



Final report: Roma Visual Lab, spring term in 2015

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I. Roma Visual Lab, summer term 2015

1. Concept

The Roma Visual Lab as a screening program and as a course was launched by Andrea Pocsik in 2011, in collaboration with the Department of Media and Communication at ELTE University, Budapest. The basic idea on which the Lab was founded consists of two parts. First, the applied critical approach toward the (in)visibility of the Roma community in the Hungarian documentary film making, and second, the progressive methodology by which students are involved in the organization of the program. Regarding the fact that both the aforementioned research field and the sharing of the responsibility with the students are deeply political, the social idea which governs the Roma Visual Lab originates in cultural studies, post-colonial studies, feminism, critical whiteness theory and so on. This is the reason why the Lab as a course finds the Media Department as its organic partner. In the curriculum of the department there are the same scientific fields which serve as a basis for the Lab. Just to mention few, there are courses like the politics of representation, the courses based on the cultural studies, the critical approach applied in media and film studies, the analysis of the visuality in the modern and postmodern period, etc.

In 2013, Andras Mullner joined to the Lab, and in 2014 Maria Bogdan also joined to the Lab as an organizer. András Mullner is Associate Professor, and the Head of the Department of Media and Communication at ELTE. Maria Bogdan has been doing her PhD, and researches the modern forms of racism and its appearance in the media representation of the Roma in Hungary. In the fall of the academic year 2014-2015 Bogdan and Mullner have been organizing the screening program of the Lab in spring term 2015. The program can be summed up in the following terms: defining gaze, identity constructions, Roma representation, Roma Media Schools, human rights/Roma rights issues, trauma film, Roma Holocaust, social media and self-representation, photography, private and public collections, theater as workshop, portraits.

The 2015 program focused on the concepts and meanings that are constructed in the representation of the Roma (mainly on films and photography). Following the established theoretical path of the Roma Visual Lab based on critical studies, and linked to the previous semesters' themes and results, the course stays on the ground of examining the role of representation in the aspect of society and identity, and at this time attempts to define the narratives – the *identifying gaze* which constructs these meanings (by which the Roma *are looked at*) and which thus creates the knowledge about Roma. The course also seeks to identify the forms of representation as reactions to these concepts (*public act of resistance*, „*talking back*”).

1. Roma Visual Lab, summer term 2015
2. Program (topics, films, dates, organizers and guests)

Topic	Film	Organizer	Date	Guests
1. General introduction to the course and the film program	A People Uncounted	Maria Bogdan	11.02.2015.	András Müllner mullner.andras@btk.elte.hu and Mária Bogdán (modelling the round table discussion) bogdanmarcsi@gmail.com
2. Online Roma media and Roma media schools	„Roma – At Home in Europe”, Independent Media Centre (2014)	András Müllner	18.02.2015.	Ilona Móricz (Independent Media Centre) ilona.moricz@cij.hu Gyula Gallyas (Sosinet) galyasgy@gmail.com Gábor Sárközi (Roma News Centre) gabricsek@gmail.com
3. Trauma representation	Eszter Hajdú: Judgement in Hungary	MA	25.02.2015.	Dr. Árpád Csonka (legal representative of the Roma families involved) drcsonka@windowlive.com , András Vágvölgyi B. (blogger) vagesz@t-online.hu
4. Identity construction in television – I. public service broadcasting	János Litauszki, Márta Józsa: Seekers for chance János Joka Daróczi: Brighter Future!	BM	04.03.2015.	János Joka Daróczi (journalist) janos.daroczi@freemail.hu Márta Józsa (journalist) János Litauszki (journalist) janos.litauszki@gmail.com
5. Identity construction in television – II. shows	The Band – Searching for Talents with Miklós Both	BM+MA	11.03.2015.	Miklós Both (musician) info@bothmiklos.com Petőcz Tamás Palimo-téma tomasanda11@gmail.com Ádám Guld (media researcher) guldadam@commonline.hu
6. Roma filmmakers and the question of self-	Árpád Bogdán: Brand New Life	BM	18.03.2015.	Árpád Bogdán (filmmaker) hiszcsing@gmail.com László Strausz (film expert)

making				laszlo.strausz@gmail.com
7. Community and identity – documenting one's own life	<p>Siroki László https://www.youtube.com/user/sirokilacika Magyarország 2011 (Tar Béla) Roma News Production (Richárd Lakatos és Tibor Balogh) https://www.youtube.com/user/TheRomaNews Bodvalenke a világ közepe https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L3c1G1z7Tu8 Bódvalenke gyerektábor https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sILM_nB9Fzc</p>	BM	25.03.2015.	<p>László Siroki (civil journalist) sirokik@gmail.com Richárd Lakatos (Roma News) lakatosrichard90@gmail.com Balogh Tibor (Roma News) bhtibi10@gmail.com Zsigmond Petőfi (organizer) petofizsiga@gmail.com Luca Illés (organizer) illesluca@gmail.com Dorottya Kenesei (organizer) dorottya.kenesei@gmail.com Zsófia Kenesei (organizer) bodobacs@hotmail.com</p>
8. Shaping and strengthening identity by theatrical actions	<p>Independent Theatre: Expanded Spaces – Sebestyén Kodolányi: Intersections I. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h1QKkA9VkSs Independent Theatre: Peer Gynt, Index-video http://index.hu/indavideo/index.video/2013_0816_drama_a_hegyen https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MpF5UXHfIXE</p>	MA	08.04.2015.	<p>Rodrigo Balogh (Independent Theatre) balogh.rodrigo@gmail.com Andrea Pócsik (researcher) pocsik66@gmail.com Sebestyén Kodolányi (filmmaker) kodolanyi@bbsarchiv.hu Márton Illés (Independent Theatre) illes.marton80@gmail.com Tamás Boros (Independent Theatre) ikuto19930802@gmail.com</p>
9. Still Images – icons	<p>Erika Lakatos: Roma Icons: New York – Budapest, 1996-2011 Tamás Féner: Gypsies; Reserve team; Obscured by light (1993) Vízafogó 1968 - photos by Endre Kovács</p>	MA	15.04.2015.	<p>Erika Lakatos (photographer) erikakalo1@hotmail.com Tamás Féner (photographer) tel. +36302765065 Endre Kovács (photographer) bundi@kovacsendre.hu Tóth Balázs Zoltán (photo expert and museologist) botath@gmail.com</p>

10. Portraits	József Böjte: Take me with you (Film on Katalin Sztojka) http://film.indavideo.hu/video/f_vigyel_magaddal József Böjte: Where shall I take you? (Film on Katalin Sztojka)	MA	22. 04. 2015.	József Böjte (documentary filmmaker) bojte@bojte.hu Katalin Sztojka (politician, minority representative, teacher)
11. Representation of Roma women	Long road ahead of me (Film about Ágnes Daróczi civil activist, teacher, performer) Portrait about Kati Rácz, jazz singer	BM	29. 04. 2015.	Kati Rácz (singer) barika@hdsnet.hu Mária Bogdán (media researcher) bogdanmarcsi@gmail.com Vanda Arányi (filmmaker) aranyivanda@gmail.com
12. Trauma representation in fiction film	Just the Wind (dir. Bence Fliegauf)	MA	06. 05. 2015.	Roundtable discussion with the students
13. Closing and evaluation of the program		BM, MA	13. 05. 2015.	Evaluation of the essays written by the students and the collaboration during the semester
14. +Event: Shadow Theatre	Gruppo Tökmag: Dragon Lee [Sárkány Lee]	MA	18. 05. 2015.	Budha Tomi (támás kovács, artist) budeins@gmail.com András Tábori (artist) anedtwo@yahoo.com Sára Gábor (puppet theatre director) sara.gabor@gmail.com Mr. Sándor Dunai (relative) tel. +36305432643 Mrs. Sándorné Dunai (relative)

I. Roma Visual Lab, summer term 2015

3. Organizers

Mária Bogdán



Curriculum Vitae

Country of residence: **Hungary**

Email: bogdanmarcsi@gmail.com

EDUCATION

August 2008-June 2009

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY - New York, USA

Fulbright Visiting Researcher

Researching field: Modern racism and the media

2003-2006

UNIVERSITY OF PÉCS

PhD Program of Communications

Researching topic: The Media Representation of the Roma Civil Rights Movement in Hungary

PhD Adviser: Dr. Éva Kovács – Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Institute for Sociology

1996-2001

UNIVERSITY OF PÉCS

Faculty of Sciences, Institute of Adult Education and Human Resources Development

University Degree (MA) – Cultural Management

1997-2000

ACADEMY OF DRAMA AND FILM

College Degree (BA) – Television Director

1990-1994

Apáczai Csere János English-Hungarian Bilingual High School

Pécs, Hungary

SCHOLARSHIPS

2008-2009 Fulbright Scholarship - Columbia University, New York, USA

2003-2006 PhD Scholarship - University of Pécs, PhD Program of Communications

1998-2001 Romaversitas Foundation - Scholarship for Roma University Students

Tutor: Miklós Jancsó film director

1996-2001 Soros Foundation Scholarship for Roma Youth in Higher Education

1996-1997 Journalist Scholarship - Roma Press Center Budapest

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

September 2014 -

Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Center for Social Sciences, Institute for Minority Studies

Junior Research Fellow

September 2014 -

Roma Visual Lab(oratory)

Higher Education Course and Community Film Club - ELTE - DocuArt Film Art Centre

Co-organizer

April 2014 - May 2014

Central European University – Center for Ethics and Law in Biomedicine (CELAB)

Participation in the Neuro-Enhancement Responsible Research and Innovation (NERRI) Project

Interview making, translating the interviews from Hungarian to English, audio transcription, advertising and promoting the research events, registration.

November 2012 -

Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Center for Social Sciences, Institute for Sociology

Participation in the research about the Roma Civil Rights Movement in Hungary

- Interview making with the main characters of the movement

- Conducting a qualitative research about the movement's media representation.

August 2012 - May 2013

Central European University - Open Society Archives Budapest, Hungary

Development Coordinator at the Roma Digital Repository Project

April 2013

Eötvös Loránd University, Department of Media and Communications

Guest Lecturer at the course called 'Roma representation after the Cultural Turn'

Title of the lecture: Roma Representation in the Electronic Media

September 2002 - January 2013

University of Pécs

Assistant Lecturer

- February 2011 - January 2013: Faculty of Humanities, Department of Communication and Media Studies
- September 2006 - January 2011: Faculty of Adult Education and Human Resources Development, Institute of Cultural Sciences
Lectures and seminars on media and communication

External Lecturer

- February 2010 - June 2010: Faculty of Humanities, Department of Communication and Media Studies; Lecture: Media Representation of the Roma in Hungary
- September 2002 - June 2005: Faculty of Humanities, Department of Roma Studies
Lectures on Media Representation of the Roma in Hungary

March 2012

European Roma Cultural Foundation

PR-director at The Romani Elders project
Budapest, Hungary

January 2004 - December 2007

Corvinus University of Budapest - Department of Communications

External Lecturer on Media Representation of the Roma in Hungary

April 1999 - September 2006

Hungarian Public Television - Budapest, Pécs, Hungary

Reporter, Editor and Anchor in programs which focused on social and cultural issues

April 2003 - October 2003

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Hungary - Department of EU Communication

Communications Officer

Developed visual and literary materials for preparing Hungary to the EU Access and for the Ratification process

November 2001 - October 2003

Radio Tilos - 'Rádió utca' Roma Program

Radio Host and Editor

The program was about the Roma in Hungary in cultural, political, economical and human rights aspects

December 2002 - March 2003

Khetanipe Association 'For the Roma Unity'

Program Coordinator, social worker

Organized social and cultural programs for the local Roma community in Pécs

February 2001 - November 2001

Radio C

Editor, Host, Reporter

Worked in the social, cultural and news programs of the first Roma radio in Hungary
(Daily morning show, News program, Film program)

June 2001 - September 2001

European Roma Rights Center - Research and Publications Department

Program Assistant

Edited human rights reports on the Roma in Hungary and of the neighbor countries

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATION

2014 – President of the Board of the Romaversitas Foundation

2014 – Board Member of European Roma Cultural Foundation

2011 – Member of the Fulbright Hungary Association

AWARDS

March 2010 Silver Cross of Merit of the Republic of Hungary (civil division)

SKILLS

Language:

English: Advanced Level knowledge

Type “C” Advanced Level State Examination in English Language, 1994

French: Basic Level knowledge

General Elementary (B1) combined Language Exam in French Language (ORIGO),
2011 **Hungarian:** Mother tongue

Computer: Microsoft Word, Excel, Outlook, Open Office, Adobe InDesign, Internet, Social Media



**Department of Media and Communication in
Institute for Art Theory and Media Studies,**

Eötvös Loránd University

Múzeum krt. 6-8., 1088 Budapest, Hungary

E-mail: mullner.andras_at_btk.elte.hu

Phone: +36-1-411-65-58

Personal website: <http://emc.elte.hu/mullner/>

András Müllner (1968) is associate professor at the Department of Media and Communication in Institute for Art Theory and Media Studies, Eötvös Loránd University of Sciences, Budapest. Müllner is holding a PhD in Literary Theory (2001).

Müllner's main research interest is Hungarian neo-avant-garde art (performances, happenings, experimental films and photos). Another of his main focuses is the theory of media, or more exactly, the ideology of media and communication and representation, and their special connection to literature and philosophy respectively. Müllner's latest book entitled *A császár új ruhája* (The Emperor's New Clothes) consists of essays about the medium of hypertext, and its connection to literature and literary theory, and beyond that, the contemporary discourses of the hypertext as a new medium.

Müllner had been an assistant professor at the Department of Comparative Literature at University of Szeged until 2007, when he was invited at the Department of Media and Communication at ELTE, Budapest. Until recently he has been involved in several projects aimed at exploring the characteristics of the Hungarian neo-avant-garde. With the supports of different scholarships (CEEPUS, NKA, OTKA, Bolyai) he has done research on the oeuvre of the Hungarian neo-avant-garde master figure, Miklós Erdély, who was one of the key figures in the Hungarian neo-avant-garde art in the sixties and seventies. Erdély's work is at the centre of both Müllner's first and latest (forthcoming) book: the former was written in collaboration with György Fogarasi (*Rátévedések – a romantikában, a neoavantgárdban és más területeken* [Straying – in Romanticism, Neo-Avant-garde and other Places]), and the latter will be published in Fall, 2015 (*Ellenállás a történelemnek – Erdély Miklós' Kollapszus orv.* [Resistance to History – Erdély Miklós' Kollapszus orv.]). Beside these books there are more papers by Müllner, which are concerned with the Hungarian neoavantgarde figures, their performative works, experimental media and written ouevres. In collaboration with Pál Deréky, who is the professor at the Finno-Ugric Department, University of Vienna, Müllner edited a book in which papers about the neoavantgarde can be read (2004).

From 2011 Müllner gradually has been involved in the **Roma Visual Laboratory**, which is a documentary film program and also a university course, founded by Andrea Pócsik, and originally aimed at critical analyses of the (non)visibility of the Roma people presented in past and contemporary films, photos, and theatrical events. In 2013 and 2014 Müllner and Pócsik organized the Roma documentary film series together, and in 2015 Müllner's partner in the organization was Mária Bogdán. Further areas of Müllner's recent courses are representation of minorities, avantgarde, mediality, ideology criticism, media and performativity.

Between 2011 and 2015 Müllner was the head of the Department of Media and Communication, and since 2008 he is member of the curatorial board of Artpool Art Research Center.

Some lectures and papers in English

András Müllner – Andrea Pócsik: (Re)Screening the Roma Subaltern. Post-Socialist Visuals of Roma life in Hungary under the socialist era, lecture at Screening Memories international conference, ELTE, 09/20-22/2014

Minority Representation in the Hungarian Cinema. Series of lectures at CEFET (Centro Federal de Educação Tecnológica de Minas Gerais, Belo Horizonte, Brasil), 10/20-24/2014

Representation of Jewish Minority in Hungarian Experimental Film under the Socialist Regime (Miklós Erdély: Version), Erasmus-lecture at Bilgi University (Istanbul, Turkey), 5/21/2014

„Bug collection”. Articulations of terror in the Hungarian neo-avant-garde, Terror(ism) and Aesthetics Conference University of Szeged (September 22-23, 2011.) Forthcoming publication on the website of the conference: www.etal.hu

New Tribalism. Marshall McLuhan and the Oedipus-myth, „McLuhan Messages” International Conference, ELTE University, 11-12th of November, 2011.

Politics of Montage. Neo-Avant-Garde Traits in Hungarian Experimental Films, trans. Dániel Sípos, English version of the Hungarian paper published in Gábor Gelencsér (ed.): BBS 50. A Balázs Béla Stúdió 50 éve [BBS50. 50 Years of the BBS], Múcsarnok [Kunsthalle] - Balázs Béla Stúdió, Budapest, 2009, 129-142.

Films not Shot but Bloodied: “Material” Projections in Hungarian Experimental Films and Neoavantgarde Works, in Ágnes Pethő(ed.): Words and Images on the Screen: Language, Literature and Moving Pictures, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2008, 228-241.

The Fiction of „Bare Life”. How performatives function in Hungarian neo-avantgarde works of art, Documenta Magazines Online Journal és documenta12 magazines, trans. Dániel Sípos, URL: <http://exindex.hu/print.php?l=en&page=3&id=450>

Mythical light and allegorical detachment in performance. A Mediterranean matter and a Hungarian performer – Tibor Hajas, in Ales Erjavec – Lev Kreft (eds.): Imagination, Sensuality, Art, Slovensko drustvo za estetico, Ljubljana, 2007, 136-139. (Proceedings of the III. Mediterranean Congress of Aesthetics, Protoroz, Slovenija, 20-23d September, 2006.)

Dracula Embedded. Phantasmal Images of Blood Abuse in a Hungarian Experimental Film (Miklós Erdély: Version). (Unpublished version of the lecture „Images as phantasms. The proceedings of a Hungarian experimental film in adaptation”, „Cultures of Translation: Adaptation in Film and Performance” Conference, University of Glamorgan, Cardiff, 26-28th of July, 2008)

The first happening. The sketchy history of the Hungarian neo-avantgarde performance art (Unpublished English version of the Hungarian paper published in Pál Deréky – András Müllner (eds.): Né/ma? Tanulmányok a magyar neoavantgárd köréből [Numb. Essays on the Hungarian Neo-avantgarde], Ráció, 2004, 182-204.)

Books

Rátévedések – a romantikában, a neoavantgárdban és más területeken. (Fogarasi Györggyel közösen.) Ictus Kiadó és JATE Irodalomelmélet Csoport, Szeged, 1998.

[Straying – in Romanticism, Neo-Avant-garde and other Places]

A császár új ruhája. Esszék a könyv és a hipertext kapcsolatáról, valamint más médiumokról, Jászöveg Kiadó, Budapest, 2007.

[The Emperor’s New Clothes. Essays on the Relationship between Book and Hypertext, and on Other Media]

Tükör a sötétségnek (Darkness in the Mirror)

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4. Media

Portrait of the Roma Visual Lab in the Life Wheel, which is a program for the Hungarian minorities in the Hungarian public service television (Duna TV, 10th of April, 2015. URL:

<http://nava.hu/id/2152680/>

Discussion about the Roma Visual Lab in Kontúr, program of the Tilos Radio, Budapest, with Anna Kertész on 2nd of March, 2015. URL: <https://tilos.hu/show/kontur>

I. Roma Visual Lab, summer term 2015

5. Collaboration with various organizations

In 2015 the Roma Visual Lab took (and will take) part in four different programs organized by various organizations.

On 8th of April, 2015 one of our program was part of the official program of the International Roma Day (Sebestyén Kodolányi's film titled Intersections I., which was made about the Expanded Spaces performed by the Independent Theatre) URL:

http://kettosmerce.blog.hu/2015/04/08/opre_roma_tudtat_ma_van_a_nemzetkozi_roma_nap

On 18th of May, Gruppo Tökmag's Dragon Lee, which was our last program in 2015, was part of the official program of the OFF-Biennálé Budapest , URL: <http://offbiennale.hu/gruppo-tokmag-sarkany-lee/>

On 17th of June, 2015, at the Bánkitó Festival the Roma Visual Lab had a common program with Mérei Student Research Group about two educational experiments based on alternative methodology in segregated villages inhabited by roma people (Csenyété, Bódvalenke). URL:

<https://www.facebook.com/events/794121937369637/>

13th of October, 2015 the Roma Visual Lab, together with other three civil organizations (Studio K. independent theatre, Blue Point drog rehabilitation organization, Urban Tomato social plantation in urban environment), will take part in a donation campaign which is called Donor Circle Event.

I. Roma Visual Lab, summer term 2015

7. Assessment of the program

Tag cloud: documentary filmic representation, anthropological visual interpretation, visibility/blurring, representation/self-representation, control over one's identity, power/subversion, fictive/documentary representation, signifying gaze, creating normative and alternative meaning, talking-back.

The Previous Years

Since the beginning of the program in 2011 organizers of Roma Visual Lab have always tried to work out the concept for the upcoming year by maintaining an organic connection to the programs of the previous years. Therefore, an outline of the concept for the programs planned in 2015 can be best introduced by a quick summary of the conceptual frames characterizing the programs of the previous years.

Roma Visual Lab 2011 ran under the title "Roma Representation in the Context of Contemporary Cultural Studies." By means of *anthropological visual interpretation* participants of the program were focusing on the question, "how do documentary filmmakers see and represent Roma people?" Our goal was to examine the particular means and forms of filmic representation applied to reveal "the characteristics of the given Roma community together with their social environment and network of relationships"¹ In close relationship with the agenda for 2011 the films selected for 2012 centered around the dichotomy of *visibility/blurring*. The moderators and the audience were assisted by a number of guest participants in interpreting the documentaries. Our goal was to understand the mechanisms by which documentary filmmakers from a minority group, or from a Roma community in particular, may attain the right to *self-representation* and regain control over their identity, thus contributing to the emancipation of their community even if it entails the violation or the subversion of visual power normatives.²

In order to enlarge upon the question of self-representation, in 2013 we focused on the cultural, artistic and political achievements of the Roma community after the change of the regime in 1990, all centered around the ideas of *memory* and *identity*.³

Our program for the year 2014 offered an overview of the wide generic diversity characterizing the visual representations of Roma people with special attention paid to the various ways in which fiction and documentary representation may be mixed with one another, together with those imaginary acts that contribute to the constitution of the (ethno-cultural, social, sexual, etc.) *other*.⁴

¹ Available: <http://www.romakepmuhely.hu/kurzusok/2011-2/romakep-muhely1-docuart/koncepcio/>

² Available: <http://www.romakepmuhely.hu/kurzusok/2012-2/romakep-muhely2-docuart/a-2012-evi-romakep-muhely-programjanak-koncepcioja/>

³ Available: <http://www.romakepmuhely.hu/kurzusok/2013-2/romakep-muhely3-docuart/koncepcio/>

⁴ Available: <http://www.romakepmuhely.hu/kurzusok/2014-2/romakep-muhely4-docuart/program/>; See more in Andrea Pócsik: "Láthatóvá tenni. A romakepelemzés elmélete és gyakorlata" [Making It Visible – Theory and Practice of Roma Training], *Apertúra*, Summer-Fall 2014, Available: <http://uj.apertura.hu/2014/nvar-osz/pocsik-lathatova-tenni-a-romakepelemzes-elmelete-es-gyakorlata/>

The Concept of Year 2015

The program for the year 2015 was designed by Mária Bogdán and myself in the Fall of 2014 during our consultations held every second or third week. We intended to maintain our focus on the most important element of the four year program of Roma Visual lab, i.e., the questions centered around the ideas of representation and self-representation. In the preliminary summary of the program we offered a condensed account of our goals: “By focusing on the questions of representation and self-representation the semester will be devoted to the particular meanings constituted in filmic and photographic representations of Roma people. Based on our previous enquiries the analyses of the works offer us insights into the particular norms operated by the *signifying gaze* responsible for creating particular meanings attached to Roma people, and thus, contributing to the public knowledge about the Roma community in our everyday reality. During the course we also intend to discuss representations that react to these norms either by violating them or by offering alternative meanings. We try to highlight the moments in which the works we discuss, as well as their creators we plan to invite as guests, dismantle or reinterpret various, rigid meanings and categories of thinking, and they start using a language, or giving answers to our questions, filled with new contents and centered around novel roles. That is, we intend to focus on instances of talking-back as well as those of searching for one’s own voice, for self-representation, and thus, self-realization.”

The Program

As far as maintaining contact with the guests and advertising the screenings on Facebook we divided the work load by Mária Bogdán organizing half of the workshops and myself the other half. The program in 2015 was longer than in the previous years due to a significant change in the structure of the program. As a means of piloting for the upcoming events we decided to do a screening followed by a conversation in the very first occasion in which we, the two organizers would moderate the event and have a conversation with the participants without any guests invited. This event featured a Roma holocaust-film: *A People Uncounted* (*Számon kívül maradtak*). The program also extended beyond the end of the semester when, within the frames of Off-Biennale we invited a shadow theatre, *Dragon Lee Returns* (*Sárkány Lee visszatér*) to perform in Roma Visual Lab and this event fell after our regular closing of the yearly program.

With its rich thematic, that is also characteristic of our program, *A People Uncounted* proved to be an excellent start for the year. The film primarily focuses on the genocide committed against the Roma population, together with the ways it is present in today’s memory – thus functioning as a prelude to Eszter Hajdú’s *Judgment in Hungary* (*Ítélet Magyarországon*) –, thereby connecting the atrocities of the past with forms of segregation and discrimination appearing in our present time. The film reveals the presence of a normative signifying gaze functioning in stereotypes, but at the same time, by making Roma people the central characters of the film, its creators offer them means to create their own voice or even to talk-back. These examples served as a basis for discussions about the central concept of the semester, i.e., self-representation. The social campaign film by the Independent Media Center,

Elhalkuló nótaszó (The Melody Fades Away) was created by a crew with Roma and non Roma members and it makes it relevant for their frame project (*Europe: A Homeland for the Roma*), even if the Hungarian participants' efforts to create their own voice were limited by the institutional and financial embeddedness of the project. There were two public service documentaries discussed during another event of the Roma Visual Lab: the first, *Szebb jövő* (Better Future – referring to the greeting used by members of the now dismissed Hungarian Guard) was created by a Roma media expert, while *Esély-mesék* (Tales of Chances) was created by non-Roma people but it features characters who speak on their own and speak for themselves. (It is characteristic of the first movie, *Szebb jövő*, that participants of the racist aggression are equally represented and they can make their point just like the members of the threatened Roma community. It is only the self-consuming logic characteristic of racist discourse that betrays them – as it was brilliantly pointed out in the essay written by one of our participants –, like in this both racist and confessional statement made by a person rooting for the Guard, and actually talking to a Roma neighbour): “Committing crimes in order to make a living is different in your case and in ours.”) The film, *Zenekar – tehetségkereső Both Miklóssal* (The Band – Talent Show with Miklós Both) provides insights into a unique and original alternative to talent shows running on commercial TV channels. In the *Zenekar* young Roma people are found in various parts of the country are put in the limelight and they are featured in the show (centered around the forming of a band) in an organic manner, together with their true stories. Both the discussions following the screening and the essay created about the film clearly show that the originality of a voice, the idea of the original talent, i.e., that of authenticity is always a rather complex construction, and thorough and sometimes conflicting analyses are required to map out the true origins of a voice – that is, of course, different from the particular voice of the singer –, or the context responsible for the mechanisms of the construction of authenticity. It was precisely the idea of originality and its inherent ambiguity that provoked the most fertile debates throughout the semester.

The above examples allowed us to see the possible tension between the goals of Roma self-realization and the particular social institutions in which those goals are realized, such as the media, TV channels and their generic constraints, the institutional structure of filmmaking: social/political and educational/academic institutions and their hierarchical structures, and most importantly, our natural language with its standard performatives. This tension between self-realization and the institutional context is a common phenomenon and characteristic of the post-colonial context of Eastern Europe, too. These typically unbalanced, but continuously changing relations were in our focus throughout the semester, such as in the discussions about Árpád Bogdán's feature film, *Boldog új élet* (*A Happy New Life*), or about the performance by the Independent Theatre, *Metszéspontok I. – Kitágított terek* (*Intersections I. – Expanded Spaces*). In *A Happy New Life* we see a typical situation in the sense of the realist novels of the 19th Century presented in an atypical approach. The film is centered around the possibility or impossibility of self-realization for a young Roma person for whom this dilemma is reduced to the question of mere survival. In the case of *Expanded Spaces*, a thematic selection of films created in the past 50 years served as a screening-in-the-performance. Outside the embedded screening, yet in the performance, ambivalently portrayed Roma and non-Roma characters are rendered, and the actors of the Independent Theatre venture to amplify the voices of the films by adapting them and turning them into

voices of contemporary criticism of the prevailing institutional background, i.e., they make the figures of these archive films *talk-back*, and use those films to express the problems of the present Hungarian society. By similarly focusing on the possibilities of self-realization, documentaries about Katalin Sztojka were also relevant here, because they offered insights into the complex problems arising from the conflicts between (cultural, and then political) representation and one's self-realization. If we stick with the metaphor, raising one's voice cannot be done without violating certain interests, and therefore, it evokes ever greater forces that seek to silence it. (Katalin Sztojka's case is further complicated by a set of hierarchical gender relations.)

Programs where instances of representation/self-representation were performed by a cooperation between Roma and non-Roma participants were especially relevant, since these mutual projects allowed us to see the non-Roma identity that/who is commonly referred to by a color metaphor, *white*. Entering the discourse as a white person inevitably provides invisibility for a dominant participant. This ambivalent topic, worthy of the attention of critical whiteness studies, emerged in the course of several of our programs, such as in our discussions about the relationship between the interviewee and the reporter in the documentary about Kati Rácz or when we interpreted the pictures and the texts of the photo exhibition by Tamás Féner, Endre Kovács and Erika Lakatos. The same topic was in the center of the exhibition in 2B Gallery that was not part of the program of Roma Visual Lab but was connected to the photo exhibition created as a part of our program. The group exhibition organized by Roma Visual Lab served as a kind of prelude for Endre Kovács' exhibition under the title *Vizafogó 1968* that was organized – due to Andrea Pócsik's efforts as a curator – within the frames of OFF-Biennale in 2B Gallery. In Pócsik's self-reflexive approach Kovács' photographic gaze both creates an image of the nomadic Roma of the urban environment *and* reflects on its own creative approach. Therefore "whiteness" appears in several, overlapping layers in the light of the exhibition as well as in the photographs themselves.

Árpád Bogdán's film and Erika Lakatos' photographs present the idea of ethno-cultural identity in a highly reflexive manner. These works and their authors take us now to two program elements that spectacularly revealed the ways in which amateur, self-educated creators (i.e., creative and free from prevailing patterns) can represent themselves and their Roma identity by means of a set of tools and media within their handy reach. This way they also point back at the "majority", "white" society and make visible that which believes itself to be invisible: such as in the shadow theatre performance based on István "Sárkány" Kolompár's comic, or in László Siroki's "information-dealer" movies, and in the YouTube videos of Richárd Lakatos and Tibor Balogh. István "Sárkány" Kolompár's comic was created at the end of the 80's, and following its publication in the journal, *Mozgó Világ* it was adapted into an exhibition after the year 2000 and then, into a performance of shadow theatre by the artistic duo Gruppo Tökmag (Tamás Buddha, András Tábori), together with the students of the puppet program offered by the University of Theatre and Film Arts. This work features a young Roma boy and his battle with the institutions in Hungary around the change of the regime as well as his life intertwined with elements of popular culture in a fantastic manner. The same topic is in the center of attention in László Siroki's documentaries that are closely related to Kolompár's work, despite the generic differences, since they also present

the motifs of a segregated life combined with the authentic topics of everyday life (such as rock music, cuisine, a summer camp for photographers, etc.). A humorous approach to self-realization can be witnessed in the YouTube videos of Richárd Lakatos and Tibor Balogh. These videos present the current situation in Hungary by means of humor and rather than serving us with examples of self-representation, they reflect on various attitudes of the majority towards the Roma community.

Plans for the Future

The BA course, “Case Studies in Communications” offered in the Fall Semester of the Academic Year 2015-2016 is responsible for the preparation of the program of Roma Visual Lab in Spring 2016. Although we are considering a number of possible topics, here I would only mention two of them as a kind of teaser. Under the title “Resistant Pictures” we plan to present documentaries, photographic oeuvres, and theatrical performances that may serve as examples of the particular resistance by the victims of segregation and discrimination characterizing the postcolonial era in the past decades. The program would include such early works as *Handsworth Songs*, a film by John Akomfrah, or Orson Welles’ *Four Men in the Raft*, while in the Hungarian context it would cover Katalin Sztojka’s reports in Roma Magazine, the activist work of Gabriella Csoszó, or the development of Hungarian reform pedagogy (where resistance was paradoxically provoked by a positive social practice). Since they also appear in other forums in Hungary, the program of Resistant Pictures would allow Roma Visual Lab to enhance its cooperation in the next year with organizations that work for similar goals (Roma Press Center, Romaversitas, Gallery8, Independent Theatre, Tranzit.hu).

The working title of the other topic offered for next year is “Debates on Representation”. We plan to investigate various debates arising in the past years in connection with certain works of art. A few of the many possible examples include: *Gypsies* – a play performed by Katona József Theater, *Intersections III.* – an exhibition in Tranzit.hu, *Layered Identities* – an exhibition in the French Institute, Roma people in Hungarian media analyses, campaign films and their context, etc.

András Müllner
Program Coordinator

Translated by Péter Bocsor

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Evaluation of the program and the course

Shadow theatre

Gruppo Tökmag: Dragon Lee

Racial identity in art: „the black aesthetic”

<https://maryckhayes.wordpress.com/2012/10/12/racial-identity-in-art-the-black-aesthetic/>

Keith Rawlings: Deeper Investigations into Shadow Theatre and Puppetry, URL:
<http://pages.citenet.net/users/ctmw2400/investigations.html>

3. Selection of the best student essays and reviews of the round table discussions

ROMA VISUAL LAB 5 – ASSESSMENT OF THE COURSE

The Tasks

Since its launching in 2011 Roma Visual Lab has been functioning both as a film program and a university course. As a course it consists of permanent as well as changing elements. The first include the active participation of students in the programs by preparing for and taking part as moderators in the discussions following the screenings. These elements are completed by the submission of a seminar paper written about the chosen program and the completion of written summaries of the discussions (these materials are made available as online contents on the homepage of Roma Visual Lab). In 2015 these last two elements were changed. In the Spring Semester the seminar papers were completed in group work in order to acquire the necessary skills for cooperation. In addition, we realized that the written summaries of the discussions have crucial significance for several reasons. In case our users do not want to watch the (hour-long or longer) online video contents made available on the homepage of Roma Visual Lab, they can efficiently collect information about the topics by quickly scanning the summaries. We also try to help those who do research in a given topic by providing tag clouds and making Internet searches easier. A summary, however, may not entirely substitute the video itself, since the visual material offers important additional information, such as various forms of metacommunication applied by the speakers, the forming of actual social relationships, or the possible tension in the atmosphere of the conversation. This is a certain mediatized theatricality characteristic of Roma Visual Lab that might be of public interest. Yet, writing the summaries of the discussions has proved to be a valuable practice for the students, as they could improve their skills in summarizing, i.e., filtering out the important elements of a set of contents, and thus, they actually acquired the skills of writing reviews.

Since our students are not expected to prepare from week to week based on a predefined set of materials, Roma Visual Lab is not a traditional university seminar. (An event lasts from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. or later.) Students are expected to prepare for a particular program element they choose, and that includes the reading of secondary literature about the topic/guest/film, as well as two consultations with the instructor during the week before the particular program. The first consultation is devoted to the possible approaches to the topic, while during the second consultation the final refinements of the questions are made right before the program. The same practice applies to the writing of the seminar papers, since the first version is most often followed by a revised version. Here I have to express my gratitude to the students who participated in the workshops for taking my advices and following my suggestions when I asked them to insert explanations or enhance the quality of their argument when revising their texts. Another good experience was to see that many of them did not only do so in order to get a good grade, since making minor corrections would have been enough to achieve that goal, but they were motivated by a possible publication of their work. As a result I found 7 out of 11 papers worthy of publication on the homepage of Roma Visual Lab, and that is a rather good ratio. (Three more papers are also included written by the students of another seminar that focused on topics relevant for Roma Visual Lab but ran within the traditional university settings.)

The Papers

In addition to stylistic and spelling mistakes, as well as problems arising from using inaccurate data or often from incomplete or elliptic argumentation I aimed at eliminating a number of insufficiencies in the texts when suggesting revisions. Some of these problems are related to unmarked references used in students' writings that undermine the originality of their papers, a phenomenon increasingly present in university education. Many of these cases are not to be considered intentional plagiarism, but rather the outcomes of a particular *sample- and sharing culture* in which digital natives of the age group between 18 and 23 actively participate when using the Internet. Originality, however, is one of the foundations of the culture of the academia, therefore the papers created in Roma Visual Lab had to observe the rules pertaining to the conscious and reflected use of sources and their writers were also reminded of the importance of providing accurate references.

There were also a number of problems with the argumentation itself. Some of the students misunderstood the genre of the paper and wrote a review or a laudation rather than a academic essay. Here we needed to create a distance between the writers and their objects by changing the language of the paper or by introducing a more analytic approach or a historical perspective. Rather than using phrases like "shockingly honest spirit", "suggestive moments", "staggering images", a paper on social documentary photography, for instance, could be made more efficient by raising questions like: what does the name of the genre imply, when did it start evolving in the world and in Hungary, are there predecessors or contemporaries of, say, Tamás Féner's photographs, what are the differences between social documentary photography and report photography (it is especially relevant when discussing oeuvres of authors, like Féner, who worked in both genres), what do the terms metonymic and metaphoric structure mean in the context of an exhibition, are there any possible critical approaches when discussing various types and authors of social documentary photography, etc. In addition to generic problems, rendering the content of the films was another reoccurring problem that weakened the arguments by taking space away from the analysis. This was the case, for instance, with the portraits made by József Böjte, where the papers could have been more efficient by raising questions like which particular forms of the genre of portrait are applied, how does the film fit into the oeuvre of the director, what is the relationship of the reporter to his subject, how does this subject appear in the film, what tools are used to represent it, what narrative is it embedded in, what types of visual material complement the scenes shot during the interview (e.g. the function of *found footage* in documentaries), etc.

Another typical problem was the use of generalizing statements. We usually resort to generalizations because they seem to offer an easy way to move forward with the argument, or because we fail to write what we really mean (e.g. "Most films about the Roma people offer a negative image of them." – Even if we understand the intentions of the author, this statement should be a lot more specific.). Taking a generalizing statement from another source and leaving it unreflected constitutes a similar problem. Rather than marking them as flaws in the argument, when commenting such instances I tried to confront the author with the unfeasibility of the argument by raising questions about it. For instance, generalizing statements often appear in sociological studies about the status of Roma women within their

own community, where the authors fail to consider the fact that the social stratification of the Roma community is a near duplicate of that of the majority society, and therefore, there are significant regional and class differences among the various groups of Roma women. There are a number of Roma women who are a lot more emancipated than it is reflected in those studies. In addition, while there is obviously a traditionally subordinated role assigned to Roma women, it is only a different manifestation of the same subordination expected of a woman in the majority society. It is important to note here that Hungary has the lowest ratio of women in the legislature in Europe. We need to reflect on such general observations and present them as relative of a set of factors even if they come from an authentic source (a sociologist or from someone personally involved, like Katalin Sztojka).

The fact that the papers were written in teamwork resulted in occasional incoherence or redundancy. But since our goal was to acquire the skills of cooperative writing I asked the students to work on the coherence of the paper, read it together and pay attention to each other's work in order to avoid contradictions or needless repetitions. (Such a contradiction appeared in one of the papers that discussed the atmospheric power of visuality and the psychological authenticity in the representation of the main character and later it claimed that all these were just art for art's sake.) Since learning always entails the acquiring of a new vocabulary, we paid special attention to the conscious application of the newly learned terminology in the papers. The terms *intersectionality* or *digital divide* could serve as good examples here. Faye Ginsburg criticizes the term *digital divide* by claiming that it recurs to the Western, linear concept of development together with its hierarchical structures. Instead of a seemingly emancipating discourse that, more often than not, only recreates inequality Ginsburg proposes to study and acknowledge the existing solutions and methods of self-representation performed in places outside the "centers". The concept of intersectionality appeared in another paper and also required further refinement. Angéla Kóczé defines the term in the following way: "feminist literature refers to the coexistence of inequalities as intersectionality." Another paper had difficulties in discussing a theatrical performance that blurred the distinction between reality and fiction: what are we to make of a performance in which the actors bear their own names and their roles reflect their real social status (Rodrigo Balogh appears in the role of "Rodrigo" the art teacher)? This is a clear instance of crossing of borderlines: the staging of (what we know as) real names, events and roles makes these realias discursive by means of performative acts and that pushes the audience off of its comfort zone. This particular paper was also an interesting example of how we can collect additional information about an event that we have limited knowledge about. The writers of the paper only saw the footage of the particular theatrical performance and did not know the background behind the seemingly demonstrative exit of a number of Roma intellectuals during the show. In the process of writing the paper they had a chance to ask André Raatzsch, who was one of the people leaving the performance, what happened. It turned out that at least one of the participants did not mean to protest, since Raatzsch told the students, he left because he "wanted to collect the material of the exhibition in *tranzit* that was at Choli's that evening." The suggestions listed above were made during discussions and individual consultations with students in order to improve the arguments of the papers, the results of which are available on our homepage.

It is important to note that there were two occasions organized for the presentation of the papers. The first event took place during a class in the seminar where students gave account of the concept of their papers and offered a summary of their argumentation, while the other event was organized by the Department of Media and Communication, where the final papers (graded as excellent) were presented.⁵

A Virtual Contradiction

Finally let me mention a problem that fundamentally determines the operations of Roma Visual Lab. There appears to be a contradiction between the critical approach characterizing the participants and the essay writers of Roma Visual Lab and the idea of solidarity with the guests we invited. Our intentions to be critical with the work presented were often in conflict with our respect towards our guests, the creators of the work. There were several examples of this conflict, such as the question of possible sexism present in the film featuring the jazz singer, Kati Rácz that we discussed in the program element devoted to the representation of Roma women, or the stereotypical practices and lack of focus characterizing certain Roma media schools and social campaign films, or the inconsistencies in the construction of authenticity in the talent show film. In one of our discussions this contradiction (that I believe to be virtual) became manifest, when one of the student moderators claimed that it had been a reoccurring motif in the history of Roma Visual Lab that the different perspectives offered by practice vs. theory, or methods of filmmaking vs. critical concerns are turned into opposing standpoints in the discussions, despite the mutually positive attitudes towards the topic of the discussion. This, however, is far from being an antagonism. The signifying practices of those working in the fields of professional and non-professional (if this distinction is still relevant) media are in constant change. Anything that appears as a norm in the context of critical theory may become the object of discussions or even the basis for a specific and feasible suggestion. Roma Visual Lab intends to participate in this very process by creating a constant dialogue between those who create and those who interpret these contents, i.e., a forum based on our mutual commitment to the democratic media representation of the Roma community.

Acknowledgement

When I was preparing the students for the task of the moderator and during the discussions I had very positive experiences about the level of motivation of our students, their creativity in participating in the events, and their honest but critical attitude in round-table discussions. This applies to each and every program element and the overwhelming majority of the students. They were always available when I needed help in organizing the events for which I want to express my gratitude here in this assessment. I am also grateful for everyone who participated in the events related to the work of Roma Visual Lab and contributed to the success of our programs.

András Müllner
Translated by Peter Bocsor

⁵ Available: <https://www.facebook.com/events/433616800096711/permalink/436674699790921/>

