



psychedelic culture gathering
19-23 July

elysium island
festival
2017

RAY OF HOPE

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ELYSIUM ISLAND FESTIVAL

Inspired by the specific beauty of a sandy island on the Danube river near Sremski Karlovci, Snailydelic organization, together with friends started realization of a project called "Elysium Island". The idea of the project is to gather all fans and admirers of nature, psychedelic art and culture, with the overall aim of raising awareness and nature conservation. Full of enthusiasm, a group of young people through friendship and teamwork have progressed, to conjure up the beauty and freedom of "Elysium Island" to the visitors. Their smiling faces, mystical energy, as well as the vibrations from the dance floor created a very positive image of the first "Elysium Island" festival. Through the first encounter with fine sand, permeated the colorful shade of young willow forests, surrounded by water, gives the impression of tropical and exotic landscapes. The natural wealth of beach, from the center of the Danube river offers wide view of the sunrise and sunset, starry sky away from city lights are only few factors why the festival got the name "Elysium Island".



The artistic overtones of Elysium Island Festival "Fakirs from the South" - Katya Krsmanovic

The artistic expression of a festival, be it psychedelic or not, is extremely important for the visitors as well as the artists, because at the end of the day, we all come back with some kind of impression. The impression left by the chill stage at last year's Elysium Island Festival was definitely powerful and it resonated the following: "I want to come back here again". Behind the fluorescent garden, a symbol of last year's chill part "Caseworm", were Katya and Nenad, who are known as the "Fakirs from the South" in the psychedelia scene. Other than decorating the Elysium Festival oasis of peace, Katya will be taking on the role of the artistic director of this year's festival, meaning that the entire festival will be integrated into one artistic whole, offering a kind of artistic education as such, as well as offering the festival visitors a plethora of visual and artistic attractions. On that note, we interviewed Katya, who is responsible for the artistic concept of Elysium, and she explained to us how she entered the world of psychedelia, what makes a good trance festival, and how psychedelics helped her love what she does even more.

**When did you first fall in love with psychedelia and decorations?
Which one of these two reached out to you first?**

The term "psychedelia" has always meant more than just music and decoration to me. I believe that the first love appeared during my early childhood through different books about art, where one can find quite a lot of honest psychedelia in its original meaning. My first planned encounter with the psychedelic festival scene happened in 2012, which could be a little late in comparison with other people. I can't say that I fell in love with decorations. I fell in love with the straightforwardness of experiencing a piece of art. I fell in love with the strength with which it can impact a large number of people, as well as the freedom that work and the audience have in such surroundings. I am more of a visual type of person, so I barely remember any names from the line-up, but I do remember the chill stage as well as other works scattered around the festival, as well as other visitors.

"Fakirs from the south" is an interesting name, considering that not many people know who fakirs are and what they can do. How did this team come about, how did you come up with the name, what was your first project?

We first came up with the name at a festival, very spontaneously, while trying to explain who we were without using unnecessary information. It was pulsating with energy and great atmosphere, and regardless of the rest of the natural evolution of the Fakirs and the meaning of the name, Fakirs from the South for me present first and foremost energy, the energy of our work and the energy that we possess. Speaking of the decor team, I would have to step away from the basic meaning and accentuate the fact that we do not see ourselves as a decor team as much as we see ourselves as artists whose work is tightly related to psychedelic festivals, as well as the psychedelia experience as a whole. The first steps in that direction happened after our first festival in 2012. At that time, my partner Nenad and I had an atelier, and we also lived in "Inex Film", an artistic squat in Belgrade. Our stay at Inex was an opportunity to play and experiment, and the first big bang that our first psychedelic festival made in our lives helped put all the missing pieces together, leading to a number of little experiments which helped us give the path that we now have in front of us.

You graduated from the Academy of Fine Arts in Belgrade, how do you think that your academic education helped you break through as an artist in the psychedelia scene?

My academic education is certainly an impact that left a trace which I am sure will never disappear. Maybe the greatest help that I got from the Academy was that my education there showed me where I don't see myself and what I don't want. During my education, I felt that I found myself in an elitist and self-sufficient society. Gallery exhibitions seemed sterile and unnecessary to me, and I felt that the exhibitions were boring and didn't have enough visitors. It seemed like the artists weren't in their natural state, and that everything lacked the real in-depth experience that art should provide us with. Those things were lacking because they require honesty and time. The time that happens between the work itself and the visitors. Still, I don't think that academic education should be underestimated, since an academic education implies years of thinking about art and years of searching for a personal source of creativity.

Last year, you "provided" Elysium Festival with a fluorescent garden and unforgettable pink monkeys. Now I am noticing the Owlmighty spirit in your decorations, which is why I have no idea what you have in store for us this year, what are your plans for the Elysium Island Festival audience?

The plan is really simple. We will insist on quality. I believe that the theme or the medium used are a lot less important. Every theme can be processed in a good or bad way. That is why we will focus on the quality of our work.

What is your opinion on the "Elysium Island" festival, what do you think about its' role in the development and preservation of the Serbian trance culture?

Elysium Island is a festival in its' earliest stages, and it still has a long journey ahead. The steps that are made annually after each iteration of the Festival are big and positive, which showcases the fact that all of the gathered resources are used, and they are used wisely. Nevertheless, the Serbian trance scene is a small, underground scene, and we shouldn't only talk about its' preservation, but about its' development as well. An important contribution of this festival is also the development of environmental awareness, the promotion of vegetarianism and the other elements that are important in order to completely understand this subculture. My expectations are high. The audience has a great impact on the festival as well. The people are the foundation the festival is built on, which is why I hope that they will also give their best to treat each other with respect and understanding during these festival days.

Bosijka Djikanovic
translation: Jelena Stojanovic



"Snailydelic" the Elysium Island Festival main stage deco team

In the same way that people call the human face a representation of one's character, the same can be said for the main stage of a music festival. If we leave out the music and the sound, the way the main stage is decorated is usually the first thing we think of when we talk about a festival we had visited. The deco team in charge of this year's Elysium festival is called Snailydelic, and they are an organization which has been decorating and enhancing our psychedelic memories for years. The name Snailydelic can in part be a description of the way this team works; they look at what nature and time have given them from every possible angle, reaching their goal slowly, moving spirally, eventually reaching the perfect decoration. Just like snails, they are patient, perseverant and thorough, and their signature style involves symmetry and geometry. Snailydelic always manage to give us something new and different, whilst managing to stay authentic. Tamara Stefanovski, the Snailydelic deco team representative talked to us about what decorating a music festival is about, as well as about what we can expect in our future "living room" in a visual sense.

When and how did "Snailydelic" come to be and why did you decide to use a snail as part of your name?

"Snailydelic" was founded a few years ago, in 2014, to be exact, and it all happened spontaneously by merging experiences and elements that we created as travelers through time and space. Hah, a snail in our name... well, before Snailydelic and the entire story followed by it, we had an idea where everyone in the team should make their festival inspired costume. It didn't really involve a lot of thinking, somehow I knew that it would be a snail. While we were surrounded by different colors, materials and skills, we quickly got to work and made the costume which eventually became our mascot as well.

When did you get involved in the world of psychedelic event decor? Did you come across some frustrating and stressful moments while trying to make an idea work? Is improvisation something you look forward to?

We just finished decorating a party abroad, where the entire organization involving the trip, the time we had, the logistics behind transporting the décor as well as the entire preparation process which took a few days before the party, and all of it was hugely complicated. In such cases, improvisation can be frustrating since you have to think about a lot of things simultaneously. Still, each event is unique, and I consider each event a new challenge and a new chance to improvise. I love improvising. I often look at things that are new and unknown to me, and it inspires me to confront those uncertainties and conquer them. The same thing happened when I first encountered decorations. The psychedelic world presents one big, limitless improvisation.

Does Snailydelic have a status quo, namely something that is identifiable and unique in your decorations? Are there things that you try and push in most of your decorations, or is every new party considered a new idea, a new trip?

I believe that our decorations do have something that is identifiable. It is us, our moment, and our ideas. Each work of art has its maker, which makes each work of art unique in a way. We are holding on to one style that we do and are known for, but still, it is improvisation that dictates the combination as well as the application of different materials, making each event a different chapter in our story. Regarding shapes, I think inspiration comes periodically; we are currently inspired by geometry, which goes hand in hand with another "team member", symmetry. I would of course love it if it were possible to calculate everything with utmost precision, to nail and hang everything exactly where it's supposed to be, because I love geometry, and I was always quite good at mathematics. This is why we value the importance of details; we are young, we have time, and we don't care how long it takes to make those details stand out.

What is your opinion about festival decorations, how important is it for a festival to have a certain theme visible throughout the décor? What do you think festivals would be if they didn't have any decoration?

Decor is an important segment in the entire psychedelic festival culture. It differentiates depending on the purpose, but it is nevertheless very important that it blends into the festival space and that it follows the festival theme. A festival without decor... Hmm... That would be like having only sound without the picture on a TV – an incomplete experience. There has to be something that draws attention, that makes people remember a festival, something that makes it stand out compared to other festivals.

What plans do the Snails have for this year's Main Stage?

Hmm... I don't want to reveal too much, it's much better to come and see and feel for yourself. Just like most snails, who carry their little homes, their "roofs above their heads" on their backs through their entire lives, the Snails will settle their "home", lift their "roof" and host dance floor enthusiasts at this year's Elysium.

**Bosiljka Djikanovic
translation: Jelena Stojanovic**



The "Elysium Island" theatre

This year's "Elysium Island" festival program is abundant with art, and there are still surprises to come. This year, we have prepared a stage for you; and it is not a music stage with a DJ, it is a real theater stage. Dear Elysium festival visitors, we are proud to announce the Elysium theater!

The "Creative Chaos" theater from Smederevo and their representative Stefan Nikolic will perform a special play called "Mika" for us, which will be performed on the opening and closing days of the festival. It is not your average play, you can expect a mix of acrobatics and mime, whereas the storyline will incorporate verses written by Miroslav Mika Antic, a well-known Serbian poet, painter, director and journalist.

"We used Mika Antic's verses as replicas that reach the very core of his creative work, which are enhanced with unusual stage movement. The viewer will see a dynamic conversation between the Poet and the Painter who are revealing the soul that they share, one step at a time. Mika Antic, the genius whose verses and paintings enhance life itself in a way that causes a whirlpool of emotions and ideas through which we are living through moments of complete and utter truth. Man and art. Confronted, permeated, inseparably connected in their childhood, love, dreams and society."

Since there aren't too many music festivals that incorporate this type of artistic attraction, we decided to have a chat with our actors as well as people who spent a large portion of their lives in the festival theater world. We cannot reveal too much about the plays, but we can give you the opinions of the people behind them. Dimitrije Arandjelovic, a Serbian National Theater and O.Z.O.R.A. theater actor says that he is especially fascinated by theaters at trance music festivals, he emphasizes the importance of art in such places and surroundings, thus making us more familiar with the unbreakable bond between trance culture and theater.

"The most important thing for every person is to be honest, open and aware of the world they live in. The trance culture holds the answers to those questions. It opens the door to getting to know oneself as well as one's surroundings. It's the same when you are on the stage, you are awakening the moment and the area that you are in, you are free of all shackles and boundaries and you can breathe freely. Having a theater at a place like a trance festival is a wonderful thing, since the theater gets the chance to observe, teach, and inspire people. Trance music and the theater both have a special place in my life, they are opening a new world of imagination to me and they wake up the child in me. It is freeing, inspiring and it helps you go through life with a smile on your face. That is why I think that any theater act is important for a festival, because it raises awareness in people, and it gives them a chance to be part of a highly artistic process", Dimitrije said.

The "Creative Chaos" theater will bring us a bit more than a mere theater play, they will give Elysium festival visitors a chance to participate in theater workshops, so they can try out their skills in acting, mime and acrobatics, which will allow them to explore their artistic potential and to relax and find themselves through acting. Stefan Nikolic has been acting for 12 years, he is a graduate at the Academy of Fine Arts, but he never endeavored into the world of festival theater. He is hoping to have good interaction with the festival visitors and says that these creative hours will be permeated with a special spiritual act of connecting the actor and the audience, emotions and the body.

"Free from the shackles of text, we are becoming part of a different theater. Body movements tell the story we want. We are free of text, we tell the audience a lot more, and the audience are active participants and they present a key factor in making the entire story complete. The boundary between the actor and the audience is lost, and we can go through emotions together, supporting each other. In order to tell a story with body movements, we need to be aware of our bodies. We will awaken our entire body with targeted exercises. Once we achieve that, we can say more by moving our left ring finger than we could ever say with a 20 sentence text. By awakening our body, we are connecting much better to our physical selves and we realize what we are capable of. What's more, we endeavor into our other "self", the mental self, allowing us to meet ourselves on an even deeper level. This is how we recreate the bond between the physical and mental self, realizing how much they are connected and dependent on each other. I want to use these workshops to show to the people that they can use their bodies instead of words to express themselves." Stefan explained.

It is the people who make a trance music festival what it is; the festival grounds are completely lifeless and different without the colorful scarves on the tent doors, without the hammocks and deck chairs between the trees, without the décor, without the music... That is why we asked Dimitrije to tell us something more about the festival audience he encountered during his performance of "High life" at O.Z.O.R.A., one of the biggest trance festivals.

No matter where you are, an audience is an audience, as long as they have and feel the need to listen to you. I've encountered various types of audiences as a professional actor, be it at a theater, on the street or at a festival. Last year I played at the O.Z.O.R.A. festival, which is one of my favorite and most inspiring festivals in the world, and it is a place where I will always gladly come back. It was a magical experience. Exchanging energy with those people, in that moment, it was a very special feeling for me. The smiles are what won that night. The trance culture and theater culture fusion at that place was magical!", Dimitrije said.

Actor and host of our theater Stefan Nikolic talked to us about our festival and the experience he is hoping for.

"Festivals like Elysium mean a lot to me because I visit them in order to run away from reality and dive into the world of magic, smiles and friendships all around. I've been thinking about the way theater workshops or our plays would look like at festivals, but I didn't have the nerve to apply and experience it, until now. I am extremely excited because, just like in life, I don't have expectations. What I expect from myself is to give it my best and to give people a chance to become more aware of all of their body parts and their physical abilities. Living in a city requires little to no physical activity, which is why people forgot how much they can actually do. I hope that I will be able to use the workshop to show them how much they can actually do." Stefan said.

Bosiljka Djikanovic
translation: Jelena Stojanovic



ArtCorner

Festivals where there are artistic havens are special, as they offer visitors completely new, different formations, new buildings housing the works of art created by inspiration, they radiate different colors, and direct your attention to strange forms, in other words affect our daily time at the festival and even our lives. Therefore, we are here to introduce you to the artistic corner of the Elysium Island Festival, part of which will house a gallery and workshop, a source of extreme creativity and inspiration.

This year's host of the Elysium Island Festival Art Corner will be the Kimberly Kovac. Kimberly has been living in Serbia since 2007, when she and her husband came from New York and began her art project, Artscape. Kim explains she found support, understanding and honesty here, so we asked, in order to better understand the artistic hand of our festival, what she thought of trance in general, but also about this festival of ours.

"The music... it's a force that shuts down my mind and opens my heart... euphoric, eyes closed, connected, riding the wave... when trance music takes me, I am free... smiling... it is a story with no words... excitement, wonder, suspense, climax... feeling ALIVE. The dance-floor is in synch, eyes, smiles and hands express feeling, everyone is connected... we are one.", explains Kim.

In our corner of the art, will run a positive, inspiring energy and how Kim says, everyone is welcome to find himself through a sincere work.

Kimberly talks about her Art Workshop called Wildflower

"From concept to finished designed, every piece is created with much thought and attention to detail making every piece an art piece in itself and truly unique! Naturally, handmade, soulful and elegantly tribal accessories, using natural materials, made possible with the inspiration of friends, family, music and nature. The name Wildflower comes from a quote I once read, 'like wildflowers, you must allow yourself to grow in all the places people never thought you would'. I related to this and found this to also speaks for my creations and the souls they attract.", said Kim.

PHILOSOPHY:

Kim jewelry designs under the name "Wildflower by Kim" and works with natural materials such as feathers, stones, leather and copper.

"Wildflower by Kim" brand stems from my fascination with nature. I am inspired by the way the wind makes grass and leaves dance. Patterns found in early morning beach shorelines or the roots, branches and trunks of trees. Shapes that create the horizons like mountain ranges, endless open fields or the sea kissing the sky. Colors that fuse effortlessly in forests, skies, and seas. Inspiration for my work lies in all of these, patterns, shapes, colors and the way wind moves nature. My experience in each moment comes back to my workshop and becomes wearable art. ", said Kimberly.

Bosiljka Djikanovic
translation: Jelena Stojanovic



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