



NOMADIC JOURNEY AND SPIRIT OF PLACES

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Preface

For over 40 years, I have collected stationary from different guest houses, motels, inns, bed-and-breakfasts, and hotels. When I started the collection, I did not have any clear purpose. For me it was just about the recollection of the places where I stayed and my fascination with the names of the hotels and the diverse stationary designs, the quality of paper, etc.

Then, one day, a very clear idea appeared in my mind that this should be an artist's book. I believe we as humans need to keep moving forwards, and my own life has been purely nomadic. My home was everywhere I went because my home is my own body.

This book should be seen as a diary filled with writings, poetry, cut-outs, collages, photographs, and drawings printed on stationary that preserves the memory of my journeys. I wish to call this book *Nomadic Journey and Spirit of Places*.

On the choice of images:

Before I started working on this book, I was confronted with boxes and boxes of material that I had collected throughout my travels. I never threw anything away—maybe as a reflection that I come from Yugoslavia, where everything can be used as evidence at some point against you, you never know. These boxes of material also served to maintain the memory of my diverse life. I did not look into the boxes for a long time, but finally, I had a reason to do so and make this book. I do not think I had less pressure to work on any other book in my whole life than this one. There was something so liberating. There was a sense of freedom, no restrictions on what I could or could not use. It was intoxicating.

Each material found its place on the right stationary in front of me. But when we finished working, I had a bigger question: How can I put these materials together? Which order should I use? Should it be chronological? Should it be

divided by groups? Drawings? Countries? The questions only created more restrictions and obstacles. I wanted to approach a concept that could cause a freshness to flow, and that is how I turned to John Cage's system of chance operations. With this system you can never go wrong. You are not the one to decide; the universe will decide; chance will decide. All you have to do is accept it. I printed all the pages out, cut them, put them in a big bowl, and picked them while blindfolded. The rule of this game is that when you decide to do it, you have to be ready for the consequences, because it cannot always be the choice you like, and the new combinations will bring new meaning.

Regarding the cover:

For any book, the cover is really important—it has to communicate content and message at the same time. My approach to it was very simple: I was looking at cut-outs of newspapers that I had collected for years, mostly from my own country and later from all over the world. I looked through the material and was repeatedly caught by one particular image, a cut-out from a newspaper I found when I was very young in Belgrade. There was something special about the picture itself—a very old woman, who not only could be my grandmother but anyone's grandmother, and a child. Both of them carry identical handmade canes. There was something about the image that absolutely reflects the determination to take the journey into the unknown. The position of the bodies and the focus in the eyes, they are ready to start the journey. During the time I spent working on this book, that image haunted me, and I knew it was the right cover. It is very important to note that the image is not perfectly cut so you can see on the side that there are Cyrillic letters from some Slavic country, which just so happens to be my own.