

YADEGAR ASISI – PANORAMAS

Renaissance of a 19th-century medium

The artist Yadegar Asisi was born in Vienna, grew up in Saxony and has been living in West Berlin since 1979. Since 2003 he has been creating the worldwide largest 360° panoramas, measuring up to 32 metres in height and with a circumference of up to 110 metres. What started as a project in a listed, former gasometer in Leipzig has become an artist studio with panorama houses in seven cities. Asisi's latest giant panoramas can be seen in his own houses in Leipzig, Dresden and Berlin. In 2014, locations in Pforzheim and Rouen in France have been opened, and furthermore 2017 in Lutherstadt Wittenberg and 2017 in Hanover. A second building will be inaugurated in Berlin in 2018.

In 1993, as the exhibition architect of "Sehnsucht - Das Panorama als Massenunterhaltung des 19. Jahrhunderts" (yearning - the panorama as mass entertainment in the 19th century) at the Bundeskunsthalle in Bonn, Yadegar Asisi discovered the art space panorama for himself. Since then he has been studying the possibilities offered by the panorama medium and he continues to develop the art form. As a graduate in painting from the Academy of Arts (today's University of the Arts) in Berlin Asisi cultivates an academic appreciation of art. He places great emphasis on perspective, and on the theory of shape, colour and pigment, among others. "Once you have drawn an object you have truly understood it", believes the admirer of the Renaissance painters Andrea Mantegna and Leonardo da Vinci.

Asisi composes his visually stunning panoramas from his project-specific research archive containing up to 50,000 photographs, drawings, sketches and paintings. To gather material, he often undertakes extensive research and photo expeditions on the different topics: for example to Brazil for AMAZONIEN, to the Himalayas for EVEREST, to Australia for GREAT BARRIER REEF, to Turkey and the entire Mediterranean region for PERGAMON; he also travelled through Germany and Central Europe for LEIPZIG 1813, LUTHER 1517 or BAROQUE DRESDEN. Based on a storyboard that has been discussed with scientists he also does elaborate photo shoots with amateur actors, extras and other elements to obtain scenes that Asisi incorporates into the basic architectural and topographical structure of the panoramas.

With plenty of attention to scenic, historic, architectural and topographic details Asisi creates his works on the computer, working with many different image levels, based on his own groundwork and the preparatory work of his core team of around 15 staff. They are then printed on 3 times 32 metre fabric panels, fitted, and mounted in the round buildings. At the pinnacle of the creative process, which is often accompanied by an introductory exhibition at the exhibition venue, the inspired panorama artist puts the finishing touches on the giant panoramas. Light and sound and the different day and night sequences are set up with great complexity to produce the desired underlying atmosphere.

A multidisciplinary team in Kreuzberg, Berlin helps Yadegar Asisi to implement his projects. Around 15 employees from the fields of composition, visual design, exhibition design, 3D modelling, matte painting, architecture, costume design, editing, project management and culture management perform much of the groundwork for the artist, thus playing a vital role in bringing the panoramas to life.