

# Upwardly Mobile

The biennial's championing of "Mobility" may have deemphasized place conceptually, but that didn't mean the participants—all either invited or selected through an open call—didn't have every opportunity to play the tourist. The itinerary



included a photo op at the Iron Gate II (which sounds straight out of Westeros but is in fact a hydroelectric dam); a pilgrimage to Brâncuși's *Endless Column* at Târgu Jiu; and a brief respite at a chalet in Turcinești, where Niculescu and Dan Vezentan's Cannibal Disco party featured a human-shaped mirror-ball roasting on a spit over red neon "flames." Along the way, there were monasteries, mammoth caves, and hot springs galore, not to mention—crucially—outposts to replenish supplies of alcohol and cigarettes. And yes, there were the nightly presentations, more or less formal, though the real conversations raged over bottles of red wine and roadside *tuică*. Topics skittered from what it might mean for an artist to take responsibility for his or her work to whether an artist could ever effectively comment on another culture to who was left behind on a mountaintop (a conversation I missed, being one of the ones left behind on a mountaintop).

Artist Anca Bodea and Joana Grevers at the Cetate Arts Danube Atelier.

First, however, we paid a call to Cetate Arts Danube, the neighboring artist residency program launched by Joana Grevers, collector, patron, and founder of Bucharest's 418 Gallery. The sprawling estate had belonged to her family before communism. By the time Grevers was able to buy it back, many of the buildings had fallen into disrepair, including the magnificent stables, whose collapsed roof had allowed plants to colonize the building. Still, Grevers had managed to retool a hulking barn as the "Cetate Atelier la Dunăre," a studio space for residents, and the property's small chapel had been completely redesigned by architect Alexandra Afrăsinei. "I think it's always best to start with a chapel," Grevers mused, as we sipped a local rosé wine beside the lavender fields. (She could have said anything at that moment and I would have agreed).