

Visegrad Scholarship — Final Report

Inclusion Through Visualisation: participatory cinema as a tool addressing structural violence against Romani population in the EU

The main idea behind the research is to look beyond the established grand narratives about the Romani population in the EU. Those homogeneous narratives, portrays of the Romani population carefully shaped by the mainstream media and sustained by lack of will to challenge one's own perception of the "reality" contribute to the everyday, interpersonal exclusion and marginalisation of the largest ethnic minority in Europe.

Documentary cinema which currently took its niche within the mainstream media landscape is extensively focusing on fate of Romani population. The incentives of documentary filmmakers are diverse as are their approaches. Some want to advocate for human rights, others — allegedly give the voice to "voiceless"; some are seeing cinema as venue for their artistic expression and others are trying to empower the subjects of the cinema. Within the scope of this research I was trying to see patterns used by documentary cinema in portraying Romani stories.

The research title suggests that participatory cinema is a valid alternative to the mainstream documentary scene. It is to be argued that participatory cinema is offering the freedom of narratives which are not bind together by the filmmaker's sense of the story. However, in order to claim that participatory cinema is a better tool in addressing structural and cultural violence against Romani population, documentary cinema shall be analysed.

In this regard, OSA offers a great selection of documentary films on Romani issue. Though all of the films are focusing on fate of Romani people in the Eastern and Central Europe, the approaches used by filmmakers and consequently the impact on a viewer differ greatly. I was privileged to have an access to the films which I would probably have not been able to find otherwise.

During the two months of the fellowship I watched and analysed all Romani focused films at the OSA. This period represents a significant stage within my PhD studies. I have just recently started working on the project and I was ready to be challenged by video materials. This is indeed what happened during my research at the OSA. While I was developing the research project, I was confident that documentary cinema is an unethical and somewhat dangerous tool which can lead to further alienation and marginalisation of Romani population in the EU. Now, after being exposed to

numerous documentary films, I admit that there is vast field of possible manifestations of documentary cinema and it would be limiting to assume that all documentary scene is sustaining and reinforcing prejudice and stereotypes against Romani population. Therefore, as a result of the fellowship I am reshaping/reassessing the focus of my research project. Even though I am willing to stay with participatory cinema, documentary cinema and its assessment will be differentiated on its possible societal impact. I will try to see beyond the documentary genre as such, which indeed can disseminate stereotypical narratives, but rather focus on single stories of success, stories which address the issue in alternative and somewhat innovative way. I am happy that this stage of reassessment happened now, when I am still searching for right needed questions. Research is a transformative process which can at times bring us to the places we have not anticipated to go and I think that fellowship and exposure to different documentary projects allowed me to open the door to new horizons of truths.

OSA staff welcomed me as a member of the inspiring family of people who care about past and present and who are willing to sustain the connection between both. I would like to thank separately my supervisor, Oksana Sarkisova, who provided me with needed support and advice, Robert Parnica, who explained me how to navigate in the endless sea of information OSA has an access to, and Katalin Gadoros for administrative support and her helpful presence.

The list of documentary films watched during the fellowship at OSA:

Nomad Market: Three Wanderers / Nomád Pláza: három vándor. Szalay, Péter, Hungary, 2009, Hungarian/ Subtitles: English, 52 min, documentary film.

Our School / Școala noastră. Nicoară, Mona; Coca-Cozma, Miruna, United States, 2011, Romanian/ Subtitles: English, 94 min, documentary film.

Vortex / Örvény. Csaba, Szekeres, Hungary, 2010, Hungarian/ Subtitles: English, Hungarian, 75 min, documentary film.

My Home is My Castle. Kleider, Alexander ; Michel, Daniela ; Müller, Marco, Germany, 2011, Hungarian/ Subtitles: English, 75 min, documentary film.

Turn off the Lights. Mladenović, Ivana, Romania, 2012, Romanian/ Subtitles: English, 77 min, documentary film.

Ghetto Street / Getto Sor. Csubrilo, Zoltán, Serbia and Montenegro, 2009, Hungarian, Serbian/ Subtitles: English, 44 min, documentary film.

Other Worlds / Iné svety. Škop, Marko, Slovakia, 2006, Slovak, Romany/ Subtitles: English, Polish, Slovak, 75 min, documentary film.

The Mission of a Rom / Mustlase mission. Laiapea, Vahur, Estonia, 2010, 67 min, documentary film.

Without Rights / Jogtalanul. Takács, István Gábor, Hungary, 2009, Hungarian/ Subtitles: English, 46 min, documentary film.

Gyurika. Fehér, Zsuzsanna, Hungary, 2007, Hungarian/Subtitles: English, 23 min, documentary film.

Sona and Her Family / O Soni a jej Rodine. Rusnoková, Daniela, Slovakia, 2006, Slovak/Subtitles: English, 37 min, documentary film.

Everyday Life of Roma Children From Block 71. Todorović, Ivana, Serbia and Montenegro, 2006, Serbian/Subtitles: English, 21 min, documentary film.

Hopeless in Sweden / Svédtelenül. Kovács, János, Hungary, 2006, Hungarian/Subtitles: English, 26 min, documentary film.

Strangers from the Inside / Étrangers de l'intérieur. Jourdan, Juliette, France, 2008, Czech/Subtitles: English, 52 min, documentary film.

Kenedi Goes Back Home / Kenedi se vraća kući. Žilnik, Želimir, Serbia and Montenegro, 2003, Serbian/Subtitles: English, 78 min, documentary film.

The Shutka Book of Records / Knjiga Rekorda Shutke. Manić, Aleksandar, Serbia and Montenegro, 2005, Serbian, English, 79 min, documentary film.

The Last Camp – aka Gypsies / Последний мабор. Evgenii Shneider, Moisei Gol'dblat director; Mezhrabpomfil'm producer; Soviet Shneider, Evgenii ; Gol'dblat, Moisei, Soviet Union, 1935, Russian, 78 min, fiction film.

Pretty Dyana. Mitić, Boris, Serbia and Montenegro, 2003, Serbian/Subtitles: English, 44 min, documentary film.

Suspino: A Cry for Roma. Kovanic, Gillian Darling, Canada, 2003, English, 1 min, documentary film.

Osada Bystrany. Bader, Marc ; Kuncikova, Petra, (n/a), 2006, Slovak, Romany/Subtitles: English, 32 min, documentary film.

Garlic and Watermelons: Summer 2003. Kickey, Cameron ; Feeny, Lauren, United States, 2005, Greek, Modern (1453-)/Subtitles: English, 56 min, documentary film.

No Place for You at This Workplace / Na ovom radnom mjestu nema mjesta za vas. Zimbrek, Slaven, Croatia, 2007, Croatian/Subtitles: English, 53 min, documentary film.

The First Day. Skrinar, Hannah, United Kingdom, 2008, English, 11 min, documentary film.

The Endless Column / La colonna senza fine. Mereghetti, Elisa, Italy, 2008, Italian/Subtitles: English, 80 min, documentary film.

Journey of Change / Cesta Změny. United States, 2001, Czech/Subtitles: English, 21 min, documentary film.

T'an Bakhtale!: "Good Fortune!". Lemon, Alaina, United States, 1994, Russian/Subtitles: English, 75 min, documentary film.

Djangos Erben. Sekerci, Suzan, Germany, 2008, German, 89 min, documentary film.