The Central/Southeast European Film & Visual Culture Symposium is a recent initiative to create a new forum for presentation and discussion of visual texts from East-Central Europe and the Balkans, broadly defined. There is currently no such venue or regular conference for this field of scholarship, despite the large number of people working on such topics in the Midwest & Great Lakes area. The Symposium will take place annually within the larger framework of the Midwest Slavic Conference. Each year, we will highlight film & animation, photography and multimedia art, graphic narrative & graphic design from a region that has excelled in these arts, particularly since achieving independence after World War I. As the Symposium grows each year, we expect to include more special events that correlate with our academic focus, such as film screenings, exhibitions, and presentations from artists and filmmakers.

Symposium Schedule

Friday, April 15

Panel I: By Any Means Necessary: Romania Then and Now
8:15 am - 10:00 am
Pfahl 330

Chair: Andrei Cretu, Ohio State University
Kevin Gillman, Ohio State University & Michael Roberts, Ohio State University: “A Rigged Game: Sports, the Oligarchy, and Organized Crime in Romania”
Marla Hicks, Ohio State University & Zach Reau, Ohio State University: “Women’s Rights and Social Status in Romania, Then and Now: The Larger Context of 4 Months, 3 Weeks, and 2 Days”
Robert Neutzling, Ohio State University: “Cinematic Techniques and Devices in 4 Months, 3 Weeks, and 2 Days”

Panel II: The Irreality of Everyday Life: Socialist-era Central European Film
10:15 am - 12:00 pm
Pfahl 330

Chair: Elizabeth Angerman, Ohio State University
Jason Merrill, Michigan State University: “Destruction of the Feminine in Communist-Era East European Films”
Scott Andrews, Bowling Green State University: “Vitezslav Nezval’s Valerie a tyden divu”
FILM SCREENINGS: “Poland's Invisible Others”
1:15 - 3 pm
Pfahl 330

The following short films will be screened which will serve as the basis for the ensuing roundtable discussion.
Krzysztof Wodiczko, Goście (Guests, 2009) video installation at Venice Biennale (7 min)
Poznajmy sie: Roznorodnosc, Zrozumienie, Otwartosc (Let’s Get to Know One Another: Diversity, Understanding, Openness, 2009) (16 min)
Paweł Łoziński, Pani z Ukrainy (The Ukrainian Cleaning Lady, 2002) (20 min)
Sławomir Fabicki, Z Odzysku (Retrieval, 2006) (excerpts)

ROUNDTABLE: Poland's Invisible Others
3:15 - 5 pm
Pfahl 330

Chair: Ewa Bachminska, Ohio State University
Katarzyna Marciniak, Ohio University, Presentation from Streets of Crocodiles
Respondent: Karen Underhill, University of Chicago
Respondent: Jessie Labov, Ohio State University

This roundtable is inspired by Katarzyna Marciniak’s recent book Streets of Crocodiles: Photography, Media, and Postsocialist Landscapes in Poland (Intellect, 2011). The films screened in the previous session provide the context for a discussion of her last chapter, “An Act Against the Wall,” about the complex reception of various foreigners, migrants and refugees in Polish society that traditionally sees itself as ethnically and racially homogenous. Ultimately, the Polish context serves as a platform for a larger commentary on foreignness and the responsibility toward re-imagining phobic nationalisms. After a short presentation by Prof. Marciniak, respondents Karen Underhill and Jessie Labov will comment on a few more of Poland’s invisible others, before inviting a general discussion with the audience.

Dr. Marciniak is Associate Professor of Transnational Studies in the English Department at Ohio U. In addition to Streets of Crocodiles (Intellect, 2011), she is the author of Alienhood: Citizenship, Exile, and the Logic of Difference (U of Minnesota Press, 2006) and co-editor of Transnational Feminism in Film and Media (Palgrave Macmillan, November 2007). Her interdisciplinary work on transnational feminist cultural studies, transcultural cinema and literature, exile, immigration and visual culture has appeared in Camera Obscura, Cinema Journal, differences, Social Identities and in the AFI Film Reader, East European Cinemas (Routledge, 2005).
"Czech Peace" FILM SCREENING
6 – 8 pm
Pfahl 202

Czech Peace (Cesky mir, 2010, Czech Republic) 100 min; in Czech and English
Directed by Vit Klusak and Filip Remunda
*Screening made possible thanks to the support of the Czech Centre New York.

In 2007 the Czech government approved the installation of a U.S. antimissile system right in the heart of the country, on a site once occupied by another foreign superpower: during the Cold War, Soviet soldiers camped in the same area. The decision sparked the largest and most organized Czech protests since 1989, with unprecedented solidarity among groups ranging from traditional activists to heads of local governments and ordinary folks. Disapproval of the radar installation reached 70% among the country’s population. Directors Klusak and Remunda—whose first feature, Czech Dream, was a sensation both at home and abroad—document not only the anti-radar movement and the pro-radar side, but also the men behind the Czech-American deal. They bring the audience up close in the woods and streets that became a battlefield, but also to the White House and the back rooms of the Pentagon, starring Bush, Obama, and the like.

Saturday, April 16

PANEL V: Packaging the Body
8:15 – 10 am
Pfahl 330

Chair: Jessie Labov, Ohio State University
Karla Huebner, Wright State University: “Sketching the Czechoslovak New Woman”
Jodi Greig, University of Michigan: “Visual Rhetoric of Book Cover Art and Its Interplay with Publishing Companies in Poland”
Jessica Zychowicz, University of Michigan: “Marketing Women’s Social Activism: The Potentials and Pitfalls of FEMEN in Ukraine”

PANEL VI: Iconography & Design
10:15 am – 12 pm
Pfahl 330

Chair: Joseph Brandesky, Ohio State University
Caitlyn Andrews, Bowling Green State University: “The Use of Specific Iconography Relating to Sts. Wenceslaus and Vitus by Charles IV as
Holy Roman Emperor”
Katie Clark, Ohio State University: “Icons in the Avant-Garde”
Lauren Bush, Ohio State University: “The Scenographer Steals the Show”

PANEL VII: Transnational Approaches to Post-Socialist Film
1:15 - 3 pm
Pfahl 330

Chair: Elizabeth Angerman, Ohio State University
Justin Wilmes, Ohio State University: “In Between and Beyond: Hybrid Genre and Multicultural Perspective in Dvortsovoi’s Tulpan”
Sunnie Rucker-Chang, Ohio State University: “Filmic Representations of the Chinese Presence in Serbia, Croatia, and Bosnia”
Irina Stakhananova, Bowling Green State University: “Geographies of Memory: The Island in Post-Soviet Cultural Space”

Symposium Organizer: Jessie Labov (The Ohio State University) has been stubbornly studying the language & culture of East European countries with less than 50 million inhabitants since the mid-1990s. During this time her interests, along with those of said inhabitants, have migrated more and more towards visual culture and new media. She has written articles on Polish & Hungarian film, as well as Yugoslav popular culture. Labov is actively seeking a better title for this Symposium, and is very open to suggestions.

The Central/Southeast European Film and Visual Culture Symposium would like to thank the Czech Centre New York, the Midwest Slavic Association, the Slavic Department at OSU for their support for these events. Extra special thanks to Jordan Peters & Lance Erickson for all of their hard work in making the impossible possible.