

Agenda (Brussel Deze Week)

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Page: 35

363

AGENDA



SURVIVING PICASSO

Ⓧ **FRANCESCO VEZZOLI: OLGA FOREVER! THE OLGA PICASSO FAMILY ALBUM** > 2/3, di/ma/Tu > za/sa/Sa 11 > 19.00, gratis/gratuit/free, **ALMINE RECH GALLERY**, Abdijstraat 20 rue de l'Abbaye, Elsene/Ixelles, 02-648.56.84, www.alminerech.com

EN I The Italian artist Francesco Vezzoli has a soft spot for celebrities. He is known for, among other things, his trailer for an imaginary remake of the controversial film *Caligula*, which he managed to persuade a load of international stars – including Helen Mirren, Benicio Del Toro, and Courtney Love – to take part in. He is also known for his versions of photographs of well-known actresses, to which he adds embroidered tears, as a reference to the downside of their glamorous lives. Via the Fundación Almine y Bernard Ruiz-Picasso para el Arte, he was given access to Olga Khokhlova's family album. Khokhlova was a dancer with the legendary Ballets Russes before she got married to Pablo Picasso, but, once married, she stopped dancing. Vezzoli's project is, among other things, a tribute to Khokhlova. The industrial, normally brightly lit space of the Almine Rech Gallery is, for once, plunged into near darkness. The atmosphere is theatrical. In the middle of the room stands an imposing structure that brings to

mind a mausoleum. A red carpet leads the visitor in. Thick curtains and an old radio on which you can hear the Ballets Russes create a domestic atmosphere. On the walls hang portraits of Khokhlova: old family photographs presented as oils on canvas. Sometimes Vezzoli covers them with embroidery, sometimes with collages. The added tears constantly refer to the world of Picasso and the Ballets Russes. Alongside fragments of Picasso paintings, there are also references to Jean Cocteau and to famous female dancers of the time. The whole show is rounded off with a double portrait of Khokhlova. When she felt that her relationship with Picasso was coming to an end, she posed one last time in her wedding dress. Her tears are made up of sepia photographs of the couple in happier times. Like Vezzoli's previous work, the exhibition is extremely theatrical, but in a way that makes it an appropriate tribute to a dancer.

SAM STEVERLYNCK