



DocNomads-12 2023-2025/2nd semester (Budapest)

HC / HUNGARIAN CINEMA

Representation of the Dictatorship
Narrative and Visual Strategies in Hungarian Cinema 1950-2010

Lecturer

Lóránt Stóhr

e-mail: stohr.lorant@szfe.hu

Biography

Lóránt Stóhr (dr. habil) graduated in Film Studies (2001) and obtained his DLA degree in Film and Video Art (2007) and PhD in Art Theory (2017) at the University of Theatre and Film Arts Budapest. Since 2010, he has been an associate professor at the University of Theatre and Film Arts, Budapest.

Since 1999, he has been working as a film critic at the Hungarian weekly paper, *Élet és Irodalom*. He is a member of the Association of Hungarian Film Critics. From 2004 to 2006 he was the member of the editorial board at *Filmkultúra*, the online film magazine of Hungarian Film Archive.

He has worked in different other areas of Hungarian film culture. He was a member of the Art Film Distribution Committee at National Film Office, from 2004 to 2011, and the Committee of Documentary at Motion Picture Public Foundation of Hungary from 2005 to 2009.

He published several essays on melodrama, documentary and Hungarian cinema, and a book on later modern film melodrama in 2013 (*Bitter Tears. Film Melodrama in Late Modernism. Fassbinder, von Trier, Wong Kar-wai, Mundruczó. Szeged: Pompeji*). His current research project examines Hungarian cinema and documentary. His book on contemporary Hungarian

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documentary was published in 2019 (Subjectivity, presence, narrativity. Change of paradigm in contemporary Hungarian documentary, Budapest, Gondolat).

Course description

This course is intended to be a short introduction into the history of the Hungarian cinema from 1945 until the present. The course will focus on the representation of the dictatorship, both as a contemporary and as a past phenomenon. In each class different narrative and visual strategies of Hungarian cinema will be demonstrated by analysing a masterpiece of Hungarian cinema from different era. The introductions into Hungarian cinema before the discussion will give a cultural and historical context for the better understanding of the film.

Course schedule

Location: DocNomads classroom (2.01)

1. February 15, Thursday

14.00-17.00

Film: Zoltán Fábri: *Merry-Go-Round* (Körhinta, 1955).

<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0048275/>

Discussion: Communist takeover in Hungary and the beginning of the state-controlled cinema. Film policy of the communist dictatorship. First artistic achievements in 1950s and the road to the revolution in 1956.

Recommended readings:

Peter Kenez: "Post Second World War Hungarian cinema as a reflection of the communist struggle for power." *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television*, xxiii(1), 2003, pp. 11–25.

2. February 20, Thursday

10.00-13.00

Film: Miklós Jancsó: *Round-Up* (Szegénylegények, 1966)

<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0059776/>

Discussion: Cultural policy of the early Kádár era. Modernism in the Hungarian cinema in the 1960. Miklós Jancsó's historical and political parables.

Recommended readings:

Czigany Lorant. "Jancsó Country." *Film Quarterly (ARCHIVE)*, vol. 26, no. 1, 1972, pp. 44-50.

3. February 29, Thursday

Film: Károly Makk: *Love (Szerelem, 1970)*

<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0067814/>

Discussion: Modernist tendencies in the Hungarian cinema in the early 70s. Representation of private life and intimacy in the dictatorship.

Recommended readings:

Miklós Kiss: "Rationalizing the Irrational: Artistic Realism as Cognitive Reality in Károly Makk's 'Szerelem/Love.'", *Scope: An Online Journal of Film and Television Studies*, vol. 24, no. October, 2012.

4. March 7, Thursday

10.00-13.00

Film: Péter Gothár: *Time Stands Still (Megáll az idő, 1982)*

<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0082729/>

Discussion: Pastiche and grotesque in the historical cinema. The hopelessness and the lust for freedom in the „soft” dictatorship.

Recommended readings:

Marek Haltof and Donald Smith: "An aborted revolution, a stillborn generation: Generational Politics and Gender Relations in Péter Gothár's *Time Stands Still*." *Canadian Journal of Film Studies (ARCHIVE)*, vol. 6, no. 2, 1997, pp. 51-64.

Roumiana Deltcheva: "Western Mediations in Reevaluating the Communist Past: A Comparative Analysis of Gothár's *Time Stands Still* and Andonov's *Yesterday*." *CLCWeb: Comparative Literature and Culture*, vol. 1, no. 4, Purdue University Press, 1999.

5. March 14, Thursday

10.00-13.00

Film: Béla Tarr: *Damnation* (Kárhozat, 1987)

<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0095475/>

Discussion: Decline and revival of Hungarian cinema in the 80s. Film policy after the political transformation in 1989. Béla Tarr's films on the late socialist and post-socialist Eastern Europe.

Recommended readings:

Lilla Tóke: "The Outsider Within: Béla Tarr and Hungarian National Cinema." *Hungarian Cultural Studies* 9 (2016): 90–100.

Philip Roberts: "Control and Cinema: Intolerable Poverty and the Films of Bla Tarr." *Deleuze Studies*, vol. 11, no. 1, Edinburgh University Press, Feb. 2017, pp. 68–94.

Literature

John Cunningham: *Hungarian Cinema. From Coffee House to Multiplex*. Wallflower Press, 2004.

M. János Rainer - Gábor Kresalek: *Hungarian Society on Film. (Social image, value and ideology) 1948-1956*

Graham Petrie: *History Must Answer to Man. The Contemporary Hungarian Cinema*. Budapest: Corvina, 1978.

András Bálint Kovács: *The Cinema of Béla Tarr: The Circle Closes*. Wallflower Press, 2013.

András Bálint Kovács: *Screening modernism: European art cinema, 1950-1980*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2007.

Beata Hock: Sites of Undoing Gender Hierarchies: Women and/in Hungarian Cinema (Industry). *Medij. istraž.* 16 (1) 2010. 9-30.

Teréz Vincze: Remembering bodies: picturing the body in Hungarian cinema after the fall of communism. *Studies in Eastern European Cinema*. Vol 7 (2) 2016. 153-167

Requirement

Regular attendance and active participation in class. Each student should compose as finals an essay on a Hungarian film from the list attached below. The length of the essay must be about 2000 words (double space). The aspects of the analysis of the film:

- interpretation of the story with regards to the representation of the experience of living in a hard or soft dictatorship or in a post-socialist society
- analysis of the narrative strategies and narrative tone (lyrical, grotesque, sublime etc.) of the film

- short analysis of the main stylistic devices (photography, sound design, music, acting style, cutting)
- how do the main narrative strategies and stylistic devices underpin the interpretation of the story and emphasise the representation of the character's social and psychological experience?

Hungarian Cinema, Culture and Identity Essay delivery deadline: 5th of May

You must choose one film from this list for the aim of analysis:

Miklós Jancsó: *The Red and the White* (1967)
 Károly Makk: *Another Way* (1982)
 Márta Mészáros: *Diary for my Children* (1982)
 Lívia Gyarmathy: ***Do You Know Sunday-Monday?* (1969)**
 Péter Gothár: *A Priceless Day* (1979)
 István Szabó: *Mephisto* (1981)
 Béla Tarr: *Family Nest* (1977)
 Ferenc Török: *Moscow Square* (2000)
 Szabolcs Hajdu: *White Palms* (2004)
 Ágnes Kocsis: *Fresh Air* (2004)

You can find these films in the library of SZFE (Budapest, Vas u. 2d, 1088)

On-line catalogue: <https://opac3.szinmuveszeti.monguz.hu/en/search>

Evaluation criteria

The quality of the essay 80%

Presence and participation of the class 20%

Aspects of evaluation (essay)

- understanding of the historical and social context of the story: 15%
- coherent interpretation of the film: 25%
- precise analysis of the filmic devices: 25%
- citations of books and studies: 15%
- structure, argumentation: 10%
- formal criteria: 5%
- correct language: 5%

Sending the essay over the deadline:

- Less than 2 days: - 1 Mark
- 2-4 days: - 2 Marks
- 5-7 days: - 3 Marks
- 8-14 days: - 4 Marks
- More than 15 days: Not acceptable