



Hungarian Studies Association

HSA Newsletter, Winter 2017

HSA News & Notes

The annual convention of the **Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies** will be held on the theme of "Transgressions" at the **Chicago** Marriott Downtown Miracle Mile on **November 9-12, 2017**. As always, the annual meeting of the HSA will take place at the conference. The call for papers can be found at <http://www.aseees.org/convention/cfp>. The connect with prospective panelists, visit <http://www.aseees.org/convention/paperspanels-wanted-board>. **Proposals are due February 15th!**

Congratulations to our **newly elected executive committee members!**

- Arpad von Klimo, President
- Steven Jobbitt, Vice-President/President-Elect
- Karl Brown, Board Member
- Emily Gioielli, Board Member

Jeff Pennington and Mark Trotter will continue their terms on the board, and Kristina Poznan will continue her term as secretary-treasurer. We thank outgoing president Alice Freifeld and board members James Niessen and Catherine Portuges for their work!

It is once again possible to pay **HSA membership dues** on our website, <https://hungstudiesassoc.com/>. If you have not yet paid your dues for 2017, please do so ASAP so you will be in good standing! If you prefer to mail a check, email HungStudiesAssoc@gmail.com for the mailing address.

Member publications: The spring newsletter will feature a list of books, articles, and other significant

scholarly output by members that appeared in 2016. To have yours included, email a full citation in Chicago style to HungStudiesAssoc@gmail.com. No book reviews, please.

HSA will soon be joining **ASEEES Commons**. The Commons replicates many of the features for sharing work like on academia.edu, but in a non-profit setting. Details in the spring!

The **American Historical Association annual meeting** seeks proposals for their 2018 annual meeting, which will be held in Washington, DC, on **January 4-7**. The deadline for submitting proposals will be 11:59 p.m. PST, February 15, 2017.

<https://www.historians.org/annual-meeting/future-meetings/submit-a-proposal>

Vernon Press (<https://vernonpress.com/>) is seeking new reviewers in economics, the social sciences, and humanities. If interested, contact reviewers.community@vernonpress.com. In your message please mention your name, affiliation, bio, area(s) of expertise, and list of publications.

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An Address from the New President

by Arpad von Klimo, Catholic University of America

Our Association was founded almost half a century ago, in 1970, by twelve famous Hungarian historians. One of them, Peter Pastor, is still a very active member today. In 2004 this formerly academic society of historians was transformed into the multi-disciplinary association we have today, open to all anthropologists, sociologists, musicologists, literary scholars, historians, art historians, political scientists and many more who have a strong interest in Hungary, its past, present and future. In the last years, the HSA also became engaged in exchanges and cooperation with similar societies dedicated to the study of the Czech lands, Poland, Slovakia, and others because we share a common past and we can only understand it profoundly if we look at it from various perspectives and with a number of different methods of study and research.

I feel extremely honored that the members have elected me as their president. I remember the moment when I became a member of the association: It was

during the dramatic Slavic Studies convention in Boca Raton in 1998. Outside the bombastic Resort Hotel with its very unique Spanish-Hollywood-style architecture, a hurricane blasted. I had been one of the last to arrive in Miami before the airport was closed. Our friend Mark Pittaway, whom we lost a few years ago, had to wear a t-shirt for his presentation because his clothes were soaked. Immediately, I felt at home when I attended the first meeting of our society, out of sheer curiosity. It was this warm, friendly, but also critical and inspiring atmosphere that made me return from Berlin and Budapest in the following years. But, of course, I would never have dreamed of the possibility that I could become, one day, the president of our association! Since my move to Pittsburgh in 2008 which was, first, only thought to be a temporary stay as guest professor at Pitt, I have never missed a meeting. Since 2012 I have been an associate professor at The Catholic University of America in the nation's capital, and this year I also became a US citizen.

The mission of our association, as I understand it, is to share and spread knowledge on Hungary, its politics, history and culture, now, and in the future. We want to serve the academic and a wider interested community that is dedicated to Hungary and surrounding regions of Europe by providing and publicizing information on activities and opportunities in the field of Hungarian studies, especially on publications, conferences, fellowships. We want to enable and encourage cooperation of scholars of Hungary and Central Europe. We want to identify and encourage undergraduates and graduates to study and visit Hungary and help them finding financial support. Hungarian Studies have flourished at the end of the Cold War and in the years after, but the interest in Hungary and its place in Europe and the world should not depend on changing political or other circumstances. Understanding Hungary can and will always be a key to understand Europe and the world.

Mark Pittaway Article Prize, 2016

The Hungarian Studies Association awards the Mark Pittaway article prize in even years in recognition of the best article in Hungarian studies published in the preceding two years. The prize is awarded in memory of historian Mark Pittaway, author of *The Workers' State*, who passed away unexpectedly in 2010. Nominations are especially encouraged of excellent pieces written by promising young scholars.

The winner of the 2016 prize is James Mark and Péter Apor's "Socialism Goes Global: Decolonization and the Making of a New Culture of Internationalism in Socialist Hungary, 1956–1989," published in *The Journal of Modern History* 87, no. 4 (2015): 852-891.

The honorable mention goes to Ferenc Laczó's "The Foundational Dilemmas of Jenő Lévai: On the Birth of Hungarian Holocaust Historiography in the 1940s," published in *Holocaust Studies* 21, nos. 1-2 (2015): 93-119.

In 2017, the HSA will award its biennial book prize for the best book published in 2015 or 2016. The article prize will be awarded again in 2018 to an article published in 2016 or 2017. Details on nominations will appear in fall!

New Directions in Hungarian Filmmaking

by Catherine Portuges, University of Massachusetts Amherst

Last year, László Nemes's *Son of Saul/Saul Fia* was awarded the Grand Prix at the Cannes Festival and the Oscar for Best Foreign Language Film, among numerous accolades, a major achievement in contemporary Hungarian filmmaking. A brief overview of the current cinematic landscape suggests a trend toward diverse intergenerational participation in genres targeted toward attracting a wider audience under the auspices of media czar Andy Vajna, Viktor Orbán's controversial appointee in 2011 as commissioner in charge of the Hungarian Film Fund (MNFA), the funding body that replaced the former Hungarian Motion Picture Public Foundation (MMKA).

Ferenc Török's seventh feature, *1945*, has its world premiere this month at the Miami Jewish Film Festival; the Budapest-born director of *Moskva Tér*, *A Pál utcai fiúk* and *Magyarország 2011*, among many other features, received the prestigious Béla Balázs Award for outstanding achievement and is a member of the European Film Academy. On an August day in 1945, preparations are underway for the wedding of the town clerk's son as two Orthodox Jews arrive at the train station. Fearing they may be heirs of the village's deported Jews seeking to reclaim expropriated property, the villagers are forced to confront the town's WW II history in a haunting narrative reminiscent of Pavel Pawlikowski's award-winning *Ida* (Poland, 2013)

After a long hiatus, Ildikó Enyedi's much anticipated return to the big screen with *On Body and Soul/A testről és a lélekről*, 2017, marks her fifth fiction feature. She made her feature debut in 1989 with *My 20th Century* (Caméra d'Or, Cannes), followed by *The Magic Hunter*, *Tamás and Juli*, and *Simon the Magician* before turning her attention to television by directing the Hungarian version of the HBO series *In Treatment*. Premiering in competition at the 67th Berlinale in February, the new film, also written by Enyedi, traces a love story across the liminal boundaries of dreaming and wakefulness through protagonists sharing dreams over time, whether they wish to or not.

Kills on Wheels/Tiszta szívvel, Attila Till's second feature, premiered last July at the Karlovy Vary Film Festival and was selected to represent Hungary for best foreign-language film Oscar consideration. This inventive coming-of-age dramedy is structured around two disabled young Hungarians who strike up an unlikely friendship with a cantankerous paraplegic killer before embarking on a series of hits for a Balkan crime boss. The director conceived the idea after working as a volunteer in a Budapest rehab center and chose to cast non-professional actors in the lead roles to achieve raw authenticity. The film won the FIPRESCI Prize and the Prize of the Ecumenical Jury at the Cottbus Film Festival.

Director Szabolcs Hajdu was awarded the Grand Prix Crystal Globe for *It's Not the Time of My Life/Ernellaek Farkaseknel* at the 51st edition of the Karlovy Vary International Film Festival last July. This independently produced feature, adapted from his own play and made without Hungarian state support, is arguably one of the director's more conventional endeavors: his previous films focused on Communist-era professional athletes (*White Palms*), slaves (*Bibliothèque Pascal*) and an African outsider on the Hungarian Puszta (*Mirage*). The intimate study of two families forced to share an apartment also stars Hajdu in a performance that earned him the award for best actor and unfolds entirely within a single bourgeois apartment, recalling the intimate chamber pieces of independent filmmakers such as Bergman and Cassavetes.

Nimród Antal, born in Los Angeles of Hungarian ancestry, returns to Hungarian filmmaking thirteen years after his debut feature, *Control (Kontroll)*, a stylish action-comedy-thriller hybrid revolving around subway workers in Budapest that marked him as a young talent to watch. Since then, he has worked in English in the US with the Robert Rodriguez-produced *Predators* and the 3-D concert film *Metallica Through The Never*. Antal's new film, *The Whiskey Robber*, his first Hungarian effort since *Kontroll*, is a large-scale biopic of Attila Ambrus, a Hungarian born in Romania who requested asylum in Hungary in 1988 and launched into a string of colorful careers--grave digger, fur smuggler, professional hockey goalie-- before establishing himself as the nation's most flamboyant bank robber.

Following a seven-year absence from cinema, Gábor Herendi directs *The Invincible/Kincsem*, a Russian/Hungarian/Austrian/Slovak co-production, reportedly granted the Fund's most substantial support with

a budget of 2.2 billion HUF (\$7.76 million). The film is set during the Hapsburg reprisals after the failed Hungarian revolution of 1848 when Hungarian aristocrat and supreme racehorse trainer Sándor Blaskovich is killed after his former friend, Austrian officer Otto von Oettingen, is sent to arrest him for treason. Von Oettingen takes over the Blaskovich castle with his young daughter Klara, while Blaskovich's orphaned son Ernő is consigned to a worker's cottage. Years later he will train a magnificent racehorse, Kincsem, an unruly yet unbeatable champion. Herendi has directed such popular hits as *A Kind of America (Valami Amerika)* and *Hungarian Vagabond (Magyar vándor)*.

Other features by seasoned directors are planned for release: Kornél Mundruczó (*Superfluous Man – Story of a Refugee*), János Szász (*Cross My Wind*), Áron Máttyássy (*Weekend*), Krisztina Goda (*Home Guards*), and Márta Mészáros (*Northern Lights/Aurora Borealis*, with a focus on the taboo subject of children fathered by occupying Russian soldiers.) *The Perfect Killer/A tökéletes gyilkos* by József Pacskovszky *Just Drop Dead/ Halj már meg!* by Zoltán Kamondi, *Troupers* by Pál Sándor, and *Strangled, Árpád Sopsits'* crime drama exploring the search for a serial killer in the 1950s and 1960s in the small town of Martfű, are also awaited with interest

Animation was well represented at Sundance by with Zsuzsanna Kreif and Bori Zétényi's *Limbo-Limbo Travel*, and the Berlinale premiered Oscar-shortlisted Réka Bucsi's *Love*; two animated Hungarian short films premiered in Cannes: *Superbia* by Luca Tóth, and Nadja Andrasev's 9-min. *A nyalintás nesze*. Short subjects, a successful genre on the festival circuit, are gaining in popularity thanks to new digital platforms, while documentaries and first features are also showing strength, as are films by younger filmmakers. *For Some Inexplicable Reason (Van valami furcsa és megmagyarázhatatlan)*, an ambitious project by Gábor Reisz at SZFE to create a low-budget feature length film, attracted attention from Hungarian as well as German and Polish audiences, a noteworthy achievement for a début feature made on the budget of a short film.

Internationally acclaimed media artist and independent filmmaker Péter Forgács's latest documentary project, *Picturesque Epochs/Festői korszakok*, uses paintings, faded photos, 8mm film footage, news extracts, handwritten documents and radio archives, as well as present-day HD interview recordings, integrating the distinctive features and iconic turns of different several eras in an intimate yet extensive saga of the lives and works of Hungarian artists Mária Gánóczy (1927-), a painter and a film aficionado who brought up nine children with her husband József Breznay (1916-2012), a fellow artist. Gánóczy's films and paintings immortalized the checkered history of Central Europe.

The Hungarian National Film Fund launched its Incubator Program in 2015 to support début features, a significant strategy to encourage young talent to gain experience in promoting their work to the film industry, while the University of Theatre and Film Arts Budapest (SZFE), Moholy-Nagy University (MOME), and Eötvös Lóránd University (ELTE) are partner institutes with the Film Fund. Students from these schools may seek support for their productions, which may then be distributed at film festivals.

The return of so many talented filmmakers after long absence marks an auspicious moment, perhaps ushering in an era of artistic vision combined with popular appeal.



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