

University of Missouri

The Magazine of the Mizzou Alumni Association

# MIZZOU

## This Romanian Life

**MU alumnus and Romanian native starts his own magazine.**

*Story by Kelsey Allen*

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**C**ristian Lupsa went through two years of journalism school in Bucharest, Romania, without reporting a story. His studies focused on theory and semantics. It wasn't until he took a class taught by American journalists that he realized what he had been missing. For the first time, Lupsa wrote stories and put out a newspaper. "I got more hands-on experience in one semester than I had had in three years," he recalls.



Cristian Lupsa, MA '05, returned to his native Romania to start his own magazine. Photo by Cristian Banica.

He wanted to learn more about the craft.

At the MU School of Journalism, he cultivated his passion for storytelling, ultimately winning the 2005 Atwater Prize for in-depth reporting. His portfolio included a 20-page special section in the *Columbia Missourian* called the “Soul of Islam,” which featured profiles of Columbia Muslims, a look at the basics of the faith and a report on the struggle between factions within the religious tradition.

Lupsa, MA '05, moved back to Romania in 2007. Unable to find a place where he could write the stories he wanted to tell, he started his own magazine, Decât o Revista, November 2009. “If the New Yorker and Wired had a Romanian baby, this is what it would look like,” Lupsa says. “We’re not only trying to promote a form of journalism that doesn’t exist in this part of the world — long-form narratives — but we’re also trying to teach people how to consume it.”

From reports on societal issues and in-depth profiles to provocative photographs and illustrations, the magazine attracts about 6,000 readers, mostly designers and musicians, activists and human rights workers.

“We are fighting a reluctance on the part of Romanian culture to examine itself and to examine what they do, what they believe and why they believe what they believe,” Lupsa says. “There is a degree of soul-searching that long-form nonfiction gives you. People are able to read something and not only learn about the people around them but also ask questions and get some answers about their own lives. This is what good writing does.”

*View the first issue of the English language edition of Decât o Revistă.*

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