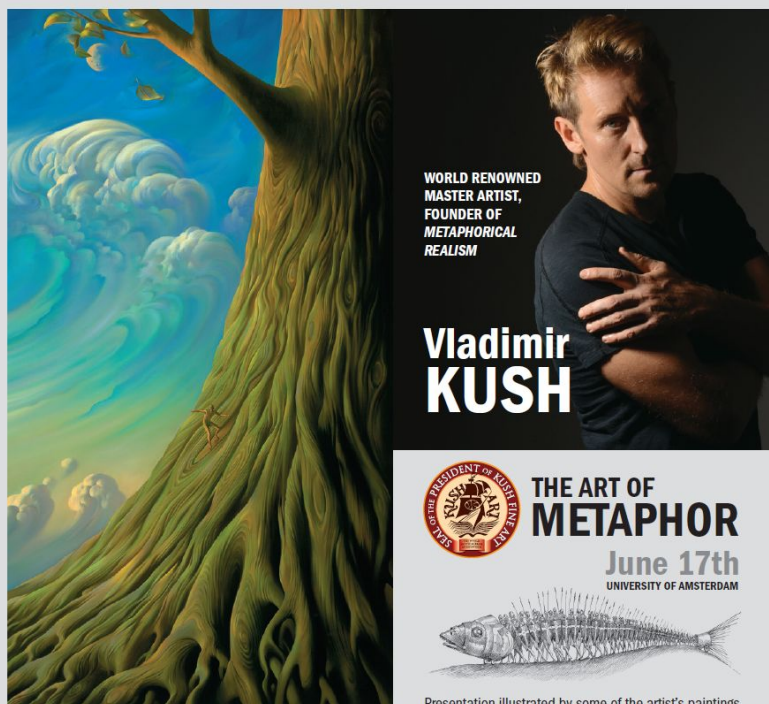





METAPHOR
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DIFFERENT

ARISTOTLE




**WORLD RENOWNED
MASTER ARTIST,
FOUNDER OF
METAPHORICAL
REALISM**

**Vladimir
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**THE ART OF
METAPHOR**
June 17th
UNIVERSITY OF AMSTERDAM



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Presentation illustrated by some of the artist's paintings,
followed by Q&A session/free discussion.

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I. Metaphor in our life

Our whole life, from its everyday experiences to its existential meaning, revolves around metaphor, which in Aristotle's understanding is 'an intuitive perception of likeness in things that are different'. We do not live by facts, but by interplay of ideas, by drawing connections. When we are young, emotions and logic feed on one another in a way that makes connections fall into a natural and effortless matrix of existence. As we grow up the grid remains but the elements get mixed up or go missing. So we start to reconstruct the whole by stringing meanings together at random or forcing them into place. Instead of being a natural and conscious mode of functioning metaphor becomes a subconscious remnant or just a clever artificial device serving a particular purpose. We still use it but we no longer know how to live it.

II. Recreating metaphor: from tool to method

We now use metaphor as a tool to express particular experiences while it is, rather a method of perception, from which experiences arise. Bertolt Brecht once said that art is 'not a mirror to reflect reality, but a hammer with which to shape it.' And so it did through beating reality into admirable stand-stills or crude depictions (realism), interpreting it (impressionism), encoding it (abstract art) or distorting it (surrealism). But does

any of this need to be done to reality? Maybe rather than creating a new fabric of life we have to rediscover how to navigate the one that is already there. Metaphor allows us to do just that and metaphorical realism is about returning the art that mirror-like quality denied by Brecht, the ability to reflect reality in a manner that is truthful but not rigid, multidimensional but not confusing. The artist then ceases to be a hammer smith and becomes a careful restorer of reality, gently opening 'the doors of perception' to the viewers, facilitating their own metaphorical thinking and recreating the lost gift of simply noticing.



III. Surrealism and metaphorical realism

The essence of metaphorical realism is also best understood by reference to surrealism. My paintings are often compared to Dalí's. The difference is as simple as it is profound. Dalí's art is not about metaphor. He distorts the likeness of things - I leave it intact. The surrealist distortion speaks to our own subconscious perception of the painful disturbances of existence and manipulates us into consciously accepting them as irredeemable, indeed as perversely beautiful. Metaphorical realism liberates our subconscious in a way that makes it possible to look beyond the brokenness and see ways of restoring the authentic harmony around us. Surrealism is a captivating but a dead-end artistic trick, whereas metaphorical method is a mode of existence, refreshingly unexpected and at the same time deeply familiar.

IV. Living the metaphor

Metaphor is neither about the language nor about the art only. Borges compared it to a bridge between two distant shores - the greater the distance, the more exciting it is to cover. 'Bridging the gap,' as the expression has it. As we move through life, there are multitudes of gaps for us to bridge, both physical and metaphysical. So instead of being studied and used at random metaphor should become a natural life skill again. Living the metaphor is of special significance if we are to retain our humanity in the age of computer science and aspirations of artificial intellect. Spontaneity and depth of connection is something inaccessible to the machine.



Create your own metaphor

I believe that metaphor is a conscious mode of existence and therefore accessible to everyone. The ability to notice the hidden likeness and to make natural connections is not a matter of particular giftedness, but of drawing out the inner potential common to all of us. Tell me about personally important links you would like to establish between unrelated objects/concepts and I will try to help you create your own metaphor.