

Residence scholarship "Sharing Future" 2021

Organized by the International Elias Canetti Society (IECS)
with the kind support of the Danube Rectors' Conference (DRC)

REPORT

The chosen candidate to implement their project idea through this year's "Sharing future" scholarship in Ruse was **Thomas Perle**.

Thomas Perle is of Romanian-Hungarian-German descent. After the fall of the communist regime, he emigrated with his parents from Romania to Germany. In 2020 he took part in the 13th edition of Ruse's Literature Festival. This year, he was amongst the applicants for the 2021 call for applications of the *Sharing Future scholarship*, which he ultimately received after his project idea was selected and approved. He has been working for a month in Ruse on the drama "donauwellen"/"Danube waves", which he conceptualized together with local Bulgarian actors and a regisseur.

For one month he studied and gathered information for a period in Ruse's history, the public protests against gassing of Ruse in 1987, through interviews and literary review. The second part of the play was about Danube, about people who live in different countries, speak different languages, think they know each other, but do they? The part of the drama that takes place in Ruse takes us back to the 1980s, when chlorine poisons from the coast of Giurgiu sparked the first mass protests in communist Bulgaria.

He interviewed local Bulgarians for their memories of what has transpired. He gradually formed the text of what he would later transform in a theatrical-literary performance with the actors Kadri Habil, Yasena Gospodinova and the director Nikolai Nenov. The artistic team gathered multiple times, they rehearsed, reworked, improved, and polished the artistic work until they were ready to present it as a performance on the last day of the Festival in Ruse.

This year's festival was the longest by far, two weeks, from the 1-17th of October, literary readings, film screenings and book presentations of contemporary German, Austrian, Hungarian, Polish, Czech and Bulgarian authors were here to be heard and felt. Additionally, the Bulgarian selection was comprised of nominees for the international prize for literature "Elias Canetti". The Bulgarian authors' participation was made possible with the support of the Municipality of Ruse and their call for funding of project ideas in the field of culture.

On the 17th of October Max Czollek presented his works *Gegenwartsbewältigung* and *Desintegriert euch!* After that the artistic scene switched from the political to the theatrical and cultural mood. Thomas and his entourage of fellow artists led the guests to a world not so far away in time, presented in an immersive way through lightshows, artistic fog/smoke, music and acting.

The guests of the festival felt, saw and remembered past feelings and emotions connected to the not-so-distant 1987, some were even moved to tears. The 20 minutes the performance lasted went by as smoothly as the artificial clouds and fog which accompanied it. In the end a long discussion formed in an informal setting with a glass of Glühwein, tea, or coffee in a pleasant warm atmosphere and gas lanterns.

The performance was recorded live at Canetti House and the whole product can be watched on the International Elias Canetti Society's YouTube channel

(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4qes70Sx6vk&ab_channel=InternationalEliasCanettiSociety).

The event was published on the International Elias Canetti Society's webpage:
<http://eliascanetti.org/2021/10/17/literaturen-festival-2021-finalat/>

as well as here on Facebook:

1. <https://www.facebook.com/elias.canetti/posts/10216578544696445>
2. <https://www.facebook.com/elias.canetti/posts/10216501640133879>

Photos of the evening can be seen here:

<http://eliascanetti.org/2021/10/17/literaturen-festival-2021-finalat/>

Additional links:

Ruse.info

<https://rousse.info/%D0%BD%D0%B0-1-%D0%B2%D0%B8-%D0%BE%D0%BA%D1%82%D0%BE%D0%BC%D0%B2%D1%80%D0%B8-%D0%B7%D0%B0-%D1%87%D0%B5%D1%82%D0%B8%D1%80%D0%B8%D0%BD%D0%B0%D0%B9%D1%81%D0%B5%D1%82%D0%B0-%D0%BF%D0%BE%D1%80%D0%B5%D0%B4/>

BNR (Bulgarian national radio)

<https://bnr.bg/hristobotev/post/101536720>

21.30 to 23.00

Alarma

- Premiere of the film "Away from Time" directed by Deyan Tsviatkov (studio guest).
- **"The Breath of Europe" - a highlight of the Ruse Literature Festival: an interview with the German-Romanian writer and playwright Thomas Perle**
- Piero Epifania - a Peruvian between psychedelic rock, China and... Sofia.

Thomas' event was a success for the International Elias Canetti Society in the full sense of the word as well for the city of Ruse. It attracted an ample audience that included people of all ages and we received solely positive feedback from all participants. His stay in Ruse made a strong impact and encouraged sensible intercultural exchange, which would not have been possible without the support of the Danube Rectors' Conference and we sincerely hope to repeat the residency next year and continue to foster cultural dialog with artists from all over Europe.

Prof. Dr. Sc Penka Angelova

