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Vladimir er i sit sommerpalæ.
Han spiser aftensmad.

Vladimir is at his summer mansion.
He is having dinner.

Efternavnet Putin optræder aldrig i digtet, men her består rammens mønster af de kyrilliske initialer VP.

The surname Putin never appears in the poem, but here, the pattern of the frame is made from the Cyrillic initials VP.

Vladimir er sammen med sin bedste kæreste.
Hun elsker ham så højt, at hun serverer måltidet
klædt ud som en hund.

With Vladimir is his best girlfriend.
She loves him so much that she serves the meal
dressed as a dog.

Den 'bedste kæreste' klædt ud som hund er Alina Kabaeva. Den olympiske guldvinder Kabaeva blev ifølge den russiske avis *Moskovskij Korrespondent* gift med Putin i 2008. Både Putin og Kabaeva benægtede historien. Tidligere, i 2007, blev Kabaeva medlem af Statsdumaen for Putins parti, *United Russia*. Rammens mønster får ansigtsagtige træk i dets øvre del, men er stadig baseret på de kyrilliske bogstaver for V og P.

The figure of the 'best girlfriend' dressed as a dog is that of Alina Kabaeva. An Olympic gold medallist, Kabaeva was reported by the Russian newspaper *Moskovsky Korrespondent* to have been wed to Putin in 2008. Both Putin and Kabaeva denied the report. Earlier, in 2007, Kabaeva became a state deputy for *United Russia*, Putin's party. The frame pattern becomes face-like in its upper section, but is still based on the Cyrillic V and P.

Vladimir beder en bordbøn, som en joke.
Hunden griner.

Vladimir says a blessing as a joke.
The dog laughs.

Korset og præstefiguren i øverste højre hjørne (bestående af forfatterens initialer, MK) er de første referencer i serien til henholdsvis den russiske suprematisme og konstruktivisme. Cirklen øverst til venstre minder om tæppet fra de foregående billeder, mens bogstaverne VP nu er formgivet som kroppe i erotiske formationer. Nederst til venstre kan den del, der stikker ud af (eller rager ind i) B'et – det russiske V – ses enten som noget skatologisk eller som en overdimensioneret udgave af sexlegetøjet kendt som Ben-Wa-kugler.

The cross and the priest-like figure in the upper right (made of the author's initials, MK), are the first references in the album to Russian Suprematism and Constructivism, respectively. The upper-left circle echoes the carpet in the preceding drawings, while the letters VP are now bodies, in two erotic figurations. At the lower-left, the element protruding from (or intruding into) the B – the Russian V – can be perceived either as a scatological element, or as a gigantic version of the sex toy known as Ben-Wa balls.

Maden smager herligt og ser skøn ud.
Vladimir overvejer: Smager mad godt, når den er
smuk, eller er det omvendt?
Sikke store agurker de sælger i butikkerne for tiden!

The food is delicious and beautiful.
Vladimir ponders: Does food taste good when it is
pretty, or the other way round?
Such big cucumbers they sell these days in stores!

Den sidste linje her er et direkte citat fra Daniil
Kharms' novelle *What They Sell in the Shops
These Days*, hvor sætningen siges, efter den ene
hovedrolle slår den anden ihjel med et agurkeslag
i hovedet.

The last line here is a direct quote from Daniil Kharms'
text *What They Sell in the Shops These Days*. In
Kharms' story, the exclamation is uttered after one
protagonist kills the other with a cucumber blow to
the head.

Vladimir har en vældig appetit.
Når de sidste krummer er spist, er han meget træt.

Vladimir has a great appetite.
After eating the last crumbs, he is very tired.

Månen og solen fungerer her som øjne i et omvendt ansigt. Næsen er logoet for olieselskabet Yukos, der ledtes af Mikhail Khodorkovskij. I 2003 fremsatte den russiske regering et skattekrav på 27 milliarder dollars mod Yukos og fastfrøs selskabets aktiver. I oktober samme år blev Khodorkovskij arresteret. På daværende tidspunkt var han en af verdens rigeste mænd. Yukos blev i 2008 erklæret konkurs. Ved at skildre Yukos som krummer på Putins kosmologiske middagsbord fremstilles Putin som den direkte begunstigede, både økonomisk og personligt, af Khodorkovskijs retsforfølgelse.

The moon and the sun serve as the eyes of an upside-down face. The nose is the logo of Yukos, the giant petroleum company controlled by Mikhail Khodorkovsky. In 2003, the Russian government presented Yukos with tax claims of \$27 billion US dollars, and froze its assets. In October the same year, Khodorkovsky was arrested, at a time when he was one of the richest men in the world. Yukos was declared bankrupt in 2008. The rendition of Yukos as crumbs on Putin's cosmological dinner table asserts him as the direct benefactor, financially and personally, of the persecution of Khodorkovsky.

Vladimir ligger i sin seng. Hans elsker ligger på gulvtæppet.
Hun arbejder på sin tale:
Vuf, vuf, vuf!
Måske hun en dag bliver en minister, eller en hest.

Vladimir is in bed. His lover is on the rug.
She is working on her speech:
Woof, Woof, Woof!
Perhaps one day she will become a minister, or a horse.

Gulvtæppet er en variation over det tjetjenske flag.

The carpet is a variation on the flag of Chechnya.

Over sengen hænger Gud, for at sikre forsyningen
af gode drømme,
Og det udstoppede hoved af en journalist, Vladimir
jagtede for et par år siden.

Above the bed is God, to secure the serving of
sweet dreams,
And the stuffed head of a journalist Vladimir hunted
a few years ago.

Det udstoppede hoved tilhører journalisten Anna
Politkovskaja (1958-2006), en af de mest prominente
kritikere af Putins regering, og i særdeleshed af
hans brutale angreb på Tjetjenien. Hun blev skudt
i elevatoren i den lejlighedsbygning i Moskva,
hvor hun boede. Mens Politkovskaja er den mest
fremtrædende journalist, der er blevet myrdet i
Rusland, så fremgår det af rapporter fra *Committee
to Protect Journalists*, at landet siden 1993 har
været verdens tredje farligste sted for journalister
(med dødstal kun overgået af Algeriet og Irak).

The stuffed head of the journalist is that of Anna
Politkovskaya (1958-2006), one of the most outspoken
critics of Putin's reign, and in particular of his ruthless
attack on Chechnya. She was shot in the elevator of
the Moscow apartment house where she resided. While
Politkovskaya is the most renowned journalist to have
been assassinated in Russia, reports by the *Committee
to Protect Journalists* note that, since 1993, the country
has been the third most dangerous in the world for
journalists (with numbers of violent deaths exceeded
only by Algeria and post-invasion Iraq).

Inden han falder i søvn, stirrer Vladimir på sit klædeskab.
Han forestiller sig altid, at han ser ansigter.

Before he falls asleep, Vladimir stares at his wardrobe.
He always imagines seeing faces.

Klædeskabet er inspireret af det skab, der stod i Maxim Komar-Myshkins eget soveværelse i Tel Aviv, hvori hans krop blev fundet efter hans selvmord den 18. januar 2011.

The cupboard is based on the one in Maxim Komar-Myshkin's own bedroom in Tel Aviv, where his body was found after he committed suicide, on 18 January 2011.

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Sover Vladimir? Forandrer ansigterne sig?
Nej, han drømmer ikke!
Jo, ansigterne forandrer sig! En mund åbner sig!

Is Vladimir asleep? Are the faces changing?
No, he is not dreaming!
Yes, the faces are changing! A mouth opens up!

Hvad kommer ud af klædeskabet?
Smilende sokker og fjollede trøjer!

What is emerging out of the closet?
Smiling socks and silly sweaters!

Begge 'fjollede trøjer' kombinerer julemotiver med portrætter af Stalin – én som snemand og én som en storbarmet mø, der rider på et rensdyr.

Both 'silly sweaters' combine Christmas motifs with portraits of Stalin – one as a snowman, one as a heavy-breasted maiden riding a stag.

Hvad kommer frem fra skuffen?

Saks, knibtang og strygejern, gaven fra den zemblanske premierminister,
Ha'-det-godt-piller, Vær-glad-tabletter og en munter IZH-pistol med lyddæmper.
Velkommen, kammerater, tikker det gøglede ur.

What is emerging from the drawer?

Scissors, pincers and the iron, gift of the Zemblan primeminister,
Feel-Swell pills, Be-Gay caplets and a happy IZH gun, with a silencer.
Welcome, comrades, ticks the clowning clock.

Strygejernstammer fra Zembla, en fiktiv europæisk stat i Vladimir Nabokovs roman *Pale Fire*. Mens størstedelen af Nabokovs bog består af forrykte annotationer af Charles Kinbote (den afsatte konge af Zembla), er selve kernen et selvbiografisk digt af den amerikanske digter John Shade. Med sine søm er strygejernst efterkommer af Man Rays berømte surrealistiske objekt, *The Gift* (1921). Tilstedeværelsen af piller, narkotika, medikamenter og kanyler her og i den følgende tegning refererer muligvis til de mange antipsykotiske medikamenter, som Komar-Myshkin fik ordineret. Men piller og narkotika har også spillet en rolle i Putins karriere. Politkovskaja rapporterede om et sandhedsserum brugt på præsidentkandidat Rybkin under valgkampagnen i 2003, der resulterede i, at han måtte trække sig fra valget. Politkovskajas kilde var den tidligere KGB-agent Aleksandr Litvinenko, der i 2006 blev forgiftet med det radioaktive stof polonium-210. På sit dødsleje anklagede Litvinenko eksplicit Putin for at stå bag forgiftningen. Pistolen, der kommer frem fra skuffen, kunne også være en reference til Politkovskaja, der blev dræbt med en IZH-pistol med dæmper.

The iron hails from Zembla, a fictive European state in Vladimir Nabokov's novel *Pale Fire*. While most of Nabokov's book consists of the perverted annotations of Charles Kinbote (the ousted king of Zembla), at its centre is an autobiographical poem by the American poet, John Shade. With its nails, the iron is a next-of-kin to Man Ray's famous Surrealist object, *The Gift* (1921). The presence of pills, drugs, medications and syringes here and in the subsequent drawing may refer in part to several anti-psychotic drugs prescribed to Komar-Myshkin. But pills and drugs have also played a role in Putin's career. Politkovskaya reported on a truth drug used on presidential candidate Rybkin during the 2003 election campaign which forced him out of the campaign. Politkovskaya received this information from Alexander Litvinenko, an ex-KGB agent who was poisoned in 2006 with the cancerous radionuclide polonium-210. On his death bed, Litvinenko directly accused Putin of poisoning him. The gun coming out of the drawer may also allude to Politkovskaya, who was shot to death with an IZH gun and silencer.

Ud af Vladis taske springer et par iPhones, en iPad, kreditkort og emblemer.
 Ud hopper Bliv-stærk-sprøjten og de lækre pralineer.
 Ud popper vigtige papirer og kostbare kuglepenne,
 Og også et lystigt Uzi-gevær tilslutter sig.

Out of Vladi's bag leap a pair of iPhones, an iPad, credit cards and pins.
 Out spring the Be-Strong syringe and the delicious pralines. Out pop important papers and pricey pens,
 And all are joined by a jolly Uzi submachine.

De to logoer forbundet af et hjerte midterst i den øverste del af rammen tilhører NKVD og den franske Æreslegion. NKVD var det frygtede russiske hemmelige politi, der senere blev til KGB, og som Putin engang tjente i. KGB blev ydmyget og vanæret i de tidlige Perestrojka-år, men medarbejderne fik genoprejsning under Putin, der tildelte mange tidligere agenter magtfulde positioner.

The two symbols connected by a heart at the central upper part of the frame are those of the NKVD, and of the *French Legion d'honneur*. The NKVD was the dreaded Russian secret service that later became the KGB, and in which Putin served. The men of the KGB, an organisation humiliated and discredited in the early years of Perestroika, came back with a vengeance under Putin, who placed many ex-agents in positions of power.

I 2006 fik Putin overrakt Æreslegionen af den franske præsident Jacques Chirac – en begivenhed, der sikkert chokerede Komar-Myshkin, som derfor skildrer et kærlighedsforhold mellem fransk kultur og den dunkle verden af russisk magt.

French President Jacques Chirac bestowed upon Putin the *legion d'honneur* in 2006, an act that probably shocked Komar-Myshkin, who thus presents a love story between French culture and the shadowy world of Russian power.

Blandt børnetegningerne, der flyver ud af tasken, ses et grotesk muskelbundet, der tydeligt parodierer Putins offentlige image som 'alfahan' – en betegnelse brugt af amerikanske diplomater til at beskrive Putin (afsløret i en WikiLeaksrapport fra 2010). Således leder kanylerne her og pillerne på de foregående billeder ikke blot tanker hen på mord og tortur, men også på steroidebaseret bodybuilding. Den anden synlige tegning er et portræt med påskriften Felix-Edmundovitj. Dette er F. E. Dzerzjinskij, udnævnt af Lenin som leder af Tjeka ('Den alrussiske ekstraordinære kommission for kamp mod kontrarevolution og sabotage'), en organisation, der udbredte terror overalt i Sovjetunionen. Dzerzjinskij var skruppelløs omkring sin tilgang: "Vi står for organiseret terror – det skal åbent indrømmes. Terror er en absolut nødvendighed i revolutionstider [...] Vi dømmes hurtigt [...] Vi har ikke brug for retfærdighed nu – dette er krig."

Among the childish drawings flowing out of the bag, the grotesque man of muscles clearly ridicules Putin's public image as an alpha male, the term some US diplomats used to describe Putin (revealed by a Wikileaks report in 2010). The syringes here and the pills on the preceding page thus evoke not only assassinations and torture but also steroid-based bodybuilding. The other prominent drawing is a portrait with the inscription Felix-Edmundovich. This is F. E. Dzerzhinsky, appointed by Lenin as head of the *Cheka* (acronym for 'Extraordinary Commission to Fight Counterrevolution and Sabotage'), an organisation that spread terror throughout the Soviet Union. Dzerzhinsky was unabashed in his approach: "We stand for organised terror. This should be frankly admitted. Terror is an absolute necessity during times of revolution [...] we judge quickly [...] We are in no need of justice now – this is war."

Mens Stalin henrettede de fleste af Lenins udnævnte efter denne terrorlogik, døde Dzerzjinskij tidligt nok til at blive hyldet som revolutionshelt gennem hele Stalins regime. Billedet skitserer således en højst summarisk genealogi for Putin igennem Ruslands hemmelige politi.

While Stalin killed most appointees of Lenin following this logic of terror, Dzerzhinsky died early enough to be celebrated as a hero of the revolution throughout Stalin's regime. The drawing thus creates a highly abbreviated genealogy for Putin through Russia's secret services.

Hvor har våbnene dog savnet hinanden!
De kysser og krammer, kæler og aer.
Stop, kammerater, I får mig til at tude,
Bimler det følsomme ur.

The weapons missed each other so!
They hug and kiss, fondle and stroke.
Halt, comrades, you make me sob,
Clangs the tender clock.

Så ren Vladimir er! Vi vil alle være med!
 Hvad slags løjer kommer mon til at finde sted?
 Et pyjamasparty måske, eller en særlig kongres?
 Og er der plads til alle i den lille leders seng?

So clean is Vladimir! We all want to get near!
 What kind of frolics are in progress?
 Is it a pajama party or, perhaps, a special congress?
 And will there be room for all in the little leaders' bed?

Figuren, der lurer bag døren, er Mojdodir, en servante fra en kendt børnebog af Kornej Tjukovskij fra 1923. I historien bliver en lille dreng så beskidt, at hans legetøj og ejendele forlader ham. Den vrede Mojdodir tilkalder sine skuresvampe og sæbeblokke for at vaske drengen, der flygter ud på gaderne med en truende svamp i hælene. Der bliver han midlertidigt forskånet for renheden takket være en krokodille (hovedkarakteren fra andre af Tjukovskijs historier), der sluger svampen. Men da krokodillen opdager, hvor beskidt knægten er, bliver den vred på ham, og fordi drengen frygter krokodillen mere end renheden, vender han tilbage til Mojdodir for at blive vasket. Komar-Myshkins billede er baseret på de to animerede versioner af historien fra 1939 og 1954, der begge er tegnet af kunstneren Ivan Ivanov-Vano.

The figure leering behind the doorway is that of Moydodyr, a washstand in a famous 1923 children poem by Korney Chukovsky. In this poem, a child gets so dirty that his toys and other household objects run away from him. The angry Moydodyr summons his sponges and soap bars to wash the boy, who escapes to the streets and is then chased by a menacing sponge. There, he is temporarily saved from cleanliness by a crocodile (the protagonist of other works by Chukovsky) who swallows the sponge, but then, upon noticing how dirty the urchin is, becomes very angry with him. Scared of the crocodile even more than of cleanliness, the boy willingly returns to Moydodyr and takes a bath. Komar-Myshkin's image is based on the two animated versions made of the poem in 1939 and 1954, both by the same artist, Ivan Ivanov-Vano.

Det er bestemt ikke et pyjamasparty;
Kammeraterne er ivrige efter at hjælpe vores dreng
af med tøjet. Hold op, jeg er kilden, fniser Vladimir.
Han havde ikke grinet så meget siden han var et
lille barn.

It certainly is not a pajama party;
The comrades are eager to help our boy undress.
Stop, I'm ticklish, Vladimir giggles.
He had not laughed so hard since he was a little child.

To logoer gemmer sig i træudskæringerne på Vladimirs seng. Den første, der er dannet af de lodrette streger nederst på sengebenedene, er logoet for Rosneft, det statskontrollerede olieselskab, der blev Ruslands største olieudvinder efter staten solgte Yukos' værdier på auktion (se billede 5). Transaktionerne, der muliggjorde likvideringen af Khodorkovskijs værdier, var mildest talt mistænksomme. Den 2. december 2004, med Yukos' tidligere ejer allerede fængslet, vandt et selskab ved navn Baikal Finance Group auktionen over Yukos' centrale datterselskab, Yuganskneftgaz. Baikal, en stråvirksomhed etableret blot et par dage forinden, var adresseregistreret i byen Tver. I bygningen lå der en vodkabar og nogle små virksomheder, men ingen kontorer for gruppen, og da virksomheden blev registreret, udgjorde dens aktiekapital mindre end \$400. Alligevel sikrede Baikal sig et lån på \$1.7 milliarder US dollar fra den statsejede Sberbank – en løs variation over Sberbanks logo fungerer som øjne på to af monstrene på sengens sidestykke. Når selskabet havde brugt dette statssponsorerede 'lån' til opkøbet, overrakte Baikal så virksomheden til Rosneft og forsvandt ligeså pludseligt, som det var opstået. Direktøren for Rosneft, Igor Ivanovitj Setjin, har tætte forbindelser til den russiske sikkerhedstjeneste, og det er almindeligt antaget, at han arbejdede som spion i 1980erne. Han blev bestyrelsesformand for virksomheden i 2004, da likvideringen af Khodorkovskijs værdier for alvor begyndte.

Two logos are integrated into the wooden decorations of Vladimir's bed. The first, formed by the vertical lines on the lower part of the bed's legs, is the logo of Rosneft, the government-controlled oil company that became Russia's biggest extractor and refiner after the government auctioned the assets of Yukos (see plate 5). The transactions that enabled the liquidation of Khodorkovsky's assets were dubious to say the least. On 22 December 2004, with Yukos' former owner already in jail, the control of its core production subsidiary, Yuganskneftgaz, was bid for by a company called Baikal Finance Group. Baikal, a straw company formed only days earlier, had its registered address in the city of Tver. The building housed a vodka bar and some small businesses, but no offices of the group could be found there, and when the company was registered, its share capital amounted to less than \$400. Despite that, Baikal secured a \$1.7 billion US dollar loan from the state-owned Sberbank – a loose variation of Sberbank's logo serves as the eyes of two monsters on the bed's side panel. Once it had used this government-sponsored 'loan', Baikal handed the companies to Rosneft, and vanished from the face of the earth as abruptly as it appeared. The CEO of Rosneft, Igor Ivanovich Sechin, is closely tied to the secret services, and is widely believed to have served as a spy in the 1980s. He became chair of the company's board of directors in 2004, when the liquidation of Khodorkovsky's assets was beginning in earnest.

Rygtet om festen må have bredt sig til marken.
 Se hvem der kommer ind igennem vinduet:
 En kolkhoz-høtyv, der holder en kolkhoz-høtyv.
 Også han fortjener lidt sjov efter al det hårde arbejde.

The rumour of the party must have reached the
 meadow. Look who is coming in through the window:
 A kolkhoz pitchfork gripping a kolkhoz pitchfork.
 He too deserves some fun after all that hard work.

‘Hr. Høtyv’ er grammatisk ukorrekt på russisk, idet ordet ‘høtyv’ egentlig er flertal. Designet minder om tidlige sovjetiske propagandaplakater, og månen, der er gennemskåret af en rød trekant, er en direkte citering af El Lissitzkijs klassiske plakat *Beat the Whites* fra borgerkrigstiden efter revolutionen. I den stjerneklare himmel danner et stjernebillede tydeligt bogstaverne ‘K-G-B’. I en tidligere gouacheserie af Komar-Myshkin, *Astrological Paranoia* (2006-2008), bliver lignende stjernebilleder tilsammen til ord, korte sætninger og billeder, mens enkelte værker antyder en kosmologisk teleologi.

‘Mister Pitchfork’ is a misnomer in Russian given that the word ‘pitchfork’ in Russian is plural. The design harks back to early Soviet propaganda posters, and the moon intercut by a red triangle directly quotes El Lissitzki’s staple poster, *Beat the Whites*, from the days of the post-revolution Civil War. In the starry skies, one constellation clearly spells ‘K-G-B.’ In an earlier series of gouaches by Komar-Myshkin entitled *Astrological Paranoia* (2006-2008), similar constellations add up to words, short sentences and images, while a few of the works suggest cosmological teleology.

Tingene begynder at trænge ind i Vladimirs krop.
Helt fyldt, mindes han aftensmaden.

Things begin to enter Vladimir's body.
Feeling stuffed, he recalls dinner.

Mønstret på det stof, der er viklet omkring Vladimirs torso, tager udgangspunkt i et kendt tekstil fra 1923-24 af Varvara Stepanova. Symbolet på trøjen er logoet for den Putin-støttede ungdomsbevægelse Nasji ('Vores!'). Ifølge adskillige kilder har Nasji, der blev grundlagt som en 'antifascistisk' bevægelse, fra begyndelsen været støttet direkte af Kreml. Siden december 2011, efterhånden som modstanden mod Putins genvalg voksede, har Nasji organiseret pro-Putin demonstrationer.

The pattern of the fabric enveloping Vladimir's torso is based on a famous 1923-1924 textile designed by Varvara Stepanova. The emblem on the sweater is the logo of Nashi ('Ours!'), the Putin-supported youth movement. Established as an 'anti-Fascist' movement, it has been widely reported that the movement has received direct funding from the Kremlin since its inception. From December 2011, as the opposition to Putin's re-election intensified, Nashi has been staging pro-Putin demonstrations.

Ting begynder at trænge ind i Vladimirs ansigtsglød.
Han kalder på sin mor, men hun er død.

Things begin to enter Vladimir's face.
He tries to call his mother, but she is dead.

Designet her er baseret på en reklameplakat af Aleksandr Rodtjenko og Vladimir Majakovskij for *Røde Oktober* småkager (1923). I originalen snor en kæde af småkager sig vej ind i en lille piges smilende mund. I tiden umiddelbart efter revolutionen opfordrede Rodtjenko, som del af en større diskussion, der skulle gøre op med både konservativ kunst og det kapitalistiske system, til et fornyet forhold til objekter – en sovjetisk befrielse af ting: 'Tingene i vores hænder skal være ligemænd, kammerater.' Blandt de ting, der udgør tusindbenet på vej ind i Vladimirs mund, er et bølgesymbol og en abstrakt afbildning af en jødisk lysestage. Dette er våbentegnet for Birobidzhan – en by tæt på den kinesiske grænse, som blev en autonom jødisk region (i overensstemmelse med Stalins vision).

The design here follows that of an advertising poster by Alexander Rodchenko and Vladimir Mayakovsky for *Red October* cookies (1923). In the original, a trail of cookies makes its way into the smiling mouth of a girl. In the early days after the revolution, as part of a discourse meant to tackle both conservative art and the capitalist system, Rodchenko famously called for a change in relation to objects, a Soviet liberation of the thing: 'Our things in our hands must be equals, comrades.' Amongst the objects that create the millipede entering Vladimir's mouth is a symbol of waves, and an abstracted Jewish Menorah. This is the coat of arms of Birobidzhan – a town close to the border with China, and what was to be an autonomous Jewish oblast (according to Stalin's vision).

Hr. Høtyv synes godt om hunden.
Han spidder hende på sin høtyv for at kunne riste
hende senere. Vil hun smage godt, fordi hun er
smuk, eller er det omvendt?

Mister pitchfork likes the dog.
He impales her on his pitchfork, to be roasted later.
Will she taste good because she looks pretty,
or the other way around?

Tror saksen, at Vladimir er en matrjoskadukke?
Den klipper ham op for at se, hvad der gemmer
sig indeni.

Do the scissors think Vladimir is a Matryoshka?
They cut him open to see what hides inside.

Vladimirs mave er fyldt med komplicerede sager, Det er ikke til at se en pind i den snørklede bunke tarme. Frygt ej, kære Diner's Club, American Express og Master-Card, snart skal Vladimirs mave opsprættes.

Vladimir's belly is filled with complicated matter. You cannot find a pin within that serpentine intestine pile. Do not despair, dear Diner's Club, American Express and MasterCard, soon Vladimir will be disembowelled.

Mandorlakompositionen leder tankerne hen på *Den majestætiske Jesus* (1408) af Ruslands største middelalderkunstner, Andrej Rubljov. Billedet er således stødende på flere måder: den bespottet et helligt ikon og fremhæver tydeligt den vaginale form på mandorlaen (der traditionelt er forbeholdt afbildninger af Kristus eller Jomfru Maria), for så at lade den gabende kløft afsløre indvolde i stedet for guddommelig storhed eller feminin erotik.

The mandorla composition connotes that of *Christ in Majesty* (1408), by Russia's most venerated medieval artist, Andrei Rublev. The image is thus offensive in more ways than one: it debases the venerated icon, even as it blatantly emphasises the vaginal semblance of the mandorla (traditionally reserved for depictions of the Saviour or the Holy Mother), only to have the gaping cleft offer intestines rather than either heavenly import or feminine eroticism.

Vores anstrengelse har båret frugt, bimler de gode
jordmødre,
Mens Vladimirs sjæl, den prægtige myggemus,
Endelig befries fra sin jordiske puppe.

Our labour bore fruit, the good midwives chime,
As Vladimir's soul, the glorious mosquito-mouse,
Finally flies free from within its earthly cocoon.

Mens det er myggemusen, der fødes i billedet, ser vi i den omkredsede ramme, sjælens typiske repræsentant, nemlig sommerfuglen. De andre figurer i rammen (fade med skatologiske anretninger, et par antropomorfe kjoler) kan imidlertid også ses som sjæleafbildninger, hentet fra Majakovskijs tidlige teaterstykke, *Vladimir Majakovskij, En tragedie* (1913). Stykket splintrer gentagende gange skellet mellem subjekt og objekt, det somatiske og det spirituelle, og forsyner på vovet vis det spirituelle med ekstremt taktile kvaliteter. I prologen præsenterer digteren sin sjæl på et fad, for at den senere kan blive spist, og spørger så: "Måske har tingene en anden sjæl?" Senere viser det sig, at sjælen ikke blot er spiselig, men også kan tages på: "Af min sjæl ka' man også sy sådan nogle smarte skørter"¹.

Genstanden, der står bag uret, er thereminen, én af de første elektroniske musikinstrumenter (patenteret i 1928). Thereminen er særlig, både på grund af sin dystre klang, og fordi den spilles uden hænder: Spilleren kontrollerer volumen og tonen ved at bevæge hænderne omkring instrumentets to antenner. Komar-Myshkin var sikkert interesseret i thereminen på grund af dens 'magiske' spillemetode og foruroligende lyd, men også på grund af Leon Theremins livshistorie, særligt hans bratte hjemkomst til Sovjetunionen fra New York i 1938, der rygtedes at være en kidnapning foretaget af sovjetiske hemmelige agenter. Theremin blev sendt til en Gulag-lejr, men blev senere løsladt takket være sine talenter som opfinder, som nu blev brugt i den russiske spionages tjeneste. Han udviklede blandt andet en højst sensitiv miniaturemikrofon.

While the mosquito-mouse is the parasite delivered in the picture (see frontispiece annotations), its frame hosts the traditional figure of the soul, the butterfly. But the other images in the frame (platters with scatological culinary offerings, a pair of anamorphic dresses) can also be construed as images of souls, culled from Mayakovsky's early play, *Vladimir Mayakovsky, A Tragedy* (1913). This play repeatedly shatters the divide between objects and subjects, somatic and spiritual, and audaciously endows the spiritual with overly tactile qualities. In the prologue, the poet offers his soul on a platter, to be eaten later, and proceeds to state that: "Perhaps things have different souls than ours." Later on, the soul turns out to be not only edible but wearable as well: "from my soul you can sew, also, such elegant dresses"¹.

The object posed behind the clock is the theremin, one of the earliest electronic musical instruments (patented in 1928). The theremin is unique both for its haunting sound, and for being played without hand touch: the player controls volume and pitch by moving their hands next to the instrument's two antennas. Komar-Myshkin was probably interested in the theremin not only because of this 'magical' sound production and eerie sound, but because of Leon Theremin's life story and, in particular, his abrupt return from New York to the USSR in 1938, rumoured at the time to have been kidnapped by Soviet secret agents. Theremin was imprisoned in a Gulag but was later absolved, thanks to his gifts as an inventor, now at the service of the USSR's espionage efforts. He developed, amongst other things, a highly sensitive miniature microphone.

¹ Citat fra: Vladimir Majakovskij, *Vladimir Majakovskij – En tragedie i 2 akter*, oversat af Kjeld Bjørnager, 1973.

¹ Vladimir Majakovskij, *Vladimir Majakovskij – A Tragedy* in Mayakovsky: *Plays*, 1914.

Nu hvor hunden den er død,
Vil den lille høtyv at være Vladimirs bedste ven.
Han skubber sit hoved mellem drengens balder og
kigger: Sikke store agurker de sælger i butikkerne
i disse dage!

Now that the dog is dead,
The little pitchfork wants to be Vladimir's best friend.
He shoves his head between the boy's buttocks and
explores: Such big cucumbers they sell these days
in stores!

Komar-Myshkins fascination af værkerne af den tidlige amerikanske animator Winsor McCay ses tydeligt igennem hele værkserien, men især her, hvor den flyvende seng genkalder den tilhørende McCays kendteste tegneseriefigur, Little Nemo. De forstrakte 'sjælekjoler' minder om lignende forvrængninger i Nemos drømmeverden.

Komar-Myshkin fascination with the work of early American animator Winsor McCay is evident throughout the album, but especially here, where the flying bed is reminiscent of the bed of McCay's most famous comic-strip protagonist, Little Nemo. The elongation of the 'soul-dresses' recalls similar shape-shifting in Nemo's dream-world.

Det evigt foranderlige tæppe viser nu et smilende ansigt med en stor agurk som mund (Kharm's linje citeres her for anden gang, se note til billede 4). Det symbol, der udgør øjnene, er logoet for den israelske Myndighed for Befolkning og Immigration, et statsligt organ, som Komar-Myshkin anså som et særligt brutalt værktøj til implementering af racisme og xenofobi. I 2012, efter Komar-Myshkins død, kom et skræmmende eksempel på denne grusomhed for dagens lys, da det blev afsløret, at Israel havde tvunget sudanesiske og eritreiske flygtninge til at underskrive aftaler om 'frivillig udvisning', der sendte dem tilbage til deres hjemlande, hvor de risikerede at miste deres liv.

The ever-changing carpet offers a smiling face with a big cucumber in place of a mouth (Kharm's line is quoted here for the second time, see comments for plate 4). The symbol which makes up the eyes is the emblem of Israel's Population and Immigration Authority, a governmental organ perceived by Komar-Myshkin as a particularly vicious tool for implementing racism and xenophobia. In 2012, after Komar-Myshkin's death, a chilling example of this cruelty was exposed when it was revealed that Israel coerced Sudanese and Eritrean refugees to sign 'voluntary deportation' forms, sending them back to their countries where their lives would be threatened.

Sengens udsmykning antager her form af kunstfærdige tatoveringer, og mindst én af dens nye tilføjelser er hentet direkte fra det mangfoldige repertoire af russiske kriminelles tatoveringer. Over den overdimensionerede penis, der udgør sengens venstre stolpe, kan man skimte den russiske sætning: "Jeg knepper kun drenge".

The Bed's ornamentation assumes here the look of ornate tattoos, and at least one of its new elements is culled directly from the rich repertoire of Russian criminal tattoos. Above the oversized penis of the bed's left pillar, one can notice a sentence in Russian: "I do only boys."

Det er én af flere dokumenterede ordtatoveringer skrevet over genitalier, som for at antyde, at det var penissen selv, der talte (eller, i kvindelige kriminelles tilfælde, vaginaen), i dette tilfælde fra perspektivet af en dominant homoseksuel kriminel. Derved forener sengen, i hvert fald i ånden, de andre genstande, der penetrerer Vladimir.

It is one of several documented word tattoos rendered above the genitalia, suggesting that the penis itself speaks (or, in the case of female criminals, the vagina), in this case from the vantage point of a dominant homosexual criminal. The bed thus joins, at least in spirit, the other objects penetrating Vladimir.

På en gang fyldt med smerte og velbehag,
Svajer Vladimir i en kvindedans fra gamle dage.

Flooded with pain and pleasure all at once,
Vladimir sways in a traditional women's dance.

Den 'traditionelle kvindedans' er det hysteriske anfald. Vladimirs positur er tydeligt baseret på anfaldets 'klovnestadie', som det blev gengivet i Charcots arkiver på Salpêtrière. Sengen deler sig her i to og danner et dobbeltportræt af Nikolaj Tjerkasov i rollen som *Ivan den Grusomme* i Sergej Eisensteins film (1942-1943), måske den ultimative filmiske skildring af politisk paranoia, der til sidst fører til et endeløst blodbad. Mens den ene af figurerne kaster op, udgyder Vladimir væsker fra sit anus, sår på maven og mund, i hvad der kunne minde om en eksorcisme.

The 'traditional women's dance' is the fit of hysteria. Vladimir's posture is clearly based on the depiction of 'the clown stage' of the seizure as it was rendered in Charcot's archives at the Salpêtrière. The bed bifurcates here into two figures, a double portrait of Nikolai Cherkasov acting as *Ivan the Terrible* in Sergei Eisenstein's film (1942-1943), perhaps the ultimate cinematic depiction of political paranoia, leading into an ongoing blood bath. While one of the figures vomits, Vladimir expels emissions from his anus, belly wound and mouth, the figurative nature of which suggests an exorcism.

Fat mod, Vladimir, store matriark af Rus fra fordums tid
Pres, moder, træk vejret og pres: trods dine smerter.
Du er ligeså frugtbar som vores prægtige land.
Ingen Yukos-oliekilde har nogensinde ydet mere.

Have courage, Vladimir, Great matriarch of Rus of yore
Push, mother, breathe and push: despite those aches
of yours.
You are as fecund as our great land.
No Yukos oil well had ever yielded more.

Det er den eksplicitte reference til Yukos (se kommentarer til vers 5 og 15), der dikterer udledningens sorte farve her. *All-over-*kompositionen og øjnene leder tankerne hen på Jackson Pollocks værk *Eyes in the Heat* (1946).

The explicit reference to Yukos (see comments for verses 5 and 15) dictates the black colour of emissions here. The all-over composition and the presence of the eyes evokes Jackson Pollock's painting *Eyes in the Heat* (1946).

Hvil dig nu, lille tyran, saml kræfterne.
Så, nu er det nok.

Rest now, tiny tyrant, gather strength.
There, you had enough.

Ligesom i flere tidligere kompositioner bliver en samling af forskellige genstande her tilsammen til en antropomorf figur. Maven på figuren i det nederste felt synes at bestå af et gammelt fjernsyn, der viser Lenins baghoved, som det ses i logoet for Komsomol. Komsomol var sovjettidens meget indflydelsesrige 'Leninistiske Ungkommunistiske Forbund', hvor blandt andre den tidligere oligark Khodorkovskij begyndte sin karriere.

As in several earlier compositions, an amalgamation of different objects adds up to an anthropomorphic figure. The belly of the objects figured in the lower panel seems to be an old television monitor showing the rear part of Lenin's head as it appears in the Komsomol emblem. Komsomol was the highly influential 'All-Union Leninist Young Communist League' during the Soviet era where, among numerous others, the former oligarch Khodorkovsky began his career.

Nu drysser vi salt i dine sår,
Ligesom i det kemiforsøg i skolen,
Hvor de døde fisks muskler sitrer og dirrer,
Lev videre, vågn op – gå ikke glip af vor munterhed.

Now, we'll pepper your wounds with salt,
Just like in that science class experiment,
When the muscles of dead fish shiver and convulse,
Live on, wake up – do not miss our merriment.

Kompositionen her er inspireret af René Magrittes
Le Sorcier (1951).

The composition here is based on René Magritte's
Le Sorcier (1951).

Vladimir har to ben,
Vladimir har ét ben,
Vladimir har nul:
Dem skænker han venligt til sit yndlingsgevær.

Vladimir has two legs,
Vladimir has one leg,
Vladimir has none:
He kindly donates them to his favourite gun.

Uzi-geværet, der får skænket et par ben, er en tegneserieagtig variation over Kristusfiguren, men glorien minder også om det filtrede hår på Snaskepeter, den usoignerede, uartige dreng i Heinrich Hoffmans klassiske børnebog *Den store Bastian*, og står i kontrast til Vladimirs egen renlighed i vers 14.

The Uzi who gained legs is a cartoonish variation on the figure of Christ, but the halo also echoes the unkempt hair of *Struwwelpeter*, the dirty, rebuked boy in Heinrich Hoffmann's classic children's book, offering an opposition to Vladimir's own cleanliness in verse 14.

Stik hans øjne ud og skær næsen af,
Dem er der sikkert nogen, der gerne vil ha'.

Gouge his eyes and cut his nose,
We can make good use of those.

Kosten i feltet nederst til højre modtager Vladimirs udstukne øjne og afhuggede næse. Den antager også form af det russisk-ortodokse kors med dets tre vandrette bjælker. I Rusland kaldes dette kors også for Sankt Andreas-korset. Det siges, at apostelen Andreas brugte dette kors, da han prædikede i Rusland, med den nederste bjælke (Kristus' fodstøtte) løftet mod højre for at indikere, at det er dem til hans højre side, der vil blive frelst.

The broom in the lower right frame receives Vladimir's gouged eyes and cut nose. It also assumes the shape of the Russian Orthodox cross, with its three horizontal bars. In Russia, this cross is also referred to as Saint Andrew's Cross. According to tradition, when Saint Andrew was preaching in Russia, he used this cross, with the lower beam (Christ's footrest) elevated to the messiah's right side, to indicate that those to his right will inherit heaven.

Se: Hunden er ikke død alligevel!
Hun er vor egen Lazarus, det er et mirakel!

Look: The dog is not dead after all!
She is our private Lazarus, it is a miracle!

I denne Lazarusscene løfter Kristus to fingre. Dette var den rigtige måde at gøre korsets tegn på ifølge de gammeltroende, som brød med den russiske ortodokse kirke i det 17. århundrede i det skisma, der opstod som følge af patriarken Nikons liturgiske reformer. Disse gammeltroende har lidt under brutale forfølgelser lige siden. Det var under Putins første embedsperiode, at både den russiske kirke og det gammeltroende mindretal fik tilbageleveret den ejendom, der blev konfiskeret i sovjettiden. Putin var standhaftig i sin støtte til kirken, men den kom kun til gengæld for kirkens politiske opbakning.

In this Lazarus scene, Christ is raising two fingers. This was the proper way to make the sign of the cross according to the old believers who were separated from the Russian Orthodox church in the 17th century, in the schism caused by patriarch Nikon's reforms. These old believers have suffered harsh persecutions since. It was under the first presidency of Putin that the Russian church, as well as the minority of old believers, regained the properties expropriated from it during communism. Putin was persistent in showing his support for the church, but only in return for the church backing him politically.

Den trofaste hund kærtegner sin lemlæstede herre,
 Mens hun logrer med sin hale
 Måske hendes kærlige tårer vil fremtrylle
 En lykkelig slutning, som i et eventyr.

The loyal canine caresses her maimed master,
 All the while wagging her tail.
 Perhaps her loving tears will muster,
 A happy end, as in a fairytale.

Rammen kombinerer den røde stjerne med afskårne dele af royale symboler med kroner, kors og ørne. Efter Jeltsin-årenes kaos havde Putin en vision for en ny nationalistisk stolthed, hvori ikoner spillede en særlig rolle. Snedigt approprierede og kombinerede han symboler, der engang ville have virket uforenelige: det kommunistiske røde flag og stjerne, kirkens kors og en monarkisk nostalgi i form af tsarens dobbeltørn. Under Putins første præsidentperiode blev det røde flag og stjernen genindført i militæret, mens et utal af kronede dobbeltørne snart prydede nærmest samtlige regeringsbygninger. Specifikt tilhører den flankerende ørn med sværd og økse i kløerne Den Føderale Fængselstjeneste, mens ørnen med de sorte og hvide kugler nederst i rammen stammer fra emblemet for Den Centrale Valgkommission. Det er muligt, at Komar-Myshkin valgte netop dette symbol som en reference til de mange forfatningsændringer, Putin gennemførte for at forstærke den såkaldte magtvertikal, blandt andet afskaffelsen af direkte valg til regionale guvernører, således at de i stedet udpeges af præsidenten selv. Kronen øverst i rammen er en løs fortolkning af emblemet for Justitsministeriet.

Her ses ørnens dobbelthoved dog kun i en nyere fortolkning som del af tatoveringen på Vladimirs venstre balde. Denne version er faktisk logoet for *United Russia*. Under ørnen står navnet på partiet, og ovenover står ordet 'Vozhd', der betyder 'fører' eller 'stor leder', og som tidligere associeredes til Lenin og Stalin.

The frame combines the red star along with partial views of regal emblems featuring crowns, crosses and eagles. After the chaos of the Yeltsin years, Putin's vision of a new nationalistic pride and might entailed an emphasis on icons. He ingeniously appropriated and combined symbols that would have formerly appeared incommensurate: the communist red flag and star, the religiosity of the cross, and a monarchic longing in the form of the Tsarist double-headed eagle. During Putin's first presidential term, the red star and flag were restored for the military forces, while a plethora of crowned double-headed eagles soon adorned almost each governmental office. Here specifically, the flanking eagle gripping sword and axe is that of The Russian Federal Service of Punishment Execution (the Federal penitentiary Service), while on the lower part of the frame, the eagle holding black and white orbs is from the emblem of The Central Election Commission of the Russian Federation. Komar-Myshkin may have chosen this particular symbol as a reminder of several amendments Putin instigated in order to enhance 'a vertical of power,' amongst them the termination of the election of governors by direct vote, giving the president himself the power to assign them. The crown at the top is loosely based on the one in the emblem of the Ministry of Justice.

However, the double-head of the eagle appears here only in a graphically modernised rendition as part of the tattoo on Vladimir's left buttock. This variation is in fact the logo of *United Russia*. Below the eagle is the name of the party, above it is the word 'Vozhd', meaning a 'chieftain' or 'strong leader', a word formerly associated with Lenin and Stalin.

Det er filosofisk, en ting i en ting,
 Hævder det eftertænksomme ur,
 Og Vladimir er hul, lad os proppe hende derind
 Og sy maveskindet sammen med stramme sting.

It's philosophical, a thing within a thing,
 Opines the thoughtful clock,
 And Vladimir is hollow, let us shove her in,
 And tightly sew the belly frock.

Billedet genkalder det, uret betragter som et filosofisk princip – ‘en ting i en ting’ – ikke kun igennem dets centrale motiv med Vladimirs udstopning, men også kompositionsmæssigt med dens rammer inden i rammer såvel som andre afbildninger af ting i ting. Kinderægget, den berømte chokolade fra den italienske producent Ferrero, er et hult chokoladeæg, hvori en orange plastikbeholder gemmer på de som regel adskilte dele af et stykke miniaturelegetøj, sammen med et lille instruktionsblad. Her kan legetøjsmændene, der gemmer sig inden i æggene, identificeres på deres initialer: øverst til højre står der ‘DM’ for Dmitrij Medvedev, og nederst til venstre ‘LB’ for Lavrentij Berija. På tidspunktet for Maxim Komar-Myshkins selvmord var Medvedev Ruslands præsident. De færreste regnede hans præsidentembede for andet end et kneb til at Putin kunne forlænge sin embedsperiode ved at udfylde positionen, mens den stærke mand selv fungerede som premierminister, og derved omgås den lov, der forhindrer en præsident i at sidde i mere end to perioder i træk (i 2012 overtog Putin atter præsidentposten, mens Medvedev blev premierminister). Lavrentij Pavlovitj Berija var den notoriske øverste leder af NKVD, Sovjetunionens sikkerhedspoliti – en stilling han holdt fra 1938 indtil Stalins død. Efter magtkampene blandt Stalins efterfølgere kom Berijas undergang, da han blev arresteret og anklaget for forræderi, terrorisme og kontrarevolutionære aktiviteter, såvel som adskillige voldtægter. Han blev skudt d. 23. december 1953, samme dag som sin retssag. I rammens yderste lag ses den sejrsparade, der afslutter *Peter og ulven* af Sergej Profokjev (en scene med endnu en ‘ting i en ting’, og som skildres i det følgende vers: anden, der sluges levende og i en mundfuld af ulven).

The drawing echoes what the clock sees as a philosophical principle – ‘a thing within a thing,’ – not only through the central motif of the stuffing of Vladimir, but by having frames within frames, and additional ‘things within things.’ *Kinder Egg* (also known as *Kinder Surprise*), the famous product manufactured by the Italian company *Ferrero*, is a hollow chocolate egg within which an orange plastic container hides the usually unassembled parts of a plastic miniature toy, along with a tiny instructions sheet. Here, the men-toys hidden in the eggs can be recognised by their initials: at top-right ‘DM’ for Dmitry Medvedev, and at bottom left, LB for Lavrentiy Beria. At the time of Maxim Komar-Myshkin’s suicide, Medvedev was the president of Russia. Few mistook his presidency for anything but a ploy to allow the continuous reign of Putin, preserving the seat while the strong man himself functioned as prime-minister, circumventing the law that prevents a presidency of more than two consecutive terms (in 2012 Putin assumed the presidency, making Medvedev, in kind, his prime-minister). Lavrentiy Pavlovich Beria was the notorious chief of Soviet security and secret police, the NKVD, a position he held from 1938 until Stalin’s death. Following power struggles amongst Stalin’s successors, Beria’s downfall came as he was arrested and charged not only with treason, terrorism and counter-revolutionary activities, but also with numerous cases of rape. He was shot to death on 23 December, 1953, the same day as his trial. The external frame tier depicts the victorious procession ending *Peter and the Wolf* by Sergei Prokofiev (a scene featuring another ‘thing within a thing’ that will be evoked in the next verse: the duck swallowed alive and whole by the wolf).

Levende begravet, som Peters stakkels and,
Kunne hunden stadig høres,
Hylende inden i sin mavekiste.

Buried alive, Like Peter's poor duck,
The dog could still be heard,
Wailing from within her tummy coffin.

Vinduerne minder om dem i Ilya Kabakovs kendte værkserie, *A Window* (1972-1975), både i deres komposition og i deres ulogiske åbning (himlen udenfor ses i hvad der kun kan være vinduesskodder, mens selve vinduet åbner ud til et køkkeninteriør). Stjernerne i vinduet til højre danner igen det russiske ord 'Vozhd', stor leder, ligesom Vladimirs tatovering i billede 31.

The windows allude to those in Ilya Kabakov's most famous album, *A Window* (1972-1975), both in composition and in their illogical opening (the outside appearing in what could only be the shutters, while the opening reveals the interior of the kitchen). The stars in the window at the right render again the Russian word 'Vozhd,' a strong leader, seen in Vladimir's tattoo in plate 31.

Som den tragiske ulv i blodige rødhætte,
Med bugen grusomt stoppet med sten,
Således døde Vladimir, nedtyngt af sin dyriske
elsker, Hans forførende fuldmægtige, hans dødelige
falske datter.

Like the tragic wolf of bloody riding hood,
His abdomen cruelly crammed with stones,
Thus expired Vladimir, weighed down by his animal
lover, His luscious deputy, his deathly
artificial daughter.

... Og dog! Ikke helt død endnu!
 Vladimir er stadig vaks, umulig at slå ud!
 Hurra, store leder! Og selvom det ikke rimer,
 Lad os skære hans arme af.

... Or maybe not! Not quite dead yet!
 Vladimir is so resilient, still alert!
 Hurrah, great leader! And even though it does not rhyme,
 Let us carve his arms off.

Lårenes udsmykning på denne hybridfigur tager udgangspunkt i logoet for den russiske TV-kanal 1 (ORT). Denne statsdrevne kanal blev delvist privatiseret, hvor den russiske stat beholdt 51%, og private investorer kontrollerede resten, primært oligarken Boris Berezovskij, der i slut-90erne ejede 38% (og døde i 2013). I hans berømte retssag mod hans tidligere partner og ven Roman Abramovitj, udtalte Berezovskij, at Putin forsøgte at tvinge ham til at opgive sine aktier, og påstod, at han ønskede at styre kanalen selv, og at dem, der nægtede at adlyde Putin, ville blive fængslet.

Det dobbelte æselhoved er måske Komar-Myshkins måde at latterliggøre den russiske dobbeltørn såvel som Putin selv, der selv identificeres med dobbelthovedet (se vers 31). Men måske er billedets betydning en hel anden: i Dostojevskijs roman *Idioten* er æslet fyrst Myshkins yndlingsdyr, og Myshkin opremser dyrets talrige gode kvaliteter. Således er der måske et gran ideologisk alvor i forslaget om at erstatte ørnen med æslet.

The decoration of the thighs of this hybrid figure is based on the logo of Russia's Channel 1 (ORT). This State-run channel was partially privatised, with the Russian State retaining 51% and private investors controlling the rest, chief amongst them the oligarch Boris Berezovsky who held 38% in the late 1990s (and who died in 2013). In his famed court case against his former partner and friend Roman Abramovich, Berezovsky stated that Putin tried to force him to relinquish his shares, claiming that he wanted to direct the channel himself, and stating that those who refused to abide by Putin's will would end up in prison.

The double donkey head is perhaps Komar-Myshkin's way of denigrating the Russian double headed eagle, as well as Putin himself, who is himself identified with the double-head [see verse 31]. But perhaps the meaning of the image is quite different: the donkey is the favourite animal of Prince Myshkin in Dostoevsky's novel *The Idiot*, with Myshkin identifying the manifold good qualities of the animal, and there thus may be a grain of ideological seriousness in the proposal to replace the eagle with the donkey.

Og til sidst hovedet, en yderst eftertragtet skat,
Begæret af så mange ansigtsløse ting.

And finally the head, a much contested treasure,
Coveted by so many faceless objects.

Hvor er han nu, Vladimir?

I hovedet, stadig rig på nervøse tics og grimasser?

I kroppen, stadig uimodståelig i al sin anatomiske ynde?

Eller måske i sjælen, der stadig smovser i sin tidligere residens?

Where is he now, Vladimir?

In the head, still rich with nervous ticks and grimaces?

In the body, still compelling in its anatomic grace?

Or maybe in the soul, that gorges on its former residence?

På billedet står der 'Volodja [kælenavn for Vladimir], hvor er du?'. Teksten, såvel som skrifttypen og rammen, genkalder billede nummer 16 i Ilja Kabakovs værkserie *The Released Gavrilov* (1974). Serien er en af mange, der blev 'lavet' af Kabakovs opfundne karakterer. Disse karakterer forsvinder ofte, fanget i sidernes formelt restriktive ramme såvel som i tidens sociale mismod og restriktioner. Men i *Gavrilov* er alt billedsprog udgjort af verbale udsagn – dialoger med spørgsmål og svar angående disse forsvundne karakterer.

Afbildningen af den opsvulmende blodsuger er en hyldest til Winsor McCays banebrydende animerede kortfilm, *How a Mosquito Operates* (1923).

The text inside the drawing reads 'Volodya [nickname for Vladimir], where are you?'. The text, as well as the font and frame, echo plate number 16 in Ilya Kabakov's album *The Released Gavrilov* (1974). The album is one of several which were 'made' by Kabakov's invented characters. These characters often disappear, confined as they are within the formal restrictive frame on each page, as well as within the social glum and restrictive context of the era. But in *Gavrilov*, the entire imagery is made up of verbal statements – dialogues of questions and answers regarding these disappeared characters.

The depiction of the swelling up of the blood-sucking soul pays homage to Winsor McCay's seminal animation short, *How a Mosquito Operates* (1923).

Eller måske sover han, så stille,
For alle de billeder er i virkeligheden blot billeder.
Eller måske ikke. Husk, når det gælder Vladimir, min
kære,
Tingene er ikke, hvad de ser ud til at være.

Or maybe he's asleep, so still,
For all those stills, for real, are only stills.
Or maybe not. Remember dear, with Vladimir,
Things are not what they appear.

Hybridet 'myggemusen' møder vi i digtets 21. vers, hvor den afsløres som Vladimirs sjæl. På den måde kan myggemusen siges at erstatte sommerfuglen som ikonografisk repræsentant for sjælen. I stedet for denne æteriske inkarnation af ren skønhed, der flyver op fra sin døde kropslige puppe, er Vladimirs sjæl her en sammensmeltning af to dyr, der anses som parasitter. Samtidig fungerer myggemusen også som visuel manifestation af forfatterens pseudonym, idet 'Komar' og 'Myshkin' betyder henholdsvis 'myg' og 'mus' på russisk.

The hybrid animal – a mosquito-mouse – is encountered in the poem in verse 21, where it is revealed to be Vladimir's soul. The mosquito-mouse thus replaces the butterfly as the traditional iconographic representation of the soul. Instead of an ethereal epitome of pure beauty rising from within its demised corporeal cocoon, Vladimir's soul merges two animals which are considered parasites. Yet the mosquito-mouse also doubles as a visual representation of the author's pseudonym, with 'Komar' and 'Myshkin' meaning 'mosquito' and 'mouse' in Russian.

Den russiske forfatter og kunstner Efim Poplavsky hævdede altid, at han hverken var kunstner eller forfatter. Hans pseudonym, Maxim Komar-Myshkin betyder 'myg' (Komar) og 'mus' (Myshkin) på russisk, og han mente at disse to dyrs kendetegn var beskrivende for hans arbejde: Myggen, der parasitisk ernærer sig via blod fra 'store' og 'virkelige' mennesker (det være sig magtfulde politikere eller højtagtede kulturpersonligheder), og musen, der mæsker sig i rester og hengemt mad, og som forbindes med snigen og snavs. Både mus og myg udgør snarere en pestilens end en egentlig trussel (og dog, under de rette forhold, kan begge dyr være dødelige). Både musen og myggen er at finde i hjemlige omgivelser, om end de bestræber sig på at holde sig ude af syne.

I årene frem til sit selvmord var Efim Poplavsky overbevist om, at Putin førte en personlig vendetta mod ham, og at han, selvom han var anonym, arbejdsløs og havde forladt Rusland for mere end et årti siden, var i reel fare for at blive myrdet. I den forstand udgjorde *Vladimir's Night* Poplavskys skjulte kunstneriske revanche; animismen i *Vladimir's Night* bruges helt bogstaveligt til at hævne sig på en ærkefjende. I tråd med denne konspiratoriske, paranoide tankegang byder både vers og billeder på et væld af forbindelser og referencer, hvoraf en lille del påpeges i værkseriens vægtekster.

The Buried Alive

Kort efter Komar-Myshkin emigrerede fra Rusland til Israel i slutningen af 90erne, grundlagde han The Buried Alive, et tæt sammentømret kollektiv af unge ekssovjetiske billedkunstnere, skuespillere, musikere og forfattere. I deres manifest erklærer de sig for 'russiske kulturelle zombier', og The Buried Alive satte sig for udelukkende at agere på russisk, i en selvvalgt kunstnerisk ghetto. Gruppen isolerede sig bevidst fra den lokale israelske kunstscene, som de følte sig hævet over, om end de samtidig led under det enorme pres og den usikkerhed, som isolationen bragte med sig. 60erne og 70ernes uofficielle Moskvakunstnere var mere end blot en central inspirationskilde for The Buried Alive – gruppen så sig selv som videreførere af den autonome, intime og ikke-anerkendte eksistens, der karakteriserede den tidligere Moskvakreds: En selvforsynende kunstscene helt uden hierarkier og materiel værdi, baseret udelukkende på personlig venskab og passioneret engagement. Men for Efim Poplavsky, som led af akut paranoia, pegede gruppens navn også på selve den frygt, der undersøges i Edgar Allan Poes novelle, *Levende Begravet*.

Tre af videoerne lavet af The Buried Alive indeholder historiske vittigheder, der læses op under pistoltrussel af henholdsvis en palæstinensisk, en eksrussisk og en indfødt israelsk kulturberømt. Vittighederne er taget fra et litterært værk, som Komar-Myshkin ikke var i stand til at færdiggøre: Hele den russiske historie skabt af vittigheder. Desuden præsenterer gruppen filmen *Killing Andrey Lev*, som viser et forsøg på at torturere og myrde en ung kunstner ved hjælp af voodoo, hvilket dog resulterer i en helt anden slags magi end den planlagte. På den anden side af denne væg udstilles to muntre sange om forbrugsvarer; i filmen *Little Iron* får et lille strygejern fortalt sin historie af et ægtepar, mens filmen *Hybrid* skildrer en gruppe folk, der råbesynger neogolismer til en række varer i de prerevolutionære russiske avantgardepoeters ånd.

The Russian author and artist Efim Poplavsky always maintained that he was neither an artist nor an author. His pseudonym, Maxim Komar-Myshkin, connotes in Russian a mouse and a mosquito, and he perceived his work through the attributes of these animals: the mosquito, parasitically feeding on the blood of 'big' and 'real' humans (be them powerful politicians or venerated cultural personae), and the mouse, feasting on leftovers and stashed goods and connoting infiltration and dirt. Both mouse and mosquito suggest a nuisance rather than a major threat (yet, given the right circumstances, they can become deadly), and both are domestically present even as they strive to remain hidden and invisible.

In the years before his suicide, Efim Poplavsky believed that Putin had a personal vendetta against him, and even though he was anonymous, unemployed, and had left Russia more than a decade ago, he was a pertinent target for assassination attempts. *Vladimir's Night*, in that sense, was Poplavsky's secretive artistic retaliation: animism literally employed to avenge a nemesis. Following the conspiratorial, paranoiac mindset, both the verse and the images offer a plethora of links and references, some of which are explained in the accompanying texts.

The Buried Alive

Soon after Komar-Myshkin emigrated from Russia to Israel in the late 90s, he founded The Buried Alive, a tightly knit collective of ex-soviet young artists, actors, musicians and writers. Describing themselves in their manifesto as "Russian Cultural Zombies" The Buried Alive vowed to produce only in Russian, in a self-willed artistic ghetto. The group was resolutely alienated from the local Israeli cultural scene towards which they felt inherently superior, yet they were also experiencing the tremendous hardship and insecurity stemming from their seclusion. For The Buried Alive, the Moscow unofficial artists of the 60s and the 70s were thus not only a main source of artistic influence; they saw themselves as continuing the autonomous, intimate and publicly unrecognized existence that typified the Moscow circle: a self-sustaining artistic scene devoid of hierarchies or material value, based entirely on personal friendship and passionate commitment. For Poplavsky, however, the name also conveyed the actual fear explored in Edgar Allan Poe's tale *The Premature Burial*, colored by the acute paranoia he suffered from.

The videos by The Buried Alive contain three historical jokes, read under gun threats by Palestinian, ex-Russian and native Israeli cultural celebrities. These jokes are taken from a literary work Komar-Myshkin was unable to complete: an entire history of Russia made of jokes. Also presented is *Killing Andrey Lev*, an attempt to torture and kill a young artist using a voodoo doll, which results in a different magic than the one schemed. On the other side of this wall, there are two animation chants for commodities, *Little Iron*, in which a couple tells the iron of its own history, and *Hybrid*, where a group chant yields neologisms in the spirit of pre-revolutionary Russian avant-garde poets.