Linia Izei · Halta Săcel · Art Center

Curatorial text · Text by Lorena Marciuc

Linia Izei follows the railway route along Line 409, between Salva and Sighetu Marmației, interpreting it as a technical extension of the watercourse that gives the valley its name. In this way, the repurposed railway halt in Săcel becomes a transit node within a network that cannot be reduced to railway infrastructure alone. Conceptually, it overlaps with the local hydrographic network—the Iza River and its adjacent streams, already mapped in the Josephine surveys and with the bodies that, according to Astrida Neimanis, are constituted through circulation, as waters perpetually moving from one body to another.

The inaugural exhibition of the new art centre, bringing together works by 16 artists, explores the rupture between visible infrastructure, which can be abandoned through administrative decisions, and living, embodied infrastructure, described by AbdouMaliq Simone through the concept of “people as infrastructure”. From this perspective, the functions of transport, connection, and maintenance are displaced into relationships and repeated gestures, persisting even after their material support has disappeared.

The curatorial framework starts from the condition of the station itself, an architecture of waiting in which the approach of a train is first heard and only then seen. From there, the research extends to another infrastructure that defines the territory, water, and to the people who live with it. The Iza River, the nearby hydrological systems, the vâltori (traditional water-powered installations for washing and fulling woollen textiles) still in use at the Mecleș and Burnar mills, agricultural rhythms, and materials associated with local practices all enter the artists’ research. Wool, wood, water and ceramics appear in the works as materials directly tied to the place and to the forms of work developed here.

The exhibition also looks at the history of infrastructure and extraction. The railway, the exploitation of timber and ore, economic transformations and their traces on the landscape are part of the same research. In this context, continuity is not treated as an idealised image of the past but as a practice of maintenance, repair, care and the transmission of knowledge, as forms of living resistance. Through collaborations with local woodworkers and ceramicists, artists explore ancestral technologies as living knowledge and models of sustainable, circular practices.