

SAINTE CHAPELLE a solo show by Radouan Zeghidour

October 12th - November 16th 2019

Cité, the largest of the Parisian islands, has been radically transformed in the space of a year. One badly extinguished cigarette butt, and the millenary forest went up in flames.

When the High Court of Paris was relegated to the Porte de Clichy, the oldest judicial body disappeared: the Palais de la Cité, whose dungeons imprisoned Marie-Antoinette, Robespierre, Ravachol and all the other anonymous accused or condemned Parisians. The Palais still bears the scars of those times, like an archaeological museum of broken laws. The corridors and waiting benches are marked by their passages: places of limbo saturated with inscriptions, drawings, crypts and engraved signatures which can be read as a last testament prior to sentencing.

There used to be a curious cohabitation in the Palais: the Sainte Chapelle and the Prison, the Crown of Thorns like a halo over the cells several metres below, and the fragment of the "True Cross" juxtaposing the guillotine. Today, queues of believers and tourists armed with cameras face the queues of defendants, grasping onto their.

Forgiveness and punishment were united in the same Palais, whose bells either announced an Office or a Sentence. Hooded people were brought together, be they monks or prisoners. In French, *capuche* (hood) and *chapel(le)* come from the same Latin root: *Cappa*.

The German translation of Dostoevsky's *Prestupleniye i Nakazaniye* is *Crime and Redemption*. From *The House of the Dead* to *Demons*, Dostoevsky tirelessly demonstrated that salvation stems from the depths of perdition.

Nihilist debauchery, *femmes fatales*, pathological liars, incorrigible alcoholics and their sudden ruin, cancelled marriages or suicide almost always lead to Christ.

But it was another novel that was revived by the fire of Notre Dame, *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* by Victor Hugo, in which he described the Court of Miracles, where beggars and thieves took refuge at nightfall. The miracle being that the blind recovered their sight and the crippled their ability to walk. Centuries passed, and this Court, like a Phoenix, was reborn from its ashes.

"LA SAPEL PORTE DE LANFER" ("La Sape!" for "La Chapelle", the door of hell) is a tag written in yellow on a motorway interchange bordering the Capitol.

Porte de la Chapelle, a court with no miracles, where refugees and drug addicts replace the sickly and the *coquillards*, and crack dealers steal the throne of the King of Truands.

Porte de la Chapelle, the threshold beyond which the City of Light has deported its scraps of darkness. Every evening, an ark of subhumanity sets sail, only to be stranded on a promise: Rue de l'Évangile, where the last Calvary of the Portes de Paris sits enthroned, mute, with a frozen gaze.

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Radouan Zeghidour was born in Paris in 1989, where he presently lives and works. Zeghidour graduated from the Paris School of Fine Arts in 2016. The young artist has actively participated in group shows such as the 68th edition of *Jeune Création*, in 2018, and *Nos ombres devant nous* at the Fondation Ricard in 2017. He has also held many solo exhibitions, such as *Hypogea* et the Catinca Tabacaru Gallery, New-York, in 2016, and *LXXV Chants de Sirènes*, at the Yamamoto Keiko Rochaix Gallery, London, in 2019, along with the *Salon de Montrouge* during that same year. Radouan Zeghidour was awarded the *Prix Thaddaeus Ropac* in 2014 and the *Prix Felicita* by the Paris School of Fine Arts, in 2017.

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Translated in English by Emmelene Landon