

Final Report
Blinken OSA – Visegrad Fellowship
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Title: *The Cold War between the Medium and the Message: Performing the archive of the Non-Aligned Movement*

My research at Blinken OSA investigated the legacy of the Non Aligned Movement (NAM) – and how the movement’s historical representation and contemporary reputation could be applied to aesthetic practices today.

The NAM was officially formed as a movement at the Belgrade summit 1961, in Yugoslavia. It represented the first major disruption in the Cold World map as a quest for alternative political alliances. The NAM was a transnational political project, a coalition of small and middle-sized states, mostly former colonies and developing countries, from the global south or the “third world”. During its establishment, the NAM was therefore a rupture of the Cold War phenomenon and thus also a hopeful movement and moment in part of Europe and The Third World – aiming at reconfiguring global leadership away from both NATO and the Soviet Bloc. For a moment it seemed as if anything was possible – reflected in ambitious meetings, conferences, cultural exchanges and architectural infrastructures – nevertheless, it mostly ended in failed dreams.

The Non-aligned Movement is a vast topic that can be looked at from many angles, but I put an emphasis on Yugoslavia’s involvement. My initial research at Blinken OSA was intended to be done almost three years ago prior to an exhibition project about artistic, activist, and aesthetic organisation and solidarity practices, but the pandemic came in between. Since the initial project was already done, I decided to change focus, yet maintain the research foundation but instead let the material guide me to a new focus. So, for the research that I have been doing, which is intended to become a new artistic work, I decided to stick with my original title and, do exactly that, “perform the archive” in order to make a new sound-montage to be presented at the artistic and discursive audio platform “Tentative Transmits: The Radio as G/Host” in 2023.

While reflecting on what the NAM including its disruptions, can tell us about structures of solidarity and both political as well as performative gestures of that time, led me to read and explore the holdings at Blinken OSA (NAM-summit coverage, RFE reports, and media coverage) from a rhetorical point of view, in order

to further investigate the materiality of the NAM and how its legacy might be interpreted today. How the movement aimed at practising peace politics and solidarity structures. Especially in relation to our current realities and on-going wars and proxy-wars.

By categorising Yugoslav NAM-oriented performances into summit spectacles, diplomatic and cultural networking, and Tito's personal diplomacy, as well as going through sources of Radio Free Europe, research reports, transcriptions, books and articles, I intend for this new artistic work to somehow look further into, find and stage gestures of performed errors of its time.

During my time at OSA I became more interested in how the NAM was perceived and "performed" inside Yugoslavia, and how it was perceived outside the country (as they didn't always go hand in hand). To exemplify, Tito didn't always practice what non-alignment preached for, which was made visible in his opening speech at the Belgrade summit in 1961 where rather than condemning he instead addressed his "understanding" of the Soviet nuclear testing which according to news reports, totally changed the atmosphere of the conference and opened in "shock and confusion". This weakened Tito's position among the other non-alignees, who could not understand Yugoslav claims that while non-alignment was possible in foreign policy, there could be no non-alignment in ideological matters. This was confirmed in the document "On the Eve of the Belgrade Non-Aligned Consultative Meeting" from 1969 (HU OSA 300-8-3-10454). But also noted in several articles from 1961 (HU OSA 300-7-9). I am currently investigating and looking further into these so-called "summit ruptures". Not necessarily from a critical point but rather from an artistic and "performed-errors" standpoint. And for this, the resources at Blinken OSA have been of great value (see sources/appendix below), particularly in relation to how I could familiarize myself with documents, statements and transcripts rhetorically and through the anticipations of its time while simultaneously reading history through ruptures and by elaborating its course. From here, I intend to further examine how the movement's historical representation and contemporary reputation could be applied to aesthetic practices today. Allowing us to better grasp the histories of our own struggles and socio-political implications that characterise our collective present.

Based on the material collected at OSA, I will continue this artistic research further by intervening, sampling, extracting audio-visual material in order to construct a sound montage dealing with these ruptures from an aesthetical outlet.

Appendix:

- HU OSA 300-7-9

- HU OSA 300-7-9:43/2
- HU OSA 300-7-9:43/4
- HU OSA 300-7-9:43/5
- HU OSA 300-8-3
- HU OSA 300-10-3
- HU OSA 300-80-1:622/4
- HU OSA 318-0-4:26/9

Books:

Nash, Mark, 1947- (editor.), "Red Africa: Affective communities and the Cold War", London: Black Dog Publishing, 2016.