



This September, thanks to Refresh Project, I had the chance to work in Romania; I have been in the city of Iași to realize a photographic project, on the occasion of the Centenary of Unification. I was privileged to work with other artists who came from Slovenia, Spain and also from Iași; together we shared artistic experiences, cultural experiences and an awesome studio which was not an ordinary office, but a huge and amazing nineteenth century building: the “Palace of Culture”.

My Italian traveling companion and I, Serena Vittorini, were warmly welcomed from the Art Director Cristian Ungureanu and from all the Palace of Culture staff. Soon we also bonded with the artists of Iași involved in the project, they were very excited to show us the city and its traditions and they were really happy to work with us.

Even if the time was short I think I’ve figured a lot about Iași, thanks to the continuous contact with local people. I was really surprised visiting the city, because it looks like Paris or Berlin or Middle East. Iași, in an attempt to integrate itself with Europe, has absorbed its architecture, especially in some cultural and folk aspects such as mechanical music. At the same time this city has preserved a strong orthodox root and also it was highly influenced by a soviet mentality.

Now Iași is, above all, the symbol of a growing nation, where new generations are emerging, paving the way for a new way to look at this country and at its history.

During the week each artist realized its own project focused on the relation among the past, present and future of Iași, with the final purpose of realizing an exhibition inside the Palace of Culture. My photographic work was focused on the socio-cultural aspects of this city.

During our first day we explored the most important sites, under the expert guidance of Professor Cristian Ungureanu so as to find inspiration for the realization of our project; we visited the most significant places such as the Metropolitan Cathedral, the National Theater, the University of Iasi, the Three Hierarchs Church, The Clock Tower.

For the rest of the week we had at our disposal a beautiful and well equipped workshop area inside the Palace of Culture; there we studied different work strategies, analyzed our works, debated about art and about our impressions. Moreover it was a space dedicated and set up for painters, very suggestive.

Unlike them I spent the week exploring the city, trying to catch the essence of Iași, so as to immerse myself as much as possible in its atmosphere. Overall my RHW adventure was really important for my work as a photographer, thanks to it I experienced a cultural, professional and human growth.

I think that at concerts, exhibitions and shows taking place in cultural heritage sites, everyone can find the topic that attracts him. Heritage sites are also great for socializing with friends.

Chiara Martini,
RHW Iași 2018