

Andreas Müller-Pohle

The Danube River Project ^{v09e}



Photography/video/sound installation, 2006

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Context

The Danube is the European river per se. It flows through ten states – Germany, Austria, Slovakia, Hungary, Croatia, Serbia, Romania, Bulgaria, Moldavia and Ukraine – thus traversing more countries and landscapes than any other river in Europe. And it flows from West to East, towards the new, expanded European Union, which since 2004 has included the Danube countries Slovakia and Hungary, and as of 2007 will embrace Bulgaria and Romania.

The waters of the Danube reflect the glory and horror of recent European history: the wonderful urban panoramas of the so-called Danube Monarchy, but also national chauvinism, the Holocaust and the ethnic persecution in the former Yugoslavia. As one of the continent's most important trade and transport routes, the Danube became Europe's vital artery. It is navigable for seafaring ships from Kelheim to the estuary delta in Romania. And it is there, in the delta region, that it suffers most, and most visibly, from pollution, as a result of agricultural contaminants, shipping oils, industrial waste and municipal sewage.

Concept

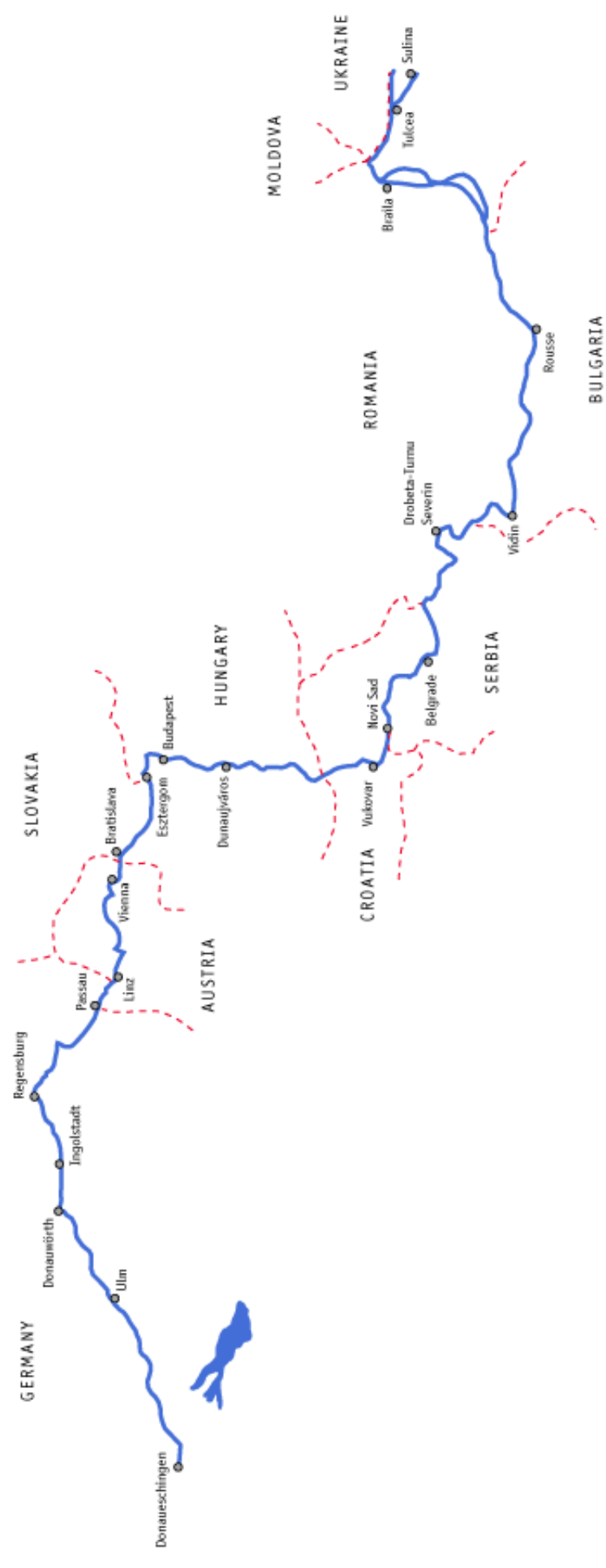
The *Danube River Project* is a photo, video and sound portrait of the more than 2,800 kilometer-long river at its most significant points – the historical scenes, the large cities, the spectacular views – but also at its quieter stages. Taken from the water level, the upper part of the photographs shows the landscape, the lower part the water of the river at that point. Water samples from the places photographed were analyzed and the laboratory values added to the pictures. This provides a “pictorial atlas” and a “blood count” all in one: an aesthetic and scientific compendium of Europe’s most important river, its cities and landscapes, from the Black Forest to the Black Sea.

Method

1 \ Production. Along a chain of 21 places, nearly 4000 photographs and more than five hours of video were taken during four field trips between July and November, 2005. The locations include important cities along the Danube, such as Ulm, Ingolstadt and Regensburg (Germany), Linz and Vienna (Austria), Bratislava (Slovakia), Budapest and Dunaujváros (Hungary), Vukovar (Croatia), Novi Sad and Belgrade (Serbia), Vidin and Rousse (Bulgaria), Braila and Tulcea (Romania), but also famous spots and sights, such as the Danube Bend near Vác in Hungary or the Iron Gate near Drobeta-Turnu Severin in Romania.

At each location water samples were taken and then analyzed according to specific parameters for water quality (e.g. TOC, phosphate, potassium, mercury, lead). These values are presented as a data bar at the lower edge of the image.

2 \ Presentation. The exhibition comprises photography, video and sound. The photography section includes 80 digital Chromira images 60 x 85 cm each, printed on Kodak Endura Mat Photo Paper. It is complemented by a video projection of the water surface and a soundtrack of original underwater recordings of the Danube at Kilometer Zero in Sulina, Romania. The water codes and their critical values are explained in a separate table.



Exhibition

Between March 2006 and Mid-2008 *The Danube River Project* will be on show in the participating Danube countries, as follows:

Ulm, Donauschwäbisches Zentralmuseum, Germany
Bratislava, Central European House of Photography, Slovakia
Budapest/Dunaujváros, Institute for Contemporary Arts, Hungary
Ingolstadt, Stadtmuseum, Germany
Donaueschingen, Donauhalle, Germany
Linz, KunstRaum, Austria
Vienna, Fotogalerie Wien, Austria
Rousse, Rousse Art Gallery, Bulgaria
Belgrade, O3one Gallery, Serbia
Bucharest, Bucharest Biennale, Romania
Tulcea, Institutul de Cercetari Eco-Muzeale Tulcea, Romania

Subsequently, presentations and joint activities in different non-Danube venues are planned, in the framework of which other specific river studies – on the Thames, the Pearl River, the Rhine etc. – will be carried out.

Depending on the space available, the number of 80 photographs can be restricted to a minimum of 25.

A book will be published to accompany the exhibition containing all the project-related images and data. By fall 2006, the complete project will be online at www.riverproject.net.

Project Partners

Generous support and assistance comes from the following companies and individuals:

Underwater Photo Equipment

Andreas Voeltz/Lars Kirchhoff, Berlin
www.digideep.com

Underwater Sound Equipment

Mega Audio GmbH, Bingen, Germany
www.megaaudio.de

Water Analyses and Scientific Consulting

ICP Analytik, Preetz, Germany
www.icp-analytik.de

Image Editing

Prints Professional, Jan Scheffler, Berlin

Digital Printing

das foto image factory GmbH, Berlin

Presentation

Halbe Rahmen GmbH, Kirchen, Germany
www.halbe-rahmen.de

Sample Pictures



Donaueschingen, Germany



Sigmaringen, Germany



Ulm, Germany



Ingolstadt, Germany



Regensburg, Germany



Passau, Germany



Linz, Austria



Vienna, Austria



Bratislava, Slovakia



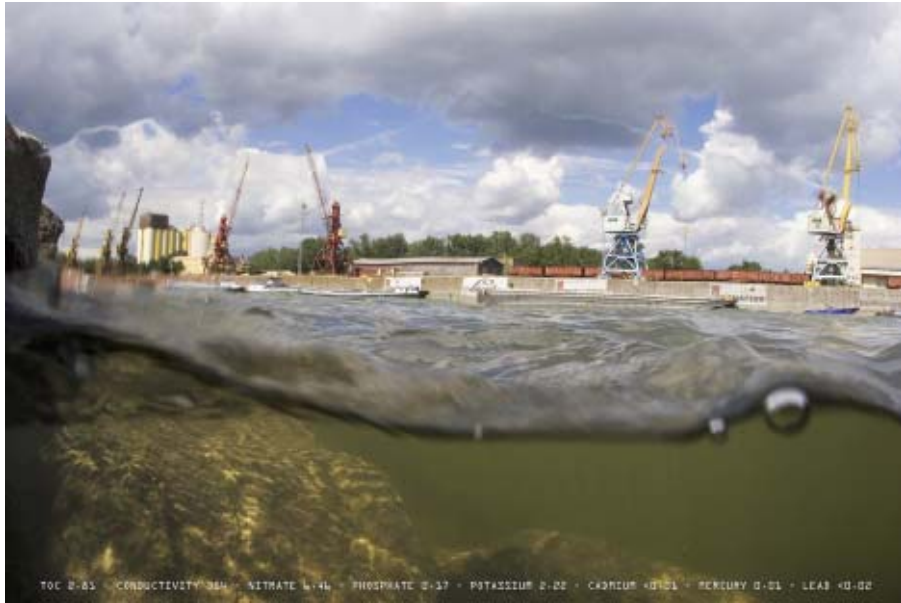
Göd, Hungary



Budapest, Hungary



Budapest, Hungary



Dunaujváros, Hungary



Vukovar, Croatia



Novi Sad, Serbia



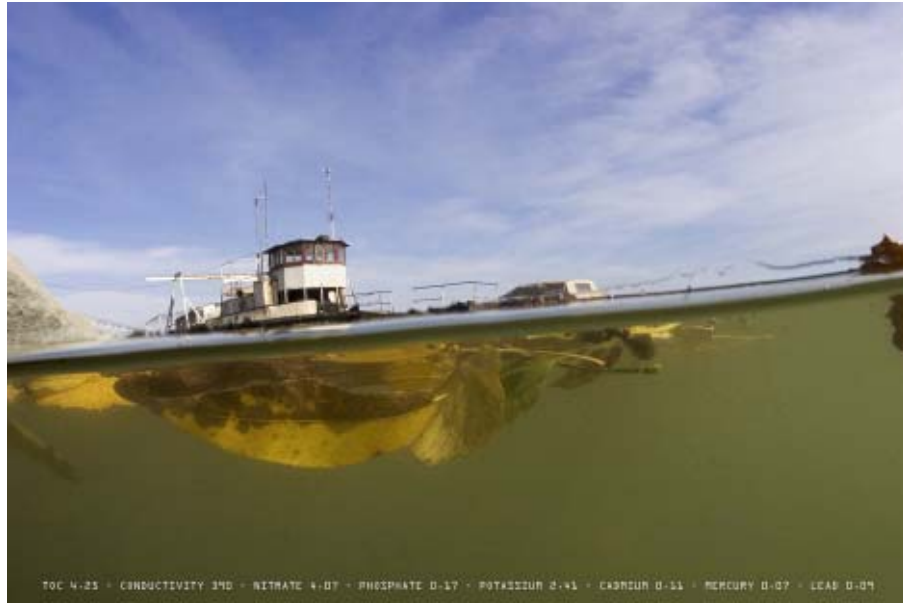
Belgrade, Serbia



Iron Gate, Romania



Drobeta-Turnu Severin, Romania



Vidin, Bulgaria



Braila, Romania



Tulcea, Romania



Danube Delta, Romania



Sulina, Romania