

ISTANBUL



STANKO ABADŽIĆ

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Stanko Abadžić

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Sinu Srđanu
/
For my son Srdjan

Stanko Abadzic is the epitome of a street photographer. His wonderful black and white photographs of Istanbul illustrate that point perfectly. He captures all the colorful people and places with a sense of vitality and magic. He manages some how to capture real moments untainted by the camera's presence. He, more than any of his contemporaries, has taken up the mantle of Henri Cartier-Bresson with a genius and wit, and an amazing eye for the moment.

Alex Novak, Contemporaryworks, USA

Sanjarija trenutka

„Sve to nije bio ni grad, ni crkva, ni rijeka, ni boja, ni svjetlost, ni sjena; bila je to sanjarija. Bio je to jedan od onih neopisivih trenutaka kada čovjek osjeća u sebi nešto što se uspavljuje i nešto što se budi.“

Victor Hugo, *En voyage*

Gledati gradove – pridružiti prostoru značenje, neznancima priče, mjestima misli. Posljednja dva desetljeća svog umjetničkog traženja posvetio je Stanko Abadžić europskim metropolama, fiksirajući ih u vremenu srebrom i svjetlošću. Prag, Pariz, Berlin, Zagreb, sada i magični Istanbul, grad na razmeđu Istoka i Zapada, grad obaju svjetova, grad granice i susreta, povijesti i nastajanja. Smjestimo li Istanbul u kontekst dosadašnjih Abadžićevih velegradskih ciklusa, otkrit će nam se nekoliko elemenata s kojima se fotograf susreće prvi put – drevna je prijestolnica najstarija među onima koje je do sada snimao, jedina na moru, jedina duboko obilježena siromaštvom i mnogoljudnošću te najbliža Istoku. No Abadžić se ne posvećuje tim razlikama, već u Istanbulu pronalazi one motive koji ga fasciniraju u svim gradovima, ma koliko različiti bili, a koji proizlaze iz jedinstvenog susreta čovjeka, vremena i prostora, u strogo zadanim urbanim koordinatama. Kao štovatelja odlučujućeg trenutka ne zanimaju ga specifičnosti mjesta, već momenti koje zaleduje snagom percepcije, odnosno zanatom bilježenja. Njegov je pristup uvijek istovremeno klasičan i prepoznatljivo njegov.

Odnos čovjeka i grada, klasična tema umjetničke fotografije, i ovaj je put u središtu Abadžićeva interesa, manifestirajući se kroz tri jasno artikulirana interesna žarišta. Prvo i najvažnije jest sučeljavanje stvarnosti grada i intimnog realiteta pojedinca.

Paradigmatska fotografija istanbulskog ciklusa, u tom smislu, jest ona na kojoj vidimo leđima nam okrenuta čovjeka što sam sjedi za stolom neke birtije. Prepušten mislima i melankoliji trenutka, njegov pogled usmjeren je prema nečem izvanjskom što sami ne vidimo, on gleda u ono nešto što je izvan stvarnosti same fotografije, gleda ravno u svoju sanjariju. Iznad njega, na zidu, slika cvijeća i fotografija nekog moćnika što drsko zuri u nas, kao da nas poziva na dvoboj. Dvije paralelne prisutnosti dinamički se sučeljavaju u prostoru fotografije – intimna sadašnjost nepoznatog čovjeka i teatarska izazovnost povijesne ličnosti. Te dvije nerazdvojne, a opet nespojive, razine iskustva česta su Abadžićeva tema. Grad je prostor odvojen od stvarnosti pojedinca, groblje povijesti bezimenih i poprište budućnosti svih onih koje nikada nećemo upoznati. A opet u njemu se svakodnevno događaju i naši mali dramoleti koji ne čine ni prošlost ni budućnost grada u kojem živimo, osim ako koji od naših nezaustavljivo prolaznih trenutaka, vječnim ne načini oko fotoaparata. Te male titraje Abadžić prikazuje razotkrivajući simetrije između povijesti, koja je najopipljiviji sloj gradskog prostora, te trenutne stvarnosti onih koji se njime kreću.

Drugi Abadžićev interes jest onaj za geometrijske oblike što ih pronalazi u kaosu stvarnosti, opredmećujući fotografijom njihove duhovne strukture. Svaka od ovih fotografija posjeduje lako uočljive likovne kvalitete majstorske kompozicije i vješto kontrastiranih svjetlosnih ploha, no i onaj neuhvatljivi višak značenja. Misaono oko fotografa nije tek ono koje stvarnost likovno transponira, već i ono koje arhivira njene dublje slojeve. Tako kada fotografira zatvoren prozorčić zakriven rešetkama od šiblja na nekoj istanbulskoj ulici, nije fasciniran samo neiscrpnom likovnošću plohe zida što ga uokviruje, već i pričom što se iza njega

sigurno skriva. Abadžićeva je fotografija tako poziv na dvostruku sanjariju – onu meditativnu što je u nama budi vrijeme, upisanu u pore površine, i onu kreacijsko-imaginacijsku u kojoj ne možemo odoljeti, a da ne izmaštamo roman o nekome tko taj prozor otvara i zatvara. Slično je i s fotografijom stepenica, na čijem dnu vidimo djevojčicu u bijeloj haljini koja drži bijeli balon. Pronađena likovnost prizora u kojoj se dinamika stepenica transponira u duhovnu strukturu beskonačnog ponavljanja, obogaćena je naletom stvarnosti utjelovljene u lik djevojčice koja kao da levitira nošena maštom – svojim čarobnim bijelim balonom. I naposljetku, naravno, uvijek ostaje svjetlost. Kao apostol analognog pisanja svjetlošću, Abadžić gaji nepresušno divljenje za manifestacije svjetla i sjene, čiju čaroliju neumorno fiksira. Rimbaud je svojevremeno pronašao vječnost, otkrivši je u neiscrpoj promjeni zrcaljenja sunca na površini mora. Takve vječnosti skrivene u detaljima stvarnog, nastanjuju brojne Abadžićeve fotografije. Nekad je to sjena krošanja na plohi zida, nekad refleksija sunca u zabačenoj uličici, nekad sjena čovjeka ulovljena u igri s onima grada, a nekad refleksija neba u vodi koja je s njega potekla – u lokvi kiše što onako nepokretna sanjari o slobodi susjedne morske pucine.

Gradovi, kako ih snima Abadžić, jesu prostor sanjarije, stvoren da bi ga se čitalo, a ljude koje u njima susrećemo, možemo samo zamišljati promatrajući ih „s leđa“ i maštajući o njihovim toplim svjetovima, smještenima između zadanih gradskih okvira ulice, trga i ograde. Abadžić se svojim fotografijama divi objema razinama gradskog tijela, onoj povijesnoj koja postoji u vremenu, kao i onoj intimnoj koju čini beskraj nezabilježenih otkućaja njegovih stanovnika. Gledamo misli onih koji putuju gradskim ulicama, sanjareći s njima o svjetovima koji jesu

i nisu grad koji ih okružuje. Stoga se istanbulski ciklus ne bavi poviješću tog, po svemu fascinantnog, grada, već stvarnošću onih koji sada u njemu dišu, misle, zaboravljaju. Tako, naizgled neočekivano, Abadžić među svoje veličanstvene vizure poviješću pregnantne metropole, uvrštava i zapanjujuće neposredan portret djevojčice koja je svoj pogled, poput melankoličnog sanjara, uperila negdje izvan stvarnosti fotografije, u prostor nedostupnog, odnosno savršeno imaginarnog. U rukama je čvrsto stisnula svoju najbolju prijateljicu - veliku bijelu pticu koja ne može letjeti, ali može o tome sanjati. Lice svijeta u tom je smislu univerzalno, kako u Pragu i Parizu, tako i u Istanbulu i Berlinu. Grad diše mislima i snovima svojih stanovnika koji, ulovljeni u labirint ulica, postojano žive kroz snove i misli. Na Abadžićevim fotografijama ne izranja slika grada, već bogatstvo svijesti njegovih stanovnika koji se druže s pticama, duboko razmišljaju dok pognuto hodaju pustim ulicama, odaju se melankoliji po pustim birtijama i žive skriveni zatvorenim prozorima. Kada snima grad, Abadžić ga istovremeno sanja i gleda, vješto spajajući realno i imaginarno u crno-bijeloj igri stvarnosti fotografije. Djevojčica stiže veliku bijelu pticu, a Abadžić u leću smješta sve ono što se u gradu ne vidi, a što ga čini živo beskonačnim i zbog čega nas, dok gledamo ono što je tako vješto za nas zabilježio, istovremeno prožima vedrina i melankolija. U kojem god gradu da se zatekao, Abadžić će ga preobraziti u sanjariju o vječnom trenutku, sazdanom od čarolije svjetlosti i misli koja je uporno promatra.

Višnja Vukašinović
Vukovar, studeni 2014.
<http://felix-trot.tumblr.com/>

A Moment's Reverie

"All that was neither a city, nor a church, nor a river, nor colour, nor light, nor shadow; it was reverie. It was one of those ineffable moments when one feels something in himself which is going to sleep and something which is awakening."

Victor Hugo, *En voyage*

Looking at cities – assigning meaning to space, stories to strangers, thoughts to places. Stanko Abadžić dedicated the last two decades of his artistic search to the metropolises of Europe, taking hold of them in time with silver and light. Prague, Paris, Berlin, Zagreb, and now magical Istanbul, the city at the dividing line between the East and the West, the city of both worlds, the city of border and contact, of history and unfoldment. When we view Istanbul in the context of Abadžić's previously produced cycles on major cities, we discover several elements which the photographer encounters for the first time – the ancient capital is the oldest he has photographed so far, it alone is located on the sea-coast, it alone is deeply marked by poverty and heavily populated, and it lies the closest to the Orient. But Abadžić does not focus on the differences. In Istanbul he finds the motives which fascinate him in all cities, however varied they may be, motives derived from a unique coming together of man, time and space, in strictly defined urban coordinates. As one respectful of the decisive moment, he is not interested in traits typical of a place, but in moments which he freezes by strength of perception, i.e. by the craft of recording. His approach is always both classical and distinctively his own.

The relation between man and city, the classical subject of art photography, is again at the centre of Abadžić's attention. It is manifest through three clearly articulated focal points of interest. The first and most important is the confrontation of the city's actuality and the individual's

intimate reality. In that sense, the paradigmatic photography of the Istanbul cycle is the one in which we see a man sitting alone in a bar with his back turned on us. Immersed in his thoughts and the moment's melancholy, his gaze is turned toward something external that is invisible to us. He is observing that particular something which is outside of the reality of the photograph itself, and looking straight at his reverie. Above him, on the wall, a picture of flowers and a photograph of some person of power impudently staring at us as if challenging us to a duel. Two parallel presences are dynamically confronted within the space of the photograph – the intimate reality of an unknown man and the theatrical challenge presented by a historical personality. Abadžić frequently broaches the subject of the two inseparable, and yet incompatible, levels of experience. The city is a space separated from the individual's reality, a cemetery of history of the nameless and the scene of the future of all those we will never get to know. Still, our mini-dramas are also played out in it on a daily basis, and they constitute neither the past nor the future of the city we live in, unless some of our unstoppably transient moments were rendered eternal by the eye of the photographer. Abadžić displays those slight pulsations by uncovering symmetries between history, which is the most tangible layer of city space, and the momentary reality of the ones moving in it.

Secondly, Abadžić is interested in geometric shapes – he finds them in the chaos of reality and objectifies their spiritual structures by means of photography. Each of these photographs possesses easily noticeable visual qualities of masterful composition and skilfully contrasted planes of light, but also an elusive surplus of meaning. The photographer's mental eye goes beyond a mere visual transposition of reality – it also archives its deeper strata. For instance, when he takes a photograph of a small, shut window concealed by a wicker grid in a street in Istanbul, he is fascinated not only by the inexhaustible visual quality of the wall plane that frames it, but

also by the story that is certainly hidden behind it. Abadžić's photograph is thus an invitation to a twofold reverie – one that is meditative, awoken in us by time and inscribed in the pores of the surface, as well as one pertaining to creation and imagination, which irresistibly incites us to imagine forth a novel about someone who opens and closes that window. Much the same can be said of the photograph of the stairs, at the bottom of which we see a little girl in a white dress holding a white balloon. The uncovered visual quality of the scene wherein the dynamics of the stairs is transposed into a spiritual structure of infinite repetition is enriched by a surge of reality embodied in the figure of the little girl, who seems to levitate by virtue of imagination – her magical white balloon.

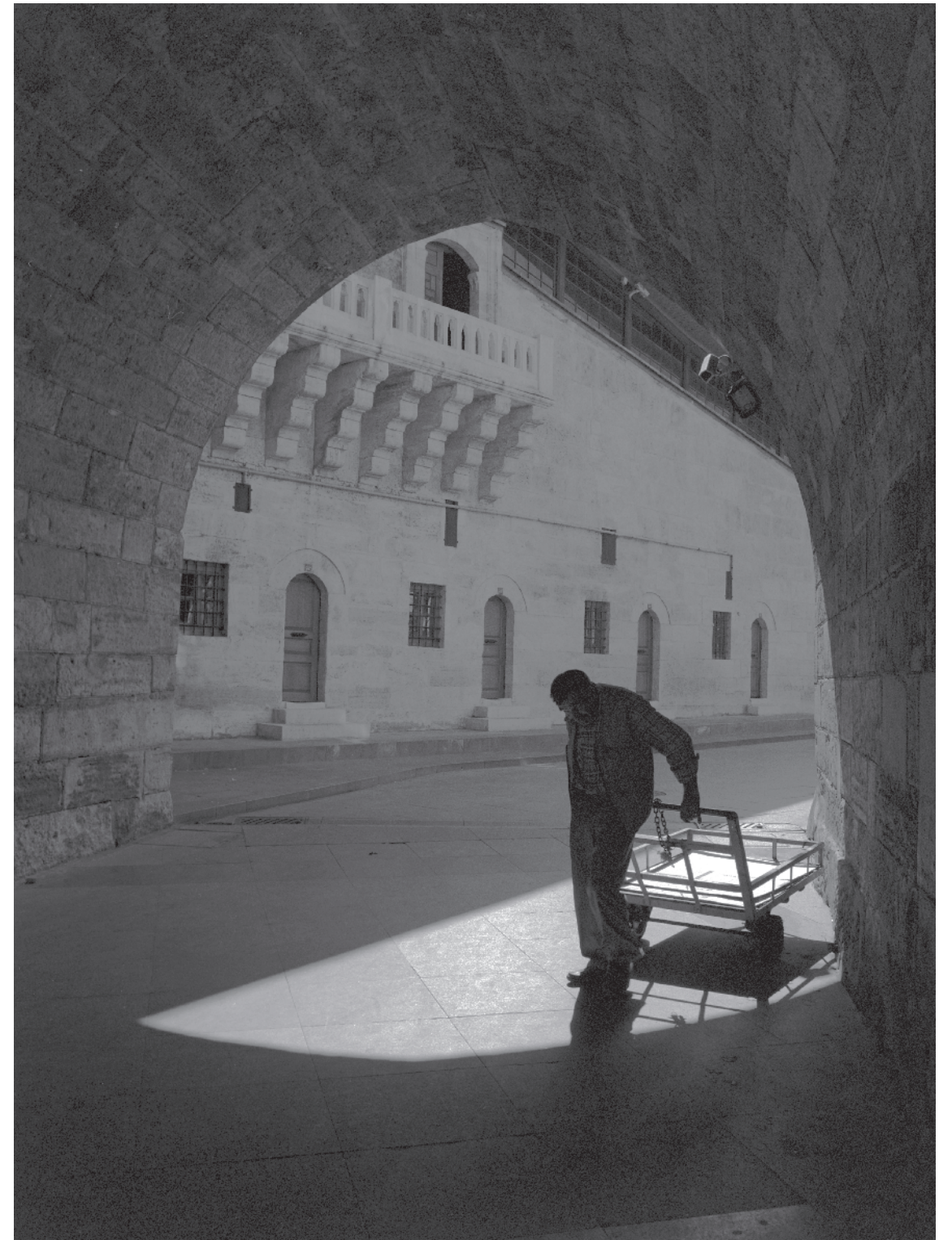
And finally, of course, what always remains is the light. As an apostle of analogue writing by means of light, Abadžić is filled with unquenchable admiration for manifestations of light and shadow, and he tirelessly takes hold of their spell. At one time Rimbaud discovered eternity in the incessantly changing reflection of the sun on the sea surface. Such eternities concealed in the details of the real inhabit many Abadžić's photographs. It may be the shadow of tree tops on the plane of the wall, or a reflection of the sun in a back alley, or a person's shadow playfully intertwined with shadows of the city, or else a reflection of the sky in the water which poured down from it – in a rain puddle that fantasizes, immovable as it is, about the freedom of the open sea nearby.

Cities, as photographed by Abadžić, are a space of reverie, created in order to be read. The people we meet there can only be imagined through observation "from behind" and fantasizing about their warm worlds located between the set urban framework of street, square and fence. In his photographs Abadžić admires both levels of the city's body – the historical level which exists in time, and the intimate level which is made up of infinite unrecorded heartbeats of its inhabitants. We observe the thoughts of those

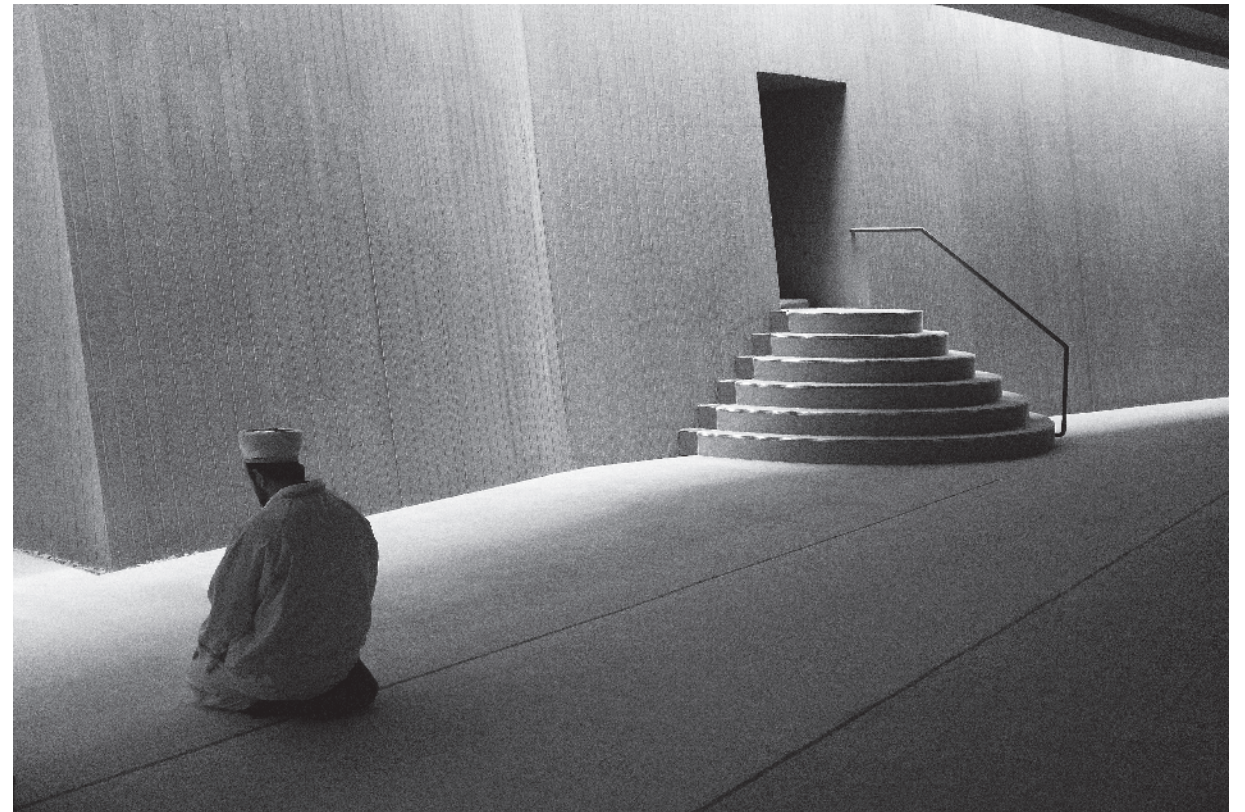
who wander the city streets, immersing ourselves with them in a reverie of worlds that are and are not the city which surrounds them. Consequently, the Istanbul cycle is not preoccupied with the history of this city, fascinating in every respect, but with the reality of those who presently breathe, think and forget in it. Thus, as may seem unexpected, Abadžić includes in his majestic vistas of a metropolis impregnated with history an astonishingly forthright portrait of a little girl who, like a melancholic dreamer, directs her gaze somewhere beyond the reality of the photograph, into the space of the inaccessible, i.e. the perfectly imaginary. In her hands she clutches her best friend – a big white bird that cannot fly, but can dream about it. In that sense, the face of the world is universal, both in Prague and Paris, and in Istanbul and Berlin. The city breathes the thoughts and dreams of its inhabitants which, caught in the labyrinth of streets, live steadfastly through dreams and thoughts. What emerges in Abadžić's photographs is not an image of the city, but the wealth of consciousness of its inhabitants, who enjoy the company of birds, ponder deeply, with back bent, while roaming the deserted streets, give way to melancholy in deserted taverns, and live concealed by shut windows. When he takes shots of a city, Abadžić simultaneously dreams it and observes it, deftly combining the real and the imaginary in a black-and-white play of a photograph's reality. The little girl clutches the big white bird, and Abadžić places in his lens everything in the city that is not seen, but that makes the city vibrantly infinite and is the reason why, when we look at all that he has so skilfully recorded for us, we are filled at the same time with joy and melancholy. Whichever city he happens to find himself in, Abadžić transforms it into a reverie of an eternal moment, wrought by the magic of light and the thought that observes it persistently.

Višnja Vukašinović
Vukovar, November 2014
<http://felix-trot.tumblr.com/>

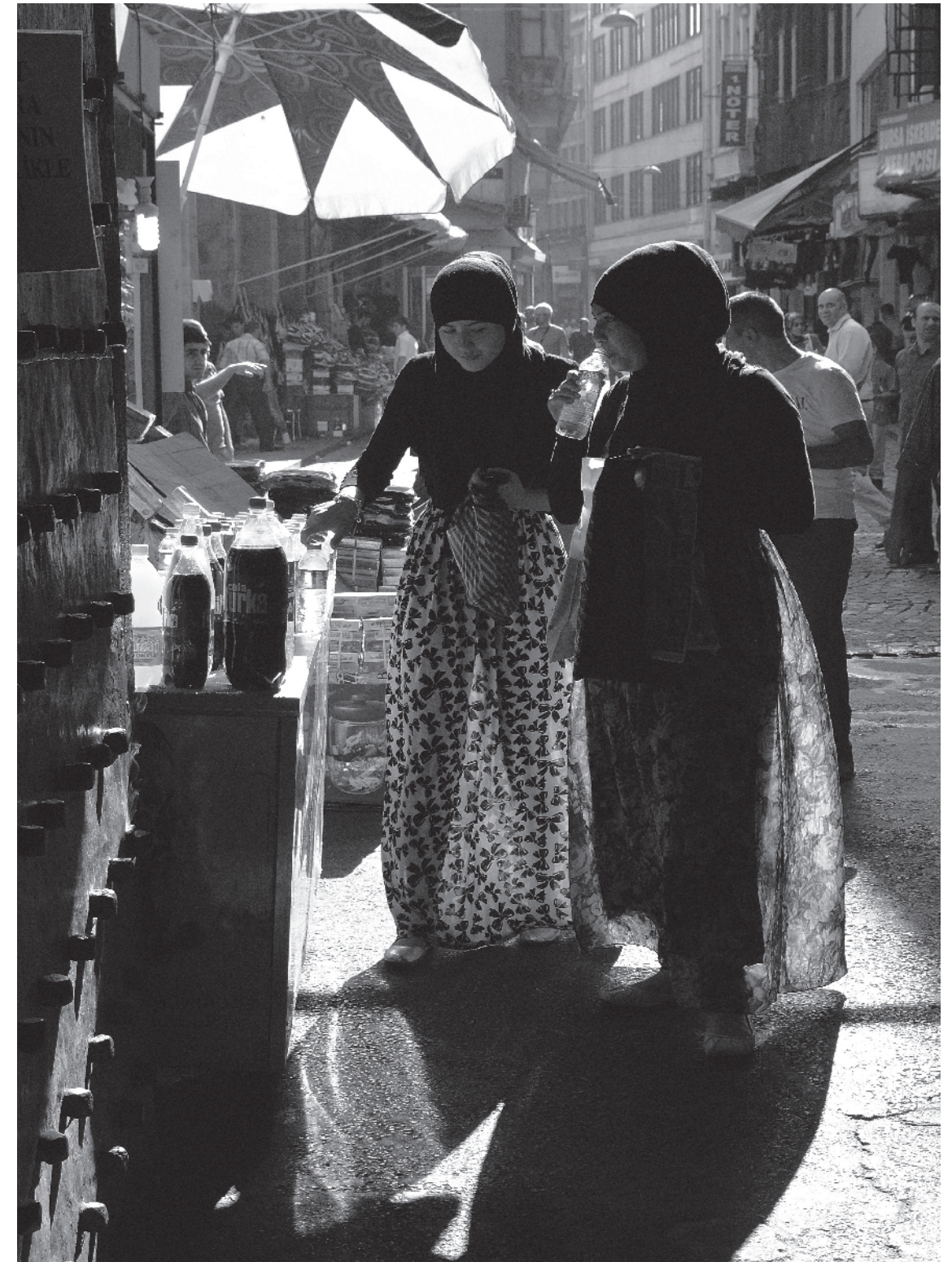
Predah / A Break
Istanbul 2012



Molitva / Prayer
Istanbul 2010



Prozirno / Transparent
Istanbul 2014



Derviš / Dervish
Istanbul 2014



Mini izložba / Mini-Exhibition
Istanbul 2010



Prva kava / First Coffee
Istanbul 2014



Tek ispečeno / Freshly Baked
Istanbul 2014



Doručak u dvorištu / Breakfast in a Courtyard
Istanbul 2012



Mladić / A Young Man
Istanbul 2015



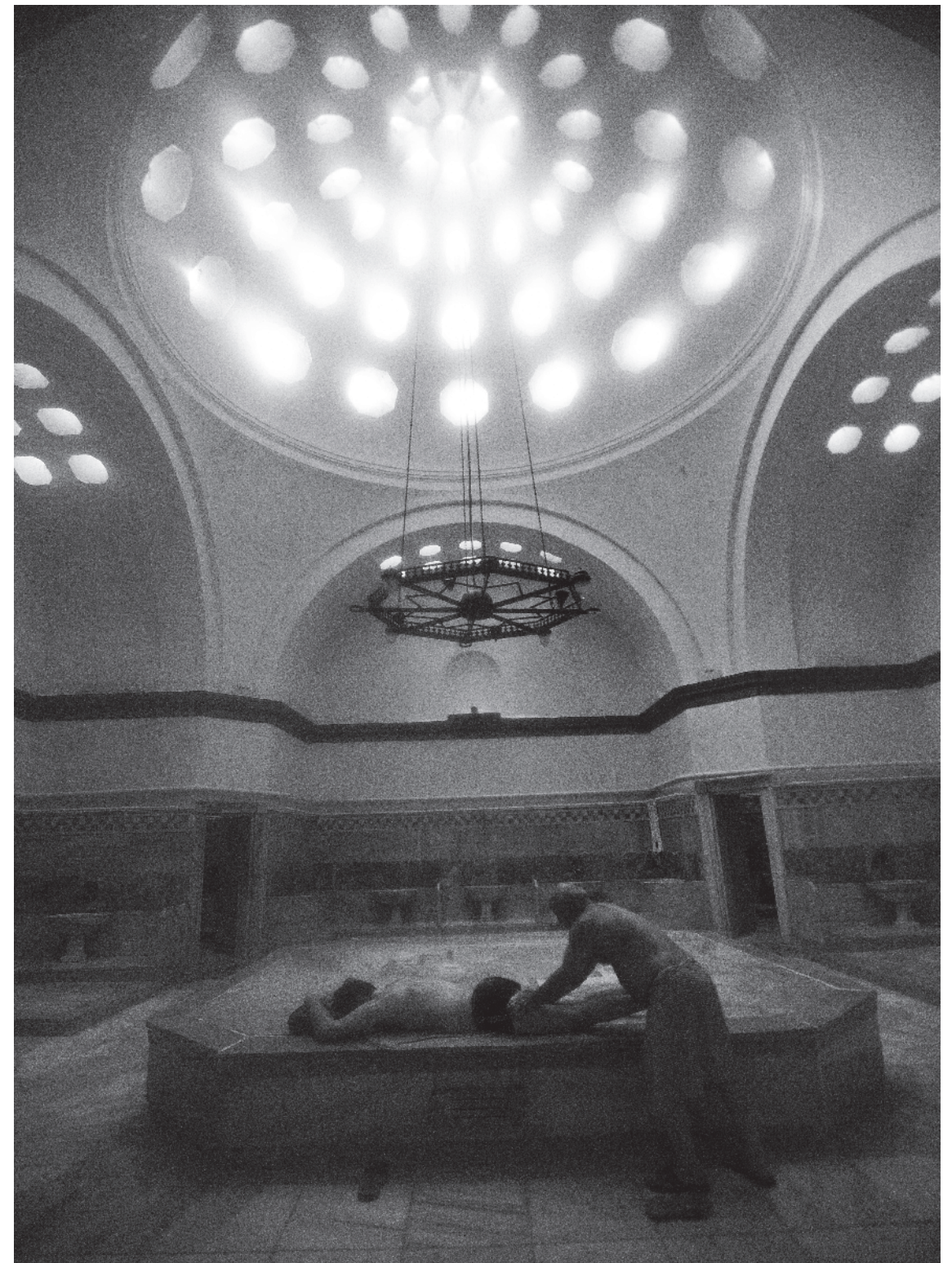
Bez naziva / Untitled
Istanbul 2015



Ogledala / Mirrors
Istanbul 2010



U turskom kupatilu / In a Turkish Bath
Istanbul 2012



Djevojčica s balonom / Girl with a Balloon
Istanbul 2012



Sa svojim mislima / Deep in His Own Thoughts
Istanbul 2010



Detalj s broda / Detail from a Ship
Istanbul 2014



Na plaži / At the Beach
Istanbul 2014



Kišno jutro / Rainy Morning
Istanbul 2014



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