

Protestants, and living in a society where a downwardly mobile nobility occupied many middle-class positions. May we apply a Schorske-like interpretation to this artist and his environment? For one, Ady's Calvinist upbringing surely influenced the religious content of his work, in a way that might have not been the case for someone raised in the mainstream Catholic Church. Secondly, the aesthetic turn of the *Nyugat* writers

bears resemblance to their Viennese counterparts, although Ady's insistent nationalism and use of proto-Magyar myths suggests a less cosmopolitan response to the dual challenges of aesthetic frustration and political marginalization. Demonstrating that this is the result of the intelligentsia's more noble, and less Jewish, makeup would require more research.

Photographic Journey through Time and Space

Shandor Hassan

At-Large
Brooklyn, NY
hatzelplotz@hotmail.com

Mai Manó Ház
1065 Budapest, Nagymező u 20.
www.maimano.hu
Advisor: Orsolya Kőrösi

As a photographer in Budapest Hungary I have worked on several projects that reflect my continued interest in the development and transformation of Urban space and the relation to culture, society, architectural space and its histories. Also by looking at the history of Hungarian photography and artistic activities, particularly of the early 20th century, I have traced roots of my own artistic expression and the influence that art and artists in Hungary (and tangential movements in Europe) have influenced the arts in the United States.

Introduction

The time as a Fulbright student/researcher has been focused on the continuation of my photographic and artistic work. The photography and artistic activity that I have done here involve several modalities or approaches to making works, four of which I will present in this writing and talk, all are part of my continued exploration of the making of images and art works with photography as well as instillation and multi-media.

The particular interest in the work of Hungarian photographers and artists of the early 20th century has been part of my general studies during the Fulbright academic year. The Bauhaus and DADA art movements which it seems intersected, are most interesting to me both in my own practice as a photographer, but also in my work in design and furniture, and in object assemblage and instillation work, and the evolution and influence that it has had on the art in contemporary American art and its history until now. The primary research/work, however, here in Hungary for the Fulbright term has been in my own artistic production.

Synopsis

In Hungary I have spent my time in making several groups of photographic work, and experimenting with some new ways of making photographs. I have attended the libraries of the Mai Mano Haz and the Laszlo Moholy Nagy school to look at books of Hungarian photographers and other various artists, attending art exhibitions, museums, and spending time with artists.

In this paper and discussion I will present five bodies of work with a brief description of the work, or reflection on its meaning and what it is inspired by. Please note that all photographic projects that are presented are in progress, that most have been made for the purpose of a book style editing, and for exhibiting as prints at a latter date, or are just experiments.

The form of presentation now, i.e., the computer and projection suits the purpose of presenting to an audience the work in its current state of development.

Hungarian Photographers and artists Direct and Indirect Influences

There are many very significant artists and photographers of Hungarian origin that have had influence on art in Europe and in the United States. Of the most noted and well documented are the photographers, Andre Kertesz, Brassai, Robert Capa, Cornell Capa, George Makacsi, Gyrogy Kepes and Laszlo Maholy Nagy. All of these individuals have had an enormous and lasting impact on artistic and cultural history, and their works are published and available, and have been fundamental to the direction of photography and art in contemporary times, and inadvertently in defining new styles of art, fashion, film and culture in general.

The last two Nagy and Kepes, were not exactly photographers but experimenters in art and also in the science/practice of art making in a “new” era of technology and production, and were considered originally more as painters. The influence they had was not only in their own experimentation as artists, and as photographers, but also in the field of education. In the United states they both become founders and key figures of higher education in the United States

after leaving the Bauhaus in Germany which was closed due to the rise of the Nazi Party. Moholy Nagy founded the New Bauhaus in Chicago in 1937, latter known as the Institute of Design, Kepes also taught there and went on to teach art at other institutions, and latter in 1968 was the founder of the Center for Advanced Visual Studies at MIT which became significant in various forms of arts related and scientific research. (more detail)

These moves had lasting effects on approaches to art making that go beyond any borders of medium or style, and both were interfacing with scientific ideas and thought, and in both cases took on the subject of light as not only a tool but as the subject for work and research. It is particularly the practice of Laszlo Moholy Nagy that I have made some attempts to get closer to by looking at his works and reading some of his writing. I am not presenting any scholarly presentation on his works here, however. As an artist I have made some reference in the works of scans and computer generated collage; the fourth group of work that I will present and describe in my overview. In the least I am thinking about how art is a means to communicate complex ideas about space and time, how light is a subject itself in art making, and how art is about research and experimentation throughout the life of artists work and can interface with a multitude of ideas. I hope that I have done some experimentation while here in Hungary, that may advance my work into new and other directions, and that

the interest in the direction that Moholy Nagy took, and the interest I have in new forms of photographic art making will continue in the future work and research that I make.

I have also have re-visited the work of Thomas Barow, who studied photography at the Institute of Design in Chicago formally the “New Bauhaus” founded by Moholy Nagy. Thomas Barrow was my professor at the University of New Mexico where I studied photography. While Barrow did not study under Moholy Nagy he was clearly influenced and made specific reference to him in his work. I include some samples/illustrations that also help to define the influences that Moholy Nagy had on other artists and educators. University of New Mexico was the first school in the United States to offer a Masters of fine arts in Photography, Thomas Barrow was there nearly from the beginning of its inception, and was and is quite influential as an educator of photographic-arts. I raise this only as an example in the way in which art and culture and education are traveling, and tracing my own connection to the work and ideas of Moholy Nagy before I new what his art and life were about. And here now I am just scratching the surface.

There are numerous American artists and art movements that were influenced by the ideas of the Bauhaus, and the DADA artists/movement. It seems in contemporary times Moholy Nagy among other powerhouses, among them people like Joseph Albers who taught at the Black

Mountain College in North Carolina and was also from the Bauhaus in Germany, as well as Kepes at MIT they represent a force and influence on American Art and Culture that is important to consider. It seems that Moholy Nagy had the awareness of that potential, as he writes in the introduction of his (guide book to the education of young artists) *The New Vision*:

Now a new Bauhaus is founded on American soil. America is the bearer of a new civilization whose task is simultaneously to cultivate and to industrialize a continent. It is the ideal ground on which to work out an

educational principle, which strives for the closest connection between art, science, and technology.

And As Moholy Nagy says himself regarding the idea of discussing art and experiencing art:

One can never experience art through descriptions. Explanations and analyses are at best an intellectual preparation. They may, however, encourage one to make a direct contact with works of art.

The following projects are more or less chronological:

PROJECTS

1. WAR

This collection of photographs came about during a tour that I made for a start up company that has developed a tour, for American tourists, following the 101st Airborne, based on a documentary HBO series called *Band of Brothers*. The tour follows the training of American troops in the US initial trip to England and continues to the landing at Omaha beach through France, Netherlands, Belgium, Germany and Austria, to the Dachau concentration camp and the final destination of the Eagles Nest in Austria. The photographs I made for the tour company was for the purpose of the website and promotion of the tour, and as a record and were in color.

The work that I did for myself on this tour and as I have edited it, addresses the "idea" of the tour as story of war in a different way. Through the various modes, of museum displays, films, archives, and actual historic places/locations that were visited. This work developed into an abstracted idea of war, as an experiment of its time, and to the effort of understanding the scale that WWII had on human life, geographical landscape and territory, technological advancements, and on the global level and the aftermath that this has on our lives now. Including the isolation of parts of Europe, the Nuclear Arms Race, and the sharp and harsh distinction between Communism and

Capitalism that separated Europe in new ways, and the divisions between nations that define our current situation in history and political life now.

The photographic work also, makes direct reference to the idea of war photography in general. By chance the tour follows the path that the famous Hungarian war photographer Robert Capa made as he covered the "story" and as he writes about it in his book *Slightly Out Of Focus*. This has a particular significance for me as I have been a teacher and associated with the International Center of Photography that was founded by his brother Cornell Capa in 1974 and houses the archives of Robert Capa. I was involved in the exhibition of his work this is *War at the ICP*.

WAR (the images I present here) is a mythical remembrance, a story of lost time, something that feels and smells familiar, that has the resemblance of our own world but might belong to someone else in that it is fading, and is a way to think on the gap between the generations dividing this memory. The museums and space from which the photographs are derived are part of our collective experience, and our memories are held there, as in books we can revisit the idea of war, but not know what it was like unless we actually touch it. But what we can touch is the way that war has shaped the very way that life is lived now in front of us, and how territory and ideas are formed to construct what we might call a country or a national identity. These photographs are an attempt to address these issues.

2. Budapest: Taxonomies

The sites that I am interested in, that these photographs represent are in the process of being transformed by the human hand in one way or another, either by labor/ construction workers, but also by the individual effort to repair or to make ones own improvements to the environment/city infused with the architecture itself. These are the markings of a transforming environment. They are also collectively an organic movement in the spaces, representing evolution in time and space. The photographs together are not typological or a real taxonomical categorical organization of the city of Budapest; they are intended as an impressionistic type of "Taxonomy" and means to relate the information of an urban landscape to each other and to making a new way to describe and define the monuments of a place, they are archeological and anthropological, and in these works I am acting as a collector of things.

Construction sites are especially fascinating as they are the actual locations of the building of a city. Fundamentally this collection of work comes to the terms of architecture and built spaces. It is a way to uncover what is architectural space without focusing on the physical buildings of Budapest. It is the remainders and refractions of the buildings that I am interested in, whether from the new structures being formed, or the old deforming into something else, and maybe back into the earth itself. Architecture is in this sense all

things related to built environment that participate in the creation of that space, and includes things that non builders are involved with.

How and where is the center of the mechanism of the construction site? In the world of these images the entire city becomes a kind of construction/ destruction environment, constantly under transformation, and leaving clues and pieces of its history. As well these photographs attempt to address my interest in the arts of painting, sculpture, photography and architecture. They are elements that I am collecting, some I would like to have in their miniature form. It is for this reason I make these photographs, to engage in the materiality of our world and try to further understand the meaning of human natures relationship to the things we make, and the things we fix, and ultimately the environment we live in.

anthropology |ˌænθrəˈpɒlədʒi|

noun

the study of humankind, in particular

- (also **cultural** or **social anthropology**) the comparative study of human societies and cultures and their development.
- (also **physical anthropology**) the science of human zoology, evolution, and ecology.

archaeology |ˌɑːrkɪˈɒlədʒi| (also **archeology**)

noun

the study of human history and prehistory through the excavation of sites and the analysis of artifacts and other physical remains.

2. Forgotten Land

The photographic work *Forgotten Land* is a means of looking at time and space, both in relation to place itself but in relation to the passing of photographic history, where photographs become a kind of place, a virtual place. At once it is an attempt to recall a kind of memory of the way that Black and white photography has been an influence on me in how I first learned to see with the camera, and on our collective understanding of the history of our world fused with photographic history.

It is partly an attempt to go back in time by using a modality that does not need to be used, as we have for numerous years color and now other forms of “image Capturing”. It is an effort to move into the future using digital technology, and into the past. Fundamentally the work is about landscape and environment, abstracting it, fusing architectural environments, sky, ground and projection monitors, to investigate the idea of where and what is landscape, and from what direction do we inhabit this environment. The abstraction is both reference to various photographers especially of Hungarian origin that have relocated us in time and space with the way that they chose to photograph, where ground becomes subject and, the relationship of things in the photo transforms, where views become flattened and space is no longer about the perspective, in three dimensions but in a more vast concept of space that involves time the fourth dimension.

In the title I am addressing the loss of a

connection to nature, to earth, and to place. These are efforts to metaphorically address what we as humans are doing with our land, and to our earth. Have we forgotten our connection to it, how to live in it? And how to be part of it? It is also a means for me to address the idea of the loss of a land for a people, an idea that at once people had inhabited a space and called it a home, and now it is forgotten, but forgotten means in fact that somehow it is remembered as it is passed through generations.

3. Scan-grams and Composite

The scan-grams are a technological exploration, and in part a computer assisted reproduction of the process of the photogram. Photograms were ways that without a camera, artists like Moholy Nagy worked with light as a tool and subject.

The works scan-grams are looking at the interior of technological spaces. These are both documents of objects that we may or may not recognize. By making them “negative” they become part of a world of outer space, which is my interest in both the scans and the collages. They are both scientific in appearance and in feeling, also organic in the way that they are now somehow likened to living objects, or organisms. The scans are of parts of the bodies of cameras, and from computers, from televisions, machines that we have come to accept as natural

extensions of our lives, and brains. They are part of the complex tools that store and reflect our fundamental technological selves. They are also then reflective of the interior workings of our brains and the inner workings of a kind of hyper and molecular urbanism that is driving the way to our global interconnectedness at any instant. These shards and pieces in the reversed scans are objects that might as well be from our own brains, not any less than machines that our brains have fabricated.

The collage works, are comprised of images from the Internet, including NASA, and New York Times, and other photographs from the websites, as well as a fusion of my own archive of photographic work, scans of objects and drawings, and the inclusion of text. This began as a reference to the works of various American artists, including Thomas Barrow who I mentioned earlier, Ed Ruche, and other American artists that included advertising/billboard like text in their work, and the collage and DADA art works that made word play and collage works.

The uses of text in images are a way to abstract language and to re address certain sets of accepted ideas about language of technological, political, theoretical, and philosophical. They challenge the notion of some ultimate authority that language may have or how sources such as the New York Times may use words in their combination to create types of signage and be incredibly influential in the notion

that there is some authority that might be controlling any given situation. But perhaps also this challenges the notion of religious authority that suggests if something is written and formally conceived then it has great power over our actions, whether it is through advertising or through the means of political control.

The computer as a tool inherently addresses a new idea of infinite space, and arbitrary dimensionality. The computer allows for an enormous scale, in miniaturized form, and acts as a kind of model/plan for potentially larger printable works; ones that go far beyond the screen. The idea of this projection in space is of interest in its collision with where information can be derived from. The computer like our mind is a type of synthesizer of all things, and ultimately a sampler. In this way computer collage that I am exploring is about the collision of the machine as it intercepts the conduits of massive amounts of information.

Hungarian Folk Funk: Photography, Found Objects, Instillation/ Sculpture

HUNGARIAN FOLK FUNK is a multi media instillation of found objects assemblages, constructions and photographic works that are mined from the Budapest landscape and histories. In this work I am fusing physical and psychological terrain. This work references the material transformations and entropic manifestations in urban

space, and addresses the issues and collisions of the primal and the technological in a time of spiritual and political flux.

The instillation project is a means to explore the interaction of various modes of art making. In this project I am incorporating the scanned works, the digital projection of images from the project *Forgotten Land*, and the collection of objects, and mixed media assemblages that I have found and made. The project *Hungarian Folk Funk* is both collected from the Urban Environment in Budapest and from the various ways that I have made work here.

The instillation in its entirety relates to my interest in film and theatricality in the landscape and includes narrative elements. The total space is a kind of deconstructed film project, or theatrical space. My experimentation with using the multi media modes is a way to get further into the idea of what is landscape? As a place belonging to Earth, and as a human history: a social-political environment that belongs to human evolution, control, and national identities.

The terms Folk and Funk have references to cultural aspects and movements that I have been influenced by in America and in other parts of the world. Folk is a reference to the music, art, architecture and food that is derived from folk culture, coming from the people and often the small "village" life. It is a challenge to the idea that art, architecture and such is formed out of the Elite society.

Funk refers to several things in American culture, music, that developed from the black American blues tradition, as well as becoming a movement in 70's art culture called California Funk, the word itself describes emotional mood, smell/stench, or something being particularly cool. Folk and Funk have had particular meaning in my life as an American in growing up in California. Hungary I believe has its own qualities for these words; in the instillation *Hungarian Folk Funk* I am overlapping my own experience with Folk Funk as an American, but also in the fact that I come from Hungarian Romanian and other eastern European Jewish lineage.

The issues of nationalism are fundamentally ideas that are expressed in our landscape and our relation to earth, technology and survival. As territory is what defines a country and a language, and some notion of who one is supposed to be. The instillation references various modes of time, actual time as in the present of what is in front of us in the instillation and the human interpersonal drama that preoccupy us; geological time as in the transformation of things and structures because of the earth's movements, and the cosmic time which is beyond our ability to comprehend but what we must accept.

Lumen

The photo-gallery and café and photo collective group known as Lumen has been a significant part of my time here in Budapest and has in many ways acted as my affiliation. Lumen as a café is a

place where numerous artists, curators, architects, English translators and locals go to have a coffee or a soup. As well the café walls serve as the photo gallery and an exhibition is held monthly; inviting various photographers from throughout the world. Lumen is an international meeting place. The collective is a group of photographers who meet and present various topics on photography as well as discuss relevant issues; they present their own work and the work of other photographic artists.

Peti Laszlo runs the café, and the photographic group by Geregely Laszlo. The Laszlo brothers has in effect included me into their family and friends and to the life of the café. I have volunteered my services and abilities in building various cabinets for the gallery, as well as giving my advice on the running of the business end of the café, and the cultural aspects of the Photo group. I have presented my work to the group and have participated in numerous discussions at the café about photographers work. In this way Lumen has been an ongoing conversation, both with photography, small business in Hungary, and in the daily lives of various artists and in Budapest. The Lumen group has both been a source of friendship and family, as well as a sociological window into one aspect of the transforming Hungarian culture.