



URBAN EXPLORERS

Bucharest, 2024



ARHITECTURA  UNIUNEA
REVISTA UNIUNII ARHITECȚILOR DIN ROMÂNIA FONDATĂ ÎN 1906 ARHITECTILOR DIN
ROMANIA

URBAN EXPLORERS - NIGHT SESSION

Concept

Urban Explorers - Night Session is an event dedicated to exploring heritage houses in Bucharest, which are transformed, for one evening, into spaces animated by cultural and artistic activities aimed at revealing their stories.

Organized by the Youth Vision for Society (YVS) Association together with Arhitectura Magazine and the Romanian Union of Architects, the event places special emphasis on:

- **Built Heritage:** We bring to light the forgotten stories of historic buildings, capitalizing on local architecture and history.
 - **Accessibility:** We offer inclusive and engaging experiences, addressing a diverse audience, from families and young people to culture and history lovers.
 - **Cultural education:** We use various artistic and cultural forms to bring the history of places to the forefront, transforming heritage houses into living spaces. Each edition introduces new and creative ways to tell the stories of these buildings, actively involving the public.
 - **Cultural urban exploration:** We invite participants to discover the city from a new perspective, to connect with the places they pass by perhaps daily, but without knowing their essence.
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Urban Explorers was created to respond to a fundamental need: the creation of a cultural identity closely linked to the built heritage of Bucharest. The capital, a culturally versatile city, hosts a variety of events and initiatives, but, paradoxically, cultural consumption remains low.



Although there are many small and private initiatives that promote heritage and history through guided tours or one-off projects, the city still suffers from a deficit of cultural spaces and deep public involvement in heritage life.

Urban Explorers brings distinct added value through two essential aspects:

1. Opening houses inaccessible to the general public: The event creates a unique opportunity for participants to enter sometimes private spaces, loaded with history, that would otherwise not be available for visiting.

2. Personalized interaction with heritage: Urban Explorers is not limited to simply visiting houses, but emphasizes living, feeling and deeply understanding the space. Through creative and artistic methods, the event transforms the experience into a personal one, designed to create a strong connection between the public and the built heritage.



Our mission is to inspire the public to assume this heritage as something "theirs" and to perceive it as a legacy worth protecting and valorizing.

Only through this close personal relationship can we stimulate a **responsibility towards urban heritage** and contribute to the creation of an authentic **cultural identity** in Bucharest.

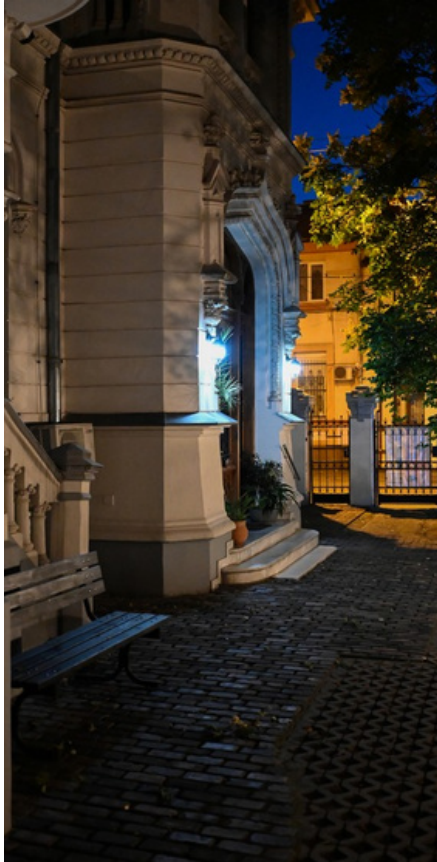
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2024

The 2024 edition of Urban Explorers was organized in the area of Str. I.L. Caragiale, Jean Louis Calderon, Italiană and partly the Armenesc neighborhood, celebrating 565 years since the first attestation of Bucharest.

The central theme was the history of the neighborhood and the events that marked this area over time, highlighting how the places and houses behind the grand boulevards tell essential stories about the development of the city and everyday life in the past.

This edition was a celebration of Bucharest's hidden history, highlighting how cultural heritage lives on in seemingly unnoticed, yet meaningful, details.



This year's edition offered participants a captivating foray into Bucharest's heritage, through a series of well-structured activities that highlighted the history and architecture of the explored area.

Opening event at OAR Bucharest

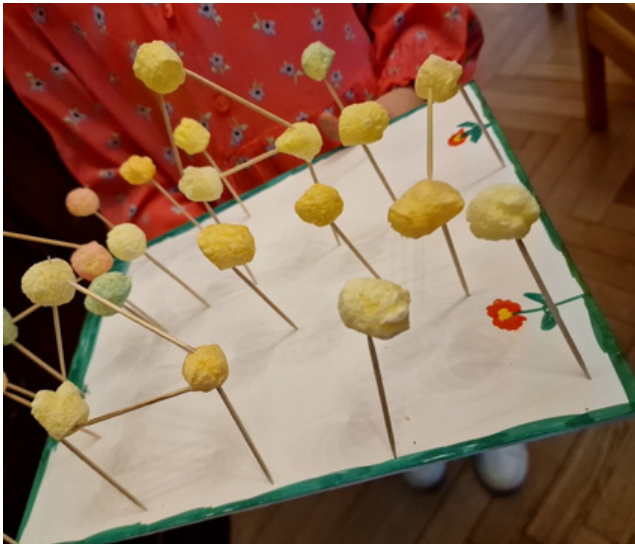
The evening before, on September 19, at the headquarters of OAR Bucharest, heritage lovers gathered to discuss the challenges and opportunities of restoring historic buildings. The building itself, a remarkable example of preservation, was the perfect host for these conversations. The event set the stage for an evening of exploration, sparking the curiosity of the participants.



The workshop at Vila Mincu:

The future architects of the city

On September 20, the event kicked off at Le Carousel Kindergarten with an architecture workshop for children. For the little ones, Vila Mincu was the perfect place to let their imagination run wild.



At the "Happy Structures" workshop, children built houses and structures inspired by the city's architecture, guided by the Architecture Association. The joy, creativity, and joy of discovery transformed the workshop into a special moment for the whole family.





Caragiale House:

Humor and nostalgia in a historic place

At the **Caragiale House**, where the famous playwright **Ion Luca Caragiale** lived, participants encountered his satirical spirit in the skit "**The Romanian Fad.**"

Actor **Lari Georgescu** transformed the house into a gateway to the late 19th century, bringing fragments of Caragiale's works to life with humor and subtlety. The monodrama included famous texts such as *Moftul Român*, *Lanțul slabiciunilor* and *Repausul dominical*, captivating the audience with the playwright's subtle irony and unmistakable satire. In the warm and intimate atmosphere of the house, each spectator felt like they were stepping directly into Caragiale's universe, rediscovering the essence of the Romanian spirit.

"**Moftul Român**" was a humorous magazine founded by Caragiale in 1893, becoming a symbol of Romanian literary satire.

Today the playwright's former home is a small cultural space that hosts theater skits.





Center for Architectural Culture:

A historic duel and vintage cars

In the impressive setting of an exemplary restored neo-Gothic house, the skit **"Duel on Four Wheels"** brought to life the true story of the registration of the first automobile in Bucharest.

Actors **Dimitrii Bogomaz** and **Cezar Antal** recreated with humor and dynamism the dispute between Asan and Prince Bibescu for obtaining the first license plate, under the direction of **Silvian Vâlcu** and the script written by **Cătălin D. Constantin**.

In the courtyard of the house, the **exhibition of historic cars** was the icing on the cake, complemented by the launch of the magazine **"Automobilul și Orașul"** which attracted urban planning and automotive enthusiasts alike.





Historic Car Exhibition:

Old-fashioned elegance on the city streets

Another highlight of the **Urban Explorers 2024** event was the historic car exhibition, which brought a touch of elegance and nostalgia to the streets of the explored area. Organized with the support of **ARCUB**, through the "**Open Streets**" program, and **Retromobil Romania**, the exhibition transformed the area into a true open-air museum.



The event was closely linked to the launch of the special issue of **Architecture Magazine**, "**The Car and the City**", an opportunity to explore the connection between mobility, architecture and urban development. The cars on display, each with its own story, attracted not only car enthusiasts, but also curious people who wanted to learn more about the evolution of urban traffic in the context of Bucharest.

The exhibition offered a moment of respite and reflection, perfectly integrating the event's theme and emphasizing the idea that heritage, whether architectural or industrial, can become a bridge between the past and the present.



Minoux Space:

Music and elegance from yesteryear

Lawyer Ananie, a former resident of the house, once again invited his guests to a cultural evening, charmingly recreated by singer **Raluca Radu** and pianist **George Vizitiu**.

The atmosphere was full of emotion, with music that seemed to echo from other times, transporting the audience to an era of elegance and refinement.



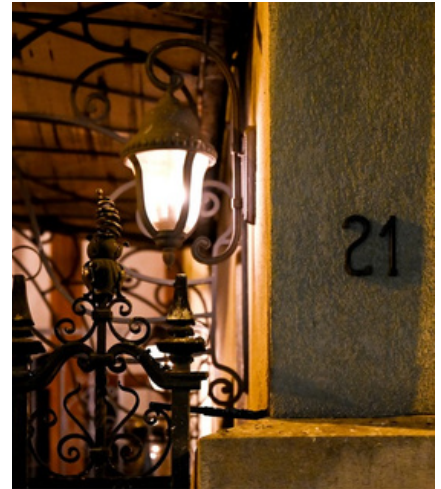
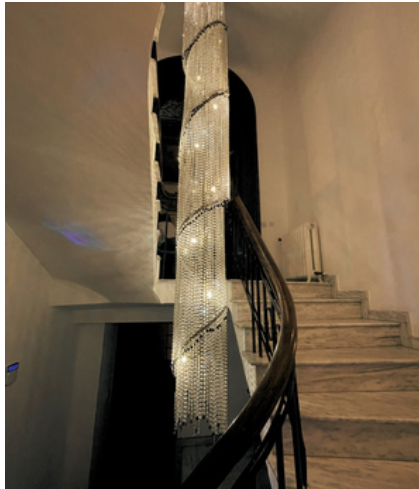
Italian 21:

Nostalgia for an autumn in 1948

Under the warm light of a September evening, the house at 21 Italian Street became the scene of a moving story.

The skit **"Autumn on Italian Street,"** written by **Cătălin D. Constantin** and directed by **Silvian Vâlcu**, transported the audience to 1948, a period of great transformations.

Actresses **Angela Ioan** and **Gabriela Popescu** delicately captured the nostalgia of two ladies who looked uncertainly at the future, discussing nationalization with humor and sadness.



Legal Resource Center:

An example of survival and reuse

On the Urban Explorers 2024 route, participants discovered a house with a unique history, which, although architecturally modest, has withstood the passage of time and found a new life. This almost 100-year-old building, today the headquarters of the **Legal Resources Center**, is a remarkable example of functional reconversion.

The former home, although not impressive in ornamental details or size, has preserved an original internal staircase and a discreet charm of the houses of yesteryear. Instead of being abandoned, demolished or becoming a point of urban pollution, the house was renovated and transformed into a useful space, harmoniously integrating into the contemporary life of the city.

Visitors appreciated the simplicity of this house's story: you don't have to be monumental to contribute to urban identity. This is a lesson in how a modest, but well-maintained and repurposed building can serve as an example for other spaces in Bucharest, offering a valuable alternative to abandonment or destruction.

The Legal Resource Center was a thought-provoking stop, emphasizing the importance of respect for the past and smart use of urban resources.



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UN SPAȚIU AL CONTINUITĂȚII



Guided tour:

A foray into the architectural history of Bucharest

The guided tour within Urban Explorers 2024 was one of the highlights of the event, offering participants a captivating perspective on the architectural diversity of the explored area.

Starting at **Caragiale House**, the tour traveled along **I.L. Caragiale, Thomas Masaryk, Jean Louis Calderon, Italiană and the Armenească streets**, revealing stories about emblematic buildings and architectural styles that shaped the city's urban identity.



The central message of the tour

Participants were invited to discover how architecture, from neoclassical and neo-Romanian styles to modernism and Art Deco, influenced not only the living, but also the social dynamics of Bucharest throughout the 19th and 20th centuries.

The guided tour, led by **Ovidiu Neacșu**, captivated almost 100 participants with fascinating stories about the history of the neighborhood and the buildings visited, transforming the experience into an invitation to discover hidden details, understand the architectural complexity of Bucharest, and connect the city's past with the present.



Closing the event:

Guided tour dedicated to children from disadvantaged areas

The Urban Explorers 2024 event ended on September 21 with a guided tour dedicated to children from disadvantaged categories, organized together with the **History Told Association**.

During the tour, participants also visited the UAR headquarters, where they had the opportunity to watch a video about the thatched roof technique, an educational material that brought to the forefront the architectural traditions and solutions of the past. This moment enriched the tour experience, arousing the curiosity of the young people about the history of architecture and the crafts of the past.





ORGANIZERS

Asociația Youth Vision for Society (YVS)

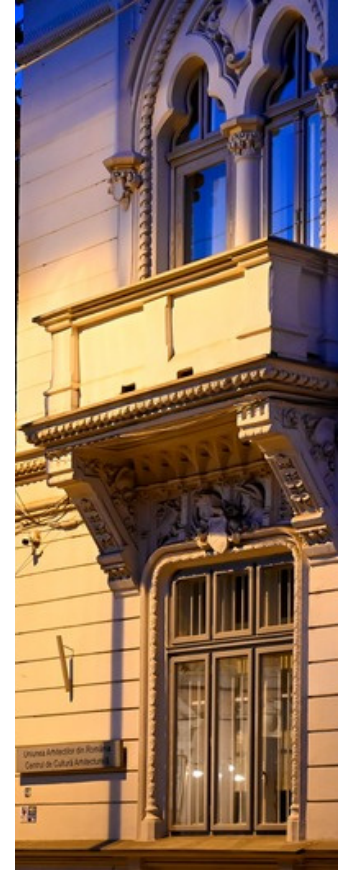
Youth Vision for Society is a Romanian non-governmental organization that promotes civic and cultural engagement. Its projects target education, cultural heritage preservation, environmental protection, and entrepreneurship education.

Architecture Magazine and UAR

The Union of Architects of Romania (UAR) promotes architecture and urbanism as cultural fields, protects the built heritage and the landscape. It is an apolitical and independent professional association, with public utility activity.

ARCHITECTURE Magazine

Founded in 1906 by George Sterian, the magazine promotes relevant works in Romanian architecture, being a source of inspiration for professionals and students. It has evolved alongside the architects' guild, contributing to their image in society. The editorial team expands the content through social media, debates, exhibitions and events.



OUR VALUED

Collaborators



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happy

PROIECT CO-FINANȚAT DE:



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The project does not necessarily represent the position of the National Cultural Fund Administration. AFCN is not responsible for the content of the project or how the project results may be used. These are entirely the responsibility of the funding recipient.

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Powered by Youth Vision for society

<https://yvs.ro/>

With the support of Arhitectura Magazine and the Union of
Architects of Romania