



People take part in the annual rowing 'Regatta on Drina' near Bajina Basta, east Serbia. — AFP photos



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People hold a giant rose inflatable flamingos as they take part in the annual rowing 'Regatta on Drina' near Bajina Basta.



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WITH NO SEA, REGATTA ON DRINA IS EQUALLY GOOD FOR SERBS

Having no natural access to sea does not stop Serbs from organizing a regatta: thousands this weekend boarded a motley fleet of craft floating on river waters for the "Regatta on Drina". The annual celebration of exuberance and excess starts with pallets of beer, often consumed before the improvised fleet casts off by the end of the morning in the western Serbian town of Bajina Basta on the Drina river, a natural border with Bosnia.

With Serbian flags fluttering in the wind and "turbo-folk" music cranked up, hundreds of inflatable dinghies, makeshift rafts, lorry inner-tubes, even giant inflatable flamingos and the occasional boat float and row for hours on the Drina cheered on by the crowds and bands on the bank. The flotilla is lit up by torches and flares that cover the river with a multicolored mist as the boom of firecrackers echoes across the water. Tying up their boats together,

the participants turn them into dancing podiums, floating slowly toward the foot of the Bosnian mountains.

The landlocked Balkan state cannot claim to be a tourism power like neighboring Croatia with its spectacular Dalmatian coast, but the sector is growing with 3.4 million tourists in 2018, half of whom were foreigners. Considered as a European capital known for its night-life and strong contemporary art, Belgrade is one of Serbia's

attractions. But green tourism in often mountainous and wild landscapes, such as Bajina Basta, is becoming increasingly popular. The authorities hope that tourism will bring 2.5 billion euros (\$2.8 billion) in 2020 and the double in 2025. — AFP

Cardin retrospective at NY museum aims to revive his once-bold image

The Brooklyn Museum in New York is staging the first big Pierre Cardin retrospective in decades in an effort to help refresh a once-bold image that had faded a bit over the years. "Who is Pierre Cardin?" That is the question museum curator Matthew Yokobosky said he wants to answer with "Pierre Cardin: Future Fashion," which opened Saturday and continues until January 5, 2020. The exhibit takes visitors back to the designer's beginnings, with no sign of the more than 850 licensed Cardin products cranked out since the late 1960s.

Those mass market products helped popularize Cardin's name but they also diluted his identity, so much so that his vast contribution is rarely if ever mentioned, with the notable exception of Jean-Paul Gaultier, who once worked for Cardin. Rather than focus on the mass-market fashions, Yokobosky concentrated on one-of-a-kind couture pieces from the personal archives of the fashion house, generously opened to him by the 97-year-old creator himself.

At center stage are the bold, inspired, avant-garde choices of the 1960s, as the museum introduces a generation that knows Cardin mainly through his classic shirts to

the radicality of his early days. "The '60s were so innovative for him," Yokobosky said. "I don't think he ever slept. He had so many ideas. He didn't stop, he just kept creating."

'It's all about movement'

A tailor's apprentice at the age of 14, Cardin knew how to make the clothes he designed, a rare skill in today's fashion world but which helped him translate ideas into reality. "That's the reason he was able to do new designs," Yokobosky said, "because he really understood construction."

Among his most emblematic creations: the high-waisted dress titled "Carwash," with its vertical cords that swished back and forth when a woman moved; and the dress with a "kinetic back," reminiscent of a Calder mobile made of wool crepe. "It's all about movement," Yokobosky explained. Cardin also made playful use of new materials, notably vinyl and Cardine - his own invention.

'No small imagination'

The exhibit plays on Cardin's fascination with futurism

and space exploration. Some tight-fitting outfits are reminiscent of the uniforms worn on TV series "Star Trek," with a unisex spirit ahead of their time. His "Computer" coat was inspired by the integrated circuit boards Cardin had seen in IBM computers. Yokobosky wanted to show both "who Mr. Cardin is and how fantastic his designs are."

The exhibit pays homage to Cardin not just as designer but as creator—someone who found inspiration in everything from rubberized molds of food from Maxim's—the famed Paris restaurant he bought in 1981 after frequenting it for years—to Chinese pagodas. "He thinks really big all the time," Yokobosky said. "There's no small imagination." The museum aims to take the exhibit to other US cities, then to Asia, where Cardin has long been popular. Yokobosky hopes the show will end up in France, where Cardin, who hates flying, would himself be able to see it. "It'd be amazing." — AFP



Brazilian theater director Roberto Alvim gestures during an interview with AFP in Sao Paulo, Brazil. —AFP

Brazil's new performing arts chief in anti-left 'crusade'

Creating a "cultural war machine" in Brazil's performing arts is renowned theater director Roberto Alvim's mission as he seeks to eradicate progressive ideas from the stage. Recently handpicked by President Jair Bolsonaro to head the performing arts center at the National Arts Foundation, Alvim's appointment is the latest salvo against artists since Bolsonaro took power in January. One of Alvim's first acts has been a call to arms on social media to likeminded professionals in the sector to stop the spread of "cultural Marxism."

"I did not invent the cultural war. It has been brutally waged by the left for at least 30 years," Alvim, 46, told AFP. "Any artist that is not aligned with the left is boycotted, defamed and prevented from working—like what happened to me." Now, Alvim wants to "balance the game." His weapons will be "fostering and giving material means for the creation of works of art" that are not based on progressive ideas.

It will also involve "stimulating the creation of companies with a classical repertoire, as well as the writing of contemporary works based on the technical complexity and depth of those of Shakespeare" and others. Likening his mission to that of the Crusades, Alvim says he is fighting "for our Judeo-Christian civilization, against its destruction by the progressive forces."

Left-right tensions

The ultraconservative wave that swept Bolsonaro to power in the 2018 elections has alarmed artists, who are concerned about potential funding cuts and restrictions on their freedom of expression. Kleber Mendonca, director of the satirical western "Bacurau" which premiered at Cannes in May, has compared life in the Bolsonaro era to "dystopia." "The film was screened at a time when there's this whole idea of destroying culture in Brazil, and the arts in general," Mendonca told reporters at the time.

Soon after taking power in January, Bolsonaro scrapped the culture ministry, which was absorbed into the new citizenship ministry. The former army captain said Thursday that public money should not be used to produce films such as "Bruna Surfistinha"—called "Confessions of a Brazilian Call Girl" in English—which was released in 2011 and tells the story of a prostitute.

Eduardo Wolf, a philosopher and arts editor in Sao Paulo, said the left is partly responsible for triggering the "cultural war." "The ideological radicalization of the left has fueled tensions" and provoked "a reaction of a regressive right, adept at conspiracy theories and authoritarian responses," Wolf said. Veteran film-maker Luiz Carlos Barreto said "the idea of cultural Marxism is nonsense." "Art is manifested by the free flow of ideas," Barreto said. "No government can treat artistic expression with pre-conceived ideas, ideologies." —AFP



Clothes and dresses are displayed at the Pierre Cardin's "Future Fashion" Exhibition at the Brooklyn Museum in New York. — AFP photos