

ABSTRACTS

András Bán

■ ***Concrete Ring***

Keywords: *Kádár era, photo reportage*
The vast number of freely accessible photographs in digitised image archives risks stripping the images of their context and undermining the possibility of reconstructing their meaning and impact. This case study examines the reportage photographs produced and published in the early 1980s by *Népszava*, the central Budapest-based political daily, which have become easily accessible on the Arcanum platform. During this period, under the direction of Ferenc Rédei, the newspaper's photo desk took shape in a manner that surpassed the prevailing greyness of the Kádár era through its professional standards. The study considers how, within the period's difficult yet shifting political environment, the photographic department's professional audacity and its small-scale achievements left their mark.

Melinda Blos-Jáni

■ ***Photographs of "Useful Time": Labour, Ideology, and the Social Function of Photography in Eastern Europe***

Keywords: *photoreportage, socialist visual culture, amateur photo clubs, labour and temporality, proletarian representation, useful images, Eastern European photography, visual ideology*

At the beginning of the 20th century, photography was released from the confines of the studio and emerged as a mass phenomenon, functioning as a characteristic leisure practice of the bourgeois way of life. In Eastern Europe, the

social transformations following the Second World War inverted this trajectory: instead of privileging the viewpoint of the strolling, contemplative citizen, reportage and propaganda photography – distinct yet partially overlapping formations – centred the proletarian worker as their primary subject. With the institutional consolidation of photoreportage, the figure of the “everyday man” and the temporalities of labour were redefined, while amateur photo clubs sought to integrate workers into the very processes of image production. This shift altered not only photographic subjects but also the modes of making and consuming images, which were expected to mobilise the masses and function as “useful images” within socialist socio-ideological frameworks. The article interrogates the historical, visual, and contemporary relevance of this photographic legacy and reassesses the extent of its prescribed usefulness today.

Zsuzsa Farkas

■ ***Ferenc Fehérváry's Representations of Labour in the Late 1950s***

Keywords: *Ferenc Fehérváry, work photography, Hungarian News Agency (MTI), FOTO journal, socialist-era visual culture, 1950s aesthetics, labour representation*

Ferenc Fehérváry (1922-1988), agricultural photojournalist of the Hungarian News Agency (MTI), left behind an archive of more than four thousand images, now accessible in the institution's online database. This study examines those work-themed photographs of his that were published in the professional journal *FOTO*. The contemporary analyses and cri-

tiques accompanying these images illuminate the value system of the late 1950s and the aesthetic expectations that defined what counted as a “good” photograph. Publication in the official, state-run journal, together with the inclusion of images regarded as “artistic”, reveals which of his officially commissioned work photographs were esteemed by contemporaries. A brief biographical overview and the presentation of two of Fehérváry’s solo exhibitions contextualise the discussion of the three selected work photographs.

Klára Fogarasi

■ *In the Interest of “Windows Opening onto the Past”: Sándor Gönyey’s Scholarly Work and Photographs (1920-1963)*

Keywords: Sándor Gönyey, Hungarian ethnography, rural life, visual documentation, ethnographic photography, ethnographic film, autochrome photography, Museum of Ethnography Budapest, labour representation

Sándor Gönyey was one of the most knowledgeable observers of Hungarian rural life in the interwar period and among the most prolific photographers documenting it. A scholar of both material and intangible folk culture, collector, photographer and a pioneer of ethnographic filmmaking in Hungary, he produced photographs, films, written descriptions and supplementary drawings on a wide range of subjects during his fieldwork travels across the country. His images are among the most frequently requested and utilised items in the 400,000-piece Photo Archive of the Museum of Ethnography in Budapest. From the perspective of the history of scholar-

ship, his contribution to the visual documentation of village life, peasant culture and its actors is irreplaceable. The extensive series of ethnographic film notes and autochrome (colour) photographs are likewise largely attributable to his work, as there had previously been no adequate means to record movement and gesture (dance and other practices) or the regionally specific colours that played a crucial role in traditional folk costumes. This study presents his museum career and examines his representations of labour.

Nikoletta Házas

■ *The History of Photography as a Technological History of Images: Notes on Analogue, Digital and Synthetic (Photo)Images*

Keywords: visual cultural narratives, analog/digital/synthetic photography, promptography, author function

This study proposes a visual-cultural historical narrative grounded in the distinctions between analogue, digital and synthetic photographs. The approach is relevant not only to the history of photography but also to its theoretical frameworks. Alongside outlining the principal ideas, concepts, theories and authors associated with this narrative, the study examines the notion and contemporary phenomenon of photo-based synthetic images. My argument is that the position of these images is difficult to determine, not merely because images have become especially easy to transform in the digital age, but also because the authorial functions and positions associated with synthetic images (often termed promptography) remain theoretically unresolved in the Foucauldian sense. Although programming

constitutes an act of authorship, and human agents participate in every phase of image production – as photographers, programmers, users, mediators or interpreters – the status of authorship in relation to synthetic images is still far from clear.

Tibor Jakab

■ ***The Photographic Style of József Marx***

Keywords: *reportage photography, theatre, lighting, style, technique, black-and-white photography*

This study examines the photographic style of József Marx, focusing on the reportage and theatre photographs processed within the Marx József Photo Collection. In the case of the reportage images, the analysis distinguishes between staged and unstaged photographs, followed by an examination of the theatre photographs. The article also briefly considers the performative aspects involved in the act of photographing. Because Marx's individual style can be studied most effectively through a comparative methodology, the discussion extends to other photographers working in the same period and to the techniques they employed. Identifying and articulating the similarities and differences helps to define the cultural position of Marx's images.

Artur Lakatos

■ ***Circumstances of a Presidential Transition***

Keywords: *Hungarian Party from Romania, István Ugron, György Bethlen, diplomatic report, János Vörnle*

The diplomatic report, preceded by an analytical introduction, is a key source for understanding the

internal political dynamics of the Hungarian Party from Romania in 1926. The Party sought to represent the interests of the Hungarian minority, which required a carefully calibrated strategy of cooperation with the major Romanian parties. Hungarian policymakers in Budapest supported integration into the successor states' political systems through independent party structures, but implementation proved difficult in interwar Romania's volatile political environment. Frequent changes of government and an electoral system favouring the ruling party reduced incentives for coalition-building. Within the Hungarian Party, strategic orientations were contested. György Bernády, the mayor of Târgu Mureş/Marosvásárhely, and his supporters advocated cooperation with the National Liberal Party, whereas the majority favoured alignment with Marshal Averescu's People's Party. It was in this context that the Party faced the unexpected resignation of its president, István Ugron. The diplomatic report authored by János Vörnle analyses the circumstances of this resignation and its immediate political consequences.

Kata Martincsák

■ ***Cars Heading Toward the Sea – Alternative Storytelling through the Archive of the Present, the Museum of Ethnography's Photo and Story Collection Campaign***

Keywords: *Jelenarchívum, Archive of the Present, vernacular photography, personal narratives, Museum of Ethnography Budapest, Fortepan, contemporary visual archives, participatory storytelling*

The new project of the Museum of Ethnography, called Jelenarchívum

(Archive of the Present) is a collection of everyday photos and stories from the 1990s to the present day. The mission of the Jelenarchívum (Archive of the Present) is to create a collection of contemporary private photographs with personal stories, starting in 1990. The archive is conceived as a special project and research, an extended continuation of the widely known and popular Fortepan collection.

Éva Mária Rác

■ ***A Possible History and the Difficulties of Writing It***

Keywords: *Radio Cluj, Kolozsvári Rádió, Hungarian-language broadcasting, media history, oral history, public service media, Romania, archival research, methodology, post-1989 transformation*

The study revisits the author's earlier oral-history and documentary research on the Hungarian-language broadcasts of the regional public service studio Radio Cluj – Kolozsvári Rádió, previously developed into a doctoral dissertation and monograph (2020). It analyses the methodological and archival obstacles that complicate the reconstruction of radio history and assesses how these constraints shape historical narratives of public service broadcasting after 1989. The article offers a concise chronological overview of the key stages in the evolution of Hungarian-language radio in Cluj/Kolozsvár and outlines directions for further inquiry within the broader historiography of Romanian and transnational media.

Eszter Szabó-Reznek

■ ***“The Theatre Works According to Plan”: The Bureaucratisation***

of Theatrical Life in Romania in the Early Years of Socialism

Keywords: *Hungarian State Theatre of Cluj, socialist realism, cultural bureaucracy, repertoire formation, archival research, Romanian cultural policy, theatrical photography*

The nationalisation of theatres in Romania – initiated in 1945 and completed with the dissolution of private companies in 1948 – replaced a partially market-based theatrical system with one supported by the state. This transformation provided the economic and infrastructural foundations for daily operations, while simultaneously establishing centralised ideological control and introducing socialist realism as the exclusive artistic method. Following the rise of the Workers' Party, the Sovietisation of Romania intensified through industrialisation and the imposition of a planned economy, processes that extended into the cultural sphere as well. The resulting political, economic and cultural (re)organisation brought about a comprehensive administrative-bureaucratic restructuring. Drawing on visual and textual archival sources from the Hungarian State Theatre of Cluj, this study traces the complex mechanisms of cultural bureaucracy that governed the reorganisation of theatrical life. It also introduces a largely overlooked body of material: the documents of the Ministry of Arts and Information and the Committee for Arts. By analysing these sources, the study highlights the significance of the literary secretary – a figure largely invisible in theatre historiography – and examines both the anatomy of repertoire formation and photographic practices within

the broader context of Romanian cultural policy.

Szócs Levente

■ ***From Impossibility to Reality? The Story So Far of the Gyergyó DIA***

Keywords: *Gyergyó DIA, digital community archives, vernacular photography, regional heritage, Tarisznyás Márton Museum, participatory digitisation, online photo archives, local memory cultures*

The development of the Tarisznyás Márton Museum in Gyergyószentmiklós and the creation of the Gyergyó Digital Interactive Archive (www.gyergyoidia.ro) began a decade ago with the aim of collecting old photographs related to the Gyergyó Basin through a community-based, dedicated online platform. This article offers a personal, rather than strictly scholarly, overview of the circumstances, aims and possibilities of the initiative. Instead of drawing general conclusions, it seeks to show – and primarily to raise as a question – how this regional project connects to global tendencies, and what prospects a venture may have that confronts the giants of the internet while simultaneously relying on

them to make its very existence known.

Gabriella-Nóra Tar

■ ***Family Photographs and Remembering in Eginald Schlattner's Brunnentore (2023)***

Keywords: *family photographs, memory, autofiction, Eginald Schlattner, Brunnentore, Transylvania, childhood narrative, photographic description in literature*

This study examines the family photographs that appear textually in Eginald Schlattner's novel *Brunnentore* (2023; *Kútka*). Drawing on images preserved in the author's family archive, the analysis shows how real photographs become points of departure for literary remembrance and the autofictional reconstruction of a childhood family history. The novel's descriptions of photographs evoke both the family's personal past and decisive moments in Transylvanian history. Within the narrative structure, the images reinforce the text's slow, contemplative rhythm and accentuate its "mood-prose" quality, which recalls the vanished Szekler childhood and the world of the Transylvanian Saxon community with lyrical sensitivity.