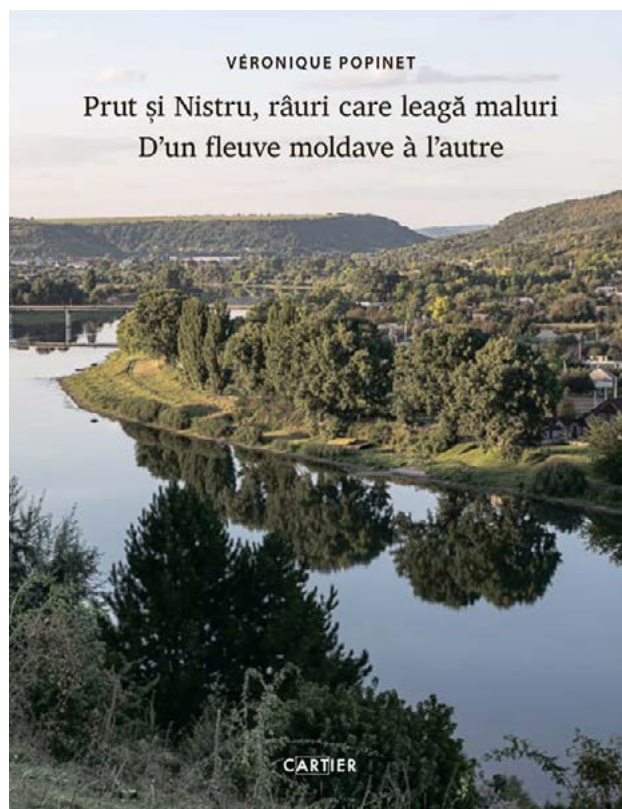


RECENZII

THE RIVERAIN DIPTYCH AS A GEOPHOTOGRAPHIC HORIZON OF MOLDOVA

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Véronique Popinet's photographic approach as well as Christian Daudel's textual approach (Véronique Popinet. *Prut și Nistru, râuri care leagă maluri. D'un fleuve moldave à l'autre*. Chisinau, Cartier, 2024, p. 170, french translation Ion Guțu) reveal to us the vision of the Other upon the horizon of the present and past of the two rivers and embankments of Prut and Dniester outlining a country – Republic of Moldova.



This project resonates with the previous projects of the artist-photographer Véronique Popinet, who has already explored the osmosis of the human activities with the riverain environment. While the river Loire symbolizes the project about a unifying cultural axis of France, the artist's project about Prut and Dniester goes beyond the connotations of a natural and cultural heritage. We are in the sensitive geostrategic area, which in the case of Prut, is unifying, while in the previous historical colonization periods used to disunify Bassarabia, and subsequently the Republic of Moldova from its country of origin – Romania; while in the case of Dniester – the

Dniestrian conflict which holts the perspective of RM unity.

This book offers the opportunity to inform through the cohesion between the textual code (containing the key milestones amply documented of the riverain itinerary that the professor Christian Daudel, Honorary Counselor of the Republic of Moldova for the Auvergne Rhône Alpes region in France, he knows them so well) but also the visual code of a great expressive force. The legends are retelling the story of the geo-historical events and of the complex geo-political context of a country which is little known in the West with a declared, affirmed European vocation. The conversion of the text into image and vice versa contributes to the development of a portrait-chronicle of a riverain eco-system of an imaginary world beyond the surface of things an exploration which is constructing/deconstructing/redefining in its own way. The pendulum between image and text provides offers a discreet and structured dynamism to the entire approach. As the story progresses the photography intervenes to reaffirm symbolically the mental images of the continuity of water flow, carrying nostalgia, hope and openness.

Beyond the history of events and the day-to-day captured story captured by Christian Daudel (assisted by Arcadie Dănilă and Jana Musat Chisălița) in relevant points, as well as behind the camera there is an eager awareness of getting to know new places and people. Viewed altogether, the photographs reveal a relationship between people and their geographical and historical reality. The abstraction of the world through words is materialized through the defining photographic images of the destiny of a couple, a family, a group, a community, a generation, a country, unique in their own way. Different ages, professions, activities and profiles show that the universe of the two river banks is one, that of the universality of the human condition. They all embody the kind of naturally acquired *riverainer identity*, a certain personalized nonchalance and the dignity of people seen and valued. Véronique Popinet is captivated by fishermen, peasants, shepherds, their everyday life and festivities, capturing exactly what defines them: sincerity, hospitality, passion, openness. The artist discovers characters with particular stories:

families proud of their children, a couple in love who exhibit the joy of living their feelings, a melancholic teenager with an artistic bouquet of wild plants, a woman who resembles a statue dominating the village, a female silhouette following a serpentine path that resembles her destiny. This articulation of image and commentary produces not only imagery but also deeper meaning.

Timeless landscapes are built on a changing dynamic of vegetal/aquatic/living creatures' rhythm. The silvery surface of the river captured in an impressionistic way, the trees with silhouettes repeated in the inflexible mirror of the water, the striking zigzags of the terrestrial vertical leading to the horizontal of the flowing stream link the cleverly arranged palimpsest-plans. The mesmerizing stillness conveys the desire to live in peaceful places: picturesque rural settlements, the medieval circular fortress of Soroca, the rock monasteries along the Dniester, the discreet or restrictive spaces of the border. Over time, industrial mechanisms have transfigured the landscape:

the lacework of the Eiffel bridge in Ungheni reproduces an important page of collaboration with the illustrious French engineer, the Giurgiulesti port and the Costești-Stânca dam evoke the modernity of megastructures. In the context of regional convergence and the country's European integration, the Republic of Moldova becomes, according to the authors, „a remarkable area of cross-border cooperation”.

Thus, the realization of this unique project presents a panoramic show of the unique riverine universe of the Republic of Moldova which, through the Prut and Dniester river axes, integrates into the flow of Time.

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