

## SEA ELEPHANT TRAVEL AGENCY

SEA ELEPHANT TRAVEL AGENCY organizes a series of events during the 7th Istanbul Biennial, between 19th and 27th September. As an ongoing [a continuous and?] open project based on regional studies, especially [focusing] on the Black Sea and the Balkans, the agency welcomes some partners from the region [those geographies]. The structure of the event [our agency is proposing] is to be perceived as an artistic project composed with [of] different projects sharing the same vision and completing each other. [Within that frame] Different group of artists and curators will realize multi-layered manifestations and presentations.

The projects intending to participate in to the Agency Project.

1- abap: As Big As Possible: Serkan Özkaya, Erden Kosova, Pelin Turgut, Can Altay, a group [that combines artistic, art critical and architectural perspectives] of artist, art critic, writer and architect.

2- whw: What, How and for Whom: a group of artists and curators initiated by Natasa Ilic from Zagreb working on broadcasting projects. They intend to realize an instant presentation .

3- 4th Cetinje Biennale, Montenegro, Nicolas Petrovitch, the director of Cetinje Biennale will make a presentation of the Biennale which will be held on July 2002 and on the actual political situation in Montenegro.

4- Tirana Biennale, Edi Muka and Albanian artists will bring up the fresh illustrations and rumours of Tirana Biennale which opens on 15th September.

5- Kahve Society from London organizes a symposium in Istanbul and London during the 7th Istanbul Biennial, they will construct a communicative desk in the agency during their visit to Istanbul.

6- Ron Mandos from Rotterdam, [who] organizes a series of Turkish contemporary art exhibitions in 2002 will be present in the agency with his colleagues from Rotterdam.

7- Art Space 1% from Copenhagen intends to join the agency with their office gallery. They have participated in various projects including "Cities on [the?] Move" exhibitions in several countries.

8- art-ist magazine, the [a] contemporary art journal of Istanbul edited by Erden Kosova, run by Halil Altindere and Vahit Tuna.

9- Apollonia: Art Exchanges in South-east Europe, Strasbourg will realize a presentation [that is focused on] on their focus on the rest of the West Europe area.

10- 30km: Emre Erkal and Mihai Craciun (SOM: Skidmore, Owings & Merrill LLP), [two] architects working on the urbanistic aspects of the Black Sea [geography and currently visiting] actually visiting Georgia and Romania will bring up the documentary [documents] of their investigations.

Sea Elephant Travel Agency as a project dealing with [connecting?] various art projects aims to be [a] part of the Biennial since it [operates as a serious network that links various artistic entities in the region -just as the city it is based on operates] is based in Istanbul and belongs to vast network links in the region. Since

1999 [until now, ipta] it has been a mobile project presenting its ideas through different mediums of artistic executions and manifestations. The loft space [ , which the Agency has recently located on, will also function as a land... ] is the land base of the art-boat-laboratory which will take off to cruise on the Black Sea in September 2002 with the participation of 50 artists, art critics, curators, architects, historians.

The work of agency is an instant, spontaneous event of presentations and performances. This relational art work is [proposes] a multi-layered, heterotopic art agora where the artistic exchange, communication and solidarity [will determine the conceptual and practical frame of the event as primary issues of negotiation] is the main debate and common conceptual and practical frame.

The Agency welcomes everybody visiting the Istanbul Biennial to the party on 20th September at 22 pm, after [following] the opening of Istanbul Contemporary Art Museum.

#### SEA ELEPHANT TRAVEL AGENCY

Sea Elephant Travel Agency is a self-founded artistic [project of] communication and exchange [project] based in Istanbul on 300 m2 loft space. The project focuses on regional studies, especially on the Black Sea and the Balkans.

One of the ongoing projects of the Sea Elephant Travel Agency is "Jules Verne and the Black Sea" based on [one of the novels the novel] of Jules Verne, "Kéraban-le-Têtu" ("Keraban the Stubborn") [.] Kéraban is a Turkish tobacco merchant [lives in from] Istanbul. His agent Van Mitten from Rotterdam [arrives the city for a visit] visits him in Istanbul. Kéraban invites him for [a] dinner [to in] Üsküdar, a district on the Asiatic coast of Bosphorus. [When they arrive the seaside they face with a recent charge issued by the local municipality for crossing over the Bosphorus by boat.] They learn that municipality of Istanbul charges a tax to cross over Bosphorus by boat. [Despite the small figure of the fee Keraban takes it as an injustice and] Keraban finds that to pay that tax is injustice and decides to take his guest for the dinner by travelling all along the Black Sea. [The rest of the novel tells us the story of the journey of our two protagonists, Keraban and Van Mitten, from Istanbul to...] Thus both heroes, Keraban and Van Mitten travel from Istanbul to Istanbul tracing all around the Black Sea belt.

Jules Verne and the Black Sea Project: "Tracing Jules Verne Along the Black Sea"

Predicated on Jules Verne's "Kéraban-le-Têtu" (a novel which explores the cultures and communities along the Black Sea belt), this project will reflect upon the present polarities between these communities and the historical observations of Jules Verne's novel at a time [under in which] Ottoman reality was omnipresent over a cosmopolit[an] texture of cultures and languages. The project is expected to follow a similar route to Verne's, this time [by via a] boat on the Black Sea, and produce a contemporary mapping of an "other" geography, and [a] spectrum of cultures in terms of visual manifestations. This will not be [a] documentary

work. It will explore a network of fates outside a mediated, generalized reality, as a kind of subjective cross-roads and destinies.

[The project aims to organize a boat travelling with artists, curators, writers, musicians, scientists and historians through the imaginary [imaginary repeating] itinerary of Jules Verne [his fiction] today, along the Black Sea. The boat itself as [a laboratory of] an art and science, music and history laboratory will stop over the ports of the Black Sea countries, cultures; such as Varna, Konstanta, Odessa, Sevastopol, Yalta, Rostov, Novosibirsk, Sochi, Batum. The voyage as work in progress, similar to Jules Verne's novel, will start from Istanbul and end in Istanbul. [At] Each port the boat-lab looks [hooks] up, there will be artistic manifestations with [the iptal] local interventions.

#### SITUATION & RAISON D'ETRE

Sea Elephant Travel Agency is a loft space [located on the center [central] area of Istanbul. The loft space is iptal -located in a building that previously functioned as a pharm...] an old pharmaceutical factory in an inter-zone district [district ] Which is a sort of periphery in the center of the city. The space as a building has no historical reference with [to] the city, but the location is in the mid-point of the center and the periphery, urban and suburbia, order and marginal which illustrates the actual position of spontaneous post-modern appearance [and heterogeneity]. [The] Building [where the loft space is located iptal- is] surrounded with night clubs, [a] hospital, Armenian and Greek foundations taking care of old people [pensioner houses] a catholic church, One of the biggest Gypsy community, marginal communities (gays, transvestites, prostitutes, drug cultures, criminals), [an emerging district with the iptal- emerging] hotels and restaurants of Japanese and Chinese communities, some historical buildings. Loft as an ongoing travel agency project will provide [a -iptal] mobile working facilities with [to] the participant[s] projects having the same vision of contemporary art in relation [ship with -to] the urban realities and city culture. During the event there will be multi-layered projections from the space to outside as a light-house and instant mirror effects [with -on] the visitors and [simultaneously,] some indoor projections reflecting outside. Vernissage [??] will be the [a] part of the architectural and conceptual settlement, guests [will] play an interactive role within the space. Main idea is [based on] an organized chaos and cacophony seeking many references to exchange and stimulate instant potencies brought by travelling artists. That organized zone as an agency with the participation of the [other] projects and visiting guests is [will produce] an inter-relational work. Besides that [,] the meeting itself [will operate] as a sign of solidarity among the unions run by artists and artistic projects.