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## **Can Art (Re)build a Community? The Roșia Montană Case, between Past and Future**

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**Abstract:** This paper tries to see how art and community structures could be connected. The general considerations in this respect are made through a case study: Roșia Montană, Romania. Here, a Canadian-based company, RMGC, tried to open a gold mine and to use large quantities of sodium cyanide in the industrial process, destroying also very precious roman archaeological remains and a unique landscape. The opposition against this project, which formed the largest civic movement in Romania after the fall of communism, used art and culture in the battle. We try to analyze, from an anthropological point of view, the uses of different arts, either by opponents or by supporters of the RMGC project, and try to argue that art is a tool for building or rebuilding communities and for the creation of an active, dynamic civic conscience.

**Keywords:** Romania; Roșia Montană; Art; Community; Activism; Participation; Social Effects; Sustainable Development.

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### **Introduction**

Even if, in time, theories on art have been very diverse, one can find two recurrent themes of debate and controversy, from the 19th century to the present days. On the one hand, art is regarded as a pure, gratuitous pleasure, focused on the exploration of beauty, while, on the other hand, art appears as a very important social phenomenon. It is this second line that we try to explore in the present paper, interrogating the connections between art and sustainable development, between art and the positive evolution of communities. What is the nature of the link, if it exists? Are cultural and artistic movements able to build a sustainable development of society? People exposed to art are more aware of the social, political, moral, ecological problems that are important for the good functioning of a community? Is art a long-term solution for a community that has economic problems? Does art bring wealth? We'll try to answer these questions<sup>1</sup> by a case study, that of the Roșia Montană gold mining project, and by identifying social and cultural patterns with a great degree of generality.



## I. The Roșia Montană Mining Project

There was lots of discussions about Roșia Montană in the last 15 years, but some information is still necessary, in order to understand the issue of this paper about the link between art and sustainable development. Roșia Montană is a big village in the Western Carpathians, in Romania, where the biggest gold and silver deposit of the whole Europe is located (around 340 tons of gold and 1600 tons of silver). The rich mineral resources of the area have been exploited since Roman times or even before the conquest of Dacia (101-106 A. D.), then during the Middle Ages and modern times. The state-run gold mine, inherited from the communist regime, closed in 2006. Since 1997, in collaboration with the state mining company, a Canadian-based corporation, the Roșia Montană Gold Corporation (RMGC) tried to open a surface exploitation of gold in four enormous quarries. This has caused controversy on one hand over the extent to which remains of Roman mining would be preserved and over fears of dangerous cyanide pollution, lasting for centuries, over the destruction of a traditional community and of a very precious cultural heritage. The campaign against cyanide mining at Roșia Montană was the largest campaign over a non-political cause in the last 20 years in Romania. Very numerous civic and ecological organizations spoke out against the project, creating a very necessary debate, while politicians emphasized the benefits that mining would bring to this part of the country. The story culminated in the autumn of 2013, when the Romanian government sent the project of a special law

to the Parliament, in order to facilitate the beginning of the RMGC project: this was the explosion of the biggest civic, peaceful movements in Romania, after the fall of communism in 1989. Thousands and thousands of protesters were in the streets of the Romanian cities, especially Bucharest and Cluj, from the 1<sup>st</sup> of September to the 22 of December, protesting against this controversial project and forcing the Parliament to reject what was called “the Roșia Montană special law” (i. e. a law written for the benefice of a private company). One of the main arguments of the protesters was that in Roșia Montană a *sustainable development* was needed, based on tourism, wood and furniture industry, agriculture, farming and cattle breeding<sup>2</sup>.

The culture in general and especially different artistic manifestations had a prominent role in the struggle between opponents and sustainers of the RMGC project. Both camps tried to win and control *the cultural sphere*, in order to transmit symbolic values (Bourdieu), and to convince the audience in Romania and abroad that justice was on their side and that the “others” were wrong. When one looks to this very interesting anthropological phenomenon without having a *parti-pris*, he or she discovers that a communicational strategy is involved in the struggle, which deserves an analysis. I will try this analysis in order to see if art has a prominent social role and if it achieves a social construction, if the culture served better the opponents or the sustainers of the RMGC project.



## II. Cultural Institutions and Journalism

First, a general view on cultural institutions and journalism is necessary, before a detailed view on artistic battles, because it is through them that most symbolic values are transmitted to the audience. Cultural institutions support artistic projects, and journalism is a key issue in transmitting and sharing the information, so to exert one's control upon culture and journalism means to gain the public opinion. The RMGC sponsored lots of cultural institutions and projects, history museums, archaeological and ethnological researches, in order to give the impression of a company concerned with culture, patrimony and values. RMGC financed even an Independent Group for Monitoring the Cultural Patrimony of Roșia Montană (GIMPCRM), with members such as Academicians Răzvan Theodorescu and Radu Vulpe, so as to obtain favorable scientific opinions on their project.

The RMGC attacked the most important cultural institution in Romania, the Ministry of Culture, promising to give 70 million dollars for the conservation of the archaeological patrimony in the center of Roșia Montană (a zone that is classified and cannot be touched by any industrial activity). This large amount of money was a sort of exchange for the possibility of destroying the Mount Cărnic, a Class A historical monument, full of roman and medieval mining galleries. In 2013, the Minister of Culture, Daniel Barbu, said – like in an irresponsible game – that all this was ok and attired criticism from prominent member of the intellectual and scientific community in Romania. Fortunately,

in February 2016, Vlad Alexandrescu, an independent Minister of Culture proposed to include Roșia Montană on UNESCO World Heritage list, as an exceptional site, while the RMGC sued the Romanian state to the International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes<sup>3</sup>, demanding 4 billion dollars because Romania hasn't respected the claims in the initial contract<sup>4</sup>.

On the other side, great institutions, such as the Romanian Academy, the Universities (Babeș-Bolyai Cluj-Napoca, The Academy of Economic Studies Bucharest), the Churches (Catholic, Protestant) declared their opposition to the RMGC project<sup>5</sup>. A special case is represented by the Orthodox Church (BOR), in a country where 86% of the population belong to this religious denomination and where the level of trust in the Church is higher than in any other institution. The BOR declared its opposition to the RMGC project in 2003 and 2013, but not very loudly and without sanctioning the local priest who helped and supported the company. The former archbishop from Cluj, Bartolomeu Anania, is a great exception in his sermons, pronounced in 2007, which condemned the destruction of the environment and of the patrimony. We must say that Bartolomeu Anania is also an important figure of Romanian culture, a poet, a playwright, a great theologian and this artistic activity gives a great symbolic force to his position.

The journalism plays a particular part in the fight for Roșia Montană. Most of the press companies and of the televisions in Romania were in favor of the RMGC project before the autumn 2013, because of the big amount of money spent in commercials by the company. The printed press and the televisions blocked also most of the news



related to the opposition against RMGC. After the protest of 2013, some of the television channels changed their discourse (as, for example Realitatea TV). The cultural magazines or the magazines with a strong cultural presence published numerous materials against the RMGC project (*Cultura, Tribuna, Steaua, Formula AS, Adevărul*). Even though, compared to thousands of favorable articles and commercials, the opposition through press was less significant than the opposition through art or street movements.

The patterns one can identify after an overview of the cultural institutions and journalism are:

– The more a cultural institution is infiltrated by politics and by politicians, the

more it is in favor of the RMGC project. The Ministry of Culture is a clear example in this respect, by refusing to include the site on the UNESCO World Heritage list, in spite of the criteria being fulfilled.

– The more a newspaper has a cultural profile, the more its attitude is against the RMGC project (see *Cultura, Tribuna, Steaua*). Independent press is against the project too. The press submitted to economic imperatives and to publicity tends to be in favor of the project.

– The more a church member is sensitive to cultural and artistic values, the more he is opposed to the mining project (the case of the archbishop B. Anania, poet, writer, translator is a wonderful example).

	For the RMGC project	Against the RMGC project
<b>CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– GIMPCRM</li> <li>– Lots of cultural institutions and projects were sponsored by the RMGC: <i>România literară</i>, Transylvania International Film Festival (first editions), Balul Operei Cluj</li> <li>– History museums, archaeological and ethnological researches were financed by RMGC, even if not always by respecting complete scientific probity</li> </ul>	<p>The Romanian Academy, UBB-BBU, The Churches (the Orthodox bishop Bartolomeu Anania), The Academy of Economic Studies Bucharest</p>
<b>JOURNALISM AND JOURNALISTS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>Evenimentul zilei</i> (fluctuation: first, against the project, then in favor of the project), <i>Unirea</i>, Antena 1, 3; most of press institutions in Romania.</li> <li>– Marius Ghilezan (also a poet, RMGC sponsored the publication of one of his volumes)<sup>6</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>Formula As, Tribuna, Adevărul, Steaua, Cultura, Kamikaze</i>, Realitatea TV, Nașul TV.</li> <li>– Mihai Goțiu (also a poet and a writer), the author of the most influential book on the subject, <i>Afacerea Roșia Montană</i></li> </ul>



### III. Artistic Battles

More specifically, the struggle between the opponents and supporters of the RMGC project was set in *the artistic sphere*. The explanation for this fact is very simple and logical: because Roșia Montană and gold rush were important topics for Romanian art before 1989 (literature: Ion Agârbiceanu; cinema: Nicolae Mărgineanu, Dan Pița & Mircea Veroiu), both the opposition and the company tried to create artistic movements and to reach people's hearts through artistic practices. Their politics passed through music, literature, visual arts and entertainment; through popular festivals and elaborated artistic discourses. Before 1945, in literature, the gold rush in Roșia Montană was subjected to moral criticism, due to the cupidity, the alcoholism and the brutality of the miners. Between 1947 and 1989, in communist Romania, gold rush was seen as a pretext to criticize bourgeois society, with its social and economic inequalities. Geo Bogza, with a famous book, *Țara de piatră (The Stone Country)*, was a forerunner in this direction.

After 2000, in the context created by the RMGC project, Romanian activist art connected itself naturally to this critic tradition, despite some bad souvenirs of the communist regime: the RMGC project is seen in certain *milieus* as a perfect illustration of the disasters that the global capitalism could produce at a local level. The protestations through art were innumerable, and famous artists engaged themselves in the fight for saving Roșia Montană. Lots of writers declared their opposition against this project, even when they were closed to politicians who supported the

gold exploitation. Mircea Cărtărescu for instance, a great novelist, close to the president Traian Băsescu, who was a key lobbyist for RMGC, wrote a beautiful article about the subject (“Roșia Montană, toți vom pierde”), published in *Evenimentul zilei* and erased afterwards. He also gave an interview to *Formula As*, that can still be read<sup>7</sup>. The list of writers against the RMGC project is quite impressive (see below), even if nowadays the gold rush is less present as a literary theme than during the 20th century.

Something similar occurs in cinema. Between 1947 and 1989, fiction films were very important, also as a way of avoiding the censorship of the communist regime. After the fall of communism, the documentary films took power, in order to show to the world the struggle of ordinary people against a big, corrupted and pervert corporation. The directors of documentary films came not only from Romania, but also from Greece (Yorgos Avgeropoulos), Germany (Fabian Daub), Hungary (Tibor Kocsis), attesting the great international interest for the Roșia Montană case. We should also underline that – in the field of video art – very beautiful clips were produced, trying to emphasize the ecological and cultural disaster to be produced by a project such as the one proposed by the RMGC. This was a response to the clips in favor of RMGC, realized by the media and communication specialist Bogdan Naumovici, and aggressively promoted by media institutions. In the clips against RMGC, famous actors were implied, such as Maia Morgenstern and Dragoș Bucur. One can also see that independent, non-professional directors posted extraordinary clips on the internet, in order to



beat the strong advertising campaign of the company. The characteristics of independent video art are: dynamics, creativity, strong emotional charge, opposed to the clichés of the official discourse (the people in Roșia Montană have no place to work, so the company will provide and will “save” them).

Roșia Montană was also a great pretext for the photographers to explore this region. One can find thousand of photos on the Internet, documenting the life of this community, the landscape, the gold treasures found in the mines etc. Ancient photos (made by Bazil Roman, or later by Aurel Sintimbrean) have a great documentary value, because some realities disappeared, for example the mount Cetate, full of roman galleries, as well as traditional installations for washing the gold (*șteampuri*), set on the little rivers of the village... Some photographs have a clear artistic value, so it is logical to include them in the discussion about the functions of art in the RM case: photos of landscapes, of people, of beautiful ancient houses becoming ruins after having been bought by the company...

Painting and graphic art are very important too, because Roșia Montană still serves as a theme for realistic or lyrical approaches, preoccupied by the beauties or the spiritual dimensions of the landscape, or for an approach which is based on social and political statements. In every approach, the visual message is very strong, and it creates a civic and ecological attitude. Andrei Brănișteanu's summer or winter landscapes try to show the great beauty of this region... Some realistic painters, such as Andrei Jurcă, who are in favor of the RMGC project, focus on the mining traditional activities of the region

(for example in a cycle showing some installation and tools for washing the gold in 1900)... In the category of lyrical approaches of the landscape, one can include Lucia Muntean or Gavril Nechifor. Lucian Muntean offers some variations on the landscape in Roșia Montană, filtering it through the symbolic leaf which is some kind of a heraldic sign of the opponents of the RMGC project. The exhibition *Gânduri – Thoughts*, by Gavril Nechifor (2013), takes as a starting point the landscape and the people in Roșia Montană, but the artist offers a very personal interpretation of what he sees, not a realistic one.

With artists such as Dan Perjovschi, graphics become virulent and based on social and political statements. One poster, for example, underlines the fact that, by saving Roșia Montană, the whole Romania (RO) will be saved. The works signed by Dan Perjovschi were often seen as banners during the protest movements of the autumn of 2013. Many other posters, realized by the MindBomb group, were spread all over Romania, in printed versions, or on Internet campaigns...

A group of painters from Turda, a town which is not very far from RM, organized a painting camp in RM, in order to promote the cultural richness of the region. The paintings made in this camp are sold and the money is used to sustain the Save Roșia Montană campaign. The group of painters is composed by Adrian Top, Cornel Vana, Eliza Loboncz, Flaviu Bugnariu, Gavril Nechifor, Gheorghe Rosa.

This camp took as a model a sculpture camp first organized in Roșia Montană in 2006, with the aim of promoting the social implication of monumental sculpture. The participants in that sculpture camp were:



Miguel Ausili (Argentina), Mihai Bucurei (Romania), Ehab Ellaban (Egipt), Zoltan Gergely (Romania), Roland de Jong-Orlando (Holland), André Domon (Canada), Hideto Yada (Japan), Leonard Rachita (France/Romania), Adrian Popovici, Sava Stoianov (Romania). Besides, one of the interesting creations of monumental sculpture, issued from a clear disapproval for the RMGC's intentions, is *Scufița Roşia Montană*, exposed in 2014 by Ileana Oancea (born in 1977) in Bucharest, on the pedestal of a former statue of Lenin, representing a beheaded Red Riding Hood with a gold ball in her hands.

Music plays a great and significant role in the fight for Roşia Montană, because of its capacities of mobilizing the crowds, of transmitting a strong, direct and deeply emotional message. Many musicians, composers and singers wrote songs about RM or mentioned this case in their concerts, addressing messages to the crowds of fans. What is to be mentioned is the great variety of musical genres and tendencies implied in the fight: one can find rock singers or bands (Tudor Chirilă, Luna Amară, Razna), rappers (Norzeatic, CRBL, Morometzii), folk singers (Andone din Abrud, Grupul Iza), specialists of classical music (Alexandru Tomescu). During the manifestations of autumn 2013, the protesters often organized concerts in public spaces, playing classical music in order to underline the cultural dimension of the fight against the RMGC project.

Like cinema, theatre is very important in the fight for Roşia Montană, because of its direct contact with the spectators, of its possibilities of telling profound stories in various spaces.

*Roşia Montană pe linie fizică și pe linie politică* (*Rosia Montana on a physical and on*

*a political line*) is a production of 2010 of the dramAcum Company, realized at the Hungarian State Theatre in Cluj-Napoca. The show was played in Romanian, English, Hungarian, so as to touch a very wide audience. *Roşia Montană pe linie fizică și pe linie politică* belongs to the so-called “documentary theatre”: the authors and directors (Gianina Cărbunariu, Ștefan Peca, Radu Apostol & Andreea Vălean) had a period of residence and work within the local community. The show was composed of seven episodes (seven stories), without connection, except the theme. The unity was given by the techniques used: video projections, audio records, collages of situations, etc. The critics didn't appreciate very much *Roşia Montană pe linie fizică și pe linie politică*, because of political reasons, but everybody remarked the excellent quality of acting.

Because the show hadn't a very good promotion, the members of dramAcum wrote an open letter to Gabor Tompa, general manager of the Hungarian State Theatre (HST), accusing his team of bungling *Roşia Montană on a physical and on a political line*. The HST didn't accept the participation of *RM* at NITRA Theatre Festival in Slovakia; avoided to put the show in the schedule; prevented people of seeing the performance by saying it was all sold out, when there were non more than 10 persons in the auditorium; took a lot of political precautions and avoided to transmit dangerous messages (such as “project against the Romanian state, which abandoned its citizens”) – it would have been weird coming from a “foreign” theatre, etc. The open letter was, more or less, a – founded – accusation that the HST sold the tickets to the members of RMGC, constraining the actors to play in front of an empty



auditorium, and preventing the strong political message to get to the wide audience that the creators of the show hoped for.

Gabor Tompa – invoking some good & solid reasons – replied that the HST (unique “producer” of the show, not a simple “co-producer” as underlined in the dramaCum letter) promoted quite well *RM*, with a number of representations superior to the average per season; that the people in Cluj had no real interest in the show. The HST had no political or commercial interest in bungling *RM*. The main argument of the reply was the aesthetic one. Gabor Tompa stated that “good” theatre reaches the audience under every circumstance. The “artistic force” of a show doesn’t need “bombastic slogans” in order to fill the initial purposes. The two letters are proofs of the difficulties of the collaboration between independent and repertoire (state) theatre, as well as of the problematic integration of a direct political message in a perfect artistic form<sup>8</sup>.

I would like to point out that supporters of the RMGC project used all sorts of arts, in order to promote this business, except theatre, which is a tool of the opponents. This explains the favor of theatrical manifestations in festivals such as FânFest. Beginning with the 2013 edition of the festival, the theatre gained more and more importance, through direct, appealing and subtle performances. In 2013, an Italian company (Motus), specialized in social and political theatre, built a show with volunteers from the audience. In 2014, a very nice performance, *Killed by friendly fire*, took place...

Inspired by the situation in Roșia Montană, the project *Killed by friendly fire*, written by Ștefana & Ioan Pop-Curșeu,

played by Ionuț Caras & Cristian Grosu, under the stage direction of Ștefana Pop-Curșeu, is meant to acquire universal significations... The audience is asked to listen to the story of a young craftsman who has returned to his parents’ home in order to rediscover his place in the world. His practice of paper figurine art brings him an unexpected “friend” in an unstable social context, under the constant pressure of economic fluctuations. But what happens when one does not play by the same rules? When conscience is tread upon by independent wealth? When our neighbor opens fire without warning? And what if it’s just the well-known story of a pact made with an unknown evil? A never-ending story for all places, which premiered in Roșia Montană the 14<sup>th</sup> of August 2014 and has been played also in Cluj-Napoca, Timișoara, Baia Mare, Phoenix – Arizona (USA), Graz (Austria), from 2014 to 2016.

In 2016, another theatrical show, conceived in a wider project, *Playing Identities, Performing Heritage*<sup>9</sup>, was shown to the audience in Cluj-Napoca (at the famous Fabrica de Pensule) and during the Kilowatt Festival, at Sansepolcro, in Italy. Four students of the Faculty of Theatre and Television from Babeș-Bolyai University Cluj played in this show, with a strong symbolic title, *This Home is Not for Sale*<sup>10</sup>.





	Before RGMC	After the Split
<b>LITERATURE</b>	<p>Ion Agârbiceanu, <i>Arhanghelii</i>, 1914</p> <p>Ion Russu Abrudeanu, <i>Tragedia aurului</i></p> <p>Maria Botiș-Ciobanu</p> <p>Geo Bogza, <i>Țara de piatră</i>, 1936</p> <p>Ovidiu Bârlea, <i>Șteampuri fără apă</i>, 1979</p> <p>Popular traditions and legends: Maria Ioniță, <i>Cartea vâlvelor</i>; Norbert Fisch, <i>Legende și povestiri din Munții Apuseni</i>; Ana Șoit, <i>Legende populare minerești</i></p>	<p>Alexandru Vakulovski, <i>157 de trepte spre iad</i>, 2010</p> <p>Lots of wipers against this project: Mircea Cărtărescu, Dan C. Mihăilescu</p> <p><i>Hyperliteratura</i> demanded their opinion on Roşia Montană to many writers, in 2013: Mugur Grosu, Vasile Ernu, Mihail Vakulovski, Florin Bican, Bogdan Suceavă, Daniel Vighi, Răzvan Țupa, Sorin Gherguț, Florin Iaru, Ciprian Măceșaru, Vasile Baghiu, Adina Dabița, Daniel Cristea-Enache, Ioan Pop-Curșeu and so on</p>
<b>CINEMA</b>	<p>Documentary film: <i>Țara Moșilor</i>, Paul Călinescu, 1939 – images of a great documentary value concerning gold mining.</p> <p>Fiction films inspired by the novels of Ion Agârbiceanu: <i>Nunta de piatră</i> by Dan Pița &amp; Mircea Veroiu, 1972; <i>Duhul aurului</i> by Dan Pița &amp; Mircea Veroiu, 1974; <i>Flăcări pe comori</i> by Nicolae Mărgineanu, 1987</p>	<p>Documentary films: Tibor Kocsis, <i>New Eldorado</i>, 2004; Cristina Oancea, <i>Apusul aurarilor</i>, 2006; Fabian Daub, <i>Roşia Montană, a town on the brink</i>, 2012; <i>Black Vilva</i>, a Greek movie by Yorgos Avgeropoulos, 2013. Many foreign directors show interest for the RM case.</p> <p>Fiction short movies: a great amateur movie about Sașa Geamăna, realized in 2013, during the protest movements<sup>11</sup>, an animation film, <i>Linea nigra</i>, presented at ClujShorts international film festival.</p> <p>Clips and video art: Maia Morgenstern, Dragoș Bucur. Famous international actors support the fight for RM: Vanessa Redgrave, Woody Harrelson, but also Romanian actors such as Florin Zamfirescu</p>



	Before RGMC	After the Split
<b>PHOTOGRAPHY</b>	Lots of photographs subsist, that could compose a great photographic archive; its historical value would be enormous (Rusu-Abrudeanu, <i>Moșii</i> ; Aurel Sântimbreaan, Bazil Roman)	Thousands of contemporary photos can be found on the internet, presenting a clear image of the region
<b>PAINTING, GRAPHICS, DESIGN</b>		Nechifor Gavril, exhibition <i>Thoughts</i> (lyrical vision). Dan Perjovschi. MindBomb. The project <i>Tabăra de pictură de la Roșia Montană</i> ('The Painting Camp of Roșia Montană).
<b>MUSIC</b>		Tudor Chirilă, Luna Amară, Razna, Norzeatic, CRBL, Morometzii Folk music singers as Andone din Abrud ( <i>Imnul moșilor</i> ), Grupul Iza. During the manifestations of autumn 2013, the protesters often organized concerts in public spaces (classical music). Few famous singers sang at the events organized by the RMGC (Folk You, at The Miner's Day): Nicu Alifantis, Ducu Bertzi, Nicolae Furdui Iancu
<b>THEATRE</b>		<i>Roșia Montană pe linie fizică și pe linie politică</i> ; <i>Motus</i> ; <i>Killed by friendly fire</i> (2014-2016); <i>This Home is Not for Sale</i>

The patterns one can identify after a look to artistic movements are:

– Very few artistic productions are in favor of the RMGC project, like the documentary *Mine your own business* by Phelim McAleer & Ann McElhinney (2006), or some clips which are sponsored by the company. There's no real artistic movement born spontaneously to support this project.

– On the contrary, one can really talk about a spontaneous movement in contemporary art, born to support the community in Roșia Montană. This movement is various, fascinating, inventive, very dynamic and intelligent.

– In the contemporary art against the RMGC project, the documentary element is fundamental. All these artistic



manifestations claim to be strictly inspired from reality. This is a phenomenon linked to the tradition, because during the 20th century the art inspired by Roșia Montană and the gold rush was always realistic (and critical).

### Festivals and Complex Cultural Manifestations

The study of the use of art in the Roșia Montană story acquires new dimensions when one takes a look to the festivals and cultural manifestations organized in the commune / the village. First, there is FânFest – The Hay Festival, a festival of the opponents, which has a great specificity. It is a big festival, with thousands of participants and with a nice income for the local community, but it is completely

ignored (when not undermined) by local authorities, because of their close relationship with the RMGC. FânFest had ten editions in two periods: 2004–2007, 2010–2015 (no edition organized in 2016). In the first one, the festival was focused on music, with little other artistic manifestations. In the second period, the cultural offer grew in quantity, diversity, quality, with literary, theatrical and cinematic events. Secondly, RMGC used an old local tradition, Ziua minerului (Miner’s Day), in order to promote its interests by imitating FânFest and by proposing a cultural and artistic program. A comparison between FânFest and Ziua minerului (which both claimed to be *the one and only* festival of Roșia Montană) is able to show us what art can do within a community, which are its social effects and levels of action.

	FânFest	Ziua minerului
<b>DURATION, PERIOD</b>	From a few days to one week, in August	One day, at the end of August or the beginning of September
<b>FINANCING</b>	Donations, cultural grants, volunteering	The local council of Roșia Montană, with the support of the RMGC
<b>ORGANIZATION, ACCOMMODATION</b>	This cultural manifestation is accompanied by a community kitchen, very simple, with many volunteers working for public wellness	This cultural manifestation is accompanied by “mici și bere”, traditional food and drink in Romanian public meetings. The method is used also by politicians when they want to pick up votes
<b>TYPE OF MANIFESTATION</b>	FânFest is not exclusively cultural. Sportive events take place, but they are very original: hay jumping for example, or marathon. FânFest is accompanied by social forums, by debates on activism, by reunions of	Sportive events take place, but they are rather traditional: rugby, soccer. Some traditions related to mining are staged, in order to promote the idea that mining is “the only solution” for the community and that the tradition should be continued



	FânFest	Ziua minerului
<b>TYPE OF MANIFESTATION</b>	grassroots groups, groups against cyanide mining etc. During FânFest a handmade fair functions, together with a market of traditional, ecological products	
<b>PRESENCE OF THE ARTISTS</b>	Numerous artists come to Roșia Montană, from young debutants to big stars, but they always manifest themselves on a solid critical basis. The event is very rich, with, for example, marvelous projections of silent films, accompanied by live music, with an open air public library etc.	Some well known singers came to sing in Roșia Montană. They pertain to a style which is well received by the audience: Andreea Bănică (pop), Puya (rap), Nicu Alifantis (folk), even the well-known band Phoenix (rock)
<b>ROLE OF THE AUDIENCE</b>	The audience is composed mostly by young, cultivated people from the cities, and by some opponents of the RMGC project recruited in the local community. Despite one criticism often heard (“FânFest is not really for the people in Roșia Montană”), the festival is alive and produces real cultural benefits not only in the local community, but on a larger scale. The festival also produces economic benefits for the local community, because of its important contribution to the development of tourism. If one takes a look to the number of participants, one can appreciate the importance of the touristic movement:	The audience is composed by RMGC workers, recruited in the local community, but they go to the Miner’s Day like one goes to work every morning. There’s no real cultural participation and reflection, contrary to FânFest, but a mere popular amusement, which attracts some people from the surrounding villages and little towns. Here, there’s never been more than 5.000 participants, in a single day, it is true. The social reflection and the political participation to the building or rebuilding of a community are never placed among the purposes of The Miner’s Day 5.000 participants in 2010



	FânFest	Ziua minerului
<b>ROLE OF THE AUDIENCE</b>	Unknown number for 2015 <sup>12</sup> 7000 participants in 2014 4000 in 2012 1500 in 2011 15.000 in 2006 8000 in 2005 4000 in 2004	

The patterns one can identify after a look to festivals and cultural manifestations are:

- Artistic models of the corporate policies / artistic models of the opposition could be reduced to the old opposition between conservative art / progressive and innovative art. FânFest invites artists deeply implied in critical debates, in reflections about the place of art in society, about the role of small communities in the process of globalization, while the Miner’s Day seeks artists whose conventional, middle class style, is well received by the audience and is meant to keep the people in a comfort area, where no question about society, politics, good and evil, responsibility could emerge.

#### IV. Conclusions

One can see that the messages that the opponents of the RMGC project transmit through art have more variety and more spontaneity, that they are more dynamic and vivid than the messages of the supporters of the project. The financial models also are different: the opponents managed to develop complex projects with little money, while the company just payed lots of money for cultural manifestations, made in a quite conventional shape. The opponents of the RMGC project are more

present in the “field”, they have a better contact with real people, but they have also a better use of the new technologies, of the Internet and so on. The Roşia Montană case illustrates the fact that economic global neo-liberalism accommodates perfectly with moral and artistic conservatism, while alternative economic models, more traditional and less invasive (agriculture, tourism, craftsmanship), are linked to artistic avant-gardes, to experiments, to humor and to a great dynamics in the artistic forms, through the participation of young, independent artists, who assumed the mission of fighting for a community strongly struck by historical events.

In this particular case, art serves as a means for the local community (and not only) to reach a political conscience and to (re)build social solidarities. Through artistic and cultural manifestations, people in Roşia Montană become more aware of their rights, of the importance of the patrimony, of the possibility of building economic prosperity on creative industries, not on polluting gold mining. If activist art looks quite different when compared with classical *engagement* (Sartre), it is because it really helps people to build a better society, it really constitutes a long-term economic alternative... In this respect, the answer to the few questions of the *Introduction* (Are



cultural and artistic movements able to build a sustainable development of society? People exposed to art are more aware of the social, political, moral, ecological problems that are important for the good functioning

of a community? Is art a long-term solution for a community that has economic problems? Does art bring wealth?) couldn't be another one except "yes"!

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## INTERNET RESOURCES (FILMS AND CLIPS CITED IN THE PRESENT PAPER)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ODuzyiaTZUE>  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aHqyTc54\\_Lc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aHqyTc54_Lc)  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P3qtnoRX\\_XE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P3qtnoRX_XE)  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zMvnZnlMzbg>  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=82FdV\\_0KofE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=82FdV_0KofE)  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ODuzyiaTZUE>  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V-CjpRBlepM>  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zXRtL-rFKwA&feature=share>  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f8Icx2PSe2s>  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=urhbQkHXWDw>  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rEDysBLKwbY>  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=poTC6gA-KvY>

## NOTES

1. The journalist and writer Mihai Goțiu is preoccupied by similar questions in a recent book, *Fraierilor [Suckers]*, Cluj-Napoca, Tact, 2015.
2. The most significant presentations of the Roșia Montană case are to be found in Mihai Goțiu, *Afacerea Roșia Montană*, Cluj-Napoca, Tact, 2013 (book published during the protest movement of the famous Romanian Autumn), or, in English, in Pompei Cocean (editor), *Roșia Montană in universal history*, Cluj-Napoca, Cluj University Press, 2012, in Victor Boștinăru (dir.), *Roșia Montană în dezbateră europeană (Antologie) / Roșia Montană in the european debate (Anthology)*, 2012 (volume available at <http://victorbostinaru.ro/RosiaMontana.pdf>).
3. Official site: <https://icsid.worldbank.org/apps/ICSIDWEB/Pages/default.aspx> [accessed the 28<sup>th</sup> of October 2016].
4. See a site entirely devoted to this: <http://arbitraj.rosiamontana.org/> [accessed the 28<sup>th</sup> of October 2016].
5. See Pompei Cocean (editor), *op. cit.*
6. Some of his articles in favor of the RMGC project and against the ecologists can be found at: <http://mariusghilezan.ro/tag/salvati-rosia-montana> [accessed the 28<sup>th</sup> of October 2016].
7. See <http://www.formula-as.ro/2010/938/spectator-38/mircea-cartarescu-la-rosia-montana-e-un-fel-de-conjuratie-un-fel-de-crima-colectiva-ne-vom-ucide-cu-buna-stiinta-unul-dintre-putinele-paradisuri-care-ne-au-mai-ramas-12939> [accessed the 28<sup>th</sup> of October 2016].
8. The two letters can be found at <http://agenda.liternet.ro/articol/11995/Gianina-Carbunariu-Radu-Apostol-Peca-Stefan-Andreea-Valean-Tompa-Gabor/Despre-adevaruri-neconvenabile-Despre-neadevaruri-convenabile-Rosia-Montana-pe-linie-fizica-si-pe-linie-politica-Rosia-Montana-pe-linie-fizica-si-pe-linie-politica.html> [accessed the 28<sup>th</sup> of October 2016].
9. Official site <http://www.playingidentities.eu/> [accessed the 28<sup>th</sup> of October 2016].
10. See <http://www.panspeech.eu/en/ubb-cluj/topic-this-home-is-not-for-sale> [accessed the 28<sup>th</sup> of October 2016].
11. See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QfCNZie3fYM> [accessed the 28<sup>th</sup> of October 2016]. The clip has more than 165.000 views on Youtube.
12. In 2016, FânFest didn't took place because of some organizational difficulties. See the official site for important information <http://www.fanfest.ro/> [accessed the 28<sup>th</sup> of October 2016].