



The exhibition *ALONG THE DANUBE*

Milkica Popović, museum conselour, historian
Aleksandra Stefanov, senior curator, art historian

The 10th International Danube Conference on Culture served as the inspiration for the creation of the exhibition *Along the Danube*. It displays numerous works of art that are connected to the Danube, mostly from the collections of the Museum of Vojvodina.



PETROVARADIN FORTRESS AND NOVI SAD BRIDGEHEAD, 1819–22
 after: Jakob Alt
 lithographed by: Adolph Friedrich Kunike



ZEMUN PIER, 1820–26
 after: Jakob Alt
 lithographed by: Adolph Friedrich Kunike

The Danube, a large and powerful river, for centuries has been a meeting place of different cultures and nations, who conquered its banks and adapted them to their needs. As the most important European waterway, it played a significant role in shaping people's daily lives and influenced the civilizational, cultural and economic progress of the Danube countries. A segment of rich heritage, which testifies to the importance of the Danube in the cultural history of this region, is presented through visual representations of cities and settlements, as well as natural entities along its course in today's Serbia.



PANORAMA OF NOVI SAD, around 1905
 postcard

The picturesque vedutas belong to the famous series Danube Views – from the Source to the Mouth into the Black Sea, published by Adolph Kunike (1777–1838), in Vienna, in the period from 1819 to 1826. The series consisted of 264 lithographic sheets with the scenes of places and landscapes along the entire Danube course, which was made according to the drawings of two artists: Jakob Alt (1789–1872), for the section from the source to Zemun on the Austrian border, and Ludwig Erminy – from Belgrade to the mouth into the Black Sea. The exhibited lithographs depict poetic scenes of towns and cities along the river bank following its course through today's Serbia. Apart from their topographical authenticity, they are characterized by a striking presentation of everyday life of various nations inextricably linked to the Danube. This unique series gained great popularity and had numerous imitators and copyists. Postcards, Ansichtskarten or illustrated postal cards represent part of the corpus of new visual media that appeared during the 19th century, on which the unity of visual experience and the written word was accomplished. On the visual representations of the Danube postcards, from Apatin to Kladovo, the following motifs are present: embankments, promenades, piers, winter quarters, bridges, fortresses, lighthouses, waterways, canal locks, monuments (Trajan's Plaque) and the like. Ansichtskarten as new media represent a fast, cheap means of communication, in accordance with the time in which they were created.



BOGOJEVO, around 1910
postcard

The exhibited lithographs and postcards are precious documents of a time and very important historical sources. At the same time, they are also a visual testimony of the common past and the mixing of cultural influences of different nations of the Danube countries. These unique artefacts occupy an important place in the cultural-historical and artistic context of the visual culture of the 19th and 20th centuries.



TRAJAN'S PLAQUE, 1918–1929
postcard

The performance *DANUBIA – MIRROR IN THE WATERS* (a geopoetic journey)



From May to August 2021, Ramona Poenaru and Gaël Chaillat went with the Amorados boat to discover Danube, the river that crosses Europe from Germany and flows into the Black Sea after a travel of 2888 km. This journey was supported by Teatroskop for artistic cooperation and networking.

During their *geopoetic* journey, they are attentive to light, colours, sounds, immaterial perceptions and emotions. They observe the relationships between living organisms, geological forces, climatic elements and the passage of time. They dialogue with the inhabitants of the river: historians, geographers, naturalists, architects, artists, boatmen, fishermen, workers. They collect the «stories» of this particular country called Danubia.

On their return, they create **Danubia - Mirror in the Waters** in november 2021 at TJP, National Center for Performing Arts in Strasbourg.

In this spectacle, the public experiences an imaginary journey on the Danube from its source to its mouth. The spectators evolve through an interactive multimedia device where their participation is necessary for the performance to take place.

Five crew members - a musician, a visual artist, an actor and two stage operators - guide them on this participatory journey which is written without text, but with sounds, images, bodies in movement, objects and water.

Each stage of the show is a picture frame inspired by Danubian history and culture and the real experience of the travelling: Germanic river mythology, Viennese dance and painting, Danubian music and languages, Balkan border wars, storms and foods, human constructions, traces and memory. The subjects and places, the landmarks of the past and the present cross, intermingle and take the public on a discovery journey to Danubia.

<https://vimeo.com/719521174>

Cast & Crew

Danubia - Mirror in the Waters

a multimedia immersive experience to wet your feet in

by **Des Châteaux en l'air** / Ramona Poenaru & Gaël Chaillat

For audiences aged 8 and above

expected duration : 1H20

estimated capacity : 50 spectators

written, directed and performed by **Ramona Poenaru & Gael Chaillat**

sound design and performance : **Étienne Haan**

set design and construction : **Olivier Benoît**

digital program developer : **Loïs Drouglazet**

video and light operator : **Lou Zimmer**

general stage operator : **Yann Argenté**

general stage operator for the creation: **Philippe Lux**

Produced by

Des châteaux en l'air

Co-produced by

Espace 110 - Centre culturel d'Illzach / Illzach Arts Centre, France

TJP - CDN Strasbourg Grand-Est / TJP National Centre for Performing Arts, Strasbourg, France Les 2 Scènes - Scène

Nationale de Besançon / Besançon National Playhouse, France

Le Nouveau Relax - Scène conventionnée Chaumont / Chaumont Public Playhouse, France MOMIX Festival

International Jeune Public / International Festival for young Audience, Kingersheim, France

Support and fundings

French Ministry of Culture / Regional Department of cultural Affairs Grand Est - Creation Grant 2021 French Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs - Relance Export 2023 Grant

French Regional Council of Grand Est - Creation Grant 2020/21

City of Strasbourg, France - creation grant 2021

Quintessence - Performing Arts Network - Quint'Est professional meetings for live performance, Bourgogne-Franche-Comté Grand Est, France, 2020/21

French Grand Est Cultural Agency, programmes : Cooperation Residency & Rehearsal Set, Selestat

The François Schneider Foundation for Contemporary Arts, Wattwiller, France - Residency Grant, 2021

University of High-Alsace, Mulhouse France - département ASI (Automatic Signal Image) & SIUAC (University Service for Cultural Action)

TEATROSKOP (South-Eastern European Network for performing Arts) a program initiated by French Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs, French Ministry of Culture, and Institut français Paris

The company

In 2013, romanian visual and performance artist Ramona Poenaru, and French actor and director Gaël Chaillat create in Strasbourg, France, the company Des Châteaux en l'air (Castles in the Air) in order to develop hybrid projects involving multiple art forms such as theatrical performances, immersive displays and art installations. They have set up exploratory research that experiments with philosophy, learning, anthropology, science, poetry and architecture. Their various artistic proposals always involve the participation of the public in part of the creative process. The company was invited to show or develop its projects in France, Romania, Germany, Iran, India, Bangladesh, Slovakia, Hungary, Serbia <http://deschateauxenlair.jimdo.com>

Biographies of authors

Ramona Poenaru

Multimedia artist, performer and director, born in Romania and established in Strasbourg. Her works, exclusively inspired *in situ*, generally take shape during a residency, and have been exhibited in Europe, Canada, The United States, Mexico, Argentina, Korea, Tunisia, Morocco, Palestina etc. Since 2005 she has also worked with performance artists

such musicians, choreographers and theatre directors. She is one of the founder members of *Interim*, an art collective that questions roles and rules of society, operating in situations that are not art specific. She is also a member of *Sweet and Tender Collaborations*, a group bringing together artists from around the world in order to research new performative art forms.

www.ramona-poenaru.org

www.interim-artistes.info

Gaë IChaillat

Actor, director and dramatist. Trained as an actor at the Ecole de Théâtre National de Strasbourg (Strasbourg National Theatre School). Has performed plays by classic authors and been involved in the writing of contemporary works (Adely, Contamin, Levey, Sonntag). He regularly participates in projects using digital technology and has also performed in contemporary dance shows, scientific theatre shows, photography and digital performances. He advocates his artistic work as a form of political resistance. Gaël Chaillat is co-writer of *MurMure (WhisperWall)*, a comedy about the Israel-Palestine conflict and of *Mouton (Sheep)*, a vaudeville theatrical show about racism. In 2019 he directed *On comprend rien (We understand nothing)* performed by the actors of L'Atelier des Artistes en Exil (Artists in Exil) at the Palais de la Porte Dorée - National Museum of the History of the Immigration (Porte Dorée Palace) in Paris, France.



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Photo by Aleksandar Milutinović