



„Überwindung der Diktaturen - Dichter, Künstler und Schriftsteller in der Begegnung.“

## **Work Description Bucharest Vlad Nancă (1954)**

*I do not know what union I want to belong to anymore* is a work which I did in 2003 after noticing that in Romanian official institutions alongside the Romanian flag was always proudly positioned the European Union flag. Government buildings, army bases but also churches, kindergartens and schools, were all displaying the EU flag (some even the NATO flag). It struck me how up until 1989 the Romanian flag had always been placed next to the red flag with the hammer and the sickle. Back in 2003 Romania wasn't even a member of the EU. However, the need to associate itself with a greater power was obvious. Somehow stuck between mentalities and the goods and the wrongs of the two Unions I really didn't know where I wanted to belong to, hence I shifted the colours of the flags to underline the confusion and this need to be allied with a greater power. In 2004, when Pat Cox, then president of the European Parliament visited Bratislava, he saw my work exhibited in a billboard art project and commented how the two unions could never be compared. I would say that immoral power schemes and corrupted economical and political systems are equally strong and wrongful no matter the Union and they could be equally as oppressive and unfair to the population.

Four years after that work and 18 years after the end of communism in Eastern Europe I had the chance to be part of a series of encounters throughout different European countries under the name of 'Overcoming Dictatorships' – various lectures, presentations and debates but mostly remembering and rememorizing recent history through testimonies have brought up new ideas and more clarity on my beliefs.

*Ideal* of 2007. In 1956 during the Hungarian Revolution the communist symbols were torn out of the flags leaving a whole in the middle. The same liberating gesture was repeated in 1989 first in Germany and then in Romania. For a few days, in each of these countries the national flag was not only without an emblem but with a hole in the middle. To me this is a symbol of pure freedom, something that could only happen in times of such strong spiritual engagement and idealistic vows. By putting the three flags together I am aiming to realize a spiritual union over-passing time, history and borders. The three countries (and their flags) are connected by the emptiness of the middle of the flag, a spiritual union of genuine revolutionary freedom, where no symbols are spoiling the essence of those days of liberty. It is an *Ideal* union I wish I could belong to.

Vlad Nancă, 2008

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*I do not know what union I want to belong to anymore* illustrates the confusion on the continuities and ruptures between Romanian near past and future. The dizzying shift between the two, once warring ideological continents, the state-communism of Eastern Europe and liberal social democracy of Western Europe is being represented in that piece by two flags. One of them bares the sickle and hammer combination used by the USSR and the other has the circular twelve stars of the EU on it. Will the latter truly replace the former? Is the EU-membership really the only viable alternative for Romania-in-transition still trying to heal the traumas of its nightmarish past? Does the coercive reformatting of the country somehow reiterate the over-regulations of bureau communism? Nancă's sardonic swap between the colours of the two flags (blue & yellow USSR flag and red & yellow EU flag) points at that confusion among the Romanian minds in regard to their national identity through the graphic split of the national tricolour into the insignia of two trans-national entities.

Erden Kosova (submitted by the artist in 2008)

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