

q world: ELSKA DOES MOLDOVA

NEW BOOK BY ELSKA SHOWCASES GAY MEN FROM CHISINAU, MOLDOVA



This is the fifty-second book in the Elsa series, a project dedicated to exploring the world and its men through a gay lens. This latest edition focuses on Chisinau, the capital of Europe's least-visited and poorest country, Moldova. Inside, readers can get to know a selection of ordinary local gay men through a blend of intimate photography and personal storytelling.

"I have toyed with the idea of taking my project to Moldova for many years, but I always assumed it wouldn't work," says Elsa editor, writer and chief photographer Liam Campbell. "I worried that the city might be too small, too conservative and too closeted to be able to find subjects willing to do a photoshoot and story for me. But then I realised that my assumptions were based on stereotypes of this country as backwards, part of a trend to focus on Moldova as the 'poorest country in Europe'. I decided to give it a go and see the place for myself."

"I found Chisinau to be a truly lovely city and its LGBTQ+ community was feeling a buoyant buzz from a recent Pride event, one that went by peacefully and with the highest attendance on record," continues Liam. "However, during my discussions with individual local men, I discovered a cleavage within the community that followed the lines of the city's demographic split between people of Romanian and Russian heritages. Gay spaces seemed geared towards one group or the other, creating separation and sometimes resentment. Political and social topics came up almost constantly when meeting our



local subjects, making this one of our most political issues... though still with a lot of sexy, naked men!"

The narrative in *Elska Chisinau* was formed from extensive diaries taken from start to finish during the trip to Moldova, including details of conversations and time spent with several local men met there. These men were also invited to take part in a photoshoot, encompassing a combination of photographs in the streets with clothes and at home without clothes. These images add a deeper, more intimate side, resulting in a reading experience that is a sort of sexy anthropology journal meets queer art book.

Elska Chisinau is available in a collectible print format or in a downloadable e-version. In addition, the companion e-zine *Elska Ekstra Chisinau* is available, containing four more men and their stories, plus many hundreds of outtake images of each *Chisinau* subject. Both are available for order online as well as from a select group of shops around the world.

Ordering information and details of the subscription service can be found on the Elska website: www.elskamagazine.com



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CHISINAU MOLDOVA

