

As part of the EMOP Berlin - European Month of Photography

Anton Roland Laub

Mineriada



© Anton Roland Laub/VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn, Untitled, from the series *Mineriada*, 2014-2022

With his exhibition *Mineriada*, artist Anton Roland Laub embarks on a journey into the past and delves into transgenerational trauma in Romanian society following the end of the Ceaușescu regime. He examines the violent unrest in 1990, during which thousands of enraged miners loyal to the regime were brought from the Jiu Valley to Bucharest in order to strike down pro-European protests.

Despite a ruling by the European Court of Human Rights in 2014, the fatal attacks remain legally unresolved – a repressed past which Laub evokes in his photographs. In the Romanian press, the so-called mineriads were compared to the January 6 U.S. Capitol attack in 2021. With his work, the artist points attention to recurring conflicts in a polarized world. The exhibition's title, *Mineriada*, is a sarcastic term that combines the Romanian word “miner” (miner) with the suffix “-iada,” as in “olimpiada.”

In a retrospective from Strasbourg, via Bucharest to Petroșani, Laub examines the sites where the events took place, the unspoken suffering of physical violence, and its traces in the collective memory. Photographs taken by his father in June 1990 serve as a point of departure, as do his own research activities, personal experiences, and memories. The artist's primary aim is not to come to terms with historical events but to approach the subject through an exploration of its latent presence in the unconscious.

One key work shows a forwards-looking view into the dark. The only visible element is a mirror with myriads of delicate drops of water shimmering on its surface, distorting what is depicted. In the reflection, looking back, we see a spotlight that appears to be approaching from behind. A small, rectangular element on the mirror surface disrupts the air of mystery; as if time were flowing both forward and backward. What will emerge from the shadows of the night?

Laub creates works of philosophical depth and poetic potency. The power of his photographs lies in their aesthetic precision and subtle symbolism. The artist opens spaces for reflection without providing answers. There is an echo of the myth of Saturn – the father who devours his children so as not to be overthrown – underlying his work. One significant photograph depicts a crooked grid structure, a metaphor for both limitation and permeability. Behind it, light falls through a dark, fine-mesh, patched-up net made of plastic – an allegory full of ambivalence.

Anton Roland Laub, born and raised in Bucharest, lives and works in Berlin. He received an MA degree from the Weißensee Academy of Art Berlin. Previously, he completed his studies at the New School for Photography (Neue Schule für Fotografie) in Berlin and graduated from the Media and Communication Science Department at the University of Bucharest.

After *Mobile Churches* and *Last Christmas (of Ceaușescu)*, Laub presents *Mineriada*, the final part of his Romania trilogy published by Kehrer Verlag. *Mineriada* was supported by the research grant for visual arts from the Senate Department for Culture and Europe (Berlin) and the publication grant from Stiftung Kulturwerk (Bonn).

Exhibition
28 March - 1 June 2025

Exhibition opening
Thursday, 27 March
7 pm
Introduction
Sonia Voss,
author and independent
curator

Artist talk
Anton Roland Laub and
Julia Rosenbaum
Thursday, 22 May
7 pm

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Haus am Kleistpark
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Free admission
No barrier-free access
Tue-Sun 11am-6pm

The book *Mineriada* as PDF
bit.ly/3CFheiw

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An exhibition
of the Department of Art,
Culture, Museums
Tempelhof-Schöneberg.

Anton Roland Laub's publication was selected by the Robert Capa Contemporary Photography Center (Budapest) as one of the *Most Exciting Photobooks from Central and Eastern Europe*. Laub was nominated for the *New Discovery Award* at Les Rencontres d'Arles (solo exhibition), the Haus am Kleistpark Art Prize (Berlin), and the German Photobook Prize (Deutscher Fotobuchpreis). He was a finalist for the *Dummy Book Award* (Unseen, Amsterdam) and the *LUMA Dummy Book Award* (Les Rencontres de la Photographie, Arles). He took part in numerous international exhibitions, including the Triennial of Photography and Architecture (Brussels), the Format Festival (Derby), EMOP (Athens and Berlin), the Kaunas Photography Gallery (Kaunas; solo exhibition), the Bucharest City Museum (Bucharest; solo exhibition), PhotoSaintGermain (Paris; solo exhibition), Museum of Recent Art (Bucharest).

