

Earth

Le Voyage à Nantes

Jul 4 — Sep 6, 2026 | Place Félix Fournier, Nantes, France

Built between 1844 and 1869, and rebuilt after wartime damage, Basilique Saint-Nicolas forms the backdrop to Ali Cherri's installation inspired by Jules Verne's little-known *A Priest* in 1839.

In it, Verne imagines a church bell collapsing inside the basilica: the sacred gives way to violence, which is then absorbed by administration – the traces are erased, the building repaired, and the event is normalized. Cherri calls this process “the mechanics of the sacred”: behind every elevation lies an infrastructure capable of breaking.

For this project, he focuses on the sculptures of the musician angels adorning the basilica's spire. Some original figures disappeared during restoration and were replaced with replicas. Cherri fragments these forms: wings and trumpets are cast in industrial aluminum at architectural scale. Opposite them is an angel's head modeled in clay. Against the permanence of the metal stands the fragility of that which erodes.

The piece rests on an exposed wooden framework, somewhere between construction site, ruin, and suspended reconstruction. It reveals the structure rather than the façade – the support rather than what is displayed.

Between construction, ruin and renewal, the work asks: what deserves to be elevated today?