



BorzoGallery

Cathedral

stories, musicians, kings and prophets

an installation by

Masha Trebukova





Cathedral

It begins at a desolate spot in North Eastern Groningen, May 2013. Against the background of the advancing chemical industry there still stands a small, deserted 13th century church. It is the only surviving building of the bygone village of Heveskes. Here it is that Masha Trebukova exhibits an installation of a project that has fascinated her as an artist for many years. For 'Creation', the sources for which lie in Roman sculpture and architecture and early mediaeval Italian frescos, this austere mediaeval church is the natural setting. Stories from the Old Testament, illustrated in abstract murals and rose windows. Masha's project 'Creation' is followed, a year later, in the exhibition space of Nieuw Dakota in Amsterdam Noord and with an introduction by Prof. Louise Fresco. Polyptychs, comprising dozens of monoprints also refer here to a Russian Orthodox Iconostasis, to mediaeval Italian frescos, the bronze doors of the San Zeno and the stained glass windows from a French cathedral.

The most striking recent development in Masha's quest is probably the new, figurative visual language that she employs in 'Cathedral Installation'. In Masha's own words:

In the last couple of years I have become fascinated by mediaeval Romanesque sculptures. Travelling along old European pilgrim routes I experienced the directness of the folkloristic and innocent way of representational art of the early Christian sculptors. This admiration prompted me to start a new series of figurative monoprints on textile stretched on canvas. They all are inspired by stone sculptures in churches and monasteries.

In my prints I closely follow existing sculptures found in the churches to study the variety of imagery and coexistence of Christian and folkloristic characters.

There are a few groups in these series: Prophets, Musicians, Kings and other stories.

There is a huge wall filled with prophets on the outside of Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela. You see prophets virtually everywhere in many churches. Heavenly Music is juxtaposed with Earthly

Music, Kings are playing all kinds of instruments and fantastic mythological beasts look down on us, full of great wisdom, humour and understanding.

Some of the themes engage me more than others, some I repeat again and again. With their characteristic anomalies and typical deformations these Romanesque images show very powerful interpretations of the Biblical stories. They sometimes look primitive and too simplistic but it only makes these sculptures more emotionally charged and attractive.

I also like the fact that most of the art works in that period are anonymous; as far as I know there are very few artists who sign their names, one exception being Gislebertus in Autun Cathedral. I like the anonymity of that period, where the story to be told and the skill to make the sculpture are more important than the authorship of the work.

I am usually inspired by colours, but in the dark and mysterious churches, where sometimes only a few frescos remain visible after centuries of wars and humidity, a major role is played by sculptural decoration of capitals, timpani and other parts of the walls. Though colourless, they are often very vivid and animated storytelling compositions.

Initially I tried to interpret these images in more abstract forms but eventually they become direct and figurative images. I printed these drawings on textile using the carborundum technique. The final print is stretched on canvas and presented as a painting. This method unites the three-dimensional with printing and painting, the combination of the visual arts I have always been looking for in my work.

It will be a great triumph to hang these works together to form a 'Cathedral' of associations, characters, rhythms and lines.

Masha's first exhibition in that small Romanesque church of Heveskes started with an introduction by Prof. Henk van Os. We are very proud that he will speak again at the occasion of this latest episode in Masha's artistic search.



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Cathedral is a short run exhibition
to be seen in our gallery on:

Saturday Sept 3 (preview)

Sunday Sept 4 (opening ceremony)

Wednesday Sept 7

Thursday Sept 8

Friday Sept 9

Saturday Sept 10

**The opening will be on Sunday, September 4 at 4 pm.
with an introduction by Prof. Henk van Os.**

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