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One in five Romanians lives and works abroad. According to a UN International Migration Report between 2007 and 2015, around 3.4 million Romanians have emigrated, placing the country on the second place globally by emigration growth rate between 2007 and 2015, after Syria. People leave Romania, disappointed by the lack of perspectives and forced by the perpetual and endemic corruption in politics and public administration. Even if this massive recent process of emigration has begun 3 decades ago, the majority of people still sees this as a temporary situation: they will stay a bit more abroad, until the things will improve a bit back home, than they will return and start a small business in their native place. That's the theory but until now a very few returned home – a simply reason is that you cannot start any business in an empty village. In some rural communities, castles of steel and glass have risen up next to the old wooden traditional houses. Overnight, an entire traditional world was swollen by a modern one, which brings together elements of various western culture in a rural community which perhaps until recently was one of the least touched by time passing in the entire Europe. What started as a need it developed into a competition for wealth display for which the migrants suffer many financial restrictions abroad to afford to emulate it. But the migrant's story is not always about their success gained: behind the shine façade of their house each family hides personal dramas and face the struggles that every generation of migrants over the world had: alienation, couples split apart from the distance, kids left behind with the grandparents, loss of identity.





The small, one story house belonging to the Gherman family clings to the side of a new constructed three story building which two brothers, grandsons of the original house's owner, are building. They work abroad and have been building their family home back in Romania over several years. **Moiseni, 2015**



A family go through the pictures received from their son who enrolled in the French Foreign Legion. **Botiza 2010**



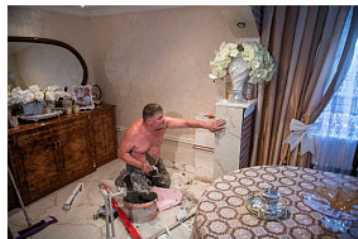
Ioan Gherman, 83 pictured (deceased now), in his grandson's house. The grandson left to work in France and sent money home to finish the building work. **Moiseni, 2015**



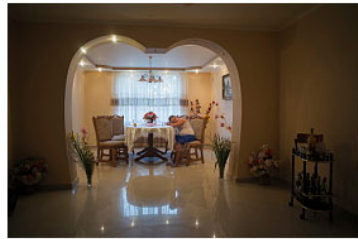
A flock of sheep pass a newly built house in the village of Cajvana. Due to the large amount of houses built by the people who left to work in Italy, Cajvana was upgraded to the status of town. **Cajvana, 2012.**



People gather for the funeral of an 84 year old man in the yard of his house. Next to his house his grandson who is working in Spain is building a new, much larger, house. **Bixad, 2012**



Vasile Solomeș who works as a construction worker in Paris cannot rest for one day in his holiday home and make some improvements in the living. "This is how we are - we return home for two weeks each summer and then we break the entire house". "If you don't show up with new things such as cars and houses people will think that we don't work so hard in Paris. Money has to be made because we are hard laborers and people should know and see that" - says his wife Irina, which works as a house maid in Paris too. **Tarsolt, 2021**



Jesica Ciorba (8) sits in the living room of the family home in the native village of Certeze, where they come for holidays from Paris. She is feeling bored as all her friends are in Paris, where she feels it rather belong. Even if they left 20-25 years ago they still see this as a temporary moment in their lives in all plan to return one day in the native village - where they have built luxurious houses. But for the youngster there is no way back home excepting holidays. As they study abroad, learned the languages and made local friends, the future is abroad, not in Romania where corruptions and lack of opportunities remains the same issue over years. **Certeze, 2012**



Two women dressed the same as they are are preparing to be sisters in law go from house to house to distribute wedding invitations for their daughter and son which are about to marry. **Certeze, 2021.**



People attending a wedding party are crossing the streets of Cajvana. Almost all the labor force works in Italy or France and pretty much the place is deserted over the year with the exception of August, when people return home for holidays and to attend the weddings. In Cajvana the traditional costumes disappeared from a period of time as people preferred the modern clothes. By the time passed and the migrants suffered from homesickness, discrimination, or self-imposed social isolation in order to save money, they have returned to the traditional costumes, which now have an updated look, are fashionable, handmade and very expensive - a perfect way to display your status. **Cajvana, 2021**



One of the most influential local business men, Ioan Balta, sings traditional Carol songs at his home in Certeze. The cash flow the migrants bring home was also beneficial for the few ones who decided to stay home, as Ioan did. **Certeze, 2010**



Petre, also called Patrick, is getting noticed by his younger neighbors while he enjoys a ride with his Ferrari. Petre started to emigrate when he was young and after many difficult experiences he reached Paris where all his fellows from the native village were at the time (90s). He became a successful entrepreneur in Paris, having a team of construction workers from his village mainly. **Certeze, 2011**



Bridesmaids are queuing in front of a newly built wedding hall in Negresti Oas. Some are from Italy, as the bride studies there and has made new friends - the rest are relatives and friends from its native town Negresti - migrants also. Each year, on the August 15, as the fasting season is over the weddings are starting until the end of the month. The sleepy town and villages around Negresti Oas came to life as the migrants return home for two weeks, for holidays and to attend the weddings. **Certeze, 2021**