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FRANCESCO VEZZOLI'S OLGA! FOREVER

BY AMANDA JAKUBIK / 04 JAN 2013 @ 1:58 PM



Olga Khokhlova, the enigmatic and beautiful dancer, never quite achieved fame or success as a ballerina; instead, she left the famed Russian dance company Ballet Russes upon falling in love with Pablo Picasso. Picasso of course, went on to find life long inspiration in the world famous dance company, and Olga, long gone but not forgotten, is now the subject of art world darling Francesco Vezzoli's first show at Almine Rech Gallery Brussels. "Olga weeps for all the ballets she never danced out of love for Picasso," states the artist, who has immortalized her in a series of slightly demonic but fantastically beautiful portraits.

In addition to dancing, which Olga stopped after marrying Picasso, Olga loved to do embroidery. Vezzoli, who has long featured embroidery in his work, has collaged and embroidered onto black and white portraits, which he has hung in a large faux marble temple, complete with an old transistor radio playing soft music in the background. As the past and the present come together with collage and embroidery, cubist motifs depict the longings and regrets of the late dancer.



Indeed, the Olga Picasso love story is a tragic one, who separated from the artist after he left her for 17 year old French girl Marie-Therese Walter. "Through this work I am paying homage to Olga, who embodies my sensitivity and obsessions," states Vezzoli. It is just this type of tragic, melancholic story of an iconic woman that fascinates Vezzoli (and us), and despite the indulgently pompous air of Olga Forever!, has another knockout with this show. Look for more big waves from the Italian artist, as his joint MoMA-MOCA-MAXXI show hits the road in 2013.

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