.⁴³ However, while sanatoriums indoctrinated vulnerable children with Soviet ideology, they also provided shelter and relative safety. Perhaps, as the triangular portion of light in the *Naptime* painting suggests, naptime offered children a means by which to

⁴⁰ Alec Skolnick, "Some Psychiatric Aspects of the 'New Soviet Child'." *Bulletin of the Menninger Clinic* 28, no. 3 (May 1964), 120.

⁴¹ Juliane Fürst, "Between Salvation and Liquidation: Homeless and Vagrant Children and the Reconstruction of Soviet Society," *The Slavonic and East European Review* 86, no. 2 (2008), 233.

⁴² Boris Groys, "Kabakov as Illustrator," *Chinati Newsletter* 6 (September 2002): 12-17.

⁴³ Fürst, "Between Salvation and Liquidation," 235.

transcend the evils of “the void.” For in the work, the children appear to sleep peacefully, temporarily free from ideological constraints symbolized by the red handkerchiefs resting on their nightstands.

Two Weavers (1932)

In works dated to 1932, Rosenthal’s Socialist Realist scenes feature small found objects adhered to the painting’s surface. This juxtaposition of the illusionism of the painted surface that embodies a memory of the Soviet past and a real object in the present demonstrates another instance of voiding that places the viewer both in the present standing before a real object and in the Soviet past viewing a work of Socialist Realist art. The viewer then experiences Rosenthal’s 1932 works in state of double consciousness much like the inhabitants of “the void.”

In this series, too, large areas of white canvas are often positioned in between smiling figures, obscuring the illusion of their interaction for the viewer but never disrupting the narrative in the works. *The Pilot* (1932/1999) (Fig. 18) features a man wearing an aviator helmet handing a box to a nurse from his plane. Though a large area of white canvas situated between the figures draws into question the content of their exchange, upon the blank canvas are the faint graphite outlines of a cross emblem, indicating a First-Aid kit. A Band-Aid box adhered to the lower left-hand corner of the picture perhaps confirms the box’s purpose. Voided, but not completely erased, is the remedy for sickness, recalling the portion of Kabakov’s essay that discusses “the void” as a disease. However, the protagonists depicted in these works do not appear to be aware of this sickness, nor do they appear to suffer from it. The sickness, manifest in the voided portion of these works, seems to plague only the artist and viewer. The voids in these

paintings are like open wounds that, as with the First-Aid kit in *The Pilot*, reveal their underlying structure in the form of the graphite contours of the works' underdrawing set against a stenciled grid.

As though he were suffering from an illness, Rosenthal seems incapable of producing a complete, cohesive image. The realism to which he supposedly aspires is always thwarted by impossibility of carrying out the illusion of the painted surface. Yet, by exposing paintings' core structure, the underdrawing, in the 1932 series, Rosenthal insists that there is something beyond the illusion worth examining. Indeed, these wounds provide a means of excavating the works.

From this series, *Two Weavers* (1932/1998) (Fig. 19) portrays two proletariat women, defined through their labor by the leavers of a loom in the foreground and the handkerchiefs that adorn their heads. Form is articulated through the blocky application of arbitrary color. Pastel blues, greens, and pinks create modelling in the faces of the two Caucasian women. In the largely dark background, light plays on various geometric forms, constructing more of an abstract visual space than an identifiable location. The figures stand side-by-side and gaze past one another across an area of white canvas situated between them. As with other works in this series, stenciled onto the portion of white canvas are the graphite contours of a preparatory sketch set against a grid. A small red flag attached to the painting to the left of the white canvas recalls the juxtaposition of signal flags and voided spaces from the *School* installation, which spoke to the problem of creating identity and meaning. However, unlike the completely blank spaces captured within wooden frames in the *School* installation, in *Two Weavers* the voided space contains the graphite contours and methodical grid of the painting's underdrawing. By preserving the underlying structure of the work within the visual manifestation of the

void, Rosenthal subtly asserts the stability of these Soviet images. Thus, while the arrangement of red flags and voided spaces in the *School* installation signifies the seemingly impossible proposition of creating cultural meaning or continuity in “the void,” in *Two Weavers* the pairing acts as a means of recovering meaning. Here, Kabakov’s theory of “the void” is challenged, for this act of recovery in *Two Weavers* suggests that perhaps through a resurrection and excavation of the seemingly surface-level works of Socialist Realism, we might find the potential for a stable identity and cultural significance.

Journey on the Dnepr (1933)

In Rosenthal’s final year, voiding in his works takes the form of large, entirely unpainted canvases on which faint graphite contours map out compositions on the otherwise blank surfaces. From this series, *Journey on the Dnepr* (1933/1997) (Fig. 20) features a drawing of a woman in a field composed against a graphite grid. Behind the woman, organic shapes of foliage fill the background while the hard edges of large rocks occupy the foreground. Without any modeling or color to clarify forms, the woman’s task remains ambiguous. However, her hunched-over stance and pursed lips indicate participation in some form of outdoor labor. Because the woman appears to be working on land, the painting’s title referencing the Dnepr river, which runs from Russia to the Black Sea, seems curious. However, the Dnepr figures straightforwardly as the subject of many eighteenth and nineteenth-century works of Russian art and literature. Nikolai Gogol’s Gothic horror story, *A Terrible Vengeance* (1832), centers on characters who live on either side of the river. Nineteenth-century paintings, such as Arkhip Kuindzhi’s

Moonlit Night on the Dnepr (1880) and Ivan Aivazovsky's *Ice in the Dnepr* (1872), take the Dnepr as their subject, depicting the river at different times of day.

In light of Kabakov's preoccupation with national identity, however, rather than offering a literal depiction of the Dnepr, I am drawn to believe that the title of Rosenthal's work references a well-known event in imperial Russian history: Catherine the Great's six-month journey down the Dnepr in 1787, organized by the ruler's former lover Grigory Potemkin, to inspect Russia's newly-acquired lands from the Ottoman Empire.⁴⁴ Following a medieval route—known as the trade route from the Varangians to the Greeks—that connected Kievan Rus' to the Byzantine Empire, Catherine called her trip the Journey to Byzantium.⁴⁵ Significant for Russia's history by bridging gaps between East and West, the royal sojourn was the focus of much international scrutiny. A late eighteenth-century English political cartoon negatively commenting on Catherine's territorial ambitions on the journey depicts Catherine the Great with scepter and orb stepping from a large rock labelled "Russia" on the left to the tops of domed buildings labelled "Constantinople" on the right (Fig. 21). In between "Russia" and "Constantinople," small, male figures occupying the foreground below Catherine look up her skirt, each boasting his own derogatory caption.

Highly prejudicial accounts of Catherine the Great's trip are still common to this day. The demeaning idiom "Potemkin village" comes from slanderous accounts of the imperial journey. According to what twentieth-century scholarship has deemed largely counterfactual narratives from Potemkin's detractors, the prince attempted to impress Catherine with hastily-erected, fake villages along the route. Based on these myths,

⁴⁴ I would like to thank Dr. Asen Kirin for drawing my attention to this connection, and for his enthusiasm and encouragement throughout the writing of this thesis.

⁴⁵ Simon Montefiore provides a detailed account of Catherine the Great's journey in *The Prince of Princes: Life of Potemkin* (New York: Thomas Dunne Books, 2001), 143.

“Potemkin village” has been used since to describe any construction—literal or figurative—built to convince one of an ideal yet false scenario. However, newer research has shown that Potemkin in fact helped the provinces along Catherine’s route through building much-needed schools, hospitals, textile mills, roads, and canals.⁴⁶ Despite such recent scholarship, the cynical characterization of Russian history has endured.

“Potemkin Village” has come to refer to nothing more than an illusion. Indeed, the Rosenthal works as a whole engage the notion of an illusionary surface, yet his later series explore what lies beyond the illusion—whether it be metaphysical light or the stability of an underdrawing.

Free of the illusionism of a painted surface, *Journey on the Dnepr* provides a subtle revisionist take on Catherine the Great’s Journey to Byzantium. By offering the sober, straightforward title, Rosenthal participates the series of title changes for this historically significant medieval route. Yet, there is a notable distance between Rosenthal and Russia’s imperial past. Rosenthal presents a largely Sovietizing image by highlighting a proletarian woman working in a field of rocks. Despite this distance resulting from Soviet efforts to erase Russian imperial history from memory, Rosenthal uses Soviet imagery to connect to a forgotten Russian past. While representing a visual manifestation of “the void,” *Journey on the Dnepr* also acknowledges and recovers elements of a voided history. It is through a formal exploration of the theory of “the void” that the Rosenthal works attempt to establish a continuity lost to “the void.” Expanding the voided sections of the 1932 series, Rosenthal provides only the underdrawing and

⁴⁶ Mary Durant argues that Potemkin’s adversaries could not deny the good that Potemkin had done for the region by rounding Kherson and Sevastopol, building their harbors and the Black Sea Fleet, and building public facilities. Mary Druant, “Catherine’s Boat Ride,” *Horizon* 8, 4 (1966): 98–104.

grid, as though *Journey on the Dnepr* is a painting either yet to be completed or just stripped of its illusions. As such, the work, like Catherine the Great's journey, plays with notions of past and future. Created in Paris, *Journey on the Dnepr* also echoes Catherine the Great's aim to provide a link between the East and West.

As the last works in Rosenthal's oeuvre, the large-scale, unpainted 1933 works may be viewed as the ultimate void ending Rosenthal's life and art. If these works signify the end of Rosenthal, they also make possible the start of Kabakov. As a Soviet diasporic artist himself, Kabakov bridges gaps between East and West and past and future. Through the Rosenthal character, Kabakov explores personal themes of Jewishness, childhood, Soviet identity, Russian history, and the vocation of painting. The Rosenthal character also allows Kabakov to engage Socialist Realist images in the context of postmodern installation, which leads to the question: who is the true painter of these works, Kabakov or Rosenthal?

VI. Conclusion

Recovery of the Artist's Hand

While the Rosenthal paintings are easily identifiable as Socialist Realist, an examination of their style complicates their attribution to the 1920s and early 1930s. The Rosenthal works present what we would expect from a Socialist Realist painting—proletariat labor, anonymous people smiling in the midst of their daily activities, Soviet youth—yet certain formal elements of the works depart from typical 1930s Socialist Realism, which often demanded a high degree of finish and a smooth application of paint. The Rosenthal paintings feature instead a freedom in the palette and handling of paint, as expressed through the expressive use of arbitrary color to model form. As we saw in *Two*

Weavers, for example, pastels articulate form in the faces and even the folds of navy-blue fabric in the dress worn by the woman on the right feature strokes of red and orange. The brushwork is open and colorful, and the backdrop consists of a largely abstract visual space rather than the expected 1930s factory setting.

For the most part, aestheticism of any kind in Socialist Realist painting was rejected outright by the Soviet regime as foreign, bourgeois influence. However, during Khrushchev's Thaw, which witnessed a de-Stalinization in Soviet society and art, reformist efforts to reintroduce standards of beauty and taste into Soviet culture resulted in Socialist Realist paintings with exactly the kind of painterly formalist approach employed in the Rosenthal works.⁴⁷ Stalin's death gave life to new discourse on aesthetics and a contemporary style in the art world that would have been silenced under the dictator's regime. By 1956, emboldened by Khrushchev's condemnation of Stalin, reformist critics began to offer alternative interpretations of Socialist Realism. The critic Vladimir Kostin defended the Soviet artist's right to generalize and use allegory, declaring that "true realism" required much more than the mundane registration of facts or photographic illusionism. Kostin advocated for aesthetic appeal and an "expressive force of color" in Soviet art.⁴⁸ As such, young artists entering art schools were no longer bound by the Stalinist requirement of precision and finish, which instead gave way to open brushwork and expressive colors.

Thus, despite Kabakov's telling us that the Rosenthal works were painted in 1920s-early 1930s Paris, their painterly technique and bright palettes belong to the Soviet Socialist Realist painting of the late 1950s, the years of Kabakov's own training in the style. Konstantin G. Dorokhov's, Socialist Realist painting, *September* (1957) (Fig. 22)

⁴⁷ Susan E. Reid, "Destalinization and Taste, 1953-1963," *Journal of Design History* 10, no. 2 (1997), 177.

⁴⁸ Vladimir Kostin, 'O khudozhestvennosti', *Iskusstvo*, no. 3 (1956), 15.

shows striking resemblance in the treatment of paint and subject matter to *Two Weavers*. Two proletariat women, also in handkerchiefs, prepare vegetables in a kitchen. Dorokhov uses broad strokes of paint to render the scene with little concern for finish; the sides of the women's aprons, for example, appear to blend into the form of their bodies, and heads of lettuce in the foreground are modeled articulated through the same use of pastel hues in shades of pink and blue which offset yellow, green, and white highlights.

Given its alignment with Soviet Socialist Realist painting of the late 1950s, I propose that the painterly hand we see in the Rosenthal paintings comes out of Kabakov's own training in the Socialist Realist at the Surikov Art Institute in Moscow. Indeed, Kabakov created his diploma project against the social and political backdrop of 1956 and de-Stalinization, when artists were freer to explore new ways of painting.⁴⁹ Kabakov's 1959-1962 *Self-Portrait* (Fig. 23) from this period in fact shares many formal qualities with the Rosenthal works. The self-portrait features a young Kabakov in an aviation cap and bulky navy-blue coat gazing solemnly out at the viewer against non-descript, abstracted backdrop created through geometric swaths of dark blue, greys, and tones of green and pink. Kabakov renders his own image with thick, open brushwork and models his skin tone in pastel hues of blue, pink, and green. Unfortunately, the self-portrait is one of the only paintings by Kabakov that survived from the time surrounding his official training. After beginning his career with a failed "masterpiece," painting was no longer an authentic means of expression for Kabakov. The artist thematizes the inability to complete the painted image through visual manifestations of "the void" in the Rosenthal works, while also using the concept of the void to explore the issues of authenticity addressed in his essay. As such, the voids in the works speak not only to

⁴⁹ Jackson, *Experimental Group*, 10.

Soviet identity, but also to Kabakov's own ambivalence toward artistic identity. Indeed, Kabakov finds a solution for his "no identity complex" in his Rosenthal character. The purposeful misalignment between Rosenthal and Kabakov, paired with the fact that viewers know that Kabakov is the real artist, underscores Kabakov's ongoing issues with authenticity. Yet, perhaps the Rosenthal character is the most authentic way Kabakov knows to recover himself as a Socialist Realist painter. For an artist who lived much of his artistic career in a state of double-consciousness in which his "official" illustrator identity voided his "unofficial" Moscow Conceptualist identity, perhaps the Rosenthal character offers the most authentic means of expression *for Kabakov*. However, the question of painting itself remains. Through the Rosenthal narrative and character, Kabakov is free to explore the questions of the possibility of "pure" painting and of Socialist Realism's relationship to kitsch, as well as to recover the memory of a Soviet past.

Images



Fig. 1
Rosenthal/Kabakov, *At the Meeting*, 1926/1999



Fig. 2
Rosenthal/Kabakov, *At the End of the Workday*, 1930/1996



Fig. 3
Rosenthal/Kabakov, *They are Discussing the New Plan*, 1932/1997



Fig. 4
Ilya Kabakov, book cover for Anatoly Markusha's *Strong Men Live Here*, 1965

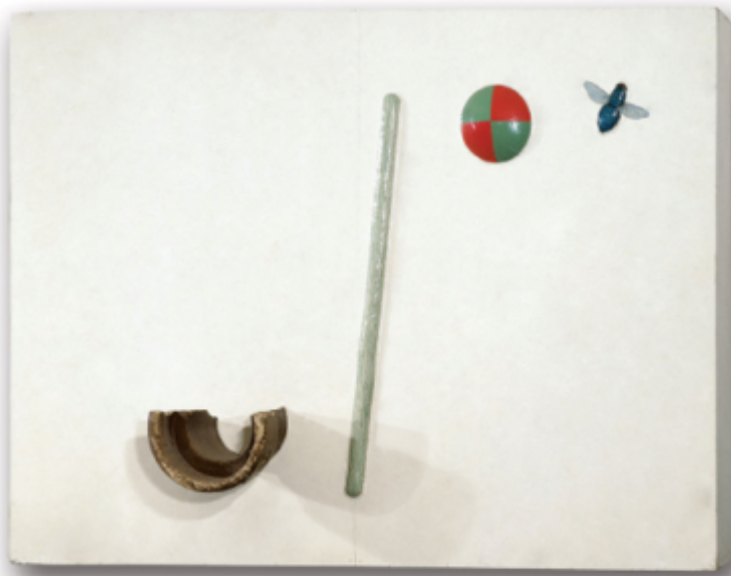


Fig. 5
Kabakov, *Pipe, Stick, Ball, and Fly*, 1966



Fig. 6
Kabakov, *School No. 6*, detail, 1993



Fig. 7
Kabakov, *School No. 6*, detail, 1993



Fig. 8
Kabakov, *School No. 6*, detail, 1993



Fig. 9
Kabakov, *School No. 6*, detail, reproduction of Isaak Brodski's 1937 portrait *Gorki*, 1993



Fig. 10
Kabakov, *School No. 6*, detail, 1993



Fig. 11
Kabakov, *School No. 6*, detail, 1993





Fig. 12
Kabakov, School No. 6 detail, 1993



Fig. 13
Rosenthal/Kabakov, *The Ripped-Off Landscape*, 1916/1998



Fig. 14
Rosenthal/Kabakov, *The Door*, 1917/1998

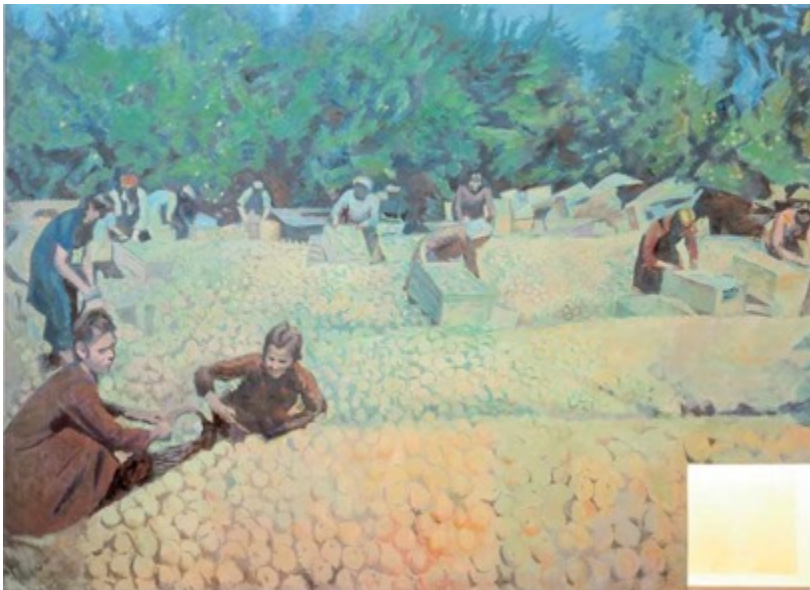


Fig. 15
Rosenthal/Kabakov, *Harvesting Apples*, 1930/2001



Fig. 16
Rosenthal/Kabakov, *Naptime in the Children's Sanatorium*, 1930/1997



Fig. 17
Komsomol poster



Fig. 18
Rosenthal/Kabakov, *The Pilot*, 1932/1999



Fig. 19

Rosenthal/Kabakov, *Two Weavers*, 1932/1998

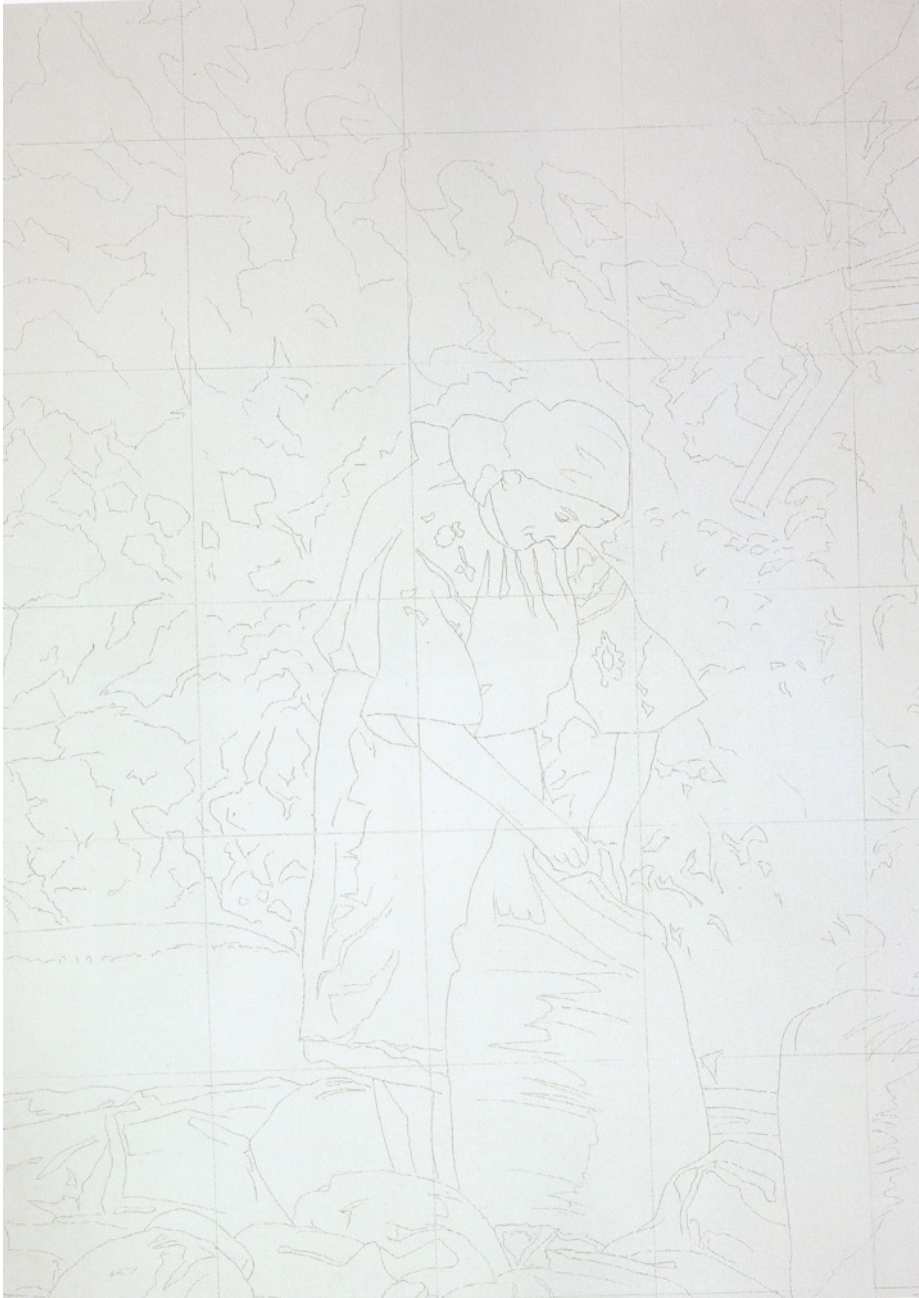


Fig. 20
Rosenthal/Kabakov, *Journey on the Dnepr*, 1933/1997



Fig. 21
Unknown artist, Late eighteenth century English cartoon



Fig. 22
Konstantin G. Dorokhov, *September*, 1957



Fig. 23
Kabakov, *Self-Portrait*, 1959-1962

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