

Fotografije izmenjenog pejzaža - Mihailo Vasiljević

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Mihailo Vasiljević je fotograf i umetnik koji stvara i koristi fotografiju. Njegov posvećen i istraživački pristup fotografskom mediju u smislu teorije i prakse rezultira bogatom umetničkom produkcijom sačinjenom od velikog broja fotografskih serija, kao što su *Trans.* (2008–2016), *Novi novac* (2011–2016) i *Topografija Beograda* (2011–2016). Njegova umetnička praksa nastaje u okviru dugoročnih opservacijskih projekata koji najčešće bivaju posvećeni kritici određenih društvenih pojava. Vodeći se tezom da od svih umetničkih medija fotografija ima *najdinamičniji odnos nepodudaranja sa umetnošću*, Vasiljević pristupa upotrebi fotografije u činu konstatovanja stanja stvari. Ovaj metod primenjuje kao kritički mehanizam prema različitim pojavama u bližem i širem okruženju, ali i kao metod učitavanja značenjskog narativa u svoj umetnički izraz. Na samom početku šestogodišnjeg projekta *Topografija Beograda* (2011–2016), Mihailo Vasiljević započinje svoje istraživanje na polju arhitekture Beograda, produkujući veliki broj fotografija koje predstavljaju njegov savremeni izgled. Iz ovakvog opservacijskog, a istovremeno umetničkog projekta proizilazi konstatacija specifične istorije diskontinuiteta na polju urbanizma i arhitekture Beograda, koja odslikava društveno-politički tranzicioni kontekst. Istorija beogradske arhitekture beleži širenje grada i veliki razvoj od polovine XIX veka, kada se u arhitekturi oseća veći uticaj Zapada. Nakon velikih razaranja tokom II svetskog rata, sprovedena je planska obnova i izgradnja grada. Arhitektura se u razvojnom razdoblju zasnivala na izučavanju i poštovanju akademskih pravila, dok je danas situacija drugačija, što postaje sasvim očigledno u urbanom pejzažu grada. U savremenoj arhitekturi Beograda nisu zastupljeni ni koncepti socijalne pravde, niti izazovi estetskih načela. Uloga stručne javnosti u *primeni* urbanizma kao naučne discipline koja se bavi urbanim planiranjem i urbanom sociologijom, kojom se oblikuju gradovi i utiče na život u njima, u Beogradu se danas smatra nepotrebnom i čak nepoželjnom. Logika profita i klijentelizma istrгла je gradnju iz ruku urbanista, zavladao je investitorski urbanizam koji razvoj gradova vodi nepredvidljivim tokovima.

Projekat *Topografija Beograda* (2011–2016), nastao u kontekstu umetničke prakse, ima naglašenu utilitarnu vrednost. Fotografije u ovoj seriji nose *topografske* nazive prema nazivima ulica, a na njima su predstavljene pojedinačne građevine, ulice, trgovi, raskrsnice, delovi grada. Nasuprot razglednicama i turističkim promotivnim fotografijama gradskog pejzaža, fotografije Mihaila Vasiljevića predstavljaju vizuelno neprivlačan sadržaj. Autor nastoji da svoj pogled na ovaj urbani pejzaž izoštri i oslobodi ga od subjektivnog i emotivnog, pa tako bar naizgled nastaju objektivni fotografski prikazi Beograda. Možemo ih posmatrati kao dokumente koji konstatuju i komentarišu promenu arhitektonskog pejzaža grada. Vasiljevićevi „hladni“ prikazi urbanog pejzaža, uz primetno odsustvo estetizacije, fotografisani tehničkom kamerom, redak su primer ovakvog fotografisanja Beograda. Jedinствен istorijski izuzetak čine fotografije pukovnika Jeremije Stanojevića, koji je tridesetih godina XX veka, u periodu između dva rata, na sličan način fotografisao beogradske ulice. Ipak, u umetničkom kontekstu mogu se pronaći fotografije i autori na koje referiše Mihailo Vasiljević kako svojim rukopisom tako i nazivom same serije fotografija.

Jedna od najuticajnijih fotografskih izložbi, održana 1975. godine u Muzeju Džordž Istmen Haus u Ročesteru nosila je naziv *Nova topografija: Fotografije izmenjenog pejzaža*. Kustos Vilijam Dženkins na ovoj izložbi predstavlja radove nekih od najvećih imena iz sveta fotografije i umetnosti poput Bernda i Hile Beher, Stivena Šora, Nikolasa Niksona, Frenka Golkija, Roberta Adamsa, Luisa Bolca i drugih. U osnovi sopstvenog kustoskog koncepta, Dženkins nepretenciozno realizuje ideju rušenja mita o umetničkoj fotografiji kao lepoj, dopadljivoj slici. U poetici *eliminacije subjektivnosti*, odnosno

distanciranja od fotografisanja u smislu ekspresivnog čina, kakva je prikazana na ovoj izložbi, uočava se srodnost fotografije Mihaila Vasiljevića sa ovom istorijsko-umetničkom referencom. Izložba Nova topografija simbolički se može uzeti kao jedan od formalnih momenata definitivnog ulaska fotografije u svet savremene umetnosti, a imala je i ogroman uticaj na dalji razvoj i poziciju fotografije kao medija umetničkog izražavanja.

Protoklo je više od četrdeset godina od izložbe u Ročesteru, a u određenim sredinama, pa i u našoj, potrebno je iznova naglasiti da konceptijski svesno dovođenje fotografije u dodir sa stvarnošću može da iznedri najkompleksnija umetnička rešenja. Izložba Topografija Beograda (2011–2016) proizvod je sistematičnosti, kontinuiteta i posvećenosti – svega onoga što bi podrazumevala kontinuirana briga o urbanizmu, materijalnoj kulturi i kulturnom nasleđu. Ovaj rad koji pronalazi balans između ideje i vizuelnog rešenja, primenjen na slučaj Beograda, progovara univerzalnim jezikom i postavlja pitanja smisla i sistema vrednosti.

Izložba *Topografija Beograda* – Mihailo Vasiljević
Kustosi: Miroslav Karić, Slađana Petrović Varagić
Galerija Artget, Kulturni centar Beograda
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Photographs of Man-Altered Landscape - Mihailo Vasiljević

Sladana Petrović Varagić & Miroslav Karić

Mihailo Vasiljević is a photographer and artist who creates and uses photography. His dedicated and exploratory approach to the photographic medium in terms of theory and practice results in a rich art production, consisting of a large number of photographic series, such as *Trans.* (2008–2016), *New Money* (2011–2016) and *Belgrade Topographics* (2011–2016). His art practice develops within the framework of long-term observation projects that are most often dedicated to the criticism of certain social phenomena. Guided by the thesis that from all artistic media it is photography that has *the most dynamic mismatch relationship with art*, Vasiljević approaches the use of photography in the act of verifying the state of things. He applies this method as a critical mechanism towards different phenomena in his nearer and wider environment, but also as a method of loading a meaningful narrative into his artistic expression.

At the very start of the five-year project *Belgrade Topographics* (2011–2016), Mihailo Vasiljević began his research in the field of Belgrade's architecture, producing a large number of photographs that show the present appearance of the city. This observational and, at the same time, artistic project establishes the fact that there has been a specific history of discontinuity in the field of urbanism and architecture of Belgrade that reflects the social and political context of transition. The history of Belgrade's architecture has recorded the expansion of the city and a rapid development since the mid-nineteenth century, marked by a considerable influence of the West. After the great destruction during World War II, the planned reconstruction and building of the city was undertaken. In the developmental period, the city's architecture was based on the study of and adherence to academic rules, while today the situation is different, which has become all too apparent in its urban landscape. The contemporary architecture of Belgrade includes neither the concepts of social justice, nor the challenges of aesthetic principles. The role of the professionals in the *application* of urbanism, as a scientific discipline dealing with urban planning and urban sociology, that shapes cities and influences life in them, is considered unnecessary and even undesirable in Belgrade now. The logic of profit and clientelism snatched construction of the city from urban planners; investment urbanism now dominates, leading the development of cities to unpredictable flows.

The *Belgrade Topographics* Project (2011–2016), created in the context of art practice, has a pronounced utilitarian value. The photographs in this series carry *topographic* names, the names of the streets, and they show individual buildings, streets, squares, crossroads, parts of the city. Contrary to postcards and tourist promotional photographs of the city landscape, photographs by Mihailo Vasiljević are visually unattractive. The author strives to sharpen his view of this urban landscape and free it from the subjective and emotional, and so objective photographic records of Belgrade, at least seemingly, are created. We can observe them as documents that confirm and comment on the change of the architectural landscape of the city. Vasiljević's "cold" records of urban landscapes, with a notable absence of aesthetization, photographed with a technical camera, are a rare example of taking photographs of Belgrade in this way. A unique historical exception is Colonel Jeremija Stanojević, who photographed Belgrade's streets in a similar way in the 1930s, between the two wars. However, in the context of art, photographs and authors can be found to which Mihailo Vasiljević refers by both his handwriting and the name of his photo series.

The title of one of the most influential photographic exhibitions, held at the George Eastman House Museum in Rochester in 1975, was *New Topographics: Photographs of Man-Altered Landscape*. The curator of that exhibition, William Jenkins, presented works by some of the greatest names in the world of photography and art, such as Bernd and Hilla Becher, Stephen Shore, Nicholas Nixon, Frank Gohlke,

Robert Adams, Lewis Baltz, and others. At the root of his own curatorial concept, Jenkins unpretentiously realized the idea of shattering the myth of art photography as beautiful, appealing. In the poetics of the *elimination of subjectivity*, that is, the distancing from photographing as an expressive activity, as shown at this exhibition, we notice the similarity of Vasiljević's photographs with this historical and artistic reference. The exhibition *New Topographics* can be taken, symbolically, as one of the formal moments of the definitive entry of photography into the world of contemporary art, and it had a profound influence on the further development and position of photography as a medium of artistic expression. More than forty years have elapsed since the exhibition in Rochester, and in certain environments, also in our own, it is necessary to repeat that the conceptually, conscious bringing photographs in touch with reality can give rise to the most complex artistic solutions. The Belgrade Topographics Exhibition (2011–2016) is a product of systematicness, continuity and dedication – all that continuous care of urbanism, material culture and cultural heritage would imply. This work, which finds the balance between the idea and visual solution, applied to the case of Belgrade, speaks the universal language and opens the questions of meaning and the system of values.

Exhibition *Belgrade Topographics* – Mihailo Vasiljević
Curators: Miroslav Karić, Slađana Petrović Varagić
Artget Gallery, Cultural Centre Belgrade
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