

Research on Karl Waldmann and study of his works (2001-2015)

The research began in the end of 2001. First, through the archivist [Roland Rolker](#), we have contacted several authorities and archives in Germany and the city of Dresden, since the works were found in the outskirts of the city. We could not identify an artist under the name of Karl Waldmann. Our research covered a wide period, from the late 19th century to 1980. None of this research could not establish the identity of the artist.

In conjunction with this research on civility, we have conducted research on the works themselves, their content and materials.

Since 2011, this research has taken each piece in hand and has analysed each cut of paper and sign that might bring an understanding. These documents were studied to find the original cuttings and therefore in order to date the work, by finding a deadline (*terminus ante quem*). All works have been classified in a File Maker Pro database with sorts made possible on several axes. The source documents or their significance have led us to many results (see our database, which is partly available on the museum website).

Signs or personal insights led us to penetrate the meaning of several works.

We have established different rankings:

- By type of paper or representation to try to establish a timeline in creation.
- By theme to establish links between different artworks
- By represented image (children, women, animals, etc.) for a comparison or an attempt of identification.

Besides, we have also conducted research on the paper used or on their representations in order to situate Karl Waldmann in relation to other authors of photomontages. We also examined historical events highlighted by the artist in his collages. We then crossed the information, works, papers and signs to try to establish a more comprehensive understanding. Some documents have been scientifically analysed in laboratories by:

- The Institute of the Catholic University of Louvain-La-Neuve (UCL), Elisa Barros, Conservator of paper and connoisseur in the field.
- IRPA (Royal Institute for Cultural Heritage) by Mr Serks and Mr Devos.
- The General Archives of the Kingdom of Belgium, by Mr Velle and the Royal Library (Paper section)
- MSMAP in 2006 (this analysis was sent to us in 2015 by the Kunsthau Dresden, received by a third party who was trying to prove the thesis of falsification of the artworks, Mr Fleiss, Director of Galerie 1900-2000, who carefully kept the analysis for himself because it proved us right as far as the dates of creation).
- The Papiertechnische Stiftung in Munich in 2015 which concluded that the age of the glue (Before 1958), laboratory specializing in the detection of forgeries.
- Different chemistry-related institutes of restoration or conservation.

All these stakeholders concluded to the difficulty to accurately date the artworks given the limited seniority of the documents, that is to say less than 70 years.

We have not been in contact with laboratories with the highest technology. Nevertheless, following what has been stated previously, our energy was devoted to understanding the meaning the artworks which still today appears to us as more important.

In the first place, we are not interested in the notion of „historicity“: we give the example of The creator of photomontages Koretsky, who died in 1998, of whom KW used a poster of 1950. Koretsky died in 1998 and also made photomontages in the 1990s.

In 2004, we have been convinced by the authenticity of the works while ignoring the identity of their author. We edited a first book in 2005 on the issue, with some assumptions that proved inaccurate afterwards, or at least not sufficiently scientifically substantiated.

The consultation of the Stasi archives after 2005, we closed the doors on the fact that the artist would be present in those political archives. Besides, the assumption of his death in a labour camp which was not

based on evidence was abandoned in 2006. We continued to focus on the study of the collages and their content, with the assumption that the artist was certainly an outsider surrounded by newspapers with a free access to them (publisher, bookshop worker, library, newspapers, propaganda institute, various hospitals, etc.)

Visited archives centers:

- Außestelle Dresden (Dresden Antenna) von Bundesbeauftragte die für die of Unterlagen Staatssicherheitsdienstes ehemaligen der DDR (Federal Commission of the Archives of the State security of GDR)
- Landeshauptstadt Dresden -Amt für Kultur und Denkmalschutz (Office for Culture and Heritage protection) und Standesamt (civil government)
- Forschungsinstitut Brenner-Archiv, Universität Heidelberg
- Das Bundesarchiv - Filmarchiv
- Kriegswochenschau (filmed news of war)
- Reichskulturkammer (Reich Chamber of Culture)
- Reichsministerium für Volksaufklärung und Propaganda (Ministry of the Reich for the Census of Population and Propaganda)

Media used by Waldmann

Book cover	Simple notebook sheet
Newspaper cover	Simple white sheet design
Cardboard sheet	Part of large white sheet (paper roll)
Ripped heavy cardboard	Passbook page
Geographic Atlas page	Part of a cardboard folder (shirt)
Music score page	Support of a calendar that is hanged on the wall
Page of a book	Full cover of a box (sort of shoe box)
Sheet of paper	

The books used were pertaining to various fields: art, literature, sport, science, medicine, politics, geography, geometry, music, ethnography

And the type of magazines as well: political, propaganda, military, industrial, equipment manual, technical handbook, film, advertising, manual a specific brand (cigarettes, razor, weapons, aviation, footwear, etc.), poetry, art, literature, dance, decoration, photography, sports, ethnographic, medicine, wellness.

Newspapers were of various origins: German, Italian, French, English, American, Russian, Ukrainian, Vienna, Austrian, Czech, Hungarian.

The collages are composed of various materials:

Newspaper, paper, magazine, book section,	Metal: spring, piece of equipment, eyelet, aluminium foil
Wall paper and decorative paper, frieze,	Part of cardboard with metal drawer handle
Tracing paper, mica	Silver photo, reproduced picture
Paper from bookbinding	Post card
Displays or party poster	Playing cards
Handwritten letter	Paper money and coins, action, title
Dictionary page	Post, fiscal, legal, administrative stamps
Visit card	Passport or part of passport, official document
Wine or drink label	Shaped shoe or boot.
Leaflet, notice to the public, election leaflet	Mir camera and focus.
Various logos	Autograph
Gouache, pencil,	Stencil
Fabrics,	Wax seal
Wood,	Wire, rope, cord

Film reel, film
Rule, meter, measure, scale

Calendar

The study goes on, with new keywords regularly added to the database, to cross the elements, classify and date them.

The multidisciplinary research is constantly trying to surround itself with experts. And there is no month without discovery on the understanding of the works or the origin of their composition.

This research is made freely, without any a priori, regardless of the puzzle that surrounds the identity of the author, and regardless of the controversy that sometimes took the shape of a witch or "Ghosts" hunt, sometimes improperly, slanderously and related to the art market.

It has regularly been proven that logic, independence of mind, the questioning of a story written once and for all, was not part of the universe of some great thinkers or members of the press (although rare).

CITATIONS :

Never ask what is the origin of man; rather question his life and you will know who he is.

Abd El-Kader

Any obstacle strengthens the determination. He who has set a goal does not change.

Leonard de Vinci

I loathe all that is required, any law, any government, any rule. Who are you, O company, to force me to anything? What God made you my master? Note that you fall back into old injustices of the past. It will not be a despot who prevail over the individual, but the crowd, the public salvation, the eternal reasons of state, the word of all peoples, the maxim of Robespierre. I prefer the desert, I return with the Bedouins who are free.

Gustave Flaubert

Myths and mysteries are made of impalpable grains, such as pollen, which remains stuck to the legs of butterflies; only the one who understands this can expect surprises and illuminations.

Italo Calvino

Beauty is a mystery in full light. There are many mysteries around us. Some, like the origin and death, are dark, opaque, terrifying. The others are light and gays.

Jean d'Ormesson

There was not much difference between archeology and investigative work. In both cases, we had to follow leads, analyze evidence, solve mysteries. The only real difference was that archaeologists unearthed wonderful things, whereas the inspector usually exhumed horrible ones.

Paul Sussman

The true reading - one that fully partakes of culture, elevation of spirit - can it exist for him without respect of what we read, the patient willingness to understand, the humility of receiving and listening.

Hermann Hesse

Being a rest, this is beyond the human language. To no longer exist and persist, to be in and out the abyss, to reappear above death, as unsinkable, there is a certain amount of impossible mingled with such realities. The man Who Laughs (1869).

Victor Hugo

It is certain that "I", that is to say my soul by virtue of which I am what I am, is entirely and truly distinct from my body, and it can be or exist without it.

René Descartes

The essential point is contingency. I mean that by definition existence is not [logical] necessity. To exist is simply ... to be there; existences appear, let themselves be encountered, but you can never deduce them.

Jean-Paul Sartre

There are too many specialties, for one single man could, in a single existence, own fully one crumb. Martin Eden (1909)

Jack London

Have you never met these beings who seem not to be on your way by chance, but by a kind of evidence so overwhelming that your existence is suddenly transformed? The Red Sofa (2007)

Michèle Lesbre