

Iulian Bisericaru

Fragments of Poetic Nature

Curated by **Seolhui Lee**

04 April – 04 June 2026

The Weight of What Remains

Fragments of Poetic Nature is Iulian Bisericaru's solo exhibition, presenting a new series of charcoal drawings centered on Gold Corporation and its operations surrounding Roșia Montană, Romania. Bisericaru's practice consistently engages with ecology, architecture, and the transformation of landscapes. In this exhibition, his recent works introduce a more poetic dimension, where gestures of fragility and erosion coexist with the political tensions embedded in a contested terrain. This poetic dimension does not soften the subject matter but rather sharpens its affective resonance, allowing the viewer to encounter the landscape as both a material reality and a space of reflection.

Roșia Montană, known since Roman antiquity as Alburnus Maior, has been a site of gold extraction for over two millennia. Its landscape bears the accumulated traces of successive regimes - from ancient underground galleries to industrial-scale mining under state socialism, and, more recently, to the halted ambitions of a large-scale open-pit project led by a Canadian-backed corporation. The proposed use of cyanide leaching, alongside plans to displace communities and transform the surrounding mountains, sparked one of the most significant environmental protest movements in post-socialist Europe. The eventual suspension of the project and the site's inscription as a UNESCO World Heritage Site have since reframed Roșia Montană as both a preserved archive and an unresolved terrain of historical tension. It remains a place where questions of ownership, stewardship, and long-term ecological responsibility continue to unfold.

Working in charcoal - a medium inherently tied to processes of burning, residue, and compression - Bisericaru renders landscapes that appear at once eroded and suspended in time. His drawings evoke the material memory of extraction: the slow violence of excavation, the fragility of ecological systems, and the spectral presence of abandoned or threatened spaces. Rather than depicting the site directly, the works operate through suggestion and absence, where forms dissolve and re-emerge as fragments. In this sense, the drawings resist fixed interpretation, instead inviting a slower, more attentive mode of viewing attuned to what is partially obscured or in the process of disappearing.

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These compositions oscillate between documentation and abstraction, foregrounding the instability of landscapes shaped by economic desire and political negotiation. As Henry David Thoreau once asked, “What is the use of a house if you haven’t got a tolerable planet to put it on?”¹ This question, posed in the 19th century, continues to resonate with urgency in the context of contemporary ecological crises. The poetic register of Bisericaru’s work echoes this provocation, situating questions of habitation, value, and survival within a broader ecological horizon. Nostalgia here is not merely retrospective, but a means of engaging with what has been lost, displaced, or deferred, as well as what remains at stake.

By situating Roșia Montană within a broader discourse of extractivism, Bisericaru’s work reflects on the entanglement of natural resources, global capital, and local histories. The exhibition invites viewers to consider how landscapes become sites of projection - of value, memory, and conflict - and how, in their fragmentation, they continue to carry unresolved narratives into the present. At the same time, it prompts reflection on how such landscapes might be reimagined beyond extraction, not as sites of depletion but as spaces of care, resistance, and potential regeneration.

Seolhui Lee

Senior Curator & Head of Creative Partnerships

MAPS - Museum of Art in Public Spaces, Denmark

¹ Henry David Thoreau, *Walden; or, Life in the Woods* (1854).

Iulian Bisericaru (b. 1987) lives and works in Sibiu, Romania. He graduated from the Painting Department of the University of Arts and Design Cluj-Napoca (RO) and developed his PhD thesis around the relationship between architecture and painting, with a critical overview of the ecological ideology. Iulian Bisericaru's artworks offer a somehow neglected or hidden perspective on aspects of contemporary society, that the human eye willingly avoids.

Ironic and playful at the same time, Iulian Bisericaru invites the beholder to take a position towards environmental issues, be it by depicting the remains of industrial society or by approaching the controversial topic of city planning and resource exploitation. His artist book with texts by Liviana Dan, Marie Maertens and Cristina Stoenescu was launched in May 2022, with a solo show curated by Marie Maertens at Anca Poterasu Gallery in Bucharest. The artist was awarded a grant for a virtual artistic residency organized by the European Alliance of Art Academies through Akademie der Künste, Berlin in 2022. During February – May 2019 Iulian Bisericaru attended the residency Cité Internationale des Arts, Paris and two years earlier he took part in the International Summer Residency in Aschersleben. In 2012, he was nominated for *Start Point Prize*, and he also received the Expomaraton Award. In 2017, his work *Diebenkorn Background* (2016) was featured in the Italian journal *La Lettura - Corriere della Sera* (July 2017).

Seolhui Lee is Senior Curator & Head of Creative Partnerships at MAPS – Museum of Art in Public Spaces, Denmark. She co-directed the Korean Pavilion of the 2024 Venice Biennale with Jacob Fabricius, served as curator and chief curator of Kunsthall Aarhus (2023-2025), associate curator at Malmö Konsthall (2024), head of the Busan Biennale 2020 exhibition team, and curator for the Seoul Museum of Art (2018-2019), among others. She has also been invited to the Expo Chicago Curatorial Exchange (2025), Tate Modern Intensive Course (2019), and Gwangju Biennale International Curator Course (2016). Furthermore, Lee serves on the permanent collection acquisition committee of the National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, South Korea (2024-), a panel for mentoring 'Danish Visual Artists' (2024-), and as an advisor for Frieze Seoul's Focus Section (2025-).