

BAROQUE DRESDEN

THE MYTH OF THE ROYAL CITY OF SAXONY

In Yadegar Asisi's work, Dresden – the city in which he studied architecture in the 1970s – holds a special place. The BAROQUE DRESDEN panorama evokes the characteristic Baroque heyday of the urban landscape and shows city structures that have since been transformed or destroyed.

The first version of the panorama, called DRESDEN 1756, was completed between 2006 and 2011. Asisi settled on 1756 as the point at which construction activity reached its highest level, before the subsequent destruction wrought by the Seven Years' War (1756–63). In 2012, Asisi reworked it: now, the period depicted covers the Augustinian era between 1697 and 1763, during which the Wettin dynasty ruled over both Saxony and Poland, and art, music and culture thrived in Dresden. New life was breathed into the panorama. To reinforce the sense of the era, Asisi gave the buildings more of a characteristic patina and added new scenes showing, for example, inhabitants of and visitors to the city who really did exist. Thus, the Countess of Cosel, Tsar Peter I, Johann Sebastian Bach, the jester Joseph Fröhlich and Johann Friedrich Böttger, who discovered porcelain, can now all be seen. But it is the everyday scenes of anonymous marketwomen, craftspeople, servants and barge-hands on the Elbe that truly show how interconnected and united Europe was in the Baroque period – with the daily dealings in the squares and streets, lively cultural exchanges or trade along the River Elbe.

Viewers can take in the surrounding cityscape from a 15 metre-high podium simulating the tower of Dresden Cathedral. In choosing this particular viewpoint, Asisi was able to create a multi-faceted picture, showing the old and new towns on opposite sides of the Elbe linked by the Augustus Bridge, the winding river itself and the meadows on its banks, the fortresses and the surrounding countryside. Offering glimpses into individual buildings, squares and streets, as well as longer views of the Elbe Sandstone Mountains in the distance, the panorama experience allows viewers to both get close and step back.

The panorama is permanently on show in the Dresden Panometer for several months, alternating with the DRESDEN 1945 panorama.