



Angelus & Diabolus: Angels and Devils. The History of Good and Evil in Christian Art

By Maria-Christina Boerner

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A book of superlatives, that's been ten years in the making!

When the traditional world of faith encounters unshackled creativity, the result can often be exceptional works of art. When artists are capable of letting their imagination run wild and are not bound by the typical depiction of classical Christian themes, the art that emerges retains its fascination up to the present day. They often create surprising, grotesque and highly emotional pictorial worlds inhabited by angels, devils, and above all demonic creatures of fantasy, to which the best-known examples by Hieronymus Bosch belong.

Angels, devils, and demons have played a significant role ever since the emergence of religious beliefs.

Angelus & Diabolus is the first publication of its kind to offer a visually stunning collection of the most beautiful and breathtaking pieces of art reflecting this exciting contrast between Heaven and Hell. Seven comprehensive chapters examine the topic from various angles like the nature, the duties and the hierarchy of angels, the downfall of sinful angels, angelic choirs, the pain of hell, imaginations of the end of the world, or the manifestations of heaven.

Substantial texts by art historian Maria-Christina Boerner are accompanied by striking pictures by photographer Achim Bednorz, some of which show rarely seen details and make otherwise hidden elements accessible to the beholder. This tome comprises an unprecedented compilation of this timeless subject.

The first chapters of this magnificent book are devoted to the angels, their nature and outward appearance, their tasks and hierarchy. They are followed by their adversaries, the diabolical princes of hell. With few exceptions, they are hideous and terrifying, as are the demons, which often appear in the center of scenes

depicting vice and torture. It is not least this blend of grace and ugliness, of the beautiful and the grotesque, which results in the fascination of these artworks – and thus also the fascination of this exceptional and monumental book. As with the de luxe production *Ars Sacra*, published in 2010 (also by h.f.ullmann), *Angelus & Diabolus* breaks all the boundaries, in terms of both content and form. The first things you notice are the length (800 pages), the lavish format and the weight of this 11-kilogram book. In opening it you will dive into the world of art and imagination, and enjoy the extraordinary photographs whose incomparable quality becomes fully evident in the oversized format.

At the same time, *Angelus & Diabolus* is much more than just a picture book, as the quality of the text is also very impressive. Maria-Christina Boerner has succeeded in writing in a factual, but at the same time understandable and lucid manner, offering the reader and viewer of the book an unprecedented presentation of the timeless theme of good and evil – in universal, philosophical, theological, and contemporary terms. For in recent times, there has been an increase in our readiness to believe in spiritual beings. Angels are showing up in advertising and huge global problems are linked with fears comparable to the ancient fear of demons. They are still perceived today as powers and forces which are beyond our control.

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Editorial Review

From the Inside Flap

Achim Bednorz specializes in photographing sacred places

About the Author

Dr. Maria-Christina Boerner read German studies, art history, and journalism at the University of Berlin. After gaining her doctorate with a thesis on Heinrich Heine, she moved to teach and research at the University of Fribourg in Switzerland. She has been writing books on European art history since 2009 for various publishers, her main focal point in research and writing being the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Achim Bednorz has been taking photographs for more than 25 years for publications on architectural and art-historical themes. He has made a name for himself above all as a specialist in sacral spaces. His photographs enjoy worldwide popularity.

Rolf Toman studied German language and literature and philosophy. For the last 22 years he has been a freelance editor of books on the themes of art and cultural history. In 2010 he presented his magnum opus, *Ars Sacra*. He lives and works in the south of France..

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