

Beat: Arts

Natalia Tsarkova A Russian Painter For POPES

Orthodox Great Russian in The Vatican

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USPA NEWS - Natalia Tsarkova is a Russian great painter born in Moscow and lives in Rome Italy the great painter followed in the footsteps of the great masters of the classical tradition when she was admitted to the fine arts school at the age of ten. Later, Tsarkova was also the only woman to enter the prestigious

Natalia Tsarkova is a Russian great painter born in Moscow and lives in Rome Italy the great painter followed in the footsteps of the great masters of the classical tradition when she was admitted to the fine arts school at the age of ten. Later, Tsarkova was also the only woman to enter the prestigious Academy of Art. Travelling to Rome to deepen her knowledge of art, Tsarkova became an internationally recognized portrait artist receiving commissions from reigning monarchies to Roman aristocracy, politicians and cardinals. Even Pope John Paul II particularly admired her capacity to synthesize modern techniques with a more classical style, making the character and soul of her subjects shine through the canvas. She painted three drawings and three oil paintings of Pope John Paul II. The first one on the occasion of the 2000 Jubilee in celebration of his 80th birthday, now on display in the Vatican Museums along with the portrait of Pope John Paul II the second one was commissioned by the John Paul II Cultural Center of Washington. The third painting was donated by Cardinal Stanislaw Dziwisz to the Roman Basilica Santa Maria del Popolo, which contains masterpieces by Caravaggio, Bramante, Pinturicchio, Sebastiano del Piombo, Bernini, Raphael and Carracci.

Among Tsarkova's most important works, presented to the public in prestigious venues, is *The Last Supper* (2002) a canvas measuring 220 x 150 cm. innovative in its composition and its symbolism.

This evocative painting has been on display in the Church of Santa Maria delle Grazie in Milan next to Leonardo da Vinci's famous Cenacle, the Basilica of Father Pio (designed by Renzo Piano in San Giovanni Rotondo) as well as in other venues. *Our Lady of Hope* (2004), dedicated to "The Mysteries of Light", was commissioned by Pope John Paul II who kept it in his private library for several weeks. The same painting has travelled to the United States, arousing great admiration and stupor in Congress.

Natalia Tsarkova was the first ever to be admitted to the Synod to portray the Holy Father with the synodal Fathers. In 2007, on the occasion of the celebrations for Pope Benedict XVI's 80th birthday, Natalia Tsarkova made a portrait of the current Pontiff.

It is the image of the great theologian of our times, with his profound faith enlightened by the power of the Holy Spirit. The Patrons of the Arts in the Vatican Museums commissioned the artist to do the portrait. In 2008, on the occasion of the Beatification of Father Giacomo from Lebanon, Natalia Tsarkova made the official portrait of the Blessed. The portrait was blessed by His Holiness Benedict XVI in the Vatican and it is now displayed in the Church of St. Mary of the Sea in Beirut, where his sacred body lies. In 2009, Natalia Tsarkova painted the official portrait of the President of the Republic of Malta, His Excellence George Abela.

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