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Anton Roland Laub *Mineriada*

Texts by Lotte Laub, Sonia Voss
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Romania in 1990: The brutal attack by hired groups of thuggish miners on the pro-European opposition

Mineriada by Anton Roland Laub addresses the division of a society that led Romania into a decade of isolation. The starting point are ten Polaroids taken by his father depicting the havoc in Bucharest in June 1990. The work examines the sites of the events and the unspoken trauma of the physical violence when hired groups of thuggish miners brutally bludgeoned the pro-European opposition. Building on research into justice discourse, Laub raises awareness of recursive events in history in a world that is once again increasingly polarized.

Following *Mobile Churches* (2017) and *Last Christmas (of Ceaușescu)* (2020), *Mineriada* is the third part of Anton Roland Laub's Romania trilogy, published by Kehrer Verlag.

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From the text *Saturn Devours its Children* by **Lotte Laub**:

After World War I, Aloys Laub turned his back on the impoverished coal-mining region of Saarlouis, and settled in the thriving Bucharest of the 1920s. Seventy years later, his grandson Anton Roland Laub witnessed how miners, incited by the government, hunted down students and demonstrators in the streets of the Romanian capital, people who had hoped to live in a democracy and in freedom. The events entered Romania's collective consciousness as the "Mineriada" and have still not been processed by the judiciary to this day.

Burnt-out buses, flames in the background, plumes of smoke rising into the air, passers-by making their way through an area of devastation. These private Polaroid shots show University Square (Piața Universității) in Bucharest. They were taken by Frederic Laub, Anton Roland Laub's father, on 13 June 1990, hours before assembled gangs

of thuggish miners overran the streets, in the government's words "to restore order".

"Mineriada" is a sarcastic term combining the Romanian word "miner" (meaning the same as the English word "miner") with the ending "-iada", as in "olimpiada". The third mineriad took place in Bucharest from 13–15 June 1990, and was the bloodiest of six mineriads. Some 10,000–12,000 miners were brought to Bucharest from the Jiu Valley in Transylvania. Days of violent clashes left more than 900 people injured and 67 dead – many more than the official death count of four that was published by the government after the event.

From the text *Night Train* by **Sonia Voss**:

Mineriada is the third part of a trilogy addressing the stigmata still evident in Romanian society thirty years after the end of the Communist dictatorship and the events immediately following the dissolution of the Eastern Bloc and the fall of Ceaușescu. Like the first two parts, this work shines a glaring light on the shortcomings of a country that has not learned from history; one that persists even today in its failure to make a democratic transition.

Anton Roland Laub, born and raised in Bucharest, studied at the Weißensee Art Academy and the Neue Schule für Fotografie, Berlin. Finalist of the New Discovery Award, International Photo Festival Les Rencontres d'Arles. Exhibitions at Photo Saint-Germain, Paris; FORMAT Photography Biennale, Derby; EMOP, Athens and Berlin; atelier35, Bucharest; Kaunas Photography Gallery, Kaunas. Represented in the book and media art collection of the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, the Berlin Wall Memorial; the City Museum Bucharest; the archive of Les Rencontres de la Photographie, Arles.

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