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Freedom Security Progress (2015)

The act of putting the words freedom, security and progress in the title of this work, the words that the work makes visible on the photographs showing the names of factories and corporations in public ownership in the socialist Yugoslavia, constitutes a critical and poetical act which aims to shed light on both the universal dimension of human activities and presence and their particular and local instantiations.

Today, when we witness growing insecurity, destabilization of many aspects of freedom, and a rising number of humanitarian crises and natural disasters around the world, the question of *freedom* can be thought about from various historical and cultural, global and regional perspectives. If we talk about the region of socialist Yugoslavia, thematization of the question of freedom is manifest in the stance taken on the events and circumstances that began developing back in the time of student protests in 1968, which was a planetary phenomenon, when freedom of expression, thought, conviction had to be regained once again, which is what we are fighting for, in a new way, at this present moment, as well as on the events which followed after 1989, when, contrary to the notion of freedom apparently flourishing in the rest of the world after the fall of the Iron Curtain and the Berlin Wall, freedom in the territory of the SFRY started to be modified to such an extent that it became, once more, unfulfilled longing, hope and a dream.

On the other hand, *security* as a process and a feeling is one of those aspects of reality that is slowly disappearing on the global scale right before our eyes. However, compared to the Yugoslav region and considered from the perspective of an eyewitness of a succession of several forms of social system, the permanence of the security has been steadily reducing, and now it remains to be one of general social goals and aspirations and unavoidable day-to-day topics.

Progress, as an expected state of things to be attained or an aspiration to be fulfilled, is nowadays mostly perceived as something related to individual ambitions, disciplines or professions, contrary to the way this notion was understood in the socialist Yugoslavia and, although we are witnessing the appearance of global trends and the inclusiveness of cultures, nothing is different in the scope of this new apprehension and creation of reality as compared to the question of progress in general.

What is different now with regard to the language, the system or the society in the SFRY is the fact that we can no longer talk of freedom, security or progress as something

common, or as processes that concern the majority, the collective, the community. The scope in which these notions, processes or experiences are applied, sustained or lived through is presently reduced to personal, individual needs, feelings or goals.

The decision to use personal archive for this work, in addition to the photographs which show the names of factories and corporations that are public property, and those from the archive of the *Museum of Yugoslav History*, arose from memories of the time when believing in the accomplishment of *freedom, security* and *progress*, and the spreading of the idea of togetherness was shared by both the old and the young generations. Photographs from the personal archive are here meant to serve as documents of one's physical presence, i.e. participation in the Gatherings of Brotherhood and Unity in 1981, and collective visits paid to the monuments to the victims of the World War II, as well as real experience of a time that is, from the present-day dystopian perspective, perceived of as utopia.

Thus, horizontal use of the *image* activates the questions of ephemerality and memory, turns into space-time and the carrier of a constructed reality shaped by the object of desire: freedom, security, progress.

Through dichotomies between personal and communal, individual and social, local and global, the work *Freedom Security Progress* aims to explain the paradox of "risk society" in which we are living. Namely, just like the society created in the socialist Yugoslavia in the name of freedom, security and progress not only failed to make them sustainable, but rather disappeared itself, in the present-day world of global market capital, financial crises and climate changes on global scale, the same questions of freedom, security and progress are changing the way in which we think about the contemporary society, and it doesn't seem that they have been successfully established or realized on the personal, individual or local level, while to certain extent they even acquire completely new or unknown dimensions.

If the need for security now pervades our freedoms, while the need for progress overrides both, perhaps it is art that constitutes the sphere in which their reconfiguration and different semantic contextualization can serve to create responsible participation in the production of reality, the "here and now" of the freedom, security and progress.