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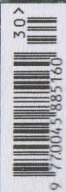
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My favourite painting Michel Roux

The Red Shoe by William Balthazar Rose



The Red Shoe, 2011, 16in by 24in, by William Balthazar Rose (born 1961), collection of Michel Roux (hanging at Le Gavroche)



Art critic John McEwen comments on *The Red Shoe*

Michel Roux is *chef de cuisine* of Le Gavroche, opened by his father and uncle in 1967

‘This striking, powerful painting is one of five I have bought from the series. The others—including chefs wielding axes and severed bodies—are slightly more macabre; mine are humorous with a twinge of darkness. My eyes are drawn to the red shoe, which, for me, signifies the *Michelin Guide*. The man—huge, serious, black-suited with white, starched collar—looks straight into the chef’s eye. He’s in command. The chefs look worried, but you can’t really tell—they’re on the brink of crying for joy or sadness. Has the head chef fainted because he’s overjoyed or because he’s heard bad news, or is he being brought as a sacrificial lamb to the *Michelin* inspector? Every time I look at it, a different story emerges, and how I interpret it depends on my mood.’

I BEGAN these paintings several years ago... I have always loved the costume of the cook—it seems magical, theatrical, and suggests, at times, the robes of a priest,’ explains William Balthazar Rose. ‘I am intrigued by what the cook does as a creative individual and am aware of how often the cook creates more vastly than any other figure.’

The Red Shoe is the artist’s favourite of the series. ‘I am delighted that Michel relates it to his own experiences with *Michelin Guide* reviewers: a collapsed cook is held by others while a larger-than-life authority figure looks on, detached.’

Mr Rose was born in Cambridge to a family of artists and, as a child, learned a multitude of crafts, from jewellery and bronze-casting to painting. After gaining degrees in architecture and painting, he studied

and taught at Princeton and the University of California in America, working as an architect in California at the same time as exhibiting his paintings. He now divides his time between homes in Bath and Tuscany.

He sums up his ‘Cook’ series: ‘Cooks can be manic in the kitchen; overworked and pressured, producing wonderful food but suffering to do it. There is a discrepancy between the nirvana they bring forth and the world in the kitchen, the two worlds seem to be masking each other. My paintings... attempt to speak of... my evoked fantasy of a world I do not know in its depths, but rather guess at.’

Mr Rose will exhibit with the Brian Sinfield Gallery, Gallery 27, Cork Street, London W1, from October 22 to 27, and at 127, The Hill, High Street, Burford, Oxfordshire, from October 30 to November 4