

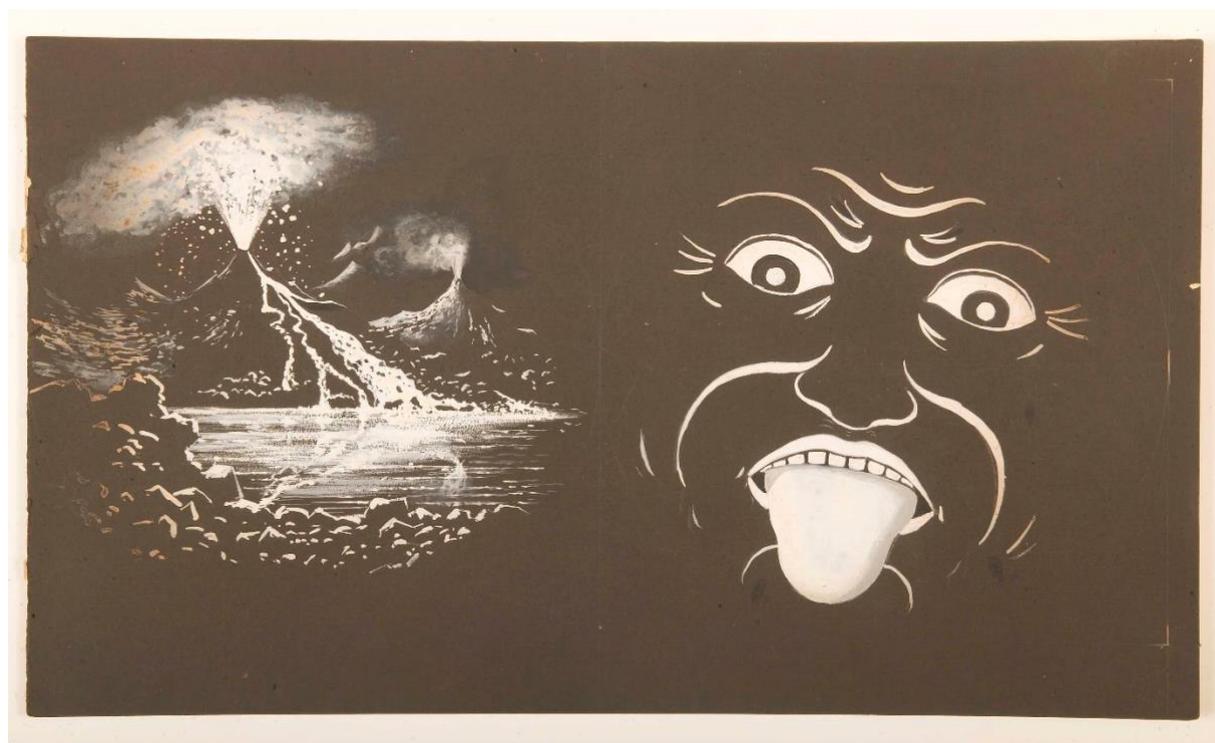
Variations

Eugène Frey's Light Sets presented by João Maria Gusmão

Nouveau Musée National de Monaco – Villa Paloma

7 February – 20 May 2020

Curator: Célia Bernasconi



Eugène Frey - Etude pour les Décors lumineux de La Flûte enchantée, ca. 1921 - Collection NMNM, n° 2003.7.93

***Variations* is an exhibition devoted to the lesser-known art of Light Sets, a stage design technique established in 1900 in the tradition of shadow theatres and magic lantern shows and developed on the Opéra de Monte-Carlo stage up until the 1930s.**

The exhibition proposed by Célia Bernasconi, Chief Curator of the Nouveau Musée National de Monaco, brings together for the first time 300 works on paper and over 100 glass plates by Eugène Frey (1864–1942), the artist who invented a complex system of lighting projections that combine photographic, pictorial and cinematographic techniques. With his projections, Frey decorated sets in multiple variations of colours, lights and forms and even incorporated moving images.

Beyond being a monograph of the inventor of Light Sets, the exhibition sets out to reveal the interactions between the technique that Frey developed for the stage and the experimental

creations of a number of artists, choreographers and directors, from the turn of the 20th century to the present day.

The exhibition presents a great diversity of work: from the shadow pieces created by Henri Rivière and Caran d’Ache for the Chat Noir cabaret to the mechanical theatre by craftsman Emmanuel Cottier, artist Hans-Peter Feldmann’s shadow theatre, performances by Lourdes Castro, silhouette films made by Lotte Reiniger or Michel Ocelot, phantasmagorical experiences created by Georges Méliès, Alexandre Alexeieff and Claire Parker or Jean Hugo, Loie Fuller’s light choreographies and the magic lantern installations imagined by the artists João Maria Gusmão and Pedro Paiva.

In this rediscovery of the Light Sets that contributed to the Opéra de Monte-Carlo’s fame in the early decades of the 20th century, Célia Bernasconi wished to combine a historical perspective with the contemporary vision of the artist João Maria Gusmão, who has imagined and reinterpreted different projection techniques.

João Maria Gusmão’s response to the NMNM’s invitation is a specific scenographic production entitled *Traveling without motion*, a “continuous-light micro-cinema” that produces moving images without using any film or an operator. Nine mechanised projections dotted around the exhibition play on the architecture of the Villa Paloma and revive the magic lantern technique while offering an iconographic and conceptual counterpoint to Frey’s works.

The catalogue of the exhibition will be published by Paraguay Press (Paris).

First publication dedicated to Eugène Frey’s work, it will include texts by Stéphane Tralongo, Professor of cinema at Université de Lausanne and Laurent Mannoni, Director of the scientific collections at Cinémathèque française, as well as a fiction piece by João Maria Gusmão

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