



BORDER PARTY

originel title - FÊTE DE LA FRONTIÈRE

Concept - **Gianpiero Borgia**

Direction - **Elena Cotugno Comaneçi**

Words: **Matei Vişniec**

Cast

Migrant 1- **Raffaele Braia**

Migrant 2 - **Elena Cotugno Comaneçi**

Migrant 3 - **Serena Di Gregorio**

Migrant 4 - **Sabino Rociola**

Migrant 5 - **Valerio Tambone**

Production

TB/Teatro dei Borgia

and

Centro di Produzione Artisti Associati-Gorizia



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**“ WE ARE THE SUM
OF THE BORDERS
WE HAVE CROSSED ”**

Matei Visniec

Once, Matei, the author of this play, told me a funny story: There is a Frenchman and a Romanian. The Romanian moved to France in the 1980s and now lives a bit here and a bit there. So, the Frenchman asks him, "But where do you feel most at home? In France or in Romania?" And the Romanian replies, "On the plane."

What happens in the history of a people when that people's history is marked by borders? Borders are places strongly connected to Geography, Politics, History, and many events of war. On borders, rituals, customs, and festivals of entire communities, less and less populated, still take place. They preserve rituals because they preserve memory, and with memory, they try to preserve identity.

In this performance, Matei writes about the stories of Ukrainian customs officers, Yugoslavian snipers, Serbian maids living on the border between Belgium and Holland, migrants who get lost in the fog, and relatives who part at the border between Mexico and the United States. He also writes about his personal experience of crossing the Iron Curtain in 1987. The actors on stage attempt to create a connection between the past and the present, between old and new generations, and between the borders of yesterday and today, offering a profound reflection on the human condition in the act of crossing

Elena Cotugno Comaneči

At the end of the last century, globalization seemed to have, if not abolished, certainly weakened borders at all levels. The crisis of nation-states appeared to signal a blending of territories and identities. This worldwide disorientation sparked a reaction that, with the arrival of the new century, brought not only the return of political borders and national sovereignty but also the resurgence of strong identities and exclusive religions. As if the response to the emerging multi-ethnic and multi-polar world order could only be isolationism and self-sufficiency. According to sociologist Zygmunt Bauman, frontiers are “material or mental, made of lime and brick or symbolic; sometimes they are battlefields, but they are also creative workshops for the art of living together — fertile grounds where the seeds of future forms of humanity are sown and grow, whether consciously or unconsciously.”



For many years, Elena Cotugno Comaneçi and Gianpiero Borgia, together with their company, have been conducting theatrical research focused on exploring reality. During the preparation phase, they meet people and visit places that allow the actors to engage directly with the issues at hand, experience them firsthand, and then bring the essence of their fieldwork to the stage, conveying the experience to the audience through the actors' performances. This is how their dramaturgies are born. This working method, conceived by Gianpiero Borgia, was solidified in 2015 with ***Medea per Strada*** and the trilogy ***La Città dei Miti*** (*The City of Myths*), works that arise from a comparison between Greek tragedies and an exploration of contemporary issues. Since 2020, the company has staged these works in unconventional venues directly related to the themes addressed: soup kitchens, streets of prostitution, nursing homes, and anti-violence centers. With this project, Elena, Gianpiero, and the entire company won the *2022 Rete Critica Award*, the *2022 ANCT National Critics' Award*, and the *Le Maschere del Teatro National Award* for Elena Cotugno's performance in *Medea per Strada*.

The practice involves identifying a socio-political theme that is relevant in the contemporary world and exploring it during the preparation of the performance through field experiences carried out by the artists. These experiences consist of interviews and voluntary actions in direct contact with the institutional and community organizations that operate in the areas being explored. The result is an art-theatre performance that breaks the conventional scene/plateau structure.

With **Border Party**, the approach remains the same.

The locations where rehearsals, field research, and discussions around the performance have taken place are those that define the territories: the Società di Mutuo Soccorso ASL in Milan, the Sociological Institute of Gorizia, the Lasciapassare Museum on the border between Gorizia and Nova Gorizia, and the Società Operaia in Vimodrone. These are the places where the research has been conducted to date—and it is still ongoing.

However, Elena and the actors have also worked in places where borders, conflicts, and differences fade away: dance halls, village festivals, neighborhood gatherings, religious celebrations, and concerts. These spaces—both those that mark boundaries and those that dissolve them—provide the ideal settings for imagining and creating a celebration.

A party is a moment of suspension, where the time of Kronos ceases to exist, and the time of Aion begins, understood as the "duration of a life" or "the duration of a generation or community." In these moments, differences and conflicts dissolve, creating a space of unity and sharing. The festivities continue until dawn, when the sun rises, illuminating the borders of the earth and signaling the return of daily life.



Open rehearsals at the Teatro di Gradisca d'Isonzo

For this reason, the ideal places for this performance to unfold are those where a territory is marked: riverbanks, level crossings, customs posts. But also places where borders, conflicts, and differences are erased: dance halls, village festivals, taverns, picnic areas. Theatres, too, are spaces of gathering, ritual, and celebration.



“ **THE OLD MAN** – DO YOU KNOW WHAT IT MEANS TO PISS IN SIBERIA WHEN IT’S MINUS 20 OUTSIDE? OR TO PISS WHILE WALKING BECAUSE THE RUSSIANS WON’T LET US STOP... COME ON, MY BOY, YOU MUSTN’T GET ANGRY... I’M JUST A LITTLE CRAZY, THAT’S ALL. AND I’VE GOT SOME HATE INSIDE ME... I’VE ACCUMULATED TOO MUCH HATE, I DON’T KNOW HOW, BUT... AND NOW, FOR A FEW YEARS, I’VE BEEN TRAVELING AROUND EUROPE WITH MY GRANDDAUGHTER, PISSING ON THE BORDERS. I’D LIKE TO MAKE IT INTO THE RECORD BOOK. I’VE ALREADY PISSED ON 27 BORDERS... GONE OR EXISTING... I’VE DONE ALL THE ONES CLOSE TO US, BUT THIS ONE WAS MISSING... I PISSED ON THE BORDER BETWEEN FRANCE AND GERMANY, I PISSED ON THE ONE BETWEEN ITALY AND SLOVENIA, I PISSED ON THE GERMAN-POLISH BORDER... MY PROBLEM IS THAT I KEEP PISSING ON THESE DAMN BORDERS, BUT IN THE MEANTIME, NEW ONES KEEP SPRINGING UP... IT’S LIKE I’VE GOT A CONTRACT WITH HISTORY. AS SOON AS I’M DONE WITH ONE REGION, HERE COMES A NEW INDEPENDENT COUNTRY! TO HELL WITH THESE BORDERS, THERE’S NEVER ENOUGH TIME TO PISS ON THEM! ”

The dramaturgy stems from the experience that the Franco-Romanian playwright Matéi Vişniec has with borders. Vişniec's theatre combines the spirit of farce with the portrayal of political violence, fully engaging with the reality of contemporary European history. The current political situation may seem more suited to tragedy than to laughter, but on the contrary, Vişniec's farce proves particularly fertile for addressing the dramas of history.



“IT'S MY BROTHER WITH HIS FAMILY,” MY FATHER TOLD ME, AND THEN HE TRIED TO LIFT ME UP ON HIS SHOULDERS. BUT I WAS ALREADY 10 YEARS OLD, I WAS HEAVY. SO, OTHER MEN HELPED MY FATHER LIFT ME, LIKE A TROPHY, SO MY UNCLE, WHO WAS ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE BORDER, COULD SEE ME...

... AND THEN WE SAW THAT ON THE OTHER SIDE, MY FATHER'S BROTHER WAS ALSO SHOWING OFF HIS CHILDREN. HE HAD FIVE, THREE GIRLS AND TWO BOYS. STRANGE HOW EVERYONE STARTED CRYING OVER THIS DISCOVERY, BUT MAYBE IT WAS ALSO BECAUSE THEY WERE ALL DRUNK AND TIRED AFTER A NIGHT OF PARTYING.”

Elena Cotugno Comaneçi

Born in 1984 in a small town in southern Italy, she now splits her time between Abruzzo and the rest of the world, dedicating her life to theatre and her daughter. An actress, author, and artistic director of TB, she pours her heart and soul into projects that blend art with social commitment. With Teatro dei Borgia, she won the Rete Critica Award, the ANCT 2022 Award, and the Le Maschere del Teatro 2021 Award for Best Emerging Actress for her performance in *Medea per Strada*, for which she also received two nominations for the UBU Award. She approaches the process of artistic creation by immersing herself fully in real-life contexts, conducting field research that leads to experiential works presented in communities, such as the trilogy *La città dei Miti*, conceived alongside her inseparable art and life partner, Gianpiero Borgia, with whom she founded the company in 2012. She graduated in 2006 from the International Theatre Academy of the Adriatic (I.T.A.C.A.); in 2007, she completed the Performing Arts course at the London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art (L.A.M.D.A.); and from 2009 to 2012, she earned a master's degree in Art and Pedagogy of the Stage under the guidance of Anatolij Vasil'ev. Since 2016, she has been the protagonist of *Medea per Strada*, a travelling performance on the theme of sexual exploitation that involves small groups of spectators in a van. In 2022, she starred in *Giacomo*, a dramatic art intervention in the political sphere, a play dedicated to socialist deputy Giacomo Matteotti, who was assassinated by the fascists in 1924. In 2024, she began the research phase for the project *Border Party*, written by Matei Vişniec. She has recently started working on the theme of change with the play *Ero l'uomo della guerra (I Was the Man of War)*, based on the autobiography of Vito Alfieri Fontana, a redemptive story about the transformation from an anti-personnel mine manufacturer to a deminer.

Matei Vişniec

(born January 29, 1956, in Rădăuți, Romania) is a playwright, poet, and journalist who became a French citizen. He studied history and philosophy at the University of Bucharest under the Ceauşescu regime. From 1977 to 1987, he wrote numerous plays that circulated widely within Romanian literary circles but were banned from being staged due to censorship. In 1987, he left Romania and moved to France, where he sought political asylum. It was in France that he began writing in French, the language in which his best-known works are written, and worked as a journalist for Radio France Internationale. After the fall of Ceauşescu in 1989, he became one of the most performed authors in Romania. In October 1996, the National Theatre of Timişoara dedicated a festival to him, where twelve companies performed his plays. Vişniec's works have been translated and staged in over twenty countries.

The play had a long gestation process:

- in June 2022, a work session with the *Artefici-Residenze Creative FVG project, Artisti Associati Gorizia*;
- from October 2023 to July 2024, a residency with *IntercettAzioni - Centro di Residenza Artistica della Lombardia (part of the CLAPS Circuit project, Industria Scenica, Laagam, Teatro delle Moire, and Zona K)*;
- September 2024, the final rehearsal and staging session in Gorizia.

Premiere: September 2025 in Gorizia for the Gorizia/Nova Gorizia European Capitals of Culture.

Show in Italian and French, with English subtitles.

Running time: 75'

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