



# ROMA KÉP

2013

“Roma Representation after the Cultural Turn”

in the framework of PATTERNS Lectures

supported by Erste Stiftung Foundation and  
World University of Austria

ELTE University, Budapest

Department of Communication and Media  
Studies

The Roma Visual Lab 2013 was prepared and fulfilled in the framework of a new course development project due to an Erste Stiftung/ WUS grant. [1]

Brief historical overview

**Roma Visual Laboratory** is a film club and university course organized by ELTE Media Department and DocuArt (a documentary film cinema, club). **The first edition (2011)** was functioning as a seminar completing the course held parallel at the university (“Roma representation in the light of cultural studies”), supported by Central European University (CEU) and National Cultural Fund (NKA). **The second (2012)** was a community film club (organized by volunteer students of previous year’s course) and attended by new students.

In my personal teaching philosophy student involvement counts as a crucial element of education, since it can motivate the participants more than any other form of studying. Also, they can get practical experiences and develop various skills, competencies.

As a theoretical background we use contemporary critical theories (post-Blackness, critical whiteness theories) and lean on cultural studies assumptions that can help the students analyze and interpret hybridization processes, our late-modern media environment (the role of new media in democratization). At the follow-up discussions researchers, journalists, filmmakers, artists take part.

In my experience, students benefit a lot from follow-up discussions, especially when we have the opportunity to interpret them together in the framework of university classes.

In **the third edition (2013)** which consisted of two parts, the theoretical courses took place at Roma Parliament, a very important cultural center and cultic place for Roma intellectuals in the 8<sup>th</sup> (slum) district of Budapest (ten minutes walk from university), and the Roma Visual Laboratory was organized in DocuArt Cinema. They were co-tutored by dr. András Müllner, the head of the Media Department at ELTE University and commented, analyzed by Jenő Zsigó sociologist, civil right activist, who is the leader of the Roma Parliament.

The program of the film club was tightly connected to the lectures and organized by almost the same team of students. The screenings/discussions were visited by students, Roma and non-Roma intellectuals. Due to PATTERNS lectures all the discussions were recorded and archived on this website.

## **Course development**

### Study visit

Course development had started with my study visit at University of St. Andrews, Department of Film Studies, in late October, early November 2012. I had several aims: first of all I studied the functioning of the new, but dynamically developing film department. I visited seminars and lectures, examined course descriptions, consulted with professors Stefanie van de Peer, Dennis Hanlon and a PhD student Diana Pópa. I analyzed the structure of the modules, course content and the working processes. The department is a centre of a new developing area of screen studies, film festival research which is very much connected to our future plans. I had also opportunity to use the university's rich library collection, collecting literature for the summer course 2013.

## Preparation

### Roma Visual Lab 2013

In November 2012 we started to work on the program of Roma Visual Lab 2013 with the members.

(Previously, in late August we spent together a brain-storming / community building week end in the village I live at Lake Balaton.)

Members of Roma Visual Lab: Luca Horváth, Norbert Oláh, Lóránt Bódi, Sára Szilágyi, Máté Kerényi.



Our working method has changed (compared to previous year) since the members of the Lab were not visiting the courses anymore. They were well informed about the course content since the film club program was tightly connected to the lectures.

The final program was put together in January and promoted in early February.

<http://media.elte.hu/blog/2013/02/06/romakep-muhely-filmklub/>

## Lectures

The preparation of the lectures at Roma Parliament started in January. We consulted with András Müllner, who became my co-tutor and discussed my plans about the course content, divided the labour. I was responsible for the course content, literature, guest lecturers, he organized the infrastructure of the course, took many organizational tasks and kept contact with the students.

### Fullfillment

#### Publication

The website was designed by ELTE University Studio experts and the structure was ready in February. But the content could not have been uploaded since there was a huge amount of archival materials, no volunteering for the editing tasks.

And yet, all the lectures and follow-up discussions were recorded during the term and uploaded on our own Youtube channel. So the students were able to follow them online if they were not present or use them in their research.

<http://www.youtube.com/user/romakepmuhely?feature=watch>

#### Roma Parliament lectures

The lectures were completed as they were planed. Every second lecture was held by a guest lecturer, between them I made an attempt to connect the different topics, highlighting important questions, adding some more aspects and analyzing media contents, visual materials. This gave the opportunity to discuss certain issues together, since the other lectures were more or less frontal, which is not an effective way of teaching. After each presentation we left time to ask questions, but the students were less active. Many valuable and crucial comments were made by Jenő Zsigó and András Müllner. Because of the mosaique-like structure the course was not totally coherent but the students gained access to sources of knowledge that were not highlighted enough in academic research life.



Anna Orsós



Jenő Zsigó



András Müllner



Andrea Pócsik



Students

## Student evaluation

### Lectures – Roma Parliament

The students were asked to summarize the compulsory readings and send it in e-mail to András Müllner two days before the lecture. By the end of the term they had to prepare a paper on a chosen topic connected to the course content. They were asked to make a draft and send to both of us in order to see if their research is based on right assumptions. To help their work we made a change in our plan: the last lecture was devoted to students' presentations: they had to prepare a brief summary of their research and take into consideration the remarks, suggestions we made with András Müllner, Jenő Zsigó and the other students.

We were more or less satisfied with the results: most of the papers were using literature, course content, new aspects and approaches in an appropriate manner. The best papers were selected and published on our website.

### Roma Visual Lab – DocuArt

The student assessment in the filmclub was a bit more complicated. At the beginning of the term the students received the list of readings connected to each program. We also put together a bunch of key terms on whose basis they could start to think about the research they had to do at the end of the term. They had the opportunity to consult with the members of the organizing team and our invited guests (only very few of them used this opportunity), and we had a regular consultation hour before each program. They participated at the screenings and the follow-up discussions, but were not very active.

Their seminar papers were also successful, the best ones were published on the website too.







Audience and guests (Péter Szuhay, Albert Durkó, Miklós Iványi, Luca Horváth)

Results in the light of our overall concept, aims and objectives

The course development „Roma Representation after the Cultural Turn” has been processed according to our main expectations, although some of the opportunities were not exploited. If we had been able to start the website at the beginning of the term, we could have used it for several purposes to make the learning process more effective, and to give larger publicity to the events. The motivation of the students could have been strengthened in many ways if the same students attend the lectures and the filmclub. Concerning the course content, the choices of the guest lecturers, the readings, the programs at DocuArt were very good: the discussions and the papers proved that the students’ overall concepts and views about Roma representation has been changing a lot, and moved into a more critical, self-conscious and self-reflexive direction. Our cooperation with András Müllner and Jenő Zsigó was fruitful in many ways.

An important experience for the future is that we have to connect more tightly the organizing team (Roma Visual Lab members) and the courses: the student involvement should stay the basic component of the project.

#### Additional activity:

In June 2013 I participated at the Screen Conference in Glasgow. <http://www.erstestiftung.org/blog/screen-conference-glasgow/>, introducing and analyzing the concept of the project

#### Lectures, seminars:

The fourth edition (2014) was prepared in winter semester 2013 in a course led by dr. András Müllner in the framework of PATTERNS Lectures. Thus – the main result of our project – the course from this term has been further developed and embedded in the curriculum of the department.

Roma Visual Laboratory has been developed slowly into a crucial cultural space in Budapest with good repetition which fulfils its basic task: it teaches critical thinking and turns the analysis of Roma representation into something else. It undermines power relations inherited from the socialist and previous eras, creates a new context in which Roma people have their basic right to interpret their cultural achievements, define their identities. The program covers broad subject terrains from gender issues through music scenes to religious movements.

### Symposium:

In this semester instead of inviting guest lecturers we decided to organize a symposium. As András Müllner held the seminars, I was responsible for the program and other tasks, working together with a group of Roma artists.

As partners we invited Dóra Hegyi curator from Tranzit.hu, André J. Raatzsch a Berlin based Hungarian Roma artist, curator and Jenő Zsigó, the leader of the Roma Parliament.

The symposium was accompanied with a film screening and an exhibition.

### **Intersections I–II–III.**

#### **Intersections I. 13<sup>th</sup> December 2013**

Facebook event: <https://www.facebook.com/events/451013358336394/>

**Expanded spaces – Half a century in „Gypsish and Redneck” manners.**

**Films, documents, free thoughts**

**Venue: Roma Parliament, VIII. 6 Tavaszmező Street**

The first program of the Intersections–events took place in the cultic scene of Roma cultural and public life (where in 2013 spring the PATTERNS lectures were organized).

„The extended cinema event entitled *Intersections I—Expanded Spaces— Half a Century of Gypsy and Redneck Manners*, as approached by the members of the Independent Theatre Hungary, created the necessary system of connections at the Roma Parliament that paved the way for the subsequent symposium by “rewriting” the films of the Balázs Béla Studio. The performance of the Independent Theatre artists, by expanding the narrative space of films and the socio–cultural space of cinema, intervened in the process of reception: through scenes operating as “enquiries,” the audience was probed about the problematics of the period—still relevant today—that is thematized as the “the Gypsy question.” The period–evoking film segment compilation offered a nuanced portrait of the power/minority relations system that was brought to life by the artists of the social theatre through scenes that depict the present days. Instead of a reconstruction, we partook in a peculiar “neither here nor there” experience, both in

time and space. The tension of the performance had both expected and unexpected effects. “ (Tranzit.hu reader written by Andrea Pócsik)

### *Expanded Spaces—Half a Century of Gypsy and Redneck Manners*

#### **Films, period-portraits, free thinking**

*Gypsies*, 1962, documentary, directed by Sándor Sára

*Changes That Have Been*, 1979, documentary (excerpt), directed by Gyula Gulyás, János Gulyás

*Gyuri*, 1978, feature film (excerpt), directed by Pál Schiffer

*Selection*, 1970, documentary (excerpt), directed by Gyula Gazdag

*Princess in Rags and Tatters*, 1975, documentary (excerpt), directed by István Dárday

*Feather Picking*, 2012, feature film (excerpt), directed by Rodrigó Balogh, Márton Illés

Curated by Andrea Pócsik

Creators of the performance: Rodrigó Balogh, Tamás Boros, Márton Illés, and Tamás Szegedi (Independent Theatre Hungary)

The performance was recorded and will be used in Sebestyén Kodolányi's documentary on social distribution.

Independent Theatre artists:

**Rodrigo Balogh** is a Hungarian Roma film- and theatre director, drama pedagogue and actor. He is the founder and art director of the Independent Theatre Hungary, which aim is to produce and manage high quality artistic products with Roma and interethnic topics.

His notable projects are among others the *'Peer Gynt's Children* (2012–13, Ibsen Scholarship winner drama project), *Feather Picking* (2012, writer, film and stage play, 3rd prize on the 4th International Romani Filmfest), *Mirad – A Boy from Bosnia* (2007, UNHCR Refugee Prize theatre). He was also awarded the Junior Prima Prize, in Hungarian Education category.

**Marton Illes** is a Hungarian communication professional, manager, dramaturge and filmmaker. Since 2011 he is the production director of the Independent Theater Hungary. He was the project manager of the Kurt Lewin Foundation (2007– 12) and edited in chief on-line and off-line materials with social and especially Roma topics such as [www.romapage.hu](http://www.romapage.hu). His notable works are among others the *Feather Picking* (2013,

director of the film adaptation of the stage play, 3rd prize on the 4th International Romani Filmfest), the Dreams of Junk project (2013, SozialMarie – Prize for Social Innovation). <http://independenttheater.blogspot.hu/p/introduction.html>

The **Independent Theatre** was established in 2004 in order to produce and manage high quality artistic products with Roma and interethnic topics.

### ***Mission***

To prove with our activity that Roma integration can be developed in the frame of socially active financially sustainable enterprises, which produce valuable products of art and educate active professionals with Roma origin. In order to reach our mission we work on the realization of novel, human-centred artistic initiatives, which react social issues and involves disadvantaged people.

### ***Aims***

- Complex development and dissemination of non-formal art education and human-centred art
- Development of a social enterprise, which is independent from the state sources, dissemination of its methodology
- Education disadvantaged young people and support them in order they can become professionals
- Advancing the cultural, social and economical integration.

The host of the event:

**Jenő Zsigó** is a Roma sociologist, civil activist, and musician. He was born in 1952 and took part in political and cultural self-organization of Roma intelligentsia in 1980ies, during the socialist era. He was the founder of Ando Drom, an authentic Roma music group of international reputation.

After the change of system he took part actively in Roma civil right movement. In 1990 Roma Parliament was founded by several Roma NGOs under his leadership. According to its basic rules it represents the interests of Roma population in Hungary. It aims to change the social and political situation of Roma people, makes efforts to save their identity, organizes artistic and public life events, runs a legal aid bureau. It inspires, informs and coordinates Roma social self-organization. He was the founder and chief editor of *Amaro Drom*, the most prestigious Roma journal.

Extracts recorded by Sebestyén Kodolányi:

## Symposium

Date: 10 January 2014

Venue: Tranzit.hu, VI. 102 Király Street

### Strategies 1957–2014

For establishing cultural programs, guiding principles and institutions,  
on the initiative of Roma intellectuals

#### 1. Cultural Alliance of Hungarian Gypsies 1957–1961

bequest of Mária László

Presenter: Erna Sággy

**Erna Sággy** is a historian, teacher and journalist.

She studied at ELTE University and at the György Bálint School of Journalism of MÚOSZ (Hungarian Journalists' Association). She wrote her thesis on the history of Hungarian Roma between the Holocaust and the 1961 Communist Party Declaration. Her essays on the same topic were published in several academic journals, e.g. *Múltunk* and *Régió*. She wrote an interrogative study together with György Bányai on the 2009 series of racist attacks against the Roma. She has been working as a free-lancing journalist, university teacher since 2007.

She was awarded for her achievements in journalism several times.



#### 1. “Rom Som” Gypsy Club of Rákospalota 1972–1978

Presenter: József Choli Daróczi

**József „Choli” Daróczi** is a Hungarian Roma writer, poet, translator and teacher.

He studied at Budapest Teachers' Training College between 1972 and 1975. He has been working as a teacher but meanwhile he has been publishing his poems, writings, and became a member of the Association of Hungarian Writers. He took part actively in the civil Roma right movement in the late seventies, early eighties. He established Roma cultural clubs for workers and a journal „Rom Som”. He edited several anthologies of Roma literature and translated several works into Romani language, e.g. the poems of Federico Garcia Lorca and the New Testament. He was awarded several times by the government and civil organizations.



The lecture/ discussion available at:

## 1. Hungarian Institute of Culture 1979–1985

Presenter: Ágnes Daróczi

**Agnes Daróczy** is a Roma researcher, cultural manager, civil right activist. She has been working at the Hungarian Institute for Culture and Art- as a scientific associate since 1978. She was the editor in chief of the first Roma broadcasting program, called *Patrin Magazin*. between 1992 and 1998 at Hungarian Public Television. She has been doing research, publishing several books on the Roma Holocaust and had a leading role in organizing commemoration public events. In the early nineties she has established several ngo-s: Phralipe Independent Roma Organization, Amalipe Cultural Organization and Romedia Foundation.



1. Romano Kher—Municipality of Budapest Gypsy House 1980–2010 (leader as of 1987)

Presenter: Jenő Zsigó

**Jenő Zsigó** is a Roma sociologist, civil activist, and musician. He was born in 1952 and took part in political and cultural self-organization of Roma intelligentsia in 1980ies, during the socialist era. He was the founder of *Ando Drom*, an authentic Roma music group of international reputation.

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## 1. Gallery8 2012-

Presenter: Tímea Junghaus

**Tímea Junghaus** is a Roma art historian and contemporary art curator. She is author and co-editor of the comprehensive publication on European Roma visual art, *Meet Your Neighbors – Contemporary Roma Art from Europe* (2006). She was curator of the First Roma Pavilion in 2007, at the 52nd Venice Contemporary Art Biennale. She has researched and published extensively on the conjunctions of modern and contemporary art with critical theory, with particular reference to issues of cultural difference, colonialism, and minority representation. She is currently concluding her PhD studies in Film Media- and Cultural Theory at the Eötvös Lóránd University, Budapest. Since 2010 she is employed as a researcher of the Institute for Art History, at the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. Junghaus received the Kairos- European Cultural Prize in 2007, since then she is the founding director of the European Roma Cultural Foundation ([www.romacult.org](http://www.romacult.org)) a Budapest-based independent ngo. She has also founded a new contemporary art gallery in Budapest: Gallery8.

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## 1. Roma Image Studio (Berlin) 2012-

Presenter: André J. Raatzsch

**André Raatzsch** is a Berlin-based Hungarian + German + Roma + European artist and curator. He is a doctoral candidate in the Doctoral Programme of the Hungarian Academy of Fine Arts – Budapest with the topic: *“Roma Aesthetics”*. This is a terminus to generate the necessary discourse to change the approach about the use-value of Romani art and culture in the European artistic canon. In his artistic and curatorial practice he does research on the emancipatory movements of the Hungarian Roma in the context of European history and The Black Arts Movement. Considering the role of the Studio Museum in Harlem in the emancipation of the black artists, he founded 2012 *The Roma Image Studio*, a critical artistic platform in Berlin and 2013 the {roma} artist collective *Sostar? / Why?* to give an independent place for himself, his colleagues and young artists, to present themselves as European artists of Romani diasporas and part of the European hybridity.



Moderated by András Müllner (ELTE Department of Media and Communication)

### Intersection III. Exhibition

See for details: <http://hu.tranzit.org/en/project/0/2014-01-10/roma-the-contract-to-sell-the-ethnicity>

Opening:

Andrea Pócsik

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[1] More information about the grant: <http://www.erstestiftung.org/blog/patterns-lectures-courses-for-20122013-selected/>