



# Recording Romani Voices, Documenting Romani Lives

## Workshop

June 13–14, 2022

Central European University, Vienna

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Organized by

Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies, Yale University (FVAHT)

Romani Studies Program and Nationalism Studies Program, Central  
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Fortunoff-CEU-VWI Workshop

Abstracts & CVs

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## The Methods and Ethics of Knowing

Monday, 13 June 2022  
09:15–10:45

*Chair: Angéla Kóczé (CEU)*

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Angéla Kóczé is an Assistant Professor of Romani Studies, Chair of the Romani Studies Program, and Academic Director of the Roma Graduate Preparation Program at the Central European University, Budapest. Previously, she was a Visiting Assistant Professor in the Department of Sociology and Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Program at Wake Forest University, Winston-Salem (NC). She was the principal investigator of a research project (2013-16) on Institutionalization of Romani Politics After 1989 in Hungary, funded by the Hungarian Social Research Fund. Her research focuses on the intersections between gender, ethnicity, and class as well as the social and legal inequalities faced by the Roma in various European countries. She has published several peer-reviewed academic articles and book chapters and co-edited books in her research interest with various international presses.

Danijel Vojak

(Institute of Social Science Ivo Pilar, Zagreb)

## Neglected Memories of Marginals: Testimonies of Roma Suffering in Croatia During the Second World War

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History of Roma in Croatia was often marked by repressive-assimilation (anti-Gypsy) policies conducted against them by state and local authorities, culminating in the genocide committed by the Ustasha authorities during World War II in the Independent State of Croatia (ISC). Even today, 77 years after the ending of the Second World War, the extent of research of this genocide is still unresearched and marginalised in Croatian historiography. Researchers in this field are primarily confronted with the lack of sources from the Roma victims themselves, which makes it impossible to fully understand the extent of their suffering in the War. At the end of November 1943, the anti-fascist movement led by Josip Broz Tito established the State Commission for determining the crimes of the occupiers and their helpers. By the end of the war, its branches were established in other parts of occupied Yugoslavia, so it was founded for Croatia in 1944. This institution aimed, among other things, to collect data and evidence to determine the responsibility and existence of crimes committed by the occupiers and their helpers before the war or during the occupation. As part of this, the systematically were collected testimonies of Roma victims and non-Roma witnesses. After the war, newly established Yugoslav socialistic judicial institutions sought to prosecute war criminals. The question of the use of the testimonies themselves then arose before them, primarily in the context of their credibility. This presentation should answer the question of using testimonies about Roma genocide as one of the most important historical sources in their historiographical “reconstruction”. The analysis will also include the question of using testimony on Roma genocide in Croatia in the context of historical revisionisms in Croatian historiography and the answer to its criticism of its validity as historical source.

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Danijel Vojak is a senior research associate at the Institute of Social Science Ivo Pilar in Zagreb. In 2011 he had finished Ph.D. on the topic of the history of Roma in Croatia before the Second World War on Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences (University of Zagreb). He has published books and papers on history of Roma in First World War and Second World War and has been working on several international and domestic projects regarding the project history of Roma. He was co-author of the several exhibitions on Roma genocide in Croatia. He is currently involved in a project relating to the Roma genocide as part of the permanent exhibition in Block 17 at the Memorial and Museum Auschwitz-Birkenau (“Ex-Yugoslav” Pavilion).

Verena Meier

(Forschungsstelle Antiziganismus, Ruprecht-Karls-Universität Heidelberg)

## In the Midst Archives: Romani Voices of Nazi-Persecution – Some Epistemological Reflections

Within archival collections of governmental institutions such as the civil administration, police records, as well as diverse collections of private people in the archives, testimonials of persecuted Sinti and Roma can be found. In this talk Verena Meier will focus on analysing those traces of Romani voices in their socio-historical context as well as in relation to the archival provenience. In a meta-analysis it is argued that it is not sufficient to analyse those documents on a content level only. Looking at those documents within their transmission history and in connection with other documents from those files, other insights can be abstracted away from the content level.

Documents that have been found during the researches of Verena Meier's dissertation project on the Nazi-persecution of Sinti and Roma in Magdeburg and transitional justice under the Allies and the GDR form the base of this paper but the regional frame will be broadened for this meta-analysis. The following typology of documents will be dealt with:

- 1) Letters written in the name of or by Sinti and Roma to public authorities;
- 2) private letters written in the name of or by Sinti and Roma to family members or friends;
- 3) eye-witness interviews and testimonies in investigation procedures and judicial examination of witnesses in the judicial persecution of Nazi-perpetrators;
- 4) memoirs;
- 5) private photos and documents from property rooms (Effektenkammer) of concentration camps.

Analysing these types of documents in their context, their contribution to the historiography of the genocide of Sinti and Roma under the Nazi regime, as well as coming to terms with the past after the war will be highlighted.

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Verena Meier studied History, English Philology, European Art History, and Philosophy at the Ruprecht-Karls University Heidelberg and Hebrew University of Jerusalem. In her previous role at the Documentation and Cultural Center of German Sinti and Roma she assisted in creating exhibitions. She has also worked at the Working Group on Minority History and Civil Rights in Europe, at the Grafeneck memorial site, the Documentation Centre of North African Jewry during WWII in Jerusalem, the Foundation Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe, the Foundation Topography of Terror as well as the State Archives of Saxony-Anhalt. Since August 2018, she is a Ph.D. candidate at the Research Center on Antigypsyism (Forschungsstelle Antiziganismus) at the University of Heidelberg. Her research interests include minority history, the history of ideas, and research on historical antisemitism and antigypsyism.

Simina Dragoş  
(Faculty of Education, University of Cambridge)

## The Politics, Dilemmas and Paradoxes of Working with Roma Holocaust Testimonies from Publicly Available Sources

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In this talk, Simina Dragoş draws on her master's dissertation, which explored the necropolitics in representations of Romani people from the interwar period in Romania. Although her argument did not directly address the experiences of Romani people persecuted and killed by the Antonescu regime, she included a chapter spotlighting the testimonies of Roma survivors. A decision that came with multiple dilemmas and paradoxes. She will explore the three main dilemmas in this paper:

- 1) How can we interpret testimonies of extreme violence ethically?
- 2) How can we represent the trauma of survivors ethically?
- 3) How can we conceptualise and enact my historical responsibility as a white Romanian researcher?

Those dilemmas emerged partly due to the paradoxical nature of representing human experience but mostly because the testimonies Simina Dragoş had access to and that were publicly available: She worked with testimonies from *The Jeff and Toby Herr Oral History Archive* (USHMM) and a secondary data resource (Nastasă and Varga, 2001). The unrestricted availability of the testimonies created several dilemmas around consent, anonymisation, the use of images, the potential erasure of identity and the potential objectification of survivors. The content of the testimonies was often graphic, involving intimate details. This gave the dilemma of the politics of representation another dimension: Simina Dragoş wanted to avoid what Hannah Arendt termed 'politics of pity' or a 'spectacle of suffering', as she found this politically harmful and potentially dehumanising. Finally, entangled in the research and writing processes was her reflection on how she should position herself in relation to the testimonies and the research topic, given that she is a white Romanian researcher who has been benefiting from structural anti-Roma racism. In this presentation, she will expose her thinking around these dilemmas, concluding with a potential conception of historical and political responsibility of non-Roma researchers who interact with Romani survivors' testimonies.

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Simina Dragoş (she/her) is an ESRC funded Ph.D. candidate at the University of Cambridge. Her doctoral research explores aspects of historical culture in post-1989 Romania: historiography, school history materials, film and museum collections. Her M.Phil. dissertation (University of Cambridge) addressed the regimes of representation of Romani communities in 'academic' and governmental discourses in interwar Romania, and the genocidal – necropolitical – implications of these. Her work is transdisciplinary and her research interests range from sociology of racism and studies of nationalism to cultural and critical discourse studies. She enjoys teaching and collaborative work, and is a member of the Race, Empire and Education as well as the Politics of Representation collectives. She tweets @siminadragos26.

## The Politics and Aesthetics of Memory

Monday, 13 June 2022  
11:15–12:15

*Chair: Michael L. Miller (CEU)*

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Michael L. Miller is head of the Nationalism Studies programme at Central European University in Vienna, and co-founder of its Jewish Studies programme. He received his Ph.D. in History from Columbia University. He is the author of *Rabbis and Revolution: The Jews of Moravia in the Age of Emancipation*. He is currently working on a history of Hungarian Jewry, titled *Manovill: A Tale of Two Hungarys*.

Miguel Ángel Vargas Rubio  
(Programa de Doctorado en Historia y Estudios Humanísticos,  
Universidad Pablo de Olavide, Sevilla)

## Between Horrible Strangeness and Sad Joy: Towards a Spanish Roma Reading of the Porrajmos

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Explaining the Porrajmos in the Spain of 2022 is an exercise in political positionality that questions the narrow limits of the national understanding of European Romani politics of identity and belonging. And if we try to do it from the art practices linked to overcoming trauma, the task will have to explain the silence around this topic. For too long, the historical experience of the mass murder of Roma by the racial policies of the Third Reich only reached the Spanish public space in the late years of the dictatorship, through three main sources: first, the testimonies of the Roma victims themselves, brought in by international Roma organisations; second, through the different directives of the European Commission and the Council of Europe, which provided legal and juridical coverage; and, finally, from academia itself. However, I would like to explain this recognition through some specific Spanish cultural products released in the aftermath of the coup d'état that led to the Civil War and the subsequent dictatorship from 1936 to 1975. This analysis would build a way to understand Porrajmos from the specific Spanish Roma context. The presentation should create a cross-reading of the chronologies of the Roma in Spain and the rest of Europe since 1933, in relation to the legal frameworks, and later will track the Gypsy imaginary of the Romani People in the Spanish cinema and music scene of the period. The outcome of this approach opens the debate of arts narratives as agents of memory erasure that paved the way to the extended and current disconnection between different contemporary histories of Romani peoples from different backgrounds. And finally, it would also imply analysing the responsibilities of the Spanish state for the relations with the Nazi regime, even beyond 1945.

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As an independent researcher and artist, Miguel Ángel Vargas combines flamenco, theatre, and Romani history as experienced-based themes of his artistic and academic inquiry. He has worked internationally as an actor, director, set designer, production manager, and even opera technician among other roles in performing arts during his 20-year career. He has collaborated with several academic institutions such as Central Saint Martins College of Arts of London, as coordinator of the work experience for their Performing Arts MA; as member of Pendaripén, an interdisciplinary research group on History of the Romani People, the University of Seville; and has participated in several seminars on Critical Romani Studies of Central European University. Currently he is a Ph.D. candidate in History at the Pablo de Olavide University of Seville, Spain, and works for the Cultural Department of the City Council of Sevilla, in Factoría Cultural.

Aleksandra Szczepan  
(Fortunoff Fellow at the VWI)

## “Romani Genocide Has Taken Place on the Fringes”: Negotiating Memorial Agency in the Testimony of Krystyna Gil

The paper focuses on the video interview of Polish Romani survivor Krystyna Gil (1938–2021), recorded in 1995 for the Fortunoff Archive. The testimony is the first account of many that Gil gave to various institutions and at various occasions in the following years, when she became one of the most prominent witnesses of Romani genocide in Poland.

Gil’s testimony may be read as a lens through which several aspects of memory and remembrance of the Romani genocide are rendered visible. At its centre stands her survival: in July 1943, as a 5-year-old girl, Gil escaped the massacre of 93 Roma in the Polish village of Szczerzowa. But her conversation with interviewer Michał Sobelman soon leaves its initial topic and becomes an arena of complex negotiations. Sobelman, a Polish Jew and 1968 émigré, who had interviewed before mostly Jewish survivors, lacks the tools to explore Gil’s history in a profound way and often flounders in his own preconceptions and stereotypes. Yet, these discrepancies open Gil’s testimony to unexpected possibilities and invite us to rethink our expectations towards Holocaust testimony.

Firstly, Krystyna Gil bears witness to the “rural” genocide outside the camps, where local Roma and Jews were murdered in an everyday, mundane manner: just around the corner, often with complicity of Polish neighbors, and their graves are until now often uncommemorated. Secondly, it maps power relations and agency in the remembrance of Romani genocide, since Gil was to be a part of the delegation at the talks in Washington about the USHMM main exhibition, yet her visit was cancelled due to financial reasons. Thirdly, it testifies to the Romnja’s social mobility and emancipation in socialist Poland: in the 1950s, Gil moved to Kraków’s industrial zone, where she actively participated in building the new city and engaged in grassroots Romani organisation.

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Aleksandra Szczepan is a literary scholar, co-founder and member of the Research Centre for Memory Cultures at the Jagiellonian University in Kraków and a collaborator of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in oral history projects in Poland and Spain. She authored the book *Realista Robbe-Grillet* (2015) on 20<sup>th</sup> century redefinitions of realism. She has been recipient of scholarships from the USHMM, European Holocaust Research Infrastructure, the Polish National Science Centre and is currently a Fortunoff Fellow at the Vienna Wiesenthal Institute for Holocaust Studies. Her research interests include Holocaust memory, decoloniality in the perspective of East-Central Europe, oral history and space-based testimonial practices of witnesses to the Holocaust.

Ana Belén Martín Sevillano

(Department of World Literatures and Languages, University of Montreal)

## Ethics and Aesthetics in Trauma Narratives. Testimony, Autobiography, and the Pitfalls of Textual Representation

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Testimony (or testimonial literature) as a literary genre has been shaped during the last quarter of the 20th century in the context of the social struggles led by persecuted political and/or ethnic groups. As a narrative of the self, testimony shares a common ground with autobiography, a genre that shifted in the 20th century, when it was appropriated by marginalised groups who, by telling their lives, questioned the principles of domination and authority implicit in the autobiographical genre. Testimony and autobiography are crucial in the formation of resistance literatures (Harlow), and not surprisingly they are a keystone in Romani literature(s).

As literary/textual representations, testimony (or heterotestimony) and autobiography involve an aesthetic process of composition and edition. As narratives of the self, they also involve a tacit ethical agreement: that of representing the truth. This ethical dimension is at the core of the narrative reason, but the aesthetical one is the matter literary texts are made of. Telling the truth must be done in a compelling way so it can have an impact, which is the point of telling the truth in the first place. How to work out the alignment between aesthetics and ethics is the core issue of testimonial and autobiographical texts. The presentation would reflect about this tension in the context of transnational Romani literature by comparing works authored by Anina Ciuciu, Oksana Marafioti, Mateo Maximoff, and Otto Rosemberg, among others.

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Specialist in Hispanic and Comparative Literatures and Cultures, Ana Belén Martín Sevillano's main research focuses on issues related to diaspora, 'race'/ethnicity, and gender. In 2014, she received an endowment from the Canadian Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council for her project *Hispanic Romani Literature*. Since then, she has actively participated in the field of Romani Studies, presenting and publishing in specialised venues. Some of her recent publications are "The Romani Ethos: A Transnational Approach to Romani Literature" (*Critical Romani Studies*, 2020), and "The Emergence of the Hispano-Romani Literature: Memory and Cultural Identity" (*Preserving the Romani Memories*, 2020). In 2020 she was a guest editor for the *Critical Romani Studies* special issue on Romani Literature. Currently, she is working on the project *Narratives of the Self in Transnational Romani Literatures*.

## Collected Memories: Romani Testimony Archives

Monday, 13 June 2022  
13:45–15:15

*Chair: Márton Rövid (CEU)*

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Márton Rövid is a visiting professor at the Romani Studies Program at Central European University. His research interests include racialisation in post-communist contexts, theories of cosmopolitan democracy, global civil society, transnational social movements, and the Romani movement. He published several peer reviewed articles, book chapters, and policy papers. His most recent publication is *From Tackling Antigypsyism to Remediating Racial Injustice in Ethnic and Racial Studies* (2021). He has been teaching in various programmes targeting students with less opportunities for participating in higher education, such as the Roma Graduate Preparatory Program, the Jesuit Roma College, the Open Learning Initiative for persons with refugee or asylum seeker status, and the Socrates Project for persons who lacked educational opportunities in the past. In addition to research and teaching, he has been involved in policy research. As a research and advocacy officer of the Decade of Roma Inclusion Secretariat Foundation, he coordinated the monitoring of Roma policies in 16 countries. He is the managing editor of the journal *Critical Romani Studies*.

Adrian-Nicolae Furtună

(Research Institute for Quality of Life, Romanian Academy)

## Roma Survivors of the Deportation to Transnistria and the Memory of the “Russian” Words

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In the last fifteen years I collected a series of interviews with Roma survivors who were deported from Romania to Transnistria, under the regime of Ion Antonescu. The interviews were collected both in Romani and Romanian language. During my field work, one fact that attracted my attention in a special way was that an important part of the interviewed survivors were remembering some words in “Russian” (Ukrainian), as they were saying. The “Russian” words remembered by them were related in general with hunger, forced labour and violence. My paper aims to treat these words like mnemonics used by the survivors to conserve the memory of the deportation to Transnistria. From my perspective these mnemonics have a double function: first is to conserve at individual and family level the memory of the deportation, and second is to proof to the interviewer/listener (collector of a material that can constitute at a certain moment archive material) that they were indeed deported. In my paper I will also address the importance of these mnemonics related with the psychological trauma suffered by the survivors.

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Adrian-Nicolae Furtună graduated from the Faculty of Sociology and Social Work, the Department of Sociology of the University of Bucharest and the master's programme in Advanced Sociological Research from the same university. He is currently enrolled in a Ph.D. programme at the Quality of Life Research Institute of Romanian Academy on the topic of the social memory of Roma slavery in Romania. From 2010 to the present he has published a series of works related with social memory of Roma history. He is the Director of Cultural and Social Research Center Romane Rodinata and counsellor in the Documentation and Research Department at National Center of Roma Culture. He is also a member of the Eugenics and Racism History Center.

Joey Rauschenberger  
(Forschungsstelle Antiziganismus, Ruprecht-Karls-Universität Heidelberg)

## Niches of Agency: Unsolicited Romani Voices in the Rigid Bureaucratism of Compensation Procedures after 1945

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The programme of compensation for the victims of National Socialism soon developed into an administrative branch of its own in postwar Germany. The compensation bureaucracy, initially still locally rooted and closely linked to the persecutees' associations, is said by researchers to have soon become alienated from its own target group, as the distance between the Nazi persecutees as applicants and the responsible officials grew. At the end of this bureaucratisation process, compensation had become nothing more than an abstract administrative act in which there was no direct contact between the former victims and the authorities, often resulting in a „feeling of powerlessness“ (Heiko Scharffenberg).

This shift of the decision-making centre to the anonymous structures of highly differentiated administrations, whose personnel could easily entrench themselves behind paragraphs and rules of responsibility, had a particularly detrimental effect on the Sinti and Roma, who were largely marginalised in society and had no professional assistance or lobbying organisations of the kind that existed for other victim groups.

However, the individual case files of the “Landesämter für Wiedergutmachung” (State Offices for Restitution) contain numerous examples of members of the minority creating small niches of agency by making their voices heard through petitions, requests, demands and accusations, in order to influence the proceedings in their favor. These documents of self-assertion will be presented in the article and analyzed in their significance for the individual compensation proceedings. In addition, the role of the lawyers engaged by many Sinti and Roma will be considered, who apparently did not always act as representatives of the applicants' interests for their benefit, but presumably also pursued their own agenda, and in doing so even weakened the position of those entitled to compensation in some cases.

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Joey Rauschenberger studied History, German Philology and Global History at the Ruprecht-Karls-Universität Heidelberg. During his studies, he was a scholarship holder of the Friedrich Ebert Foundation and worked as a research assistant at the Chair of Contemporary History of the Department of History at Heidelberg University as well as in various research projects on National Socialism and its aftermath. Since 2020, he has been a research assistant at the Research Center on Antigypsyism (Forschungsstelle Antiziganismus) at Heidelberg University and a Ph.D. candidate in a joint project on coming to terms with the Nazi past in Baden-Württemberg. His dissertation examines the compensation of Sinti and Roma as victims of National Socialism in Baden-Württemberg and its predecessor states from 1945 to about 1975.

Milovan Pissarri

(Institute for Philosophy and Social Theory, University of Belgrade)

## Testimonies of Roma Survivors from Yugoslav and Serbian Archives

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During the Second World War, the Roma from Yugoslavia were victims of racial laws, persecutions, deportations, and mass killings. In the Independent State of Croatia, a Croatian puppet state established by the Nazis on the territories of Croatia, Bosnia Herzegovina, and Serbia (Srem region), most of the Roma were deported and killed in 1942 in the Jasenovac concentration camp. In German-occupied Serbia, many male Roma were shot in mass retaliations in autumn 1941, while women from Belgrade were deported to the Sajmiste concentration camp. In the territories under Hungarian, Bulgarian, Albanian, and Italian control different anti-Roma politics were implemented.

Immediately after the end of the war, the new Yugoslav socialist authorities established a special commission, the State Commission for Determining the Crimes of the Occupiers and their Collaborators (*Državna komisija za utvrđivanje zločina okupatora i njihovih pomagača*), whose aim was to collect documents, testimonies, reports about the crimes committed during the war.

The Commission was divided into sub-commissions at the republic, regional and local levels. During their work, the sub-commissions collected testimonies from civilians, including Roma, about the suffering during the war. In the case of Serbia and specifically of Belgrade, Nis, Leskovac, Krusevac, and other cities where male Roma were shot, women gave their testimonies about what had happened. Thanks to those testimonies we are now able to reconstruct what happened, but also to analyse the social structure of the Roma population before the war and the attitude of Yugoslav authorities towards them after 1945.

The talk will focus on those testimonies, what they look like, where they are preserved, and why they are important from today's point of view.

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Milovan Pissarri is an internationally recognized expert on the Holocaust and the Roma genocide. He is research fellow and coordinator of the ShoahLab at the Institute for Philosophy and Social Theory, University of Belgrade, and member of the Steering Committee of the Memorial *Staro Sajmiste*. In 2018, he founded the Centre for Public History, the remit of which extends to the history of the 20th century in the Balkans and particularly to the Holocaust. As CPH director he is the author and the coordinator of different international projects, among them *Mapping the Holocaust: Preservation of the Topovske Supe Camp*. He has recently taken part in the project *Combating Identity-Based Discrimination Against Roma in Southeastern Europe: A Key Element for Developing Anti-Discrimination Policies and Practices* and is currently participating in the project *Encyclopedia of the Genocide of the Sinti and Roma in Europe*.

## Art, Agency, And Testimony in the Work of Ceija Stojka

Monda, 13 June 2022  
15:45–19:00

*Chair: Maria Bogdan (CEU)*

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Maria Bogdan is a media theorist and a social scientist. Her main research interest is related to media representation and racism. She received her Ph.D. from the Film, Media and Culture Theory Doctoral Program of the Eötvös Loránd University in Budapest. She wrote her Ph.D. thesis about the media representation of the Roma in Hungary, titled: ‘The Visible Stranger’. She teaches in the Romani Studies Program at Central European University. Prior to that, she was the first Romani Rose Postdoctoral Researcher fellow at the Antigypsyism Research Center of Heidelberg University (2019-2020). Maria Bogdan is a Fulbright Alumna and has done part of her Ph.D. research at Columbia University. Furthermore, she is one of the founding editors of the *Critical Romani Studies* journal. She publishes as a journalist too: Her latest essay series on the main concepts of the transnational Romani movement was published this year in multiple languages in *Deutsche Welle*.

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After several exhibitions in Europe, most of them held recently, Ceija Stojka's oeuvre has now reached the large audience and critical reception it deserves. Nonetheless, its situation stays in an in-between, and therefore embeds a paradox: on the one hand, it has been displayed by artistic institutions; on the other hand, it has been regarded mainly as an historic testimony, and therefore partially marginalized as an artwork. The subjacent dilemma here is that the aesthetical side of her artworks presumably affects in a negative way its propensity to provide a "pure" testimony. On the contrary, its testimonial intention would allegedly prevent Ceija Stojka's oeuvre to be considered as a "pure" work of art.

This contribution will briefly evoke the reasons legitimizing these two aspects of the question, since they are grounded, in one case, on a juridical model, and, in the other, on a modernist pattern; which are both inefficient to catch the historical contents in Ceija Stojka's works. Indeed, the main goal of this contribution is to demonstrate that, apart from her written archive on her notebooks, her visual testimonies do provide historical facts that can be otherwise registered in archives and testimonies. This confrontation may bring fruitful insights to document the genocide in its collective and intimate aspects.

Nonetheless, the second output such a confrontation may produce is to manifest the limits of Ceija Stojka's visual testimony. Some aesthetical decisions she made, some artistic shapes she used, actually exceed the witnesses' jurisdiction. However, my intent is to demonstrate that in the artistic strata something can be detected of her relationship to the genocide, to its temporality and later impact. In other words, the art of Ceija Stojka also opens new perspectives to understand how memory and testimony can be entangled in the same image.

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Paul Bernard-Nouraud, Ph.D. is an art historian and art critic, trained and based in Paris (EHESS), where he is a part-time lecturer (Paris I and Paris 8 Universities). He has been a post-doctoral fellow in residence at the Casa de Velazquez in Madrid (Madrid Institute of Advanced Studies). After dedicating part of his research to the figure of the 'muselmann' in the Nazi concentration camps, his doctoral research studied the impact of Auschwitz in contemporary visual arts. His current research projects are focused on the role of the archives in contemporary art, and the impact of current migrations on collective imaginations. Among his publications are: *Figurer l'autre. Essai sur la figure du "musulman" dans les camps de concentration nazis* (Paris, Kimé, 2013); *Sur les œuvres silencieuses. Contribution à l'étude de l'art d'après Auschwitz* (Paris, Pétra, 2017).

Lorely French (*Pacific University Oregon*)

Carina Kurta (*Ceija Stojka International Fund*)

## “It Is Difficult to Write About Some Things, but It Has to Be”: Ceija Stojka’s Notebooks

Renowned as one of the most influential Romani artists, writers, and spokespeople, Ceija Stojka (1933-2013) has garnered acclaim through exhibitions of her artworks internationally. As a member of a traveling Lovara family in the interwar period in Austria and a child survivor of the Auschwitz, Ravensbrück, and Bergen-Belsen camps, Stojka began to write and then paint in the 1980s. When she died, she left behind thousands of artworks and manuscripts documenting her rich life.

Among this treasure trove are thirty-three notebooks containing fascinating artistic, cultural and historical insights that are as richly relevant today as they were when Stojka wrote them. Meticulously and almost daily, she described her world of thoughts. Her entries depict memories of the concentration camps from the point of view of an adult Romni assuming the child’s perspective. Entries in the later notebooks relate more to current events. While she dealt with personal situations emotionally, she also wrote socially critical commentary, with political reflections often playing an essential role in her reflections on the rise of extreme right-wing parties from 1990 onwards. Poems, songs, and drawings add visual contexts, heightening aesthetic appeal. This simultaneous juxtaposition and symbiosis of the written and the visual make Stojka’s notebooks exciting, unusual, as well as multidimensional artwork and historical documentation.

Our presentation will focus on sample pages from the notebooks representing periods in Stojka’s development as a writer, artist, and survivor of the Romani genocide as well coinciding significant historical and social events coinciding. The unedited notebooks raise questions about collecting, archiving, transcribing, translating, and making accessible Romani voices that document their genocide and survivors’ experiences. Stojka’s work demonstrates that categories of testimony and artwork are not mutually exclusive. Indeed, text and image complement each other so closely, questioning whether a hierarchical categorisation of one over the other is even possible.

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Carina Kurta is Director of the Ceija Stojka International Fund, whose mission is to contribute to the knowledge and international influence of the work of Ceija Stojka. Born in Austria, Carina Kurta currently lives in Marseille. Carina Kurta has been accompanying the Stojka’s family since 2015 in the events surrounding Ceija Stojka’s art. As a link between researchers, curators, museums, etc., she represents the fund and the connection to the family. In 2018/19, she carried out a preservation and archive project on Ceija Stojka’s personal notebooks supported by the public Zukunftsfond Österreich and the private Antoine de Galbert Foundation.

Lorely French is a Distinguished Professor of German at Pacific University in Oregon. She first met Ceija Stojka in Vienna in 2003. During their ten-year friendship, Lorely French co-curated with Michaela Grobbel at Sonoma State University, California in 2009 the first traveling monograph exhibit of Ceija Stojka’s artworks in the U.S. She has authored several publications on Ceija Stojka and contributed to the digital archive RomArchive. Her annotated English translation of Ceija Stojka’s memoirs and interview with Karin Berger is scheduled to appear with Camden House in 2022. She is a member of the board of the Ceija Stojka International Fund.

Stefan Benedik  
(House of Austrian History)

## Unpredicted Agents of Memory: Self-Representation and Mainstreaming of Romani Suffering in Austrian ‘National Memory’

Recent years have seen an increasing integration of the memory of Romani persecution in hegemonic ‘national’ or even ‘European’ cultural memory. The underlying processes are shaped by many paradoxes. First, there is an evident disconnection between memory politics and other political action: On the one hand, European states are increasingly acknowledging Romani people as a Nazi victim group while, on the other hand, politics and public debate continue to discriminate against contemporary Romani communities. Second, Romani groups or individuals are seldomly given voice and agency in memory related projects. Therefore, academic research is mostly overlooked when Romani organisations initiated research into their history of persecution as part of identity politics but also at a time when the memory of National Socialism has become established as the core of ‘European’ cultural memory. This contribution examines these contexts on the Austrian example. It asks how Romani community oral historians have come to gain unexpected influence in determining narratives about Nazi persecution and how these ended up being woven into Austrian ‘national memory’. Thereby I will trace the effects of Romani organisations’ own efforts of telling their history on both the community and hegemonic national narratives but will also highlight how that surprisingly complicates premises of memory (such as the victim/perpetrator division or ideas of a historically homogeneous community). I argue that the mainstreaming of Romani suffering is due to a successful integration of Romani victims into the framework of a new understanding of ‘racially’ diverse victimhood in Austria. Furthermore, I trace the role of individual protagonists within these processes of acknowledgment and highlight the relevance of gendered positions in developing a new racialised history of persecution.

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Stefan Benedik has been curating material and digital exhibitions at the House of Austrian History (the Austrian national museum for contemporary history) and is the head of the museum’s Public History section. He studied history and cultural anthropology in Graz and Prague, and has been involved in university research and teaching in Graz, Toronto and Budapest. He is a scholarship holder from the Austrian Academy of Sciences and the Steiermark Savings Bank. In 2016, he headed the organisation team for Austrian Conference on Contemporary History. His research is focused on gender and racism history as well as on visual studies. Currently on display are the following exhibitions, which he (co-)curated: *Toppling Gender Norms*, *Time for New Monuments*, *Disposing of Hitler*, *Out of the Cellar*, *Into the Museum*, and the constantly re-arranged main exhibition in the House of Austrian History.

## Remembering Adversity and Survival – Case Studies From Romania

Tuesday, 14 June 2022  
09:00–10:00

*Chair: Stephen Naron (Fortunoff Archive/VWI)*

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Stephen Naron has worked as an archivist/librarian since 2003, when he received his MSIS from the University of Texas, Austin. Stephen pursued a Magister in Jewish studies/history at the Freie Universität Berlin and the Zentrum für Antisemitismusforschung, TU. Stephen has worked with the Fortunoff Archive for more than 12 years. Now, as director of the Fortunoff Archive, Stephen works within the wider research community to share access to our collection through the access site programme, as well as writing and presenting on testimony for conferences, symposiums and class sessions inside and outside Yale. Stephen Naron is also responsible for spearheading initiatives such as preservation and digital access to the collection; cooperative projects with other testimony collections; oversight of fellowship and research programmes; and the production of the podcasts, ethnomusicological recordings, and the Archive's documentary film series.

Petre Matei

(“Elie Wiesel” National Institute for the Study of the Holocaust in Romania)

## Roma Deportations and Roma Voices in Romania

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Petre Matei’s presentation aims to highlight the way in which Roma deportations can be documented by integrating the Roma voices (compensation claims and oral history interviews) in the research concerning the Holocaust in Romania. There are basically four different periods each with their own characteristics:

- 1) Until 1989, Roma were not acknowledged as an ethnic minority in Romania. In the 1970s, the Romanian secret police made efforts to obtain West-German compensation on behalf of the Roma victims. Most of those claims were simply short declarations given by survivors who were encouraged to claim that Germany rather than Romania was responsible for the deportations. Except for those affidavits, there were no oral history interviews with Roma.
- 2) The early 1990s when Roma activists showed little interest in the Holocaust (no attempts to identify and interview the Roma survivors). The state they usually held accountable for allegedly imposing their deportation was Germany, not Romania (reflecting older efforts of the Roma activists in the 1970 to the 1980s).
- 3) Towards the end of the 1990s, the first compensation programmes for Roma survivors put pressure on activists to serve as intermediaries for these compensations. The few materials published in this period were usually short (newspaper interviews, letters written by survivors, resumes of their applications for compensation). On the whole, few interviews were conducted with the Romanian Roma survivors.
- 4) During the process of EU enlargement, the Holocaust turned into an essential component of the Roma identity discourse. Roma activists started interviewing the Roma survivors, launching documentaries and books on deportations.

Petre Matei’s perspective is based on his experience as a historian dealing with the development of the historical narratives regarding the Roma deportations as well as a researcher grounding his own research on the interviews with the Roma survivors.

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Petre Matei is a researcher at the Elie Wiesel National Institute for the Study of the Holocaust in Romania. He holds a Ph.D. in History from the University of Bucharest with a thesis on the history of Roma in Romania. He is the author of articles on the history of the Roma, member in several research projects, project coordinator of *The Roma Survivors of Deportations to Transnistria* project and with Vintilă Mihăilescu he co-edited *Roma. Der Diskurswandel* (Vienna 2020). His research interests focus on Roma history, the Holocaust, compensation, and memory. Between January and July 2021, he was a research fellow at the Vienna Wiesenthal Institute for Holocaust Studies with the project *Roma Deportations to Transnistria During the Second World War. Between Central Decision-Making and Local Initiatives*.

Luiza Medeleanu  
(CESI, University of Bucharest)

## The Social and Cultural Consequences of the Famine on the Roma Deported to Transnistria during the Second World War (1942–1944)

The present study aims to investigate the „phenomenon of famine“ suffered by Roma deported to Transnistria during 1942 and 1944 and its cultural and social consequences for Roma. In order to analyse this phenomenon and its cultural and social consequences for Roma, Luiza Medeleanu will use as a point of reference the theory of Robert Dirks from his work, *Social Responses during Severe Food Shortage and Famine*. Studying several populations from different cultures, which went through periods of severe famine, Dirks argues that there is a cross-cultural pattern in terms of people’s social transformations during periods of famine. People go through a series of social transformations in which distinctive patterns of social interaction appear, as starvation progresses from stage to stage. The three stages of this pattern are: alarm, resistance, and exhaustion.

The main question of this presentation will be to what extent the famine endured by the Roma deported to Transnistria matches within the cross cultural pattern proposed by Dirks. To answer this question, Luiza Medeleanu will conduct a content analysis of survivors’ testimonies, discussing the survival strategies they mention in interviews, the relationships between people during the famine period, and how they have developed over time. She will also discuss self-survival tactics of Roma people during those two years. Furthermore, she will refer to archival documents that capture this phenomenon of starvation that the Roma deported to Transnistria faced.

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Luiza Medeleanu is a Ph.D. student in the field of Cultural Studies at the Multidisciplinary Doctoral School „Space, Image, Text, Territory“, Center of Excellence in Image Study (CESI), Faculty of Letters, University of Bucharest, with her doctoral thesis *Image of Roma in Cinematography and Cultural Media Productions. Ethics of Fictionality and Cultural Identity*, coordinated by professor Caius Dobrescu. She graduated from the Faculty of Philosophy and the Faculty of Foreign Languages and Literatures, the Romani-English department, a Master in Philosophy from the University of Bucharest and one in Anthropology from SNSPA. For over 10 years she has been working in the Roma non-governmental field, coordinating educational activities with Roma themes and intercultural character. At the same time, she develops intercultural training methodologies for teachers, for children and parents.

## Framing and Mapping: International Projects on Roma Genocide

Tuesday, 14 June 2022  
10:00–11:00

*Chair: Éva Kovács (VWI)*

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Éva Kovács is the Deputy Director of the Vienna Wiesenthal Institute for Holocaust Studies (Academic Affairs).

Kovács studied sociology and economics at the Corvinus University in Budapest, Ph.D. in 1994, habilitation in 2009. She is also a Research Professor at the Institute of Sociology at the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. Her research fields are the history of the Holocaust in Eastern Europe, research on memory and remembrance, and Jewish identity in Hungary and Slovakia. She has authored five monographs, edited ten volumes, published numerous articles in peer-reviewed journals, co-curated exhibitions in Budapest, Berlin, Bratislava, Krems, Prague, Vienna, and Warsaw. She is the founder the audio-visual archive “Voices of the Twentieth Century” in Budapest.

Karola Fings & Sarah Kleinmann  
(Forschungsstelle Antiziganismus, Ruprecht-Karls-Universität Heidelberg)

## Documenting the Crimes, Acknowledging the Victims. Insights into the Project 'Encyclopaedia of the Nazi Genocide of the Sinti and Roma in Europe'

From 1933 to 1945, hundreds of thousands categorised as 'gypsies' were subjected to racist stigmatisation, persecution and extermination in National Socialist Germany and in the occupied or allied countries.

To this day, serious knowledge deficits regarding the crimes can be observed in many European countries: The awareness that Sinti and Roma were victims of a genocide is hardly developed in (majority) society. Scientifically, too, the reappraisal was neglected for a long time.

The project 'Encyclopaedia of the Nazi Genocide of the Sinti and Roma in Europe', which began its work in July 2020, addresses these grievances. It is based at the Research Centre on Antigypsyism at Heidelberg University and is funded by the Federal Foreign Office of the Federal Republic of Germany.

The encyclopaedia will provide a structured and scientifically substantiated overview of the existing knowledge on the Nazi genocide of the Sinti and Roma in Europe – both for the general public and for future research. In particular, the encyclopaedia is intended as a written memorial to the victims and survivors of the Nazi genocide. They will be inscribed in the known National Socialist crime contexts as those affected and in history as those who acted. Life paths, self-assertion and resistance are shown.

The concept, the working methods as well as the current state of the project Encyclopaedia and the related ethical and epistemological considerations will be presented at the workshop

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Karola Fings is a historian and heads the project *Encyclopaedia of the Nazi Genocide of the Sinti and Roma in Europe* at the Research Centre on Antigypsyism at the Department of History at Heidelberg University. She curated the section *Voices of the Victims* in RomArchive and was a member of the Independent Commission on Antigypsyism of the German Federal Government from 2019 to 2021. From 2001 to 2020, she was a research assistant and deputy director of the City of Cologne's Documentation Centre on National Socialism. Her work focuses on the National Socialist genocide of Sinti and Roma in Europe, Antigypsyism, and the aftermath of Nazi crimes. She has been responsible for numerous research, exhibition and publication projects and has frequently appeared as an author.

Sarah Kleinmann is a historian and cultural anthropologist. She is research assistant for the project *Encyclopaedia of the Nazi Genocide of the Sinti and Roma in Europe* at the Research Centre on Antigypsyism at the Department of History at Heidelberg University. Previously, she was employed at the German Institute for Human Rights and worked for the Independent Commission on Antigypsyism from 2019 to 2021. From 2015 to 2019, she was a research assistant at the Institute of Saxon History and Cultural Anthropology, Dresden. Her work focuses on the National Socialist genocide of Sinti and Roma in Europe, Antigypsyism, Antisemitism, and the aftermath of Nazi crimes.

## Mapping the Genocide of the Roma in Hungary

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Despite efforts by scholars and educators in the last two decades, the genocide of the Roma remains underrepresented in commemoration, scholarship, and education of the World War II era in Central Europe. Furthermore, countries like Hungary and Slovakia are characterized by strong feelings against their Roma populations. Romaphobia is institutionalised, reinforcing negative national attitudes and obscuring the genocide of the Roma from practices of Holocaust remembrance.

The project *Mapping the Genocide of the Roma in Hungary* is developing an online portal dedicated to safeguarding the record of the genocide of the Roma. The centrepiece is an interactive map, visualising collection and labour camps, sites of killings and atrocities, burial sites, memorials, and routes of forced marches. This project will digitise and utilise unexplored archival sources on the topic as well as offer a complete digital catalogue of a selection of records from state archives of Hungary and Slovakia with multilingual descriptions to facilitate further research. The portal incorporates images, archival footage, thematic maps, glossaries of key persons, places, and subjects, a timeline providing a comprehensive account of the Hungarian chapter of the genocide of the Roma, including its origins and aftermath, along with its contemporary spatial, cultural, and political memory. Complimentary educational materials will be created and integrated, making the portal accessible for educators.

The National Archives of Hungary will disseminate to its nationwide network of archives, museums, other cultural institutions, local authorities, and NGOS. The portal will also be disseminated internationally via the archives' network, and through dissemination events targeting decision-makers in each country. Local agents can continue dissemination via public lectures, cultural programmes, and educational and commemorative programmes such as the Roma Holocaust Memorial Day. Ultimately, this project will integrate Roma perspectives in national narratives and educational practices, filling the gap in research, education, and memorialisation.

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László Csősz, Ph.D., is a historian and senior archivist at the National Archives of Hungary and a Claims Conference University Partnership in Holocaust Studies Lecturer at the ELTE University in Budapest. He received a Ph.D. in History from the University of Szeged in 2011. Csősz has been a contributor to the European Holocaust Research Infrastructure (EHRI) project since 2010, and a national expert delegate at the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) since 2011. His main fields of research interest include comparative genocide, Jewish social history, and the Holocaust in Hungary. He is the author or co-author of seven books, including *The Holocaust in Hungary. Evolution of a Genocide* (Washington, DC: USHMM, 2013, with Gábor Kádár and Zoltán Vági), and several articles, as well as contributions to EHRI's Document Blog.

**Roundtable Discussion:  
Archival Activism, Testimonies, and the development of Romani Scholarship**

Tuesday, 14 June 2022  
11:30–12:30

*Moderated by: Ari Joskowitz (VWI/Vanderbilt University)*

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Ari Joskowitz is Associate Professor of Jewish Studies and History, Director of the Max Kade Center for European and German Studies at Vanderbilt University, and a Senior Fellow at the VWI. His publications include *The Modernity of Others: Jewish Anti-Catholicism in Germany and France* (Stanford University Press, 2014), *Romani Refugees and the Postwar Order* (*Journal of Contemporary History*, 2016), *Separate Suffering, Shared Archives: Jewish and Romani Histories of Nazi Persecution* (*History & Memory*, 2016), and *The Age of the Witness and the Age of Surveillance: Romani Holocaust Testimony and the Perils of Digital Scholarship* (*American Historical Review*, 2020). His book *Rain of Ash: Jews, Roma, and the Holocaust* is forthcoming with Princeton University Press in spring 2023.

## Ágnes Daróczi

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Ágnes Daróczi is a teacher, minority researcher, and journalist. She is actively involved in promoting Roma rights in Hungary, and at European level. She is the organiser of the very first Roma Fine Arts Exhibition, the founder of the first Roma television programme, and the initiator of the Roma Folklore movement in Hungary. As a Roma activist, she relentlessly pursues the goal of “emancipating” her people, which she promotes through events on the Human Rights Day and the Holocaust Remembrance Day. She co-authored numerous articles, films, and books with her husband, János Bársony. Their books on Roma Holocaust: *Pharrajimos – Romák Sorsa a Holocaust Idején* (2005); *The Fate of Roma During the Holocaust* (2008). *Kali Trash-Pharrajimos-Samudaripen – The Fate of Roma During the Holocaust in Hungary II* (2015). She is the head of the Romano Instituto Budapest.

## Gerhard Baumgartner

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Gerhard Baumgartner is an Austrian journalist and historian. He studied History, English and Ural Studies at the University of Vienna from 1977 to 1984, was project manager at the Austrian Historical Commission from 2000 to 2003. He also managed research projects on the history of the Roma and Sinti as well as on coming to terms with the Nazi past. Since May 2014, he has been the scientific director of the Documentation Archive of the Austrian Resistance (DÖW). His main research interests include: resistance and persecution between 1938 and 1945, the history of persecution of the Roma and Sinti, the Republic of Austria's handling of the Nazi past and the history of the national minorities in Burgenland.

## Mirjam Karoly

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Mirjam Karoly is a political scientist and human rights professional. She has extensive international experience in promoting human rights for Roma in Europe, having worked with the OSCE for over ten years. As a minority rights adviser she served the OSCE field operation in Kosovo and led the OSCE Contact Point for Roma and Sinti Issues (CPRSI) in Warsaw from 2012 to 2017. As Chief of the CPRSI she promoted, among other projects, the recognition of Roma persecution during the Holocaust in collaboration with the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance. Karoly is member of the advisory council for Roma in Austria, member of the Austrian delegation to IHRA, and honorary member of the Vienna based NGO Romano Centro. Currently, she is the office manager at the Vienna Wiesenthal Institute for Holocaust Studies (VWI).

## Andrea Pócsik

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Andrea Pócsik (PhD) is a freelancing film historian and cultural researcher. Her most important projects are based on critical film education. Besides teaching, she is often involved in contemporary artistic and cultural projects as a curator, organiser, and expert. She published a book in Hungarian on the representation of the Roma in 2017: *Passings. An (An)archaeology of Roma Image Makings* (Gondolat Kiadó, 2017). She was involved in the creation of RomArchive. Her current research is based on memory and archival studies, in 2020 about video artist Péter Forgács works at Open Society Archive Budapest, as well as last year as a Goethe-Institut fellow at the documenta Archive, Kassel.