

Um verkin / Artist's Statement

Sýningin Borg Guðs fjallar um kristni og djúpstæð menningarhrif hennar á okkur. Á sýningunni eru fimm verk. Í verkinu Keldur–Khor Virap leita ég að fornum tengslum milli Íslands og Armeníu en í Íslendingabók Ara fróða er talað um þrjá „ermska“ biskupa sem hafi farið til Íslands árið 1020. Þeir voru sennilega sendimenn armensku kirkjunnar, sem er sú elsta í heimi, stofnuð 301 e.Kr. Keldur á Rangárvöllum og Khor Virap í Armeníu eru forn klaustur á útjaðri kristinnar sem tengjast með nafninu, en bæði merkja „uppspretta“ eða „fen“. Einnig hef ég endurgert helgidómshúsið sem tilheyrði Keldnakirkju en er nú á Djóðminjasafninu í Kaupmannahöfn; ég varpa fram þeirri tilgátu að það hafi verið gjöf til Íslands frá armensku biskupunum. Þriðja verkið heitir Arfleifð Abrahams; þar eru þrenn guðshús – kirkja, moska og sýnagóga – sameinuð. Þau tilheyra hinum þremur miklu eingyðistrúarbrögðum, kristni, íslam og gyðingdómi, sem eru upphaflega af sama meidi en óeining þeirra sundrar heimsfriðnum. Fjórdi verkið er svo Faðirvorið, hljóðverk á ótal tungumálum. Fimmta verkið er staðsett fyrir utan Hallgrímskirkju og heitir Spegill tímans, hringspegill sem sem sýnir heiminn og manninn sem guð skapaði í sinni mynd. Þetta verk hefur áður verið sýnt í Róm (2012) og Hörpu (2013).

The exhibition City of God deals with Christianity and its profound cultural impact on us. The exhibition includes five works. Keldur – Khor Virap looks at ancient connections between Iceland and Armenia, in view of the fact that the Old Icelandic history of Ari the Wise mentions three “ermskir” bishops who are said to have come to Iceland in 1020. They were probably envoys of the Armenian Church, the oldest in the world, founded in AD 301. Keldur in Iceland and Khor Virap in Armenia are ancient monasteries on the outskirts of the Christian world, associated by their names which both mean ‘source’ or ‘bog’. In addition, I have renovated the reliquary that used to belong to Keldur Church, now in the National Museum in Copenhagen; I propose the hypothesis that it was a gift to Iceland by the Armenian bishops. The third piece, entitled Abraham’s Heritage, comprises the unification of three houses of worship: a church, a mosque and a synagogue. These belong to the three great monotheistic religions, Christianity, Islam and Judaism, which originally sprung from the same source although their disunity is disrupting the world peace. The fourth work is of the Lord’s Prayer, an audio installation in many different languages. The fifth object is located outside the church; entitled Mirror of Time, it consists of a cylinder-shaped mirror reflecting the world and man whom God created in his own image. This work has previously been exhibited in Rome (2012) and Harpa Concert Hall in Reykjavík (2013).

Studies

2010-14 Iceland Academy of the Arts, Reykjavík. M.Art.Ed.
2000-02 Manchester Metropolitan University, Manchester UK, with Professor Ian Rawlinson, Nick Crowe and Pavel Büchler. MA in Art as Environment.
1985-86 Meisterschüler, Professor Sir. E. Paolozzi.
1981-86 Academy of Fine Arts Munich, Germany, Diplom.
1977-81 Icelandic Collage of Arts and Crafts, Diplom.

Solo Shows (selection)

2013 Parallel and Contrary, Rósa Gísladóttir – Sculptures, LÁ Art Museum, Hveragerði
2013 Displacement–Rome/Reykjavík, Harpa, Reykjavík
2012 Come l’acqua come l’oro... Mercati di Traiano, Rome
2011 The doubt of Future Foes..., Gallery Ágúst, Reykjavík
2009 Looking at the Overlooked, Galleria 196, Rome, Italy
2007 Stadtgalerie Baliere Frauenfeld, Switzerland (w/Brigitta Reinhardt)
2004 Still life from the Plastic Age, ASÍ Art Museum, Reykjavík
1999 Still life, Living Art Museum (Nýlistasafnið), Reykjavík
1995 Gallerí Birgis Andréssonar, Reykjavík (w/Brigitta Reinhardt)
1991 State of the Art Gallery, Ithaca, New York (w/Brigitta Reinhardt)
1989 Gallerí Sævars Karls, Reykjavík
1988 Gallerí Svart á hvítu, Reykjavík
1984 Reykjavík Art Museum (Kjarvalsstaðir), Reykjavík

Group Shows (selection)

2015 Inspired by Soane: I Found This and Thought of You..., Sir John Soane’s Museum, London
Collect 2015, Saatchi Gallery, London
Ákall (Challenge), LÁ Art Museum, Hveragerði

2014 Time and Space, Symposium, Center of Contemporary and Experimental Art (CCEA), Yerevan, Armenia

2013 Tenging norður (Relate North), Nordic House, Reykjavík

Grenzüberschreitungen (Crossing Borders), Symposium, Künstlerforum, Bonn

2012 Nautn og notagildi (Pleasure and Functionality), LÁ Art Museum, Hveragerði

2010 Vanitas, Still Life in Icelandic Art, Reykjavík Art Museum, (Hafnarhús), Reykjavík

2009 Il muro di Berlino, Galleria 196, Rome Creative Emergencies, waste, water and energy in international contemporary art, Second edition, Ravenna, Italy

2007 Gli Artisti si incontrano, Cascina Farsetti, Rome

2002 Holden Gallery, Manchester, UK Walking Distance, Brown Brothers Mill, Salford, UK

2001 Eldhúsið (The Kitchen), Icelandic Sculptors Society, Reykjavík

Tomb Stones (closed sculpture competition), Reykjavík

2000 Strandlengjan 2000 (The Coastline), Icelandic Sculptors Society, Reykjavík

1999 Millennium Exhibition, Gallerí Sævars Karls, Reykjavík

1997 Anniversary Exhibition The Icelandic Sculptors Society, Reykjavík

1994 State of the Art Gallery, Ithaca, New York

1991 Art in the Factory, Ithaca Gun Factory, New York

1988 Big Scale, Malmö, Sweden

1987 7th International Small Sculpture Exhibition, Budapest, Hungary

Icelandic Abstract (Íslensk abstraktlist), Reykjavík Art Museum, (Kjarvalsstaðir), Reykjavík

1986 Skulptur Zeichnung Photo, Galerie am Maxwehr, Landshut, Germany

1985 Hér og nú (Here and now), Reykjavík Art Museum (Kjarvalsstaðir), Reykjavík

1985 Kunstzentrum No 66, Munich

1984 Kunst im Dec-Park, Digital Equipment, Munich

Rósa Gísladóttir BORG GUÐS / CITY OF GOD



24. maí – 9. ágúst 2015

LISTVINAFÉLAG HALLGRÍMSKIRKJU

33. starfsár

Hallgrímskirkja Friends of the Arts Society 33. season

Armenska tengingin

Í Íslendingabók Ara fróða og Hungurvöku er sagt frá frá erlendum trúboðsbiskupum sem komu hingað til lands. Þeirra á meðal voru „ermsku“ biskuparnir þrír sem eru nafngreindir: Pétur, Abraham og Stefán. Sennilegt er að þeir hafi verið frá Armeníu og má nærri geta að klæðnaður þeirra, helgigripir og helgisíðir hafi vakið athygli enda komu þeir frá elstu þjóðkirkju heims þar sem trú, menning og saga haldast í hendur ekki ósvipað og meðal Ísraelsþjóðar fyrr og síðar. Þótt merking orðsins „ermskur“ sé umdeild benda handritarannsóknir til þess að vart sé hægt að lesa annað út úr texta Íslendingabókar en að biskupar þessir hafi verið armenskir en ekki, eins og talið hefur verið, frá Ermlandi við Eystrasalt þar sem nú er Pólland. Kristin þjóðmenning varð snemma gríðarlega sterk í Armeníu og myndaði þann grundvöll sem armenska þjóðríkið hvíldi á öldum saman – og gerir það enn þann dag í dag. Það birtist ekki síst í kirkjulegri mynd- og byggingarlist enda leitaði Basil II. Miklagarðskeisari til armensks byggingarmeistara þegar hann ákvað að reisa hina gríðarmiklu dómkirkju Ægisif sem enn stendur. Armensku biskupunum á Íslandi varð ekki skotaskuld úr því að leiðbeina Íslendingum í því að byggja kirkjur með armensku lagi; þeim svipar reyndar líka til írskra kirkna úr torfi og grjóti

sem standa í miðjum kirkjugarði þar sem kirkjueigandinn lætur grafa ættingja sína. Slíkar kirkjur voru sannarlega hér á landi á 11. öld. Líklega hafa Armenarnir einnig haft með sér kirkjulíkön sem skrín til að hafa við helgiathafnir þar sem ekki var kirkja og til að geyma í helga muni og dýrlingabein. Það má geta sér til um að íslenskir höfðingjar sem fóru náms eða til þess að þjóna í her Miklagarðskeisara hafi talið þessa atvinnulausu biskupa, sem ekki sættu sig við ráðriki páfans í Róm og voru stundum á öndverðum meiði við patriarkann í Konstantinopel, á að koma með sér heim til Íslands og þjóna íslenskum söfnuðum og heimakirkjum þar. Svo mikið er víst að þegar formlegur biskupsstóll kemst fyrst á laggirnar í Skálholti er fyrir í landinu rötgróinn kristin menning sem blómstrar á næstu öldum. Ég tel að við getum þakkað hinum erlendu farambiskupum fyrir það. Ekkert verður til úr engu, eins og halda mætti þegar sagnfræðingar hafa talið allt til sem hægt er að efast um vegna skorts á heimildum. En þá er ráð að leita til skapandi listamanna eins og Rósu Gísladóttur sem getur í eyðurnar af myndugleik og næmleika og varpar óvæntu ljósi á torráðin söguleg tengsl.

*Pétur Pétursson,
prófessor við Háskóla Íslands*

The Armenian Connection

Old Icelandic texts (Íslendingabók of Ari the Wise and Hungrvaka) tell of foreign missionaries who came to Iceland. Among them were three bishops, who were said to be “ermskir”, called Peter, Abraham and Stephan. It is likely that they were from Armenia and one can imagine that their attire, their sacred objects and their rituals, attracted much attention since they came from the world’s oldest established church, where religion, culture and history are united, similarly to what we find in Israel throughout the centuries. Although the meaning of the word “ermskr” is controversial, manuscript research suggest that the texts must be interpreted in such a way that these bishops were indeed Armenian and not, as it has been previously argued, from Ermland on the Baltic Sea, in what is now Poland. Very early on, Christian national culture became extremely strong in Armenia, forming the basis on which the Armenian nation state rested for centuries – as it still does today. This manifests itself not least in the ecclesiastical visual art and architecture; after all, it is known that Emperor Basil II of Constantinople consulted an Armenian architect when he decided to rebuild the massive basilica Hagia Sophia, which still stands today. Armenian bishops in Iceland would have found it an easy task to teach Icelanders to build Armenian-style churches, arguably resembling Irish churches made of turf and rock, standing in the middle of the cemetery where the relatives of the church-owner were buried. Such churches

were indeed found in this country in the 11th century. Chances are that the Armenians also had a church models as shrines for use at religious ceremonies, in the absence of actual churches, and also to store sacred relics and the remains of saints. It can be speculated that the Icelandic chieftains who went to study abroad, or to serve in the army of the Emperor of Constantinople, persuaded these unemployed bishops, who did not accept the authoritarian rule of the Pope in Rome and were sometimes opposed to the Patriarch of Constantinople, to accompany them to Iceland and serve local congregations and churches there. So much is certain that when a formal bishopric was first established in Skálholt, there already existed in the country a deep-rooted Christian culture that flourished in the subsequent centuries. I believe that the foreign migrant bishops are to be thanked for this. Nothing will come of nothing, contrary to what one might imagine given that historians tend to doubt everything that can be called into question due to lack of sources. But in this case one can seek inspiration from creative artists like Rósa Gísladóttir, who fills in the gaps with authority and sensitivity, shedding unexpected light on obscure historical connections.

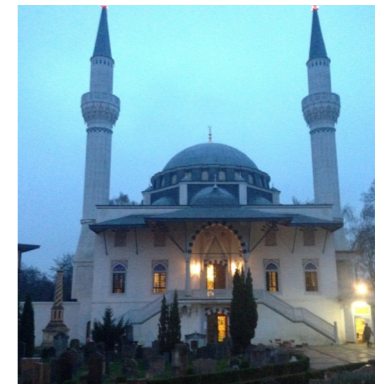
*Pétur Pétursson,
Professor at the University of Iceland*



Khor Virap, Armenia.



Synagogue, Rykestrasse, Berlin.



Sehitlik Mosque, Berlin.



Keldur, Rangárvellir, Iceland.

Forsíða / Front page:
Helgidómshúsið frá Keldum / Keldur Reliquary.

Coram deo – Speculum temporis / Fyrir augliti Guðs – Spegill tímans / Before God – Mirror of Time (endurunnið ál / recycled aluminium, 2012)

Arfleifð Abrahams / Abraham’s Heritage (balsaviður / balsa wood, 2015)

Keldur – Khor Virap (balsaviður / balsa wood, 2014)

Helgidómshús frá Keldum / The Keldur Reliquary (balsaviður, blaðgull / balsa wood, gold leaf, 2015)

Pater Noster / Faðirvorið / The Lord’s Prayer (hljóðverk / audio installation, 2015; hljóðblöndun / audio mixing: Guðmundur Vignir Karlsson)