

**Utopia Parkway** : 'Picasso's wife is shedding paper tears: Francesco Vezzoli builds temple for Olga Khokhlova', by Hans-Maarten Post, December 8th, 2012

# Utopia Parkway

Someone to trust when it comes to art, beauty & culture

**Picasso's wife is shedding paper tears: Francesco Vezzoli builds temple for Olga Khokhlova (Almine Rech, Brussels)**

Jeff Koons has barely left the building, or Almine Rech Gallery Brussels has already brought in another high-profile artist. One who's also known for his grand gestures, his bling bling kind of art and his links with the rich and the famous, although his name will not be that familiar to a broader audience. But: Francesco Vezzoli is the man who came up with a trailer for an imaginary Caligula movie in 2006, starring Helen Mirren and Courtney Love (watch it here) and who made a commercial (directed by Roman Polanski) for a fake perfume, Greed, starring Nathalie Portman and Michelle Williams (watch it here) in 2009.



Vezzoli is also the artist who made Lady Gaga wear a hat designed by Frank Gehry for a performance at a MOCA LA gala (watch a clip here), and he is the artist who made headlines in January 2012 for his 24 hour museum in Paris, set up in collaboration with Prada and Rem Koolhaas.

'We live in a very baroque and surreal moment', the Italian artist said on that occasion. And that quote is almost hovering over his installation at Almine Rech (through March 2), Olga forever!, as well. Vezzoli has built a huge faux marble temple with a red carpet. On the walls he has hung several portraits of Ballets Russes dancer Olga Khokhlova, Picasso's first wife: oil paintings inspired by pictures from the Picasso archives. To each painting he has added tiny collages and embroideries. 'Olga weeps for all the ballets she has never danced out of love for Picasso', Vezzoli says. All the while, you hear soft music from an old radio, in this almost shrine like installation.



Vezzoli will have a big traveling show next year, a joint venture between MoMA PS1 (NY), MOCA (LA) and MAXXI, the Zaha Hadid museum in Rome. So, don't come complaining then, when you'll be reading about him everywhere. Francesco Vezzoli, in Brussels, right now. An exhibition of the rather pompous kind, but an appealing and melancholic one

