

FINAL REPORT

VISEGRAD SCHOLARSHIP AT THE OPEN SOCIETY ARCHIVES, CEU, BUDAPEST

Researcher: **Haruna Honcoopová** (Czech Republic), an independent filmmaker, graduate of Sinology at Charles University in Prague, who deals in her film work and research with issues of WWII, totalitarian regimes, human rights, Far East Asia and art history.

Title of the project: THE RELICS OF SOCIALIST ARCHITECTURE – Video-Art Project

Scholarship period: 22 June, 2015 – 24 July, 2015

Introduction

The project, “Relics of Socialist Architecture”, is a series of short experimental-documentary films featuring the most significant relics of socialist architecture in selected cities of the former Soviet Bloc. The final video-art format uses split-screens combining both actual and archival film footage of roughly five minutes length for each of the selected topics. The moving pictures of the architectural objects in focus are underscored by original music soundtracks based on communist songs, and audio of speeches by communist leaders and other important figures “mashed-up” into a contemporary electronic music composition. The scenes are accompanied by inserts of some of the crucial historical events in various Soviet Bloc countries from the Second World War up to the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991.

The project is based on the premise that socialist architecture is not necessarily insignificant because it was built under the communist regime and that it may possess its own important historical value. Many of the remarkable buildings have been destroyed because of a perceived association with a hated regime, but some of them are memorable pieces of architecture, witnesses of the era, and should be preserved.

Socialist architecture is generally dismissed as megalomaniacal productions of totalitarian regimes with little architectural quality and grace. Yet, some of the buildings are rare examples of the general trends in 20th century architecture, usually labeled as Modernism, Functionalism, Brutalism and deserve proper documentation and appreciation.

The film project is designed for 3 years and divided into 3 parts:

Part I. (produced in 2015) – short films covering the cities of Prague, Berlin, Budapest and Dunaújváros, Bucharest, and Pristina (30 min).

Part II. (produced in 2016) covering the cities of Bratislava, Warsaw, Riga, Moscow, Belgrade, Kiev and Chisinau. (30 min)

For the year 2017 I am planning a longer **Part III.**, which is to cover the impact of socialist architecture in Asia, namely in Beijing, Ho-chi-Min City, Bishkek, Dushanbe, Baku, and Yerevan, provided I can find a producer to subsidize the necessary long-distance journeys. (60 min)

The completed video-art series of Part I and II can be presented in one screening of 12 short films of a total running time around 50- 60 minutes and shown at international experimental, documentary, and architecture film festivals. Besides the festival screening, the above described video-art form enables the individual “city medallions” to be shown as a series of separate short films in modern art galleries as video installations. In the

galleries, each video will be shown on a separate screen and joined by large-scale photos of the presented buildings and a typographic text providing detailed contextual information (location, name of the object, the year of construction, architect, historical background and the role of the building in the historical events). Because each of the city medallions are accompanied by an original sound-track composed by young musicians of the country involved, I also thought of creating a CD composed of the individual original soundtracks.

Methodology of video-art project realization

The work on the project is divided into 4 phases:

1. Development

- a. Getting the idea for the basic theme of the movie (inspiration) – is the idea worthwhile? Is it meaningful for the society?
- b. Assembling the basic information and gathering knowledge, web searches for relevant literature on the theme, purchase and study of books, preliminary consultations on the theme with architects, searching for support in the form of financial and intellectual support – building of the team of possible film collaborators, contacting perspective advisors and tutors, in situ assistants etc.
- c. Production prerogatives - budget building and fundraising, project scheduling, location scouting, journey and shooting time-tables, and applications to support organizations.
- d. Research and collecting archival documents and film materials in film archives (OSA Archivum plays a major role among the Eastern Bloc Archives), searching for suitable archival material for the sound-track music composition.

2. Production, shooting at various locations and coordinating visits with local advisors and assistants, trying to ensure at least a sound-track assistant is on the spot (as the one-man documentary shooting does not enable a good quality sound-track), organizing the shot material by dates and locations, exact notes to support the post-production.

3. Postproduction, editing, color grading, collaborating with music composers and final cut of the material.

4. Presentation/Distribution of the final film – offering the video-art films for:

- a. **Festivals** - application for participation in various film screenings, such as festivals, seminars, lectures, TV broadcasts, VOD etc.
- b. **Exhibitions** - exhibiting the individual reels as video-art at new media exhibitions in galleries - writing texts accompanying the exhibition in collaboration with architects and art historians, or gallery curators.

Collected material and human support:

Further on, I'm enclosing the materials I was able to collect in the Development phase and the advisors who are willing to support the project:

History consultants:

prof. Istvan Rév (CEU, OSA Archivum, Budapest)

researcher Vladimír Lejtnar (Ústav pro studium totalitních režimů /The Institute for the Study of Totalitarian Regimes, Prague)

Architecture consultants:

architect Dumitru Rusu (BACU Bucharest)

architect Lavente Polyak (KÉK Budapest)

prof. Radomíra Sedláková (National Gallery in Prague, Head of Architecture Department at CVUT, Czech Technical University in Prague)

architect Adam Gebrian (Prague)

architect Bekim Ramku (Prishtina)

Bibliography:

Andres Åman: Architecture and Ideology in Eastern Europe during the Stalin Era: An Aspect of Cold War History, MIT Press, 1992

Roman Bezjak: "Sozialistische Moderne - Archäologie einer Zeit" ("Socialist Modernism - Archeology of an Era"), Catalog of an exhibition held at the Sprengel-Museum Hannover, June 22-October 16, 2011; and Robert Morath Galerie, Hamburg, January 21-March 17, 2012)

Frédéric Chaubin: CCCP-Cosmic Communist Constructions Photographed, Tachen Books, Owen Hatherley: Landscapes of Communism, Allen Lane, London 2015

In the Shadow of Stalin's Boots: Visitor's guide to the Memento Park, Budapest, 2008

Zdeněk Lukeš: Praha moderní, Volume 1.-4., Paseka, Prague 2012-2015

Jindřich Noll, Jan E. Svoboda: Praha 1945-2003, Libri, Prague 2006

Vladimir Papernyj: Architektura stalinské epochy, Arbor Vitae, Prague 2015

Katharina Ritter, Ekaterina Shapiro-Obermair, Dietmar Steiner, Alexandra Wachter: Soviet Modernism 1955-1991, catalogue, Architekturzentrum Wien and Park Books, Zurich, 2012

Anna Maria Zahariade: Architecture in the Communist Project: Romania 1944-1989, Simetria, Bucharest, 20011

Slavoj Žižek

Filmography:

OSA film catalogue:

Péter Forgács: Kádár's Kiss , Private Hungary series), 1997

Gábor Zsigmond Papp: Budapest Retro I. and II.: Pictures from the 60's and 70's, 2003, OSA FL 333, FL 334

Gábor Zsigmond Papp: Balaton Retro, 2007 OSA FL 2437

other films:

Zsolt Keserue: Dunaújváros, 20

Věra Chytilová: Panel Story, 1979

Adam Gebrian: Gebrian vs. – series of online videos about socialist architecture in CZ

Pavel Karous a Rozálie Kohoutová: Vetřelci a volavky, Czech Television documentary, 2008

Francis Hanly and Jonathan Meades: Bunkers and Brutalism, BBC documentary, 2014

Nicolae Margineanu: Architecture and Power, Agerfilm, 1993

Béla Tarr: The Prefab People, 1982

Other archives:

Bundesarchiv Berlin

Progress Filmarchiv Berlin

Krátký film Praha (Prague)

Narodowy Instytut Audiowizualny (Warsaw)

Filmoteka Narodowa (Warsaw)

RTK - Public Television Broadcast Service Prishtina

RESULTS OF THE FELLOWSHIP RESEARCH AT OSA ARCHIVUM, BUDAPEST:

Research and materials from OSA Archivum:

As evident from the methodology review above, the research in archives belongs to the preliminary phase of the documentary and art video production. I am much obliged to OSA for the opportunity to develop the project of documenting Socialist era architecture in video-art form. I was kindly supported by a month-long grant to research the archives located in Budapest. During the fellowship at OSA Archivum, I concentrated on searching for archival film material of socialist architecture in Budapest and Dunaújváros, the two Hungarian cities with significant architecture built in the socialist style.

I am greatly obliged for advice and help from the consultant of my project, prof. Isztvan Rév, the Head of OSA Archivum and professor at Central European University, architect Gáspár Hajdu, Budapest tourist guide Alessandro Grimaldi, art researcher from Dunaújváros Anna Mária Nagy who oriented my steps to the important relics of socialist architecture in Hungary. I managed to make short trips to the locations in Budapest and Dunaújváros to make video footage of the relevant objects during my stay and also visit 2 museums related to the topic: Memento Park Museum which collects and preserves socialist statues torn down from public spaces in Budapest after the communist regime was over in this open-air museum, and Terror Háza Museum which is showing materials from the fascist and communist regimes.

However, I spent most of the allotted time at the OSA Archivum in Budapest. It collects hundreds of film reels, 11 thousand hours of audiovisual materials, mostly in the VHS format. The chief archival funds relevant to my project include: **HU OSA 306** – Collective funds, Records related to the 1956 Revolution (1956-1996), **HU OSA 320**, 1922-1989, Péter Forgács's collection of amateur videos **HU OSA 380** – 1988-2001, Rudolf Hervé collection on alternative life styles in Hungary, **HU OSA 394** - Records of the film studio of Hungarian Ministry of Interior, 1955-89. From the above-mentioned collections, I only succeed to view relevant tapes from HU OSA 320 (total 423 tapes) during the research period.

The **Film Collection** is another part of OSA Archivum that provides a good collection of various feature and documentary films; quite useful while researching the topic. Another useful collection for my research comes from the photographs collected on the platform **Fortepan** (www.fortepan.hu) by Mr. Miklós Tamási. It comprises amateur photographs from the whole Eastern Bloc region. It includes a decent collection of photographs from Budapest, but much fewer from other cities. However, it is quite natural that I will have to go into archives in all the cities I want to record.

Péter Forgács' collection **HU OSA 320**:

Photographs and home movies Collection 1922-1989

Since 1983, Péter Forgács, a Hungarian video-artist, film maker and collector of archival home movies, collected hundreds of hours of film material from Hungarian private donors of home videos. Out of these, he created a series of 14 documentary award-winning films based on home movies from the 1920s and 1970s, called " Private Hungary", which documents ordinary lives of Hungarian people. This vast collection of home video movies is now held at the OSA Archivum. The video material in Forgács's

collection, includes hundreds of hours of silent material shot on 8mm or 16mm film, 423 containers in total. The OSA Archivum keeps the material on VHS tapes in digitized form. It reflects the life of ordinary Hungarian people during the communist regime quite well. Most of the material includes private home videos capturing various family celebrations, short trips, walks around the city, 1st May celebrations, and also trips around Hungary and trips to abroad. From these reels, I was able to select many short clips showing the architectural relics I was looking for.

Though I am continually working on the topic and shooting at various locations (after Budapest I spent two weeks researching and shooting in Prishtina, Kosovo), my project is still in its initial phase of development and production, and only three cities - Bucharest, Berlin and Budapest - have entered the postproduction phase. I will certainly send the finished part I was able to shoot in Budapest and Dunaújváros, as soon as it is ready from post-production in autumn this year. Within the year, I am planning to finish Prishtina, Dunaújváros and Prague videos.

I will also continually keep you informed about the further development of my project, which is planned for the next two years to be accomplished.

Thank you very much indeed for your support.

Haruna Honcoopová
Prague, August 28, 2015

(see pictures attachment below)

Screenshots of videos from the HU OSA 320-1-2 collection:



HU OSA 320-1-2-46
Short amateur film about BP



HU OSA 320-1-2-90 Construction of metro



HU OSA 320-1-2-63 Revolution 1956



HU OSA 320-1-2-29 Elisabeth Bridge

Pictures taken during the fellowship in the locations:



Steel factory Csepel Művek, Budapest



Factory Dunai Vasmű, Dunaújváros



Church Farkasrét, Budapest



Water tower in Csepel, Budapest