



Published in:

Jasna Koteska, "Boro Rudić, Exit", *Boro Rudić, Exit* (photography monograph), Propoint, Skopje, 2018, p. 2-5.

ISBN 978-608-66095-0-4

Exit

Jasna Koteska

[...] Rudić's territory is linked to vectors of departure, which is why this book is called Exit. Still, this does not mean leaving the territory. Leaving it just means entry into a new territory. This is the reason why his photographs are full of signs, emissions of signals, railway tracks, paths, steps, streets, entrances, fences, all being there as signals intended for seekers. The objective of these signals is to be aux aguets, lookouts for the observant eye, the camera never looks in panic in the hands of Rudić. He catches the folds of the landscape, the line of the rock in order to discover the new syntax of the space. The photographs from Exit are not there as portraits of culture, but aim to capture a specific spectral dimension of reality, akin to the yellow sky or field in Van Gogh or

the grass in Munch. This does not mean that Rudic is stepping over into another form of art, that of painting. He remains within the realm of photography, but at the same time he is always with one foot in the world of painting.

1.

When we first met, Boro Rudic explained to me as follows the concept for his latest photographic book, Exit. He told me that the project consists of four cycles. The first cycle is Entry, the entrance into the city, the habitat, being headed to a place where people live. The second cycle is Messages, which represents the city itself. The third is Exit – leaving the city, reaching for the outside. The fourth cycle is the Finish constituting a form of liberation, expansion, the possibility of an exit, a new birth. The photographs are printed on hand-made paper, whereas people and animals in them are silhouettes always seen from afar, in passing or in the act of leaving. Listening to Boro Rudic (the bard of Macedonian photography and the holder of the highest professional title master photographer), explaining in a calm, collected and complex manner the concept of the Exit exhibition, I caught myself thinking instinctively – he is not just a master of photography, but also a veritable philosopher of existence. Rudic does not possess “just” a photographic eye, a must for any genius photographer, or “just” a talent for perception, something without which he could not frame the passing world – no, he also possesses the cultivated vocabulary of a philosopher.

It is as a philosopher that Boro Rudic proposes through Exit a new concept of desire. This is not a desire for the individual object: a tree, a path, traffic signs, the human silhouette, an animal, a chair, the railroad, the bicycle, the rock, the field. It is the representation of the overall context, an aggregation, a total image which appears in that singular moment when the objects accumulate to the stage of their complete meaning. Rudic’s photographic art is not theater, because theater can be constructed just like you construct a factory, this being just a matter of production. Rudic’s photographs constitute the opposite of the delirium of the theater, because they are not linked with history, the tribes of men, to what Rimbaud described as: “I’m an animal, a Negro“. This delirium can hardly be defined as geographical or political, but is rather defined by the family. Desire is something of a different nature. The world of Boro Rudic is not confined within the small intimate geographical or political family, it is no mere insignificant family affair. Rudic does not reduce objects to a single meaning (horse is the image of the father, the tree is the image of the tribe). If there is delirium in Rudic, it is more of delirium as a cosmic category. Not in the sense of a commendation for choosing a territory (“I entered the room, I entered the city, and now I am exiting”). Certainly not. We find in Rudic a process of deterritorialisation, through which he feels the direction, the situation, the context. He does not partake in the landscape in order to prevent an event from happening, he neither tries to parent or police the situation, rather he is the one who is on the lookout to make sure that things are not reduced to banality. Rudic does not employ banal elements, nor does his art serve as a cheap ploy for fantasy. The photography of Boro Rudic is more of an attempt to stop the world, the people, the objects and the landscapes from turning into banalities.

2.

Territory. The photography of Rudic is full of silhouettes of people and animals. Yet, this is no “domesticated” space, the space of families and pets, just as the photographs of the city by Rudic

are not mere postcards of the city. The city is freed from the multitudes of people, it's a city in which people have organized space according to their signalizations. Rudic depicts individual, dual and multiplied objects (folded chairs under a Che Guevara graffiti, mannequins in boxes behind a fire extinguisher), while some of the objects are slowly disappearing, nearing the end of their life or are out of use. No one notices them anymore, because no one misses them. Yet, they are not objects that scathe. They are objects of the territory. Rudic's territory is not rounded, we can see the elements which comprise the territory, yet his territory is not submissive to property or estate. The city and the suburbs in Rudic are not barbaric, even when they are abandoned. You can feel that someone has been there and is just gone for the moment and will be back, the territory is not abandoned and empty.

Rudic's territory is linked to vectors of departure, which is why this book is called Exit. Still, this does not mean leaving the territory. Leaving it just means entry into a new territory. This is the reason why his photographs are full of signs, emissions of signals, railway tracks, paths, steps, streets, entrances, fences, all being there as signals intended for seekers. The objective of these signals is to be aux aguets, lookouts for the observant eye, the camera never looks in panic in the hands of Rudic. He catches the folds of the landscape, the line of the rock in order to discover the new syntax of the space. The photographs from Exit are not there as portraits of culture, but aim to capture a specific spectral dimension of reality, akin to the yellow sky or field in Van Gogh or the grass in Munch. This does not mean that Rudic is stepping over into another form of art, that of painting. He remains within the realm of photography, but at the same time he is always with one foot in the world of painting.

3.

Colour. The color in Rudic is always opaque, creating a dreamlike or vision-like atmosphere. However, this is not for the purpose of presenting everyday life as grey, quit to the contrary. The color in Rudic is gnostic, in the sense that for the gnostics the universe is still not fully formed, it's still not fully a reality. Gnostic philosophy states that the universe is intentionally created incomplete, resembling more a periphery as it is depicted by Rudic: rough land, tufts of grass, walls rising over dumps, cracks in the sidewalks, crooked fences, half-finished buildings. All of it resembling a pre-ontological ancient material from which the universe was molded, but yet to be finished. Another reason why through the cracks of all of the structures (buildings, lawns, playgrounds) peers this pre-existing matter. Rudic's universe is a gnostic universe with an authentic affection and understanding, no matter how melancholic, for the creator of this incomplete and imperfect universe, but one devoid of the sense of horror or ontological defeat.

This idea of an incomplete gnostic universe appears on two levels in Rudic's work: in the first and fourth cycle (Entry and Finish) the world is free and ready for a new act of creation, a better reality. In the middle cycles (Messages and Exit) Rudic tells the story of the world as it is: the scenery is dominated by traffic signalization, paths, streets, railway tracks, as well as used and discarded objects. Aware that the world is incomplete, there is no celebration of the human figure, they are only present as silhouettes. Any portrayal would only prove an inadequate copy, an excessive act. Sometimes, graveyards appear at the moment of exit. They represent the symbolical permission for the world of the dead to mix with the world of the living and nature. Parks, pathways, trees are a frequent theme in the second cycle Messages where the city is represented. Parks in the middle of the city are the materialization of the idea about the symbolical node that binds the living and

the dead, a connection which aims at breathing vitality into death and the idea that death is not the final destination of life. This is the reason why Rudic integrates both living and withered trees, to illustrate the way in which we humans learn from vegetation. Just like a dead tree allows for his decomposing part to feed another plant and to re-enter the cycle of life, so is death thus liberated from under its marble tombstones and allowed to create a new life.

4.

Exit. The birth of art is closely linked to the constitution of territory and its later abandonment. Each territory is formed through the use of lines and colors, the basic determinants of art. The caveman painter, the Paleolithic artist left without exception an imprint of a hand on his or hers painting, with each hand lacking a finger or more. The thumb-less signature is the first artist's signature in the world, but also the first one that teaches us that art is created only through the act of leaving behind your territory, leaving behind a finger, the cave, the city, only through Exit. Art is leaving behind a thought, a habit, a friend, a lover, an object, a finger, a territory.

The act of abandoning is not a selfish gesture, quite the opposite. Staying is selfish, leaving is what we truly learn from the land. People most often do not know how to die, because they don't know how to leave things behind. Animals, on the other hand, always look for a quiet corner to depart peacefully, always looking to find a territory for their death. Animals know how to abandon spaces which are still hospitable and locations which are still good to live in. Art is impossible without the act of abandonment. Look at Kafka and Kierkegaard and their abandoned marriage engagements. Or the colors of Van Gogh and Gauguin, two great colorists. They use color in their works delicately, unobtrusively. It took them years of doubting and hesitation, Deleuze states, to accept themselves as worthy enough of color.

5.

The City. Texture. The city regularly serves as the theater, the stage where the author goes to purchase his or her products, characters, just like the farmer goes to the livestock market. But, this is not the case with Rudic. He doesn't go to the city as to a market, his camera doesn't try to capture stock images, he looks for the very character of what is called the "City". He rejects the notion of the city as a theater, he doesn't try to domesticate it. Rudic is searching for the "original", its wildness and melancholy, thus underlining the differences between the worker in photography (stock photography) and the artist. The city is populated with wild originality. The world of Boro Rudic is the world of partial emptiness, but not a forbidden zone in any way. What are the societal implications of his photographs? 1) Does it represent a post-transitional world with its half-constructed and unfinished buildings, 2) Or is it a post-industrial world of disasters: biochemical and architectural, 3) Finally, is it a secularised world where the nomenclature coexists peacefully with the field and the lake. Every photograph exudes an aura of mystery, then how to interpret them? Rudic tells us that there is no border between the urban and the rural, the city and the passage. The border is reality itself, the Exit is made of the same matter as the city.

Rudic's photography possesses at the same time two opposites and two excesses: the matter from which the world is made and the void which has allowed for the possibility of a world. What is striking in the work of Rudic is his specific photographic materialism, the direct physical influence of texture on his photography. It is the texture which generates an effect of pacifistic expansion of time, suspension of urgency similar to the works by Van Gogh, a sense of massiveness and spiritual

corporeality, as if is made of a “material capable of sentient thought”. The city here is a post-industrial wasteland, overgrown vegetation sprawling between the walls, concrete tunnels, railway tracks, staid water in a quarry, silhouettes of animals wading through thickets of wild flowers. Nature overlapping with industrial civilization or the remnants of human artifacts (folded chairs, fire extinguisher, Che Guevara graffiti). This is the matter which opposes aggressive domination and exploitation and just like matter itself – comes to life.

Translated from Macedonian by Milan Damjanoski