

# LEIPZIG 1813 – Amidst the Confusion of the Battle of the Nations

The panorama of the town of Leipzig in 1813 is on display since August 3, 2013

Leipzig, August 2, 2013. Since August 3, Yadegar Asisi's monumental 360° panorama **LEIPZIG 1813 – Amidst the Confusion of the Battle of the Nations** is on display at the asisi Panometer Leipzig. The world's largest panorama, 3500 m<sup>2</sup> in size and on a scale of 1:1, shows us the city of Leipzig immediately following the Battle of the Nations, which took place on October 19, 1813. The visitor views the scene from the vantage point of the roof of the church of St. Thomas at the western border of the city, with an excellent view both of the city centre and of the surrounding areas, where the most violent battles took place.

It came as something of a surprise to Yadegar Asisi that he was to spend so much time – since 2009 – working so intensively on this theme. "Having grown up in Leipzig, the Battle of the Nations was present in the form of the monument, but not in as far as the actual events were concerned", says the artist. "For a long time it didn't really mean anything to me, until I asked myself the question of what Leipzig was like in 1813 and what the battle meant to the city. I came to the conclusion that I would present this European event from the perspective of Leipzig and its citizens. Under no circumstances did I wish to create a battle panorama. In fact, it has turned out to be more of an anti-war panorama."

Asisi presents Leipzig as it would have looked in 1813, complete with its architecture still relatively intact. The city is struggling to come to terms with the repercussions of the battle: 90,000 dead and injured, countless numbers of refugees from the burned-out villages in the surrounding areas. The crowds in the alleyways and squares are in turmoil as the victorious troops move in and the French take flight, leaving behind them hundreds of thousands of people in a state of despair.

The successful ten-year collaboration between Asisi and the composer Erik Babak, well known for his work in international film and television productions, again bears fruit in LEIPZIG 1813: the accompanying music features a chorus of 40 voices and passages from the poem "Abroad" by Heinrich Heine. The panoramic experience is rounded off with sound effects reflecting the era and the confusion of the scene.

The complex figuration in the architectural design was the greatest challenge facing Asisi during his work on LEIPZIG 1813. Troops numbering around 600,000 soldiers, with over 90,000 dead and injured, all had to find their places in and around Leipzig, which had only 35,000 inhabitants at the time. For this purpose alone, it was necessary to stage four lavish photo shootings with several hundred extras in costume, saddle horses, teams of horses and traps. Scenes featuring soldiers, citizens of Leipzig, marketeers, refugees, the wounded and the dead,

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were re-enacted and coordinated as though a film were being made. To this end, Asisi's expert advisor Helmut Börner smoothed the way for a cooperation with the "Verband Jahrfeier Völkerschlacht b. Leipzig 1813 e.V."

An encounter with the novelist Sabine Ebert led to a piece of special media interaction. Details from the panorama LEIPZIG 1813 can be discovered in Sabine Ebert's most recent work "1813 – Kriegsfeuer" (1813 – Warfire), just as scenes from the book can be found in Yadegar Asisi's panorama. For example, the authoress is depicted in the panorama wearing the same clothes as one of her protagonists on the cover of the book.

The accompanying exhibition introduces the free city of Leipzig on the evening before the battle on an emotional and intuitive level. It leads visitors around the outside circumference of the panorama, presenting Leipzig as a town famous for its trade, learning, publishing and music, before the greatest battle there had ever been breaks out outside its gates. A "making-of" film will be shown in the auditorium, explaining how the complex circular picture was created and documenting the milestones of its production, which covered a period of almost five years.

An extensive mediation programme, including various guided tours, lectures and special events, is scheduled in connection with the panorama. This programme is designed to bring visitors into closer contact with life as it was at the time of the battle, 200 years ago. ([www.asisi.de](http://www.asisi.de)).

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