

The 54th Venice Biennale – “ILLUMInations”
special project of **Scuola Grande di San Rocco**
June 1 – June 17, 2011 09.30 to 17.30 every day

Vespro della Beata Vergine

“Vespers of the Blessed Virgin” music by Claudio Monteverdi
Oleg Kulik in collaboration with Hermes Zygott and Denis Kryuchkov.

Film - Installation - 128 minute

Based on oratorio "Vespers of the Blessed Virgin" by Claudio Monteverdi

presented at **Théâtre du Châtelet, Paris, January 2009**

Jean-Christophe Spinosi - Conductor, Valerie Gabail - Soprano, Sylvia Schwartz - Soprano, Marie Kalinine - Mezzo-soprano, Florin Cezar Ouatu - Contralto, Tilman Lichdi - Tenor, John McVeigh - Tenor, Luigi de Donato - Bass, Nicolas Teste – Bass, Ensemble Matheus, Choeur du Châtelet Phurpa. Tibetan Tantric overtone chanting: Alexey Tegin, Dmitry Globalyev, Mikhaylenko, Eduard Utukin, Anastasia Butko

Galleria Puck (Milan) and RNA Foundation are proud to present a video installation of a unique project by Oleg Kulik titled “Vespers of the Blessed Virgin”. The exhibition will open on Wednesday, June 1st and will be on view through Sunday, June 15th.

Situated at the historically significant site of *Scuola San Rocco* in Venice, the installation will re-create the theatrical production of "Vespers of the Blessed Virgin", held in January 2009 in the Théâtre du Châtelet through a film medium. The visual concept and execution by Oleg Kulik; produced by Denis Kryuchkov; sound design by Hermes Zygott. The film is directed by Denis Kryuchkov.

The composition of *Vespers*, or evening prayers, originally by Claudio Monteverdi, produces a unique contemporary reading of ethical and aesthetic collisions ingrained in this piece of highly functional and confessional music. Created in the 17th century, the piece stands out as an avant-garde exploration of repetition and contrast previously unexplored by composers. The production allows audiences to experience Monteverdi's masterpieces in spacio-aural and visual manifestations.

The play was an attempt to reproduce the ancient ritual of the liturgy with the aid of new technologies. The installation will allow viewers to become immersed in the atmosphere of a theater production by being surrounded with a multi-channel videos projected onto the screens and ceiling of the beautiful ground floor hall of *Scuola San Rocco*.

The location for “Vespers of the Blessed Virgin” installation coincides and compliments the theme of 54th Venice Biennale – “ILLUMInations.” The exhibition’s curator, Bice Curiger, conceives of the theme and mission of the exhibition to spread “light” of new artistic ideas, echoing the etymological and symbolic meaning of the ‘illumination’. The Biennale organizers have coincidentally chosen three Tintoretto masterpieces to be included in the exhibition.

Tintoretto’s approach to painting is notable for his brilliant ability to combine religious imagery and that of everyday life through bold use of perspective, collapsing sacred spaces into real structures of the painted surface - the bricks and mortar. Tintoretto was especially gifted at conveying drama in his compositions while making them accessible to a wide audience. Similarly, Monteverdi’s monumental musical composition *Vespro della Beata Vergine*, created in 1610, combines secular music with its inherently religious performance. Despite its vast scale and the incorporation of varied musical forms, such as sonata, motet, hymn, and psalm, the *Vespers* offer many poignant and intimate moments that are only further highlighted by Oleg Kulik’s team visual orchestration and execution. Tintoretto’s *San Rocco* paintings, Monteverdi’s music, and Oleg Kulik’s video installation together provide an exceptional experience that sweeps the historical and the symbolic of Virgin Mary into the contemporary moment of grace.

“Vespers of the Blessed Virgin” is curated by Victoria Golembiovskaya.