

SCIENTIFIC REPORT

Regarding the Implementation of the Project from July to December 2017, Summary of Activities and Results

Exploratory Research Project, code: PN-III-P4-ID-PCE-2016-0418, contract: NR. 145 / 2017.

Title of the project: ***Rethinking Intermediality in Contemporary Cinema: Changing Forms of In-Betweenness (Reinterpretarea intermedialității în filmul contemporan: forme ale liminalității în schimbare)***

The main objective of this exploratory research project is to identify some of the major directions in which cinematic intermediality has changed in the digital age determined by the affordances of the new media environment. The project attempts to solidify the theory of intermediality as a valid research paradigm within film studies, and to clarify relevant research axes for understanding contemporary intermedial phenomena in cinema. Through our conferences, presentations and publications we also expect to initiate a vivid international dialogue on the main issues proposed by the project. (See a longer abstract and a summary of the main objectives on the webpage of the project: <http://film.sapientia.ro/en/research-programs/rethinking-intermediality-in-contemporary-cinema-changing-forms-of-in-betweenness>.)

Research Period 1: The first stage of implementing the research project consisted of the period between July and December 2017. In this period our main goal was to **lay the foundations of our research**. For this purpose, we had the following activities and these were our first preliminary results.

A. Naming an MA student and recruiting a new member for the vacant positions in our research team:

At the start of the project we had two vacant positions in our research team. For the position of an MA student we named a student from the host institution, the Sapientia University, from the Film Studies MA, MIHÁLY LAKATOS. After which through job announcements posted on the sites <http://jobs.ancs.ro> and <http://www.euraxess.gov.ro> we accepted the application of a promising PhD student researcher, ÁGNES KAROLINA BAKK, as being best qualified through her studies, previous activities and publications for this project. In this way, our research team became more balanced, consisting of 4 experienced researchers (the project director, Prof. dr. Ágnes Pethő plus 3 experienced researchers: dr. Juliánna Hajnal Király, Associate Prof. dr. Andrea Adriana Virginaș, Associate Prof. dr. Judit Pieldner) and 3 young researchers (one postdoctoral researcher, Assistant Prof. dr. Melinda Blos-Jáni, a PhD student member, Ágnes Karolina Bakk and an MA student member, Mihály Lakatos).

B. Bringing the theoretical foundations of the research up to date:

In order to begin the research activity efficiently and at the level of other international researches, we initiated a series of actions meant to bring us up to date with current researches in the field and to make it possible for us to outline the theoretical avenues that can be pursued, the possible concrete topics of research and the individual research tasks.

B.1. Organization of scientific and artistic events:

A **scientific workshop** was organised for the purpose of officially launching the research project and to ensure its visibility through the public debate and presentation of the main issues that we propose to address through our researches on intermediality. The title of the workshop was: *Exploring Intermediality: Theories, Research Avenues, Artistic Practices*, and it took place on the 27th and 28th of October 2017. In this workshop we discussed the theoretical context in which our research will unfold. Each member of the team presented their own individual work plan and the goals they set themselves within this project as well as their proposals for publications for the next stages of the research, all of which were amply debated. The workshop was accompanied by a **complex exhibition of photo-video installation**, with the title **PHOTO-PROCESSING**. The exhibition, presenting the works of Zoltán Balla and Emőke Kerekes, was inaugurated on the World Day for Audiovisual Heritage and was curated by Melinda Blos-Jáni with the assistance of Mihály Lakatos. The exhibition raised questions about memory and visual representation through the intermediality of an archive of family photographs re-contextualized in the exhibition and the format of a video installation. (See the poster and description of the exhibition [here](#).) This exhibition was followed by a round table discussion about intermedial phenomena in contemporary art in general, and about our specific research topics connected to this subject.

B.2. Research trips, exchanges of experience, initiating international contacts:

In this first period we tried to ensure that each member of the research team took part in research trips which could enable them to come into contact with other, internationally acknowledges research centres, to exchange experiences and to initiate contacts, build networks with colleagues working abroad on similar researches.

- Thus, two members of the research team went on research trips to Hungary. In September, Melinda Blos-Jáni spent three days in Budapest where she met professors at the Eötvös Loránd University and the University of Theatre and Film and spent time in their specialized libraries. Hajnal Király spent a week at the University of Szeged in November, she met colleagues working on interdisciplinary researches at the Department for Visual Culture and Theory of Literature. She also visited the university library where she read about film phenomenology, especially about the non-linguistic modes of expression in cinema, which will be addressed in her next publication.
- Four members of the research team (Ágnes Pethő, Melinda Blos-Jáni, Judit Pioldner, Mihály Lakatos) went to the UK in the period between 5-19 November, with the main purpose of attending the most important scientific event of the year dedicated to researches of intermediality, organized by The University of Reading, the international conference, *'The Moving Form of Film: Exploring Intermediality as a Historiographic Method'*. Ágnes Pethő was invited to present a plenary lecture at this conference, but our own project started after the deadline for applications for this conference was already over, so other members could only be present as members of the audience. The possibility of being able to attend lectures by Alain Badiou, Ismail Xavier and Robert Stam was a unique occasion to come into direct contact with three of the most prominent theorists of intermediality. Attending the presentations in different sections and round tables of the conference, taking part in the discussions were extremely useful for us in order to see which are the main issues of

cinematic intermediality debated on an international level and to find out more about intermediality as a historiographic method, as well as to get acquainted with researchers from around the world. After this extremely inspiring conference, we went to London, where we participated in a follow-up event to the conference, a series of film projections at the Tate Modern and a round table discussion about the modernist movement called Tropicália in Brazilian cinema, in which intermedial and intercultural phenomena played a very important role (*Tropicália and Beyond: Dialogues in Brazilian Film History*).

During the conference and afterwards, at London, we had meetings and discussions with members of the research team conducted by Lúcia Nagib, who organized the conference, and who examine different periods of Brazilian cinema from the perspective of intermediality. Ágnes Pethő is also acting as a scientific advisor for this project on the intermediality of Brazilian cinema. Through this personal contact and the conversations with our colleagues, we had the opportunity to compare the methodology of our two ongoing research projects, both dedicated to issues of intermediality.

We used the rest of the time we had in London to learn about the history of intermedial art. We visited museums and the most important art galleries which had major exhibitions dedicated to intermedial art at this time (for example, the work of Jean-Michel Basquiat exhibited at the Barbican, the Dali-Duchamp exhibition at the Royal Academy of Arts, the Monochrome exhibition of painting, photography and installation art at the National Gallery of Art, the poetic multi-channel video-installations of John Akomfrah at the Curve Gallery at the Barbican and at the Tate Modern, the rich collection of video installations and of contemporary intermedia art entitled 'Everything at Once' exhibited at 180 The Strand, the Polaroid photos and video installations made by Wim Wenders exhibited in an intermedial dialogue with his films at the Photographers' Gallery, etc.)

- Ágnes Bakk and Andrea Virginás used the occasions of participating in international conferences in the same way, to gain access to the international scientific world, to meet researchers from all over the world. At the conferences dedicated to questions about Virtual Reality and video games organized in Madeira (Portugal) and Cologne (Germany) Ágnes Bakk had fruitful discussions not only with theoreticians but also with artists and engineers who design various kinds of VR projects and video games. At Bilbao in Spain, Andrea Virginás had the occasion to visit the Guggenheim Museum, and see temporary exhibitions of some prominent intermedial artists like Bill Viola or Ken Jacobs. She also attended a study day about contemporary global cinema at the International Film Festival of San Sebastian, with the participation of experts like Dina Iordanova and Ib Bondebjerg.

C. Research activity:

In this period, we also began our research activity proper: we had our first oral presentations at international conferences, one of our members finalized and published an article in a journal indexed in several prominent scientific databases and we all worked on preparing new publications.

C.1. Am participat la 6 conferințe internaționale și am avut 10 prezentări orale:

Contact Zones. Transnational Encounters, Dialogues and Self-Representation in Contemporary Eastern European Literature, Cinema and Visual Cultures, international conference, Budapest, Eötvös Loránd University, 28-30 Sept. 2017. Presentations by members of the research team:

- Ágnes Pethő (keynote): *Changing Strategies of In-Betweenness. Intermediality in Contemporary Eastern European Cinema*
- Hajnal Király: *The Text of Muteness in Contemporary Hungarian and Romanian Family (Melo)dramas*
- Judit Pieldner: *Black-and-White Memories of the Past, Intermediality and Female Identity in Contemporary Polish and Czech Cinema*
- Andrea Virginás: *Disruptive Mobilities: Female Characters and Female Filmmakers in an Eastern European Diegetic and/or Industry Framework*
- Melinda Blos-Jáni: *Re-Animating Oral Histories Through the Medium of Photography in Eastern European Documentaries*

Small Cinemas Conference. Diversity in Glocal Cinemas: Language, Culture, Identity. Universidad del Pais Vasco, Bilbao, Spain, 20-22 Sept. 2017. Paper presented at this conference:

- Andrea Virginás: *Domestic and/or international success in Eastern European small national cinemas.* At this conference she also moderated a panel about re-codification strategies in contemporary cinemas of Romania, Indonesia, Cyprus and the Ukraine.

The Moving Form of Film: Exploring Intermediality as a Historiographic Method, 6-8 Nov. 2017. University of Reading, UK. Paper presented at this conference:

- Ágnes Pethő (plenary lecture): *The Double Helix of Intermediality*

Clash of Realities. International Conference on Art, Technology and Theory of Digital Games. Conference organized by TH Cologne, Cologne Game Lab, 6-8 Nov. 2017, Cologne, Germany. Paper presented at this conference:

- Ágnes Bakk: *Narrative Environments Using Game Design Mechanism in Performance Installations & VR* (See the poster for this presentation [here](#).)

Burgess 100 Budapest, A Symposium Celebrating Burgess's Centenary. 10 Nov. 2017. Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, Hungary. Paper presented (in the panel 'Intermedial Burgess'):

- Hajnal Király: *Metaphorical Mapping: Figurations of Intermediality in A Clockwork Orange - the Novel and the Film*

International Conference on Interactive Digital Storytelling, 14-17 Nov., Funchal, Madeira, Portugal. Paper presented at this conference:

- Ágnes Bakk: *How Interactivity Is Changing in Immersive Performances - An Approach to Understanding the Use of Interactive Technologies in Performance Art.*

C.2. Publication:

- Andrea Virginás: [Gendered Transmediation of the Digital from S1m0ne to Ex Machina: 'Visual Pleasure' Reloaded?](#) *European Journal of English Studies*, Volume 21, 2017 - Issue 3: FEMINIST INTERVENTIONS IN INTERMEDIAL STUDIES, 288-303. Article published in a journal indexed in several academic databases, among them, the prestigious Arts & Humanities Citation Index and Social Sciences Citation Index.

C.3. Preparations for new publications, theoretical issues addressed at this stage:

- Ágnes Pethő worked on a meta-theoretical article that can offer a general overview of intermedial studies, a synthesis of the main directions in the theory of intermediality in film, and evaluated briefly the productivity of different approaches. At the same time, she edited papers for a volume dedicated to the analysis of intermediality in Eastern European

and Russian cinema. In this period, she also defended her habilitation thesis entitled, *Cinema and Intermediality: Key Issues, Stylistic Figurations* at the Babeş-Bolyai University, in Cluj.

- Hajnal Király worked on the article, *Intermedially Emotional. Musical Mood Cues, Disembodied Feelings in Contemporary Hungarian Melodramas*, which will be included in the volume, *Intermediality in Contemporary Eastern European and Russian Cinema*. Also, she began to write an article about the figural role of immobility in the works of Manoel de Oliveira.
- Andrea Virginás began preparations for submitting a book proposal from her writings on the relationship between analogue and digital in the context of film genres both in mainstream commercial movies as well as in cinemas of the periphery.
- Judit Pieldner worked on an essay entitled, *Black-and-White Sensations of Intermediality and Female Identity in Contemporary Polish and Czech Cinema*, in which she investigated the potential of the black and white image in the digital age, and its forms connected to depictions of female identity in contemporary movies from Central and Eastern Europe. At the same time, she wrote a book review in Hungarian, *Poétika és politika között. Gelencsér Gábor: Magyar film 1.0 [Between Poetics and Politics. Gábor Gelencsér: the Hungarian Film 1.0]*, which will be published in the online journal *Apertúra* from the University of Szeged.
- Melinda Blos-Jáni was interested in theoretical concepts that will allow her to analyse *found footage* documentaries. She examined archive images which are either interwoven with people's experiences, or they become "just images", a kind of medial "non-place" for a younger generation of viewers. She is writing about the new wave of documentaries which repurpose archive images and in which these are used to question representation but also become allegories of the real. The excess or lack of images, the collages or 'poor' images challenge the limits of cinematic and photographic representation.
- Ágnes Bakk tried to benefit from the comments received from specialists after her conference presentations. She has considered the productivity of the concept of *Verfremdungseffekt* used by Bertolt Brecht and its applicability for her research. She also researched the theories regarding the phenomenon of 'immersion' which would make it possible for her to clarify its role in the 360° Virtual Reality movies. She is preparing to finalize articles based on presentations and discussions at international conferences.
- Mihály Lakatos was fascinated by Ryoki Ikeda's abstract, immersive installations and began to study (for example, by reading Raymond Bellour's writings) in order to write an article about Ikeda and the phenomenology of this kind of audio-visual installation. The experience of John Akomfrah's works, seen in London, has also led him to begin preparations for another article on Akomfrah's intermedial art and about his innovations in this field. He is also preparing to conduct an interview with the artist.

D) Creating the infrastructure for the research: in this period, we acquired a series of electronic items (for example: laptops, hard drives, cameras) necessary for launching the project, and for the research activities planned for the next couple of years (for example, organizing and foto-video recording of the international conferences).

E) Creating a [website](#) of the project, keeping it up-to-date with information about the research activity (in 3 languages) for a greater the visibility of the project and for disseminating the preliminary results of the research.

According to the above, we can conclude that the research objectives (included in the research contract) proposed for the first research period have been accomplished, even exceeded, as evidenced in the table below:

Planned objectives and activities	Verifiable results of the activities	Have the planned results been delivered?
<p>Period 1: Foundations of the Research</p> <p>Act.1.1. Bringing the theoretical foundation of the research up to date and creation of the infrastructure. Exploring the concept of intermediality, intermediality and contemporary film, intermediality and the history of film, the poetics of intermediality.</p> <p>Act 1.1 realized through: Research activity. Writing the first oral presentations at scientific conferences, research and learning trips. Creating a website for the project uploaded with up-to-date information to ensure the visibility of the project. Organising a workshop for debating the main theoretical issues, accompanied by an exhibition open to the public based on the idea of intermediality at the host institution. Creating the infrastructure of the research by acquiring the articles necessary for launching the project, and for the research activities planned for the next couple of years.</p>	At least two oral presentations at international conferences.	YES. We participated in 6 international conferences and had altogether 10 oral presentations.
	Participating in at least one exchange of experiences with colleagues who work abroad on similar researches.	YES. There were research trips to Hungary and the UK during which we had meetings, exchanges of experience with colleagues working abroad.
	Website dedicated to the research project kept up-to-date with information about the project.	YES. There is a website , kept up-to-date with information about the project.
	Workshop accompanied by an exhibition based on the idea of intermediality at the host institution.	YES. We organized a workshop with the title: <i>Exploring intermediality: Theories, Research Avenues, Artistic Practices</i> accompanied by an intermedial exhibition of photo-video installation.
	Acquiring of infrastructure items necessary for the activities of the research project.	YES. The necessary items have been acquired.
	Report about the research activity.	YES. A report has been written.

Report drawn up by the project director,
Prof. dr. Ágnes Pethő

Cluj-Napoca, 10. 12. 2017.