

Yury Toroptsov

The House of Baba Yaga

A solo show presented by Valerie-Anne Giscard d'Estaing (curator) and Basia Embiricos
Basia Embiricos Gallery - 14 rue des Jardins Saint Paul 75004 Paris.

May 4 – 16, 2010

Opening reception on May 4, 2010



The House of Baba Yaga #2. 2008 © Yury Toroptsov.
Courtesy of gallery Photo 12

“Night came but the darkness didn’t last long. The eyes of all the skulls on the fence around the house of Baba Yaga began to gleam and the forest became as bright as day.”

- From “*Vasilisa The Beautiful*” fairy tale.

“The House of Baba Yaga” is a journey to the land of photographer’s childhood memories in search of answers. Caught in between two opposing culturally and geographically worlds Paris and Vladivostok, Yury Toroptsov, a Russian-born photographer is looking for ways to define what constitutes a common denominator of those distant worlds, people and their identity and the permanence of myths.

“Each year I spend several weeks in our family house where I grew up, in the village lost in the Siberian jungle. Over the years, the house started to resemble that of Baba Yaga, a character from Russian fairy tales, a witch who kidnaps and eats children. It is especially true when a mysterious light animates the obscure night. The banal objects like pots and jars scattered all over the place become alive. But I am no longer afraid of the witch. Her magic territory is now being occupied by two baby girls, my nieces, who have been recently born.”

“The House of Baba Yaga” transfigures the reality and daily life of the photographer’s family house in Grodekovo, a typical village of some three hundred people, north of Vladivostok in the Far Eastern Russia.

Exploring the notion of home, the artist offers to viewers the night photos of the house exterior. The photographer calls upon the visual codes of Russian traditional fairy tale illustrations. Dark shadows, saturated colours create a feeling of another reality.

“Every time when I leave France to go see family in my native Russia” – continues the photographer who has been a French resident for ten years – “I have a feeling I am changing worlds, not continents. So big and perceptible is the difference. After thirty hours of travel via the airports of Paris, Moscow and finally Vladivostok, my urban memory and the images of the City of Lights give way to the emerging childhood memories of home.”

About Yury Toroptsov:

Born in 1974 in a small rural community near Vladivostok, Yury Toroptsov left his native Russia in 1998 to study at the New School for Social Research in New York after having won a prestigious scholarship. In 2003 Yury Toroptsov, then a consultant to the United Nations, changed his profession to follow his long-time passion – photography.

His photographs tell individual and collective stories of people. They pose universal questions beyond those of models concerning the contemporary society. Memories, metamorphosis, profane and sacred are the recurring themes in his photographs.

In 2008 Toroptsov was given a solo show at the Maison Europeenne de la Photographie in Paris. His series, "The House of Baba Yaga" was shown at Paris Photo in 2008. From April 30 through July 4, 2010 "The House of Baba Yaga" is on display at the municipal park of Sainte Genevieve des Bois, a Russian historical suburb of Paris. In 2009 Toroptsov exhibited at the Rencontres d'Arles. His work has been exhibited in various group shows in Paris where he now lives.

Yury Toroptsov is represented by Gallery Photo 12 of Valerie-Anne Giscard d'Estaing.

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Basia Embiricos Gallery

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The House of Baba Yaga #1. 2008
© Yury Toroptsov. Courtesy of gallery Photo 12



The House of Baba Yaga #3. 2008
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