I am a visual artist with a special interest in interdisciplinary approaches to memory studies, especially with regard to genocide and decolonization. Currently, I am a PhD candidate at the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna, where I am completing my dissertation on the role and relevance of art in the realm of memory politics, with a focus on the “Third Generation” after the Holocaust.

I applied for a Visegrad Scholarship to conduct research on my current arts-based project, titled “How I realized I was Roma, How I realized I was a Jew,” which deals with the commonalities and differences in concealing, rejecting or embracing Jewish and Roma identity by members of the Third Generation after the Shoah/Porajmos. This project explores the various coping strategies that post-Shoah/Porajmos generations have employed to grapple with their own family origins.

Between 1980 and 1988, András Kovács, Ferenc Erős and Katalin Lévai, conducted life interviews with Second Generation Hungarian Jews, which served as the basis for their article (“Hogyan jöttem rá, hogy zsidó vagyok”), which appeared in Medvetánc in 1985. My project borrows its title from their groundbreaking study.

My research will culminate in an exhibition (a video work and a set of accompanying workshops) in the summer of 2021. The exhibition, titled “How I realized I was Roma, How I realized I was a Jew,” will be based on my personal experience of being born in Hungary in the 1980s and only discovering my family origins later in life. The exhibition is semi-autobiographical, as I am one of the subjects. I will compare my own experiences of realization and discovery, probing the ways in which other families at times concealed, rejected or embraced their “hidden” or “tabooed” origins. I will also juxtapose the personal stories with those examined by Kovács, Erős and Lévai in the 1980s.

Through these experiences and discussions, I will explore the patterns of tabooing and hiding one’s identity, culture, religion and ethnic background, both intentionally and unintentionally. Through this process, I am asking almost that same questions that Erős, Kovács and Lévai asked in the 1980s. I have tailored the questions to the challenges of the Third Generation, adapting the original questionnaire to both Roma and Jewish perspectives.

By researching the different layers of memory discourses of the Shoah and Porajmos in Hungary, I offer a new perspective on post-Second World War memory through double micro-histories bringing the neglected (and often silenced) voices of the Third Generation to the fore.
I have been planning to do this project for several years, but the real impetus came on February 10, 2020, when Ferenc Erős passed away. I felt that I should have done this project earlier, perhaps even involving Erős, so now this project has also become a tribute to his memory.

**What I was hoping to find in the OSA?**

When I was preparing the project I read András Lénárt article “Zsidó indentitáskutatások a holokauszt után született generáció körében” (Jewish identity research among the post-Holocaust generation), which states that “All four [!] researchers received a copy of the interviews, and the fifth copy apparently ended up at the foundation, but we did not find a trace of it. The interview reports, however, did remain in the OSA Soros Foundation fond (OSA 13-6-1). The typed texts of the interviews are together with the contracts, reports, lecture notes, publication notes, copies of publications, foreign-language scholarly articles and bibliographies. The audio recordings of the interviews were unfortunately lost. The interviews resulted in seven publications.”

I was hoping to find the research reports based on this information and I still hope to get the chance to see the fifth copy of the interviews. By now I am aware that this requires a longer process due to data protection regulations.

**What did I find in the archive and how did it shape my thinking about the project?**

After reading the research report “The biographical method in the study of Jewish identity in present-day Hungary” in English and some notes in Hungarian by Ferenc Erős and András Kovács (1985 OSA 13-6-1:31), I decided to examine periodicals from this era in order to see how contemporary Hungarian journals and weekly daily newspapers portrayed Jews in general and the Erős-Kovács-Lévai research, in particular.

The other goal of my research at the OSA was to find out about the István Kemény poverty and Roma research projects, which began in 1970. I was reading interviews with István Kemény and of course I wanted to know more about the research that led to his forced emigration.
I kept a research diary during my time at the OSA, focusing in particular on the articles about poverty and the depiction of Roma in Hungarian newspapers from the 1970s to the 1990s.

Here is an excerpt of my research diary focusing on István Kemény:

Kemény distributed questionnaires for the Roma-research project to the interviewers, and the only condition was that the interviews be conducted in the gypsy’s homes. Tape-recorded interviews were prepared, and afterwards he decided who could take part in the research. This material was housed in the Institute for Sociology and it has been completely destroyed. Articles and reports, however, have survived. Due to his research and weekly seminars on gypsies and poverty, and later on workers, Kemény lost his job at the Institute for Sociology at the end of 1972.1 A year later, because of the publication of his book, Magyar Munkások (Hungarian Workers), all of Kemény’s research and publications were banned. Following his research among the workers at the Csepel Iron- and Metalworks and and the workers of Pest County, he reported “in 1970 at a lecture held at the Hungarian Academy of Sciences that the surveyed people were, in fact, poor. In 1970, this was forbidden.”2 Afterwards, Kemény tried to publish pseudonymously under names like Áron Máté, Frigyes Séley, Anna Román, Flóra Kemény. This was during the heyday of the dictatorship of the proletariat, when the poor were officially called persons with “multiple accumulated disadvantages” (“többoldalúan halmozottan hátrányos helyzetű”).3 The final results of this study were immediately hidden away in the safe of the Statistical Office. Later, it appeared as a samizdat publication, and a hundred or so copies circulated in Budapest. Even under a pseudonym, he was unable to work as a scholar, so he found work in other cultural sectors. For example, he made several Roma-themed documentary and feature films with the director Pál Schiffer.4

The Erős-Kovács report also focused on the language and the shifting meanings of key terms and concepts in the post-Holocaust period. “It turned out that after a radical transformation of Hungarian Society after 1945, it was not at all clear what was meant by the terms Jewish identity, assimilation, anti-Semitism etc.” they wrote. “It was necessary to formulate questions relevant to

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1 Megfelezett élet: Beszélgetés Kemény István szociológussal, Kritika, 1990 X., OSA 300 40 5 91
2 Beszélgetés Kemény Istvánval, A hallgatás nem segít, Magyar Hírlap, 1990.4.7. OSA 300 40 5 91
3 Beszélgetés Kemény Istvánval, A hallgatás nem segít, Magyar Hírlap, 1990.4.7. OSA 300 40 5 91
4 Második Nyilvánosság, Tisztelet Kemény Istvánnak, Hírmondó, 1985 okt-nov, OSA 300 40 5 91
the present as well, rather than simply concerning ourselves with answers to earlier formulated questions. For this reason we decided to employ empirical methods in our search for an answer to the question of what is meant by the concept of Jewish identity, as experienced in Hungary after the war.”

Without quoting the entire report I want to emphasize some methodological issues which were crucial in my arts-based research project:

- The interviews were conducted with members of the second generation but also sometimes involved their parents.
- The interviews were based on oral history, supplemented by questionnaires
- The interviews focused on family histories going back two generations
- The interviews focused on childhood roots in Jewish identity
- The interviews focused on Jewishness/anti-Semitism, conflicted feelings regarding the related questions.

All these methodological issues helped me formulate and examine my own research questions. I focused on other methods and solutions to answer the challenges of living in a multicultural society for both Roma and Jewish Third generation.

After reading interviews with Kemény in Hungarian newspapers and reading the Erős-Kovács research report I realized that in both research projects basically all the raw materials and interviews had disappeared or I am just simply not authorized to access them. I decided to focus only on the articles to see how newspapers discuss Roma people, their homes, their role in society, their general circumstances, education, identities, culture, etc.

Inspired by the interview “A hallgatás nem segít” (silence does not help) with István Kemény, where he mentions that poverty was referred to as “a szegény embert ‘többoldalúan halmozottan hátrányos helyzetű’-nek nevezték” (“poor men, persons with ‘multiple accumulated disadvantages’”) I decided that I am going to pay more attention to the use of language and wording.

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5 Kovács András, Erős Ferenc kutatási beszámoló ENG HU 1985 OSA 13-6-1/31
While reading this articles, I focused on the following:
- the command of languages, the linguistics, barbarism in the articles regarding to Roma.
- how articles portray the trauma of the Porajmos
- how articles use the “Roma” or “Cigány”, “szegény”, “halmozottan hátrányos helyzetű” and in which context
- how interviews have the aspect of victim narrative
- in interviews how they ask people about their ethnic background
- which stereotypes interviewers used

My time at the OSA shaped my arts-based research project by raising the following questions:
- To what extent is the Erős-Kovács-Lévai research methodology applicable to the Third Generation (of Jews and Romas)?
- In what ways can I involve other researchers to figure out how this research can be applied to Romas of the Third Generation?
- What kind of discourse can there be between Jewish and Roma Third Generation?
- Is there any possibility or need for support groups with people of multiply identity?
- Who, how, where and when do people uncover or discuss their identity?
- What kind of research has been done targeting the Third Generation in Roma and Jewish context in Hungary?

These questions will be reflected in my final work as my research will culminate in an exhibition consisting of a video work, round table discussion, workshops, and a zine publication in the framework of “Jewish Culture 2028,” which will be organized by Marom Budapest in the summer of 2021.

At the end of the document I am attaching in Hungarian some of the articles that strongly shaped my research and some images and drafts of the video work.
'How did you find out you were a Jew?' In most countries, such a question would be met with astonishment. Whether Jewishness is regarded as national or ethnic consciousness, whether it is defined by religious or cultural traditions, family customs or a combination of these—however we understand it—in most countries one does not 'find it out'—Jewishness is an integral part of family traditions and the everyday and cultural environment, and the society in which one lives takes cognizance of this.

Hungary is one of the few places where this is not the case. Many of those who belong to the 'second generation' did not discover their identity in the above manner—by gradually becoming aware of traditions, or by other means—but, generally speaking, only came to know of it when they reached adulthood. Often the information came from older people. If it came from family members it was usually the result of a quirk in a situation of conflict or of complexes.
The project “How I realized I was Roma, How I realized I was a Jew”

exhibition: video, workshop, roundtable discussion, zine, article
The project “How I realized I was Roma, How I realized I was a Jew”

exhibition: video, workshop, roundtable discussion, zine, article
How did you realize that you were a Jew?
How did you realize that you were Roma?
What did I find in the archive and how did it shape my thinking about the project?

1. how did it shape my thinking about the video
What did I find in the archive and how did it shape my thinking about the project?

I kept a research diary during my time at the OSA:
1. to find the questionnaire (it got lost), but I found the research report

(...)the narrator creates his/her “life-history” from past events, as seen from the present and that is his present identity which creates the connections among these events.

“The “life-history” could serve to reconstruct the identity of the interviewed subject
I kept a research diary during my time at the OSA:

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1990 July 31: the Cigánynap in the Almássy tér Szabadidő Központ
What did I find in the archive and how did it shape my thinking about the project?

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