

Étienne Pluss, set designer

(December 2025)

Etienne Pluss was born in Geneva.

Before his studies at the University of Art (UDK) in Berlin, he directed an art gallery in Geneva.

In 1996 he graduated in Set Design at the University of Art (UDK) in Berlin. He began his career as associated stage designer with Achim Freyer and Karl-Ernst Herrmann.

He collaborated with directors such as George Tabori, Katharina Thoma, Claus Guth, Philipp Himmelmann, Enrico Lübke, Adriana Altaras, Patrick Schlösser, Philip Tiedemann, Romain Gilbert and Nadja Loschky.

His most recent works include the set design of Violetter Schnee at the Staatsoper Unter den Linden and La Bohème at the Opera National de Paris both directed by Claus Guth, as well as Elektra at the Oper Bonn and Tristan und Isolde directed at Oper Leipzig both directed by Enrico Lübke, Martha directed by Katharina Thoma at Oper Frankfurt, Samson and Dalila directed by Damian Szifron at Staatsoper Berlin, Die Passagierin at Oper Graz directed by Nadja Loschky and Winterreise at Schauspiel Leipzig with director Enrico Lübke. During the coronavirus crisis he designed La serve padrona for Oper Frankfurt (director Katharina Thoma).

In 2021 he designed the set for Salome at Bolshoi Theatre in Moscow and at the MET Opera in New York in 2025 (director Claus Guth), also collaborating with director Richard Brunel Rigoletto at Opera national de Lorraine, with Immo Karaman Otello at Staatsoper Hannover Verdi's and with Evgeny Titov Macbeth at Schauspielhaus Düsseldorf.

2022 started with the set design at Staatsoper Unter den Linden for The Makropulos Affair, collaborating with director Claus Guth, then Das kalte Herz at Schauspiel Leipzig (director Enrico Lübke), Shirine with director Richard Brunel (world premiere by Thierry Escaich and Atiq Rahimi), Bluthaus at the Bayerische Staatsoper which won the the Best International Prize at Musiktheaterpreis 2022 in Austria (music by Georg Friedrich Haas, director Claus Guth), Il Viaggio, Dante at Festival Aix En Provence (world premiere by Pascal Dusapin, director Claus Guth), Trittico (Puccini) at Salzburger Festspiele (director Christof Loy), Alice in Wonderland by Pierangelo Valtinoni at Opernhaus Zürich (director Nadja Loschky) and On purge bébé (composer Philippe Boesmans) at Theatre de la Monnaie collaborating with director Richard Brunel.

He designed the set for Don Carlo for the opening of the season 2022/23 at Teatro San Carlo in Naples (director Claus Guth). In 2023 he collaborated with the director Katharina Thoma on Don Giovanni at opera Leipzig and at the Komische Oper Berlin, with director Nadja Loschky he designed Hamlet (music by Ambroise Thomas) and in 2024 Giulio Cesare in Egitto at Oper Frankfurt. Furthermore he designed production such as at d'Haus, Düsseldorf Richard III and King



Lear (director Evgeny Titov), Opernhaus Zürich La Rondine (director Christof Loy), Wiener Staatsoper Turandot (director Claus Guth), Opera national de Paris La Vestale (director Lydia Steier), Opera de Lyon Wozzeck (director Richard Brunel), Opera du Rhin Ariodante (director Jetske Mijnsen) and Oper Frankfurt Macbeth (director R.B. Schlather) and Così fan tutte (director Mariame Clément), Festival Aix-En-Provence Samson (director Claus Guth), Louise (director Christof Loy) and Cabaret (director Claus Guth) at Residenz Theater.

He was invited to the Theatertreffen in Berlin 1998 and 1999 he got the Austrian Kainz Medal Award for the set design of Claus Peymann kauft sich eine Hose und geht mit mir essen. In 2004, he was nominated for the Nestroy Theater Award for the set design of Die Zeit der Plancks at the Burgtheater in Vienna.

Etienne Pluss won the Faust Preis 2019 creating the set design of Violetter Schnee at the Staatsoper Unter den Linden (director Claus Guth).