

Ironworks ABC

1.
We,
atoms liberating electrons
interlacing ourselves in molten iron.
You,
workers and artists,
made the carbon glow,
reducing us

to the beginning of a new transformation!

2.
With cylinders and hammers,
with cunning and imagination,
you,
workers and artists,
shape us into the dangerous germs of
change!

The germs of change spread!

3.
We,
sculptures,
formed through the process of emancipated
labor
of workers and artists,
in the alternating motion of matter and
mind,
we stand as iron-wrought evidence,
of the possible.

*United despite the fragmentation and
precariousness of work!*

4.
Us,
steel pipes,
have you,
artists and workers,
unexpectedly delivered
from a predetermined form.
More importantly,
you have moved us beyond the control,
of profit-driven motives.

*United against capitalist
totalitarianism!*

5.
We,
molded sheets,
are witnesses to
the incomplete struggle
for the dignity of work
and self-determination.

*For the socialization and valuation of
reproductive work!*

6.
You,
workers,
abandoned self-management.
Your future
is left to the managers of privatization.

The furnaces have melted,
disappointment flowed to the workplace.

*We are not allowing the future
to be woven by war profiteers!
For the audit of every privatization!*

7.
Us,
steel pipes,
through whose cavity
flew deadly bullets,
have you,
workers,
converted to irrigation fields and
cities.

*Let's defend the fruits of collective
labor!*

8.
We,
iron ore from the deep Bosnian
mountains,
make a pact
with workers and artists.
We do not serve the war on the poor,
let's sabotage the reinforcement of
palaces for the 1%!

*Let's fuel the transformation with the
class consciousness of iron ore!*

9.
We,
sculptures,
created by workers and artists,
from the joyful awareness of the
possibility
of liberated work,
exercise a militant optimism.

*For a strong optimism without
sentimentality!*

10.
We,
sculptures of semi-finished metal,
are much more than mirrors of
conditions.
We stand here,
despite war and robbery,
on the principle
of the objective
hope of matter.

11.
Us,
displaced atoms,
through the heat,
push dreams forward,
in the refreshing cold reality.
If you are realistic,
we can progress from theory to practice.
Speculation about bankruptcy is not
realistic.

We demand the cancellation of debt!

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The content of the act of hope, as consciously elucidated with knowledgeable interpretation, is a positive utopian function; the historical content of hope, primarily represented in ideas, investigated exhaustively in real courts, is human culture referring to its concrete-utopic horizon.

Ernst Bloch, *The Principle of Hope*

Ironworks ABC proceeds from the form, spatial points, and status of existing sculptures that were produced in the Ironworks Sisak art colony from 1971-1990. A former giant that employed 14,000 workers, Ironworks Sisak was practically destroyed by war and privatization. The sculptures were created in the colony as the result of a collective process of production between artists and workers, and they continue to stand as witnesses to the era of self-management and creation in the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. The majority of the sculptures have survived in a park in the Caprag neighborhood, despite the fact they would normally be destroyed. Such is the attitude toward the heritage of socialist monuments in the Republic of Croatia.

Ironworks ABC deals with the language of social transformation, which references the recent past of collective work between workers and artists. It is conceived as a kind of alphabet for thinking work as liberated practice and struggle for creation. Ironworks ABC is composed of banners in the public space, intended for the neighborhood of Caprag, and text-based graphics pages in the form of newspapers, in which matter itself appeals to us: iron ore, pipes, sheets, steel, and sculptures.

Because the artistic work lies in the creative collaboration of artists and workers and not in the extant form of the sculptures, this project is interested in the history of production, presenting transformative speech through language and symbols. It is not a question of affirming the sculptures as objects which are in need of protection from deterioration,

but rather the revalorization of the relations at the core of the creative process. Ironworks ABC aims to speak about those relations as art, locating the symbols and language with which this is possible.

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