

ARCHIVING THE SELF:
GEORGE LEGRADY'S IMMIGRATION STORY IN
"AN ANECDOTED ARCHIVE FROM THE COLD WAR"

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ABSTRACT

Archiving the Self:
George Legrady's Immigration Story In
"An Anecdoted Archive From the Cold War"

Ilga Leimanis

People collect for various reasons. Distinctly individual and assembled over the course of time, collections can be read as an autobiography of the collector's life. In the realm of artistic practice, the employment of such an accumulation of objects and its manipulation can serve to explore the ways in which the artist constructs an identity and defines a practice within a given political and social context. This thesis will focus on one work by Hungarian-Canadian artist George Legrady entitled *An Anecdoted Archive from the Cold War* (1994) featuring a collection devoted to his family's experience of escape from Hungary during the 1956 Revolution, their subsequent immigration to Canada and the artist's negotiation between the two cultures. Viewed collectively, this becomes a monument to the life of an individual whose history and identity were shaped by political events of the Cold War.

In the form of an interactive CD-ROM, we are invited to explore this collection contained in eight rooms set on the floor plan of the former Hungarian Worker's Museum in Budapest. The role of memory will be looked at through Legrady's appropriation of two specific architectural structures: the archive and the museum. In this thesis, the archive metaphor will be informed by Jacques Derrida's text *Archive Fever* and the museum metaphor will be explored through Tony Bennett's exhibitionary complex and Susan Stewart's writing about the souvenir.

I have approached this theme from the perspective of an artist concerned with similar issues. This written text follows my exhibition entitled *Lovers and Other Strangers* presented in January 2003. Painted diptych portraits, this series developed from a collection of correspondence collected over the last decade. Actively 'authoring' others, I have asked my friends to send images of themselves, which I painted twice. Conceptually my work is about the distance between people, and relationships based in memory. Hung separately, the viewer stands between both halves connecting each to the other by memory.

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I would like to thank the artist, George Legrady, whose work inspired me to examine my own collection and my reasons for collecting. The direction of my studio practice has changed significantly since my discovery of the *Anecdoted Archive*.

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DEDICATION

To my parents

Eriks and Ruta Leimanis.

For supporting and encouraging my education; for making us feel that everything is possible; for raising us with a dual culture and language; for bringing the family back 'home' for the first time in 1990, the beginning of this wonderful journey.

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

In the act of collecting it is decisive that the object be dissociated from all of its original functions in order to enter into the closest possible relationship with its equivalents. This is the diametrical opposite of use, and stands under the curious category of completeness. [...] Collecting is a form of practical memory and among the profane manifestations of 'proximity' the most convincing one.¹

People collect for various reasons. What may have innocently started as a mindless, sentimental pastime could develop into a significant synopsis of a person's life. Acquired over the course of time, through purchase, gift or personal discovery, a collection of objects, images or stories, could be read as an autobiography. The judgment made in the selection or rejection of potential collectables is what inscribes each object with a value that is related to the other objects in the collection and to the collector. Thus it is possible to compare these small-scale collector's decisions to the quotidian assessments that make up our daily existence and in turn to the writing of an autobiography.

Distinctively individual, the question of what to collect reveals its author's most private concerns and judgments. Where one person sees garbage, another finds treasure. The object's value becomes directly related to the collector's life thus these items very often become amassed for what they represent instead of what they actually are. For example, tourist souvenirs are brought home because they remind the collector of a special holiday and a particular time in history. Each time that object is seen, it triggers a memory of that event and this memory becomes inexorably linked to that collectable. For this reason, the associated memory often outweighs the actual object's own material

¹ Walter Benjamin quoted in Sherman, Daniel J. and Irit Rogoff. "Introduction: Frameworks for Critical Analysis." Museum Culture: Histories, Discourses, Spectacles. Eds. Daniel J. Sherman and Irit Rogoff. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994. xiv.

worth thus the object's significance to an important event in the collector's life is what infuses meaning in these types of personal collections. Once the collector can no longer remember what the object signifies, its value is lost and most likely its days in the collection become numbered. As Walter Benjamin writes in the above quote, "collecting is a form of practical memory" thus every collection becomes a site where memory is contended, as memory serves to connect each object to the owner, as well as each object to every other object in the collection.

Taken into the realm of artistic practice, the employment of such an autobiographical accumulation of objects can serve to explore the way in which the artist constructs an identity and defines a practice within a given political and social context. Methods of manipulation, including the classifying, organizing, archiving, editing and suppressing of objects in such a collection can all be viewed as a means of formalizing modes of identity construction. Thus the artistic project becomes the archiving, or contextualization, borrowing from other disciplines and appropriating discourses and structures to serve the conceptual practice.

My own interest in memory and its connection to collecting is the reason why I have chosen to pursue this topic. Armed with this research, I examined my collection and the reasons for assembling and storing it. I discovered that I have collected and classified most of the mail from my friends and family, and realized that in doing so I acknowledged their importance in my life. I have been very active socially by correspondence, communicating regularly with people I met over the years, but no longer saw on a regular basis. Obsessively, I had collected every letter and e-mail, and while researching immigration, archives and museums, collections and classification for my

graduate courses, I unexpectedly discovered the new direction of my studio work. Noticing that many people sent photographs or digital images along with their correspondence, I decided to formalize this practice and I asked my friends not living in my home city of Montreal, to send me their pictures from which I painted their portraits. This practice signifies their importance in my life and acknowledges that conceptually, this work is about the distance between people and about relationships based in memory. With the advantage of retrospection, this need to collect could be understood from my upbringing in a family preoccupied with the condition of exile. From a very young age I have been aware of a distance between people and communities as well as the inherited memories connected to the loss of home and land. At the age of twenty, following a secure and familiar childhood in Montreal, I decided to study painting in Riga, Latvia. Relocating there on my own, barely a year after the fall of the Soviet Union, I succeeded in establishing myself as part of a vibrant artistic community, which over the course of the last decade has become part of my collection of people for memorialization through portraiture.

Researching potential Eastern European artists for this thesis, I settled on one work by Hungarian-Canadian George Legrady, entitled *An Anecdoted Archive from the Cold War*, first exhibited in 1993 and published as a CD-ROM in 1994. This interactive work allows Legrady to examine the capture and release of information at the moment of art-making, commemorative practices, the shaping of collections or archives, and the events which they represent. Based on personal and collective experience of escape from Hungary during the revolution and subsequent immigration to Canada, the collected fragments are contained in eight rooms set on the floor plan of the former Hungarian

Workers' Movement Museum in Budapest. I have approached the writing of this thesis from the perspective of an artist, one preoccupied with similar issues.

Legrady's story immediately rings familiar. His childhood experience of growing up in exile, with a household filled with longing for the lost home, perpetuates feelings of separation and duality. As a form of cultural invention, exile invokes something new in the act of looking backward, and in turn, this 'something new' relates to the notion of hybridity in cultural identity. This state of hybridity, together with the passing of time, inevitably prohibits any return to the former home. Thus, exile through refugee status and its consequence of a doubled identity, is a powerful experience to inspire the beginnings of a dedicated archive. Even the conditions of an escape from home guarantee that only a few personal possessions will accompany the journey, and once relocated, these objects automatically gain an exceptional status based on their ability to trigger memories, becoming mini-memorials to the traumatic event.

Legrady's personal collection of items based on his family's exile has been transformed into an extensive, interactive artistic project. This thesis will examine the artist's construction of classification systems, the 'anecdoted' texts and the historical archive and museum references all employed to create a domicile for these collected objects. Two objectives emerge: first, as it is an interactive CD project, I am able to intimately explore and become familiar with the collection of an individual who has experienced exile and immigration, from the privacy of my own home, and second, I am able to investigate how he offers this collection for presentation, having constructed elaborate systems of classification and legitimation.

A Brief Structural Outline

The purpose of this thesis will be to examine the conditions that motivated the artist to collect personal items over the course of twenty years, or in other words, his entire adult lifetime. This examination will look at the parallels between his deliberate collection of items, the role of memory in the construction of identity (parallel to history), and how both have been based on his family's escape from Hungary and their immigration to Canada. Second, this thesis will look at how the artist has manipulated this personal collection placing it within the context of his artistic practice and constructing a computer-based media installation archive project. Finally, my intention is to demonstrate how effectively the artist has appropriated an existing architectural space, one weighted with the historical, sociological, archival and museological languages of legitimation, in which to house a collection of objects and stories dedicated to a life preoccupied with the condition of exile.

The second chapter, *The Artist and the Work*, will give a short biographical account of the artist's life and how he came to be interested in software-based digital archives and databases. This chapter also contains a description of the *Anecdoted Archive* work, including its exhibition and dissemination.

The third chapter, *The Archive Metaphor for Exile and Memory*, will examine the role of refugeeism, exile and immigration in the construction of identity and explore memory and its links to home and history. Legrady's initial impulse for his archive project coincided with the fall of the Berlin wall and the death of his father, which prompted him to mine his personal history and to re-examine his collection of objects and stories. However, while sharing a relation to the past which is not necessarily that of

truth, but of desire, both memory and history are shaped by what has been forgotten as much as by that which has been remembered. Having built a very specific architectural structure within which to house his collection of diverse items related to his displacement and metaphorical homelessness, this project serves Legrady as a poignant trigger of the events which have shaped his identity and his work. While the archive will be defined on one level as a domicile, legitimating Legrady's constructed digital environment as an architectural surrogate for the archive, on the other hand, it will also be explored as a mechanism for concealment and forgetting.

Recognizing that we are navigating through a museum within the first few minutes after entering the *Anecdoted Archive*, the fourth chapter, *The Museum Metaphor: Private and Public*, will explore the museum as a memorial institution and what Legrady himself calls a "site of memory for the inscription of the social collective imagination and as a site of representation and power."² Divided into two sections, this chapter will first explore the official museum and the impact of Legrady's chosen socialist Workers' Movement Museum, an appropriation which will allow of a comparison with the Soviet Socialist Realist project of seamless exhibition space for the permanent display of totalitarian power.

The second part of this chapter, the private museum, will look at the collection, and define the souvenir as a memento of individual lived experience. Once removed from its original context and rarely kept singly, the souvenir becomes instrumental in the writing of a life story narrative. Throughout the thesis, the contents of individual rooms of the archive will be used to illustrate the main points.

² Legrady, George. "An Anecdoted Archive From the Cold War." *George Legrady Studio*. 19 Dec. 2003. <<http://www.mat.ucsb.edu/~g.legrady/>>.

CHAPTER TWO

The Artist and the Work

George Legrady was born in Budapest in 1950. The eldest of three sons, Legrady and his family escaped from Hungary during the 1956 uprising and immigrated to Montreal, Canada with refugee status. The family lived with an aunt before Legrady's father, a composer and musician, was able to financially support his young family. Schooled at first in the French education system, he transferred into the English school system at the secondary level and began undergraduate studies in Humanities in 1968 at Loyola College, where he was first exposed to photography. After travelling abroad to Europe and the Middle East in 1970, he returned to continue his studies in photography and visual anthropology at Goddard College in Vermont, where he was introduced to American counter culture. From 1974 to 1976 he did graduate studies in fine arts at the San Francisco Art Institute and then started teaching in various universities in Canada, the United States and Europe. In 1981 he began to work with computer programming as an artistic practice and throughout the 1980s, in addition to the lecturing positions, he produced photographic documentaries on Central European Communist iconography and hand-painted advertising billboards in China and Thailand.³

From 1989 to 1997, while professor at the San Francisco State University in the Conceptual Design and Information Arts programme, Legrady began his work in interactive media installations and CD-ROM production. During this period, he also travelled extensively, became visiting professor at the Hungarian Academy of Fine Arts in 1994, and received a National Endowment for the Arts Visual Fellowship as well as a Canada Council Computer Media Arts Award for his digital media work. From 1996 to

³ "Vitae." George Legrady Studio. 19 Dec. 2003. <<http://www.mat.ucsb.edu/~g.legrady/>>.

2000 he was professor at Merz Academy in Stuttgart, Germany working with the theory and practice of interactive media, interface design, human-machine interface sensors and camera tracking systems by which to integrate audience movement as a means to influence content selection. Since 2000, Legrady hold the position of Professor of Interactive Media, with a joint appointment in the Media Arts and Technology program and the Department of Art, University of California, Santa Barbara. He received the Daniel Langlois Foundation for the Arts, Science and Technology award in 2000 and the Creative Capital Foundation grant in 2002.⁴

1980s Work: Developing Interest in Archives

In the mid-1980s, working from a background in photography, Legrady began to write software that would transform digitized video stills in various ways. After completing his first interactive software-based work, *Equivalents II* (1992), he was encouraged by ensuing cultural dialogue, to pursue this arena for creative practice. After working through computer programming logic, Legrady's work "moved towards the production of databases, archives, methods of classification, information structures that dealt with historical inscription or reflected a cultural perspective whose data were accessed according to an organizing principle expressed through an interface metaphor."⁵

The Anecdoted Archive from the Cold War houses Legrady's personal collection of objects acquired either through family or else purchased during the past twenty years. Legrady clearly explains how he has constructed this archive, classifying the objects according to standard museum categories complete with descriptive texts outlining each

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Legrady, George. "Intersecting the Virtual and the Real." New Screen Media: Cinema/Art/Narrative. Eds. Martin Rieser and Andrea Zapp. London: British Film Institute, 2002. 223.

object's history and the specific reason for its inclusion in the collection. To clarify his philosophical context, Legrady writes that this "work explores Foucault's premise that the classification of knowledge and objects constitute a socialising process that shapes or creates the individual."⁶ The objects in this collection reflect and reveal the construction of Legrady's history, one which clearly deals with the political and personal complexities of exile, immigration to a foreign land and the longing for an impossible return.

Description of the Archive: The First Few Minutes

To access this archive project, as it exists outside of a museum installation, you must first remove the CD from its box, and put it into your computer. Instructed to press "click here to start" the first image we see is a perfect square within a square, a very dark, grey and black image immediately recognizable as a floor plan. The rooms are in the outer square, around the perimeter of the building, complete with interior wall demarcations, while the inner square is empty, perhaps indicating its use as a courtyard or garden.

Over this dark grey image, large red boxes filled with white text begin to float up one after the other, in no particular sequence. Each large red text box appears simultaneously with a much smaller red box inside the floor plan, marking a specific location on the floor plan corresponding to the text in the large boxes (Fig. 1). Many of these boxes continue to appear, allowing just enough time for the viewer to grasp their contents. While reading the texts, we hear the sounds of movement and footsteps,

⁶ Legrady, George. "Project Description." An Anecdoted Archive From the Cold War: According to the Floor Plans of the Former Hungarian Workers' Movement (Propaganda) Museum Palace of Buda Castle, Building 'A' Budapest. HyperReal Media Productions (with Rosemary Comella), 1994.

indicating that we are not only reading but also moving around the square. Some examples of the texts contained in the red boxes are as follows:

White terror following the defeat of the Hungarian Soviet Republic (1919-1921).
Martyrs of the Revolution. New formation of the Hungarian and the Social Democratic

Endeavours in order to unify workers. Hungarian internationalists in the Spanish Civil War. Unravelling of the aggression of fascist powers, the beginning of World War II.

Struggle in order to bring about a People's Democracy in Hungary. Elections in 1945 and in 1947. Nationalism of factories and banks. Fusion of the two workers' parties (1945-1948).

The counter-revolutionary uprising in 1956 and its defeat.

Consolidation of the Socialist system after the defeat of the counter-revolution. Laying the foundation of Socialism is finished (1957-1962).

Works of Hungarian Socialist artists.

Construction of a developed socialist society. (1962-)

Hungarians struggle against fascism abroad. Liberating military operations of the Soviet army in Hungary. Formation of the first democratic Hungarian National Assembly and government; their first measures. Distribution of land. (1944-1945)

Execution – despite of international protests – Imre Sellai and Sandor Furst; two leaders of the legal and illegal workers movements in the years of economic crisis.

Furnishing of a worker's home in the vicinity of Budapest. Workers' cultural and sports movement of the 1920s.

These red text boxes and their corresponding markers appear in seemingly random order and if we wait long enough, some will even repeat. However, once we drag our mouse over the screen, we stop this process and a title page appears with the full name of the project in bold letters across the entire floor plan: *An Autobiographical Archive According to the Floor Plans of the Former Hungarian Workers' Movement (Propaganda) Museum, Palace of Buda Castle, building 'A', Budapest.* A voiceover in Russian together with crowd noises tells the following story:

Radio announcer: *Comrade Lenin's radio announcement regarding his conversations with Comrade Béla Kun*

Lenin: *I have known Comrade Béla Kun from the time when he was a prisoner of war in Russia and when he approached me to discuss communism and communist revolutionary themes. Therefore, when we received news about the Hungarian communist revolution, we wanted to discuss it in detail.*⁷

Finally, at the end of this extensive introduction, there is silence, and one more explanatory text appears across the screen, indicating the contents of this CD:

An inventory – archaeology of objects, images, personal documents, home movies, recent video footage and descriptive text in the collection of an individual whose history and identity were shaped by the political events of the Cold War.

The image fades to black and we hear slow, even footsteps walking across a cold, hard surface, possibly the museum floor, and the same square diagram reappears, but this time in colour (Fig. 2). Each colour, green, orange, violet, yellow, turquoise, red, peach, and blue, demarcates specific areas in the outer square, now divided into eight separate spaces.

Only a few short minutes after pressing “click here to start”, we arrive at the main body of the work and have already amassed a considerable amount of information. We know where the floor plan exists, what it represents, when the events depicted took place, and how the author has replaced the original contents of the museum with his own autobiographical collection. Having read the descriptive red text boxes and noted the location of their corresponding small red boxes, we know how the former Workers’ Movement Museum had been arranged and what it contained. This series of didactic texts, reminiscent of museum wall labels, identifies the historical context but in case we missed the connection, we are also informed by the long project title, telling us that this is the Hungarian Worker’s Movement museum dedicated to propaganda, which explains the

⁷ I asked my friend Julia Rumyantseva to translate this section of the CD-ROM. Having grown up in the Soviet Union, she immediately recognized the voice as belonging to Lenin.

use of language in the texts. The artist concludes this lengthy introduction by telling us precisely what his new archive contains and even hints at the reason for his extensive collection. With striking formal simplicity, Legrady replaces the previous dark grey, black and red floor plan with a bright, multi-hued update demonstrating that, like the historical process, the new can easily take the place of the old.

The Archive's Main Body: A Brief Description

The new floor plan is divided into eight rooms: two on each side, around the square centre, which remains empty but for the texts, “quick tour,” “Archive Floor Plan” and “exit” from top to bottom. Each newly divided room has its own colour, used to colour code the objects within, but it does not appear to have any additional symbolic meaning apart from formal design.

Clockwise, from the upper-left hand corner, the rooms are named as follows:

Stories I, Stories II, Reference Library, Propaganda Archive, Money, Personal Documents, Objects and Images. To give a sense of the scale of this work I will provide a summary of each room, including its accompanying text, subdivisions and contents. A selection from this extensive collection will be discussed at length later on, in the body of this thesis, and will be used to support the arguments made therein.

Stories I contains “Home movies from Budapest and Viségráad (1949-1956), family stories about leaving Hungary in 1956 during the revolution and landing in Canada as new immigrants.” Upon entering this room, the first stories we encounter are *Hungarian Home Movies, 1950s*, featuring footage filmed by his father around the time of Legrady’s birth, including his first years and first steps, bath time and other scenes of

intimate domestic life. While watching the films we can also read a letter addressed to Legrady by his father in 1991, in which he answers a series of questions related to his intentions and the political conditions of filming in Hungary during this time. Again through the use of home movies, the next section, *Viségráad House Saga*, recounts the history of his grandmother's house, its purchase by the family in the 1930s, its nationalisation and transformation into a summer vacation home for factory workers in the 1950s, its demolition and reconstruction as a box hotel in the 1970s and finally the family's claim for compensation in the 1990s. Legrady's voiceover in *Bullet Holes in Our House* tells us how the entire façade of the house he was born in was covered in bullet holes from World War II. On an earlier visit, he had videotaped each and every bullet hole and was surprised, when he returned, to find every hole had been filled and the building repainted, after forty-five years of neglect. Presented on a split screen, *Kissing Scene Then & Now* shows early 1950s film footage of his parents kissing on Margit Bridge with the parliament building in the background, while on the other side, Legrady films himself finding the same location forty years later. In the next section, *Escape Story Narratives*, Legrady asks his parents and brother to make drawings based on their memories of their flight from Hungary. As viewers, we are able to compare all three sets of drawings. Through the use of photographs and text, the last section, *New Immigrants in Canada*, recounts the family's arrival in Canada; their Canadian aunt Julia; his parents' dreams of capitalist glamour unattainable in communist Hungary; newspaper reports of his father's refugee status; his trials to find employment as a musician; and the harsh realities of immigrant life.

Stories II contains “Cold War and Post Communist (1988-1993) stories and incidents in Berlin, Kiev, Budapest and in a Hungarian village on the Rumanian border.” All of the stories in this room primarily use video footage shot by Legrady during his travels in Eastern Europe, and his texts narrating each event. The first, *About America*, presents two interviews with relatives telling stories (legends) about ancestors who had left Hungary in the 1920s for America. The next, *Berlin Soviet Monuments*, shows two public monuments set up by the Soviets: one to soldiers who died in the battle of Berlin, the other to victims of fascism and militarism. Similarly, *Kiev Monuments* depicts five tributes to communism: the Kiev Eternal Flame (Legrady captures a wedding party laying flowers on their special day), a Kiev traffic circle with a large star in its centre, a Koka Kola sign and a Government building, a hammer and sickle decoration, and Lenin as a public site. *Budapest Street Signs* features six small screens, each showing footage of different buildings and their attached street signs. Each building has two signs, one old, the other new. Below the six screens is a letter addressed to Legrady from his father, answering questions about street names during different times in history. *Soviet Memorials in East Germany* depicts a small roadside memorial some fifty kilometres from Berlin. Legrady’s video footage shot during the first officially tolerated public demonstration in communist Hungary is featured in *1988 Demonstrations & Later*. Eighty thousand people marched against the construction of a hydroelectric power plant deemed ecologically unsound for the Danube. This was a multinational project engineered by the Soviet Union. Three years later, Legrady filmed small cans filled with air for sale on the streets. Their label describes their contents as “the last breath of Communism!” *Flowers for Unmarked Graves* features footage shot while accompanying

a relative through the woods towards his family's crypt. On the way, they found plastic flowers grouped in two separate areas. Not knowing who had left the flowers, Legrady's relative identified one grouping as a German officer's grave and the other as a Russian soldier's. When Legrady mentioned this incident to a peasant lady living near the Rumanian border, she told him that she had also been caring for an unmarked grave in her village cemetery in the hope that someone was caring for the graves of her father and brother who had been rounded up by a Soviet patrol in 1945, never to be seen again.

Incident at Alexanderplatz describes how the West has colonised the East and how street territories are marked, controlled and defended. *Fake Berlin Wall (for a movie)* features a film crew reconstructing a part of the Berlin wall instead of using some of the wall still standing and finally, *Kiev Subway Art Installation* features a 1991 art work at the entrance to a busy subway station. Passers-by stop, listen attentively and leave money.

Mimicking standard museums, Legrady's third room is called *Reference Library*, and he provides "a sampling of printed materials, journals, books, news items and records on Cold War topics." Included in this room are the following subsections: *1956 Hungarian Revolution; Communism; Some Western Reports; News Documentation; Exotica; and Recordings.*

The next room, the *Propaganda Archive*, features "photographs, posters and public iconography collected in 1983 from East Berlin, Prague and the Hungarian Worker's Movement Museum in Budapest." Inside, there are sections devoted to *Archive Photographs 1948-1953; Hungarian Posters 1944-1948; Some Socialist Monuments; 1919 Propaganda & The Crown; Wall Plaques; and Csepel Iron Works, Budapest.*

The fifth room, *Money*, features a “collection of coins and money and the stories related to them.” Inside are sections for *Loose Change*; *Hungarian WW2 Money*; *Hungarian Post WW2 Money*; *Hungarian Socialist Money*; *Czechoslovakian Money*; *Rouble & Russian Coins*; *Rumanian Money*; *Ukrainian Coupons and Rumanian Napkin Story*.

Personal Documents is the name of the sixth room. “Family ID cards, records, official documents, etc., primarily from the Stalin era in the early 1950s in Hungary.” Among these documents are the artist’s *Birth Certificate*; a *1971 Budapest Bus Pass*; *Childhood Drawings*; and “*BAMBINO*” *Anatomy of a Song*, a room devoted to his father’s career in music. Behind each sound recording are photographs and newspaper clippings documenting *Thomas Legrady’s early Canadian career*; *Father’s IDs in the early 50’s*; *Invitation to Rutgers 1948*; *Permanent Address Documents*; *1956 Landed Immigrant Card*.

The seventh room, *Objects*, contains “a personal collection of objects from Eastern Europe and the West. Functional things, curiosity items, mementos, things of historical interest, family items etc.” For example a piece of Hungarian pottery is replete with identification photographs, purchase information and where the object was once stored in the family home, clearly identified in pre-revolutionary family photographs.

The last room, *Images* contains “various public and personal images representative of the aesthetics, values, paradoxes and iconography for both sides of the Cold War.” For example *Border Crossings* consists of a history of the artist’s border crossings, starting with the first one in 1956 to safety in Austria. Accompanied by a narrative describing each experience, the text on crossing the Canadian border recounts:

“our first steps in North America take place on a military base. We are let into the cafeteria for a meal. I see crew cuts and white sponge bread for the first time. It all seems orderly and sterile.” Each border is illustrated with a map and a story.

Each time we exit a room after exploring its contents, we come back to the central floor plan and once again hear the sound of footsteps on a cold stone floor.

Exhibition and Dissemination

An Anecdoted Archive from the Cold War was exhibited as a museum installation (Fig. 3) in the following group exhibitions: "In|Out of the Cold", Center for the Arts, Yerba Buena Gardens, San Francisco in 1993; "Ars electronica '94", Linz, Austria; ""ISEA'94", Helsinki Museum of Contemporary Arts, Helsinki, Finland; "Artifices 3 Biennale", Salle de la Légion d'Honneur, Saint-Denis, France; "Les Hypermédias: revue virtuelle 12", Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris in 1994; "Interactive Media Festival", Los Angeles; "Obsessions: from Wunderkammer to Cyberspace", "20th Foto Biennale", Rijksmuseum, Netherlands; "V2 DEAF Festival", Rotterdam, Netherlands in 1995; "Burning the Interface", Museum of Contemporary Arts, Sydney, Australia; "Everybody's Talking", Gemeentemuseum, Netherlands in 1996; "Verbindungen/Junctions", Palais des beaux-arts de Bruxelles, Belgium in 1998. *The Anecdoted Archive* has also been exhibited in two solo exhibitions: "George Legrady: Interactive Media Art", Rovaniemi Fine Arts Museum, Rovaniemi, Finland in 1995 and "George Legrady: From Analogue to Digital" at the National Gallery of Canada in 1997/1998.⁸

⁸ George Legrady Studio. 18 Feb. 2004.
<<http://www.mat.ucsb.edu/~g.legrady/glWeb/Projects/anecdote/Anecdote.html>>.

As a museum installation (Fig. 4), the *Anecdoted Archive* requires a semi-enclosed space with variable dimensions of approximately 5m x 5m. An index of the Archive's contents is featured in white letters on the charcoal grey wall and the computer image is projected in large scale on the wall, allowing for larger audience access.⁹ The visitor enters the darkened space, approaches the computer station and begins to interact with the work while watching the projection on the wall. In this thesis, my main interest is with the work itself, which is identical in both the museum installation and the individual CD-ROM. However, the difference between the two is the space of interaction: in the museum installation, the viewer interacts with the work in a public space, making his choices visible to an audience of fellow visitors, while interaction with the CD on a personal computer is private. This specific performance aspect and the difference between the public and private experience of this work is not my focus,¹⁰ however, a discussion of the museum as both a private and public institution will be examined later on in Chapter Four, including a brief discussion of the related role of surveillance.

The *Anecdoted Archive* as a CD-ROM is distributed by Printed Matter, a bookshop specializing in artist books and projects in New York City, as well as MOCA

⁹ The minimum space necessary for the installation is 3m x 4m. The walls are painted dark middle gray, Pantone #446, the white wall transfer lettering is Univers Condensed or equivalent. Computer equipment needed is g4 mac, wireless mouse, 3200 lumens projector and sound system with stereo sound. Specific installation details received from Legrady, George. E-mail to the author. 16 Feb. 2004.

¹⁰ Interesting questions raised include a performance aspect where the interactor makes his selections in front of an audience. Legrady acknowledges this aspect of his work in an interview by Sven Spieker in 2001. "If I click on one thing in a public museum, then everybody around me sees the subject matter I am interested in... The question becomes, should I make my desires visible to the public?" Spieker, Sven. "Pockets Full of Memory: A Conversation with George Legrady." [Artmargins.com](http://www.artmargins.com) (2001). 16 Feb, 2004 <<http://www.artmargins.com/content/interview/Legrady.html>>.

in Los Angeles.¹¹ An abridged version of this work is also included in *George Legrady: From Analogue to Digital*, a CD-ROM produced by the National Gallery of Canada in conjunction with the 1998 exhibition. This exhibition and catalogue traces Legrady's use of found objects, methods of classification and cultural narratives in ten projects, from early photographic works to his recent interactive installations. "The design concept is based on two metaphoric references: Information Theory's relation of signal-to-noise and the form of the nineteen sixties' computer card." Featuring articles by curators Pierre Dessureault and Jean Gagnon, theorist Tim Druckrey, and the artist, this is distributed by Printed Matter in New York City, MOCA in Los Angeles, and Amazon.com.¹²

¹¹ The *Anecdoted Archive* CD also provides the following order information in the Archive Narrative section: bASE.Arts P.O Box 78154, San Francisco, CA 94107. (415) 821-4989 email base@well.sf.ca.us CompuServe – 71742.2615. The price is \$65.US for individuals and \$120 for institutions. Two more art projects are advertised for sale on this page, one by Legrady entitled [*the Clearing*], "An interactive computer artwork that explores the construction of cultural memory through the language of technology and Western News on the situation in Bosnia. (\$45 for Individuals and \$65 for Institutions) and the other project by Sammy Cucher entitled *Cultures: From the Annotated Self*, "A series of digital images exploring the conflict of creativity and reason inside the body and reason inside the body and the relationship between art and science." (\$15 for Individuals)

¹² [George Legrady Studio](http://www.georgelegrady.com/), 20 Feb. 2004.

<<http://www.mat.ucsb.edu/~g.legrady/glWeb/Projects/anecdote/Anecdote.html>>.

CHAPTER THREE

The Archive Metaphor for Exile and Memory

It is possible to be able to return and choose not to do so, but instead continue to dream of and imagine a glorious return. It is also possible to transit back and forth, be in and out, go here and there – to be a nomad and yet be in exile everywhere.¹³

In this thesis, two main objectives emerge, first to look at the impulse behind the motivation to collect items over the course of twenty years, an entire adult lifetime, and second to explore a work of art constructed from such a collection. In the *Anecdoted Archive's* lengthy introduction George Legrady offers some important clues about his desire to collect. Within the first few minutes, before accessing the main body of the work, the first clue is in the form of the title which is splashed across the entire screen in bold letters: *An Autobiographical Archive According to the Floor Plans of the Former Hungarian Worker's Movement (Propaganda) Museum, Palace of Buda Castle, building 'A', Budapest*. Here Legrady makes the viewer aware of the fact that he considers this work an autobiographical archive and then, a little later on in the introductory statement, one based on the “collection of an individual whose history and identity were shaped by the political events of the Cold War,” his family's escape from Hungary and their immigration to Canada. That being said, Legrady has effectively constructed a domicile in which to house his collection of objects and stories dedicated to a life preoccupied with the condition of exile.

In the *Anecdoted Archive* Legrady employs two main metaphors, the archive and the museum, to legitimate his collection. This chapter, *The Archive Metaphor for Exile and Memory*, will examine the issues Legrady claims to be his motivating factors. Next, it will look at his construction of the archive metaphor within which he positions his

¹³ Naficy, Hamid. *Home, Exile, Homeland: film, media and the politics of place*. New York: Routledge, 1999. 4.

collection of identity-related objects. Finally, this chapter will explore how the archive metaphor impacts upon his collection. The metaphor “is perceived as an effect of doubling (the doubling by re-naming of truth, nature, the proper/name) and of resemblance, the act of erasing the difference of the double in re-cognizing it as ‘analogous’ (that is, other and yet the same).”¹⁴ This includes the origin of the word metaphor, which is from the Greek, meaning to carry across or transport. At the end of this chapter, Jacques Derrida’s *Archive Fever* will be used to define the archive and to demonstrate how the archive functions, drawing a parallel between Derrida’s domicile for commandment and Legrady’s domicile for his objects and stories.

Before such a comparison with the archive can occur, this chapter begins with a discussion of Legrady’s initial impulse to collect, examining specific areas of the *Anecdoted Archive* in relation to the theories by Stuart Hall. In his essay entitled “Cultural Identity and Diaspora” Hall discusses two ways of understanding the signifying practice of cultural identity: first as a symbol and second as a metaphor. As a symbol, cultural identity is transformed into a rigid construct its potency rests on its timelessness, its ability to signify throughout history. The symbol is well suited to warfare. It enables the production of an identity that can oppose the identity of the other. However, to see cultural identity as a metaphor, the significance of identity is not fixed onto a singular track that maps origin and destiny according to laws. Metaphor stresses the inventiveness in the inventing of one’s past, where cultural identity shifts from being to becoming.¹⁵

¹⁴ “metaphor.” *Encyclopaedia of Postmodernism*. Eds. Victor E. Taylor and Charles E. Winquist. London and New York: Routledge, 2001. 243.

¹⁵ Hall, Stuart. “Cultural Identity and Diaspora.” *Identity, Community, Culture, Difference*. Ed. Jonathan Rutherford. London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1990. 222-226.

In addition to Hall's theory of identity, three more theories will be employed to further define my statements in this section. To illustrate the first factor that inspired the beginnings of Legrady's collection, his family's flight from their homeland during the 1956 Revolution, and how the role of refugeeism, exile and immigration impact the construction of identity, I will look at one of the sections of the *Anecdoted Archive* entitled *Escape Story Narratives* in relation to Irit Rogoff's examination of trauma and role of memory. Next, Edward Saïd's distinction between exile and refugee together with Trinh T. Minh-ha's comparison between the words refuge, refugee and refuse will help explore another section from the *Archive* entitled *New Immigrants in Canada*. Two more examples from the *Archive*, including a recording from the *Reference Library* and a pamphlet entitled "Mailing to the Soviet Union," will be brought in to illustrate the hardships and difficulties when dealing with distance and communication.

Next, an analysis of the effects of such a condition of exile on the developing identity of a young individual will be addressed, including an examination of travel, both physical and metaphorical between places, and the ensuing doubling of identity. In this section, I posit that the beginning of Legrady's active collecting started with his return to Hungary for the first time as an adult. From the *Archive*, his *1971 Budapest Bus Pass* will be examined. This chapter will include an exploration of the end of the Cold War and the ensuing political changes that prompted Legrady to use this extensive collection to archive it into this ambitious project. A section from the *Archive* called *Budapest Street Signs* will be used to explore the relationship between the instability of the political landscape and a reliance on memory for a sense of continuity and history.

To segue from this discussion of identity as the impulse behind the initiation of an extensive personal collection, into Derrida's above-mentioned definition of the archive, I will use John Frow's examination of memory as a technological device. He posits there are technological and institutional conditions to memory. I will examine these devices in relation to Legrady's work and continue with Frow's examination of the two main metaphors through which European culture has conceptualised memory: that of inscription and the storehouse. The archive functions in an identical manner, as both a site of the inscription (or deposit) and as the storage of information. By accessing these metaphors in this work, Legrady takes the viewer on a journey, transporting us across time and place. Not only do we gain access to his own personal life narrative, but also to the intertwined collective histories of his family, his country(s) of origin and the political climate of the last century. In re-naming his personal collection an archive and a museum, Legrady enables us to access legitimate discourses which enter into the very heart of the collection and an intimate history.

The 1956 Hungarian Revolution and Flight From the Homeland

Included in the Archive Narrative section of the *Anecdoted Archive* CD Legrady provides the following information on the Hungarian Revolution:

In late October 1956, a few years after the death of Stalin, a spontaneous revolution broke out in Hungary with demands for an independent national policy without Soviet interference based on principles of Socialism with the rights to free elections and freedom of the press. The philosopher Georg Lukács became minister of culture in Imre Nagy's ill-fated revolutionary government. Historically it was the first Eastern European attempt at constructing a truly democratic state structure outside of a dictatorial Stalinist frame. The democratic revolt, officially referred to as the 'counter revolution' until the end of communism in 1989, was crushed in early November by a

Soviet and Warsaw Pact troop invasion of the country. That event led to a mass exodus of civilians to the West.¹⁶

As a member of one of the many families participating in this mass exodus to the West, Legrady explored the impact of this event, adding it to his collection of stories in 1984. Entitled *Escape Story Narratives*, it is the fifth option in the first room, *Stories I*. Other stories in this room include home movies from the time Legrady was born; the story of his grandparents' house in Viségrád; bullet holes in the Budapest house Legrady was born in; a re-enactment of his parents' kissing on Margit Bridge; and stories entitled *New Immigrants in Canada*, which I will look at shortly.

As we enter the space of the *Escape Story Narratives*, Legrady sets up an introduction to what we are about to encounter. We listen to a male voiceover in Hungarian (a tape of his father recounting the story¹⁷) and we read the following text:

The Escape Story

All families have stories which repeated over time become condensed into narratives that gain mythic proportions. In my family the 1956 escape journey across to Austria at the end of the Hungarian revolution was an event that has had a major influence on our lives. The decision to leave was made on November 23, 1956, a few weeks following the Soviet military re-occupation of the country.

In response to the Soviet return, approximately 250,000 Hungarian crossed on foot to the West during a brief period of a few weeks before the removed mines and barbed wire were replaced at the Austrian-Hungarian border.

Clicking onto the following page we read:

In 1984 I wrote to my father, mother and brother, Miklos, requesting drawings that depicted their versions of our journey from Hungary to the West during the 1956 revolution against Soviet Occupation. I restricted the story to 6 key events and provided the form on which they did their drawings. The events were:

- 1) A scene of the moment when the decision was made to leave Hungary

¹⁶ Legrady, George. *An Anecdoted Archive From the Cold War: According to the Floor Plans of the Former Hungarian Workers' Movement (Propaganda) Museum Palace of Buda Castle, Building 'A' Budapest.* op.cit.

¹⁷ In Hungarian, Legrady's father tells the story of the family's departure. "He is talking about getting up early at dawn the morning of our long walk in the October cold, getting on the train, packing some goose cooked the night before, waiting at the Austrian border train station, waiting for the night to cross, etc." Legrady, George. E-mail to the author. op.cit.

- 2) A scene you remember about the escape trip
- 3) An event at the train station in Heggeshalom
- 4) One of the first moments on Austrian soil
- 5) Refugee camp event (in Austria) or a scene from the airplane trip
- 6) First memory of arrival in Canada

With the next click, we see how the CD format easily allows the viewer to explore different viewing options, for example, we can view each family member's depiction, featuring all six drawings on one page (Fig. 5), or we can view each drawing in detail (Figs. 7-9), and we can also compare the same event as drawn by each family member (Fig. 6). All of the father's drawings are in black ink on white paper; all of the mother's drawings are in blue ink, sketched very simply as stick figures and the brother's drawings are in colour, therefore, they are the most interesting visually, although very simple, quick sketches. Done by three different people, the drawings obviously feature different elements, yet certain similarities exist in each comparison of the three versions of the same event. All three versions begin with boys playing and a baby sleeping in a crib or basket. All three versions depict the entire family outside, in a landscape, either holding hands or driving in a truck. In every border-crossing scene at the train station each drawing depicts a tense situation with an oversize border guard interrogating the family, and each arrival in Canada features either an airplane, a terminus or military objects.

My interest is in the fourth drawing, the first moments on Austrian soil, because of the almost identical elements in each of the three versions. The father's black ink drawing (Fig. 7) features a starry sky, a sign for Vienna (Wien) pointing 65km to the left and all four family members facing the ground, on their hands and knees, in the unmistakable pose of kissing the ground; the baby lies nearby in his basket. The brother's version (Fig. 8) includes the same night sky with stars, moon, trees, and one person (presumably himself) kneeling to place his face close to the ground. The mother's

drawing (Fig. 9) features the same road sign, this time with Austria instead of Wien, and all four family members prone on the ground with the baby in a basket next to his mother.

Legrady has remained true to his collector's role, collecting contributions instead of participating in the process himself, though it would have been interesting for purposes of comparison to have Legrady's drawings of his memory of this experience. Undoubtedly, as noted by the artist in the introduction to this section, "all families have stories which repeated over time become condensed into narratives that gain mythic proportions" it would be reasonable to argue that if Legrady had drawn his memory of this event, it would also have included a night sky and the entire family down on the ground. Due to the importance and repetition of the story, it has become elevated into something more than a simple account of the events that occurred. Perpetuated by both parents over the years as truth, the details become almost irrelevant, as the uniformity of the answer is more significant than whether or not the Austrian ground was actually kissed. As a small child under the age of six, Legrady's brother most certainly would have relied on the repeated accounts of the story heard throughout his childhood, than on his own accurate memory from that time.

In her review of the *Anecdoted Archive*, Irit Rogoff describes Legrady's brother's drawings as childhood "memories filtered through an adult's knowledge, [...] a version of Barthes' 'family romance', a memory of great trauma which is cajoled by the adult world into an optimistic discourse of new beginnings, of possibilities and of adventures."¹⁸ Rogoff contrasts the cartoon style adventure drawings of the escape to the

¹⁸ Rogoff, Irit. "False Endings, Anecdoted Histories, Deterritorialized Subjects and Central European Imaginaries: Reflections on George Legrady's 'An Anecdoted Archive from the Cold War.'" Germany, Merz Akademie, 31 Mar. 2001. <http://www.merz-akademie.de/%7Egeorge.legrady/public/art_reviews/articles_rews/textrogoff.html>.

new world, with some of the contents of the rest of the *Stories I* room, such as the home movies and the family house in Viségrád. She chose these examples from the rest of the room as examples of historical continuity, which were disrupted by the escape story. The flight from the safety and continuity of an established home, due to changes in the local political landscape that resulted in a climate of instability, is the traumatic event at the core of this story. It inspired not only a mythic narrative for coping with the change in circumstances, but in Legrady's case, the desire to re-trace the story, to create a collection that tells the story of 'how I became.' In fact, even though he does not contribute his own drawing to the collection, he is directing the process of memory, by creating a 'list of events' for each family member to illustrate. Thus, in the production of this list, Legrady already demonstrates his intimate knowledge of the family's mythic narrative, which would make his own drawings redundant.

This story of escape and becoming shares characteristics that coalesce with writings on the refugee and exile by Edward Saïd. Saïd provides the following succinct distinction between the terms exile and refugee:

Although it is true that anyone prevented from returning home is an exile, some distinctions can be made between exiles [and] refugees [...]. Exile originated in the age-old practice of banishment. Once banished, the exile lives an anomalous and miserable life, with the stigma of being an outsider. Refugees, on the other hand, are a creation of the twentieth-century state. The word 'refugee' has become a political one, suggesting large herds of innocent and bewildered people requiring urgent international assistance, whereas 'exile' carries with it, I think, a touch of solitude and spirituality.¹⁹

Saïd draws a distinction between the political conditions of the refugee and the exile.

The Legrady family arrived in Canada as political refugees. However, once Canadian residence was established, the family lived in exile from their Hungarian homeland. In

¹⁹ Saïd, Edward. "Reflections on Exile." *Out There: Marginalization and Contemporary Cultures*. Eds. Russell Ferguson, Martha Gevers, Trinh T. Minh-ha, Cornel West. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1990. 362.

Saïd's distinction, he emphasizes the solitude and spirituality of exile, and how the "exile's life is taken up with compensating for disorienting loss by creating a new world to rule." The *Escape Story Narratives* could be viewed as the beginning of such a compensation, the creation of a new world and a new family narrative.

Described as the century of refugees and prisoners, the twentieth century has had its share of traumatic political disasters prompting people *en masse* to flee from their homes in fear of their lives. Trinh T. Minh-ha writes about how the creation of refugees remains bound to the historical forces and political events that precipitate it.²⁰ Her comparison between the words refuge, refugee and refuse, reveals a conflation between the verb and noun *refuse* and *refuse*. Refugees are a peoples refused²¹ and/or refusing. The Legrady family was forced to flee, no longer welcome in their homeland but also refusing to align themselves with a political ideology they did not believe in.

Similarly, Rogoff has tried to understand the processes by which these mobilizations of unclaimed experience can become arenas of claimed histories, by relying on Freud's understanding of trauma, not as it is commonly used at present to mean a shocking occurrence, but rather as a deeply affecting event that has gone unmarked by consciousness and is nevertheless constantly revisited through associations. Our current awareness of constant mobility and instability has allowed us to begin to reread earlier migrations as far more complex than originally perceived. Each migration and each displacement exists within a particular and singular history, and cultural work has taken on the uncovering of these narratives of expulsion from the perspective of the excluded. By examining the cultures from which large populations had to flee, for

²⁰ Minh-ha, Trinh T. "An Acoustic Journey." *Rethinking Borders*. Ed. John C. Welchman. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996. 2.

²¹ Ibid.

economic, political or racial reasons, a hierarchy of dread has been created, in which genocides and annihilations have become the index of Western horror.²²

The entire *Anecdoted Archive* attempts to present such a narrative of expulsion from the perspective of one excluded. Specifically, this segment, *Escape Story Narratives*, speaks about the origin of the trauma and describes the two separate processes outlined above by Saïd, the refugee and the exile. These drawings depict the expulsion journey, from when the decision was made to escape, to the family's arrival as refugees in Canada. While we navigate through this section of drawings, we are brought into the fold of the family's once-in-a-lifetime journey. We are even listening to the same story Legrady heard since his childhood, his father's voice recounting the familiar tale. Every drawing corresponds to one step of the refugee process, waking up at dawn, leaving on foot, crossing borders in the middle of the night, and the arrival in Canada. Each drawing also contributes to the exile process in terms of contributing to the mythic narrative, which over the course of time reconfirms the process of how we became. Every step has been defined and articulated in order to come to terms with trauma and the family's consequence, their new life in exile in Canada.

While not all exiles are refugees, there is enough overlap among the many co-existing meanings of exile to enable a construction of a useful definition. Regardless of the many varying nuances, a flexibility exists among these definitions to enable a possible application to different individuals in different situations. Described as a painful condition, arising from a traumatic and shocking event (such as immigration with refugee status), exile could ultimately be an internal or external condition, voluntary or

²² Rogoff, Irit. "Moving On: Migration and the Intertextuality of Trauma." *Vera Frenkel: ... from the transit bar*. Irit Rogoff, Lydia Haustein, Jeanne Randolph. Toronto: Power Plant and National Gallery of Canada, 1994. 31-32.

involuntary, generally implying trauma or imminent danger. It is usually political circumstances, which make the home no longer safely habitable. The shock, disruption and loss, together with distance from home's realities, can invite idealization which often accompanies mourning.

Stories I: New Immigrants in Canada

From *Stories I*, the same room as the *Escape Story Narratives*, I will turn my attention to the sixth option, entitled *New Immigrants in Canada*, to examine how the condition of exile relates to Stuart Hall's notion of identity as a 'production', never complete, but always in process, and always constituted within, not outside representation.²³ Within this context, I will examine two photographs of Legrady's mother, taken shortly after their arrival in Canada. I will interpret them as demonstrations of how immigration to a new country includes an obvious adjustment to the new surrounding, but it also presents an opportunity to manipulate and modify one's identity, taking advantage of a crossroads, where identity is fluid and malleable.

Entering *New Immigrants in Canada*, we see a newspaper clipping presented side by side with a photograph, and their respective captions: *1956-58 Newspaper Articles* and *Some Family Photos 1956-62*. The first option features three newspaper articles about the family's arrival in Canada. Legrady describes the first article: "My family's arrival as Hungarian refugees in Montréal, Québec was covered by *La Presse*, a French newspaper, December 1956." This article describes the beginning of their life in Canada.²⁴ The

²³ Hall, op.cit. 222-37.

²⁴ A translation of part of the article reads as follows: "At the Start of a New Life in Canada – Less than a month ago, two young Hungarians were being followed by the police and communist troops in their country of origin. The refugees, who have arrived in Canada less than a week ago, have already found

following two articles are from unidentified newspapers: “A Musician from Budapest” from 1956²⁵ and “Report on an Immigrant” from 1958, which has the subtitle “Departure For Greener Fields?”

In the second option, *Some Family Photos 1956-62*, we look at a series of photographs and listen to Legrady’s voiceover in English, recounting a story about the family’s December 1956 arrival in Canada, and the help of his aunt Julia, a Canadian citizen who was able to aid them with the immigration bureaucracy. A continuation from the *Escape Story Narrative*, this section picks up from their arrival in Canada. After their long and difficult journey, they were lucky to have a secure place to land. The first photographs in this series, show the artist and his brother wearing identical new suits, a few days after their arrival. Next, is a picture of their baby brother crawling on a floor. Legrady describes the following two pictures with the words “in the process of starting over in a new country, my parents enjoyed acting out the dreams of glamour which they could not have under communism in Eastern Europe in the Stalin era.” The first picture depicts his mother standing in front of a large, dark blue car, parked on a city street (Fig. 10). The caption reads “1957 Mom on a Spring or Summer afternoon.” Dressed demurely in a dark, khaki skirt suit with a beige turtleneck, dark brown leather handbag and hat, white gloves and pearl earrings, she is photographed head on, three-quarter view (head to waist) in a very conservative style. By comparison, the next image, captioned “1957 First Summer in Canada on Ridgewood Avenue,” (Fig. 11) depicts his mother

work in their specialized fields. Mr. Thomas Legrady (at left) is a composer-arranger for Radio Canada; He fled Hungary with his wife and three small children carrying the baby in a basket with his music.[...]”
²⁵ This article reads: “In the midst of Hungarian refugees currently welcomed by Canada following a revolt by a small nation who fought to regain their freedom of thought and action, refugees who are for the most part peasants or workers, there is a musician of quality with whom we had the opportunity to discuss, from an intellectual and cultural perspective, living and career conditions within a system dominated by Soviet ideology.”

standing once again in front of a car, yet, in place of the excessive modesty of the previous picture, this time she strives for glamour. Wearing a simple skirt cut below the knee, a long-sleeved top and heels, one arm supports her body leaning against the car, with the other raised to her head touching the rim of her large black sunglasses, she strikes a Jacqueline Kennedy pose. The composition of the photograph, shot from well in front of the car, shows the entire front of the large vehicle in the foreground, and the street winding up into the distance. This emphasizes the open view of the composition and also captures the newfound glamour of Canadian life. The small toddler walks precariously on the sidewalk next to the oversize vehicle. With the knowledge that this picture was taken a few months after their arrival in Canada, I question whether this car belongs to them, was borrowed, or was it simply parked on the street belonging to strangers.²⁶ As a large car is prominent in both pictures, gaining importance in the second picture, I wonder if perhaps Legrady's parents are tapping into what have become classic associations between capitalism and the car, aligning themselves with the ideology and values, such a large American style car represents.

The last few pictures in this series feature the family standing on church steps after Sunday mass in 1958; the two brothers practicing violin for a concert in 1960; their first Communion also from 1960; and finally, the three boys with their mother from 1962. In the voiceover, Legrady says "the harsh realities of immigrant life in the West did not yet overshadow the aura of my parents' innocence." Returning to Hall's notion of identity as a continual process of production, this section of newspaper articles and

²⁶ I asked Legrady about this car, if he knew who's it was, perhaps his aunt's. He replied he did not know the owner of the car. E-mail to the author. op. cit.

family snapshots from their early days in Canada could be viewed from his perspective.

Hall understands cultural identity as a

matter of 'becoming' as well as of 'being'. It belongs to the future as much as to the past. It is not something which already exists, transcending place, time, history and culture. Cultural identities come from somewhere, have histories. But, like everything which is historical, they undergo constant transformation. Far from being eternally fixed in some essentialised past, they are subject to the continuous 'play' of history, culture and power. Far from being grounded in mere 'recovery' of the past, which is waiting to be found, and which when found, will secure our sense of ourselves into eternity, identities are the names we give to the different ways we are positioned by, and position ourselves within, the narratives of the past.²⁷

Each photograph in this section illustrates such positionings. Dealing with their discontinuity, their rupture from a former life, the family attempts to adapt to a new world, borrowing elements from the past in order to construct the new. In these photographs and newspaper articles we see certain threads of historical continuity, such as the father's music career, his attempt to pass his musical passion on to his sons, the family's Catholic religion and the importance of family life in general. These pictures also tell the story of the future, and their transformation in becoming Canadian. Legrady recounts this story in English, one language of his adopted country and new identity, and his mother adopts a new style, enjoying a new freedom of expression.

Reference Library: Recordings and Exotica

While trying on and settling into new identities, the old country is never far away in the family's minds and hearts. In the process of relocation and the condition of exile, there is always an implied distance from home. Today, as a result of the modern technologies of transport and communication we have witnessed an unprecedented

²⁷ Hall, op. cit. 225.

increase in proximity and movement between homes, old and new. This was not always the case. In the late 1950s dispersed peoples separated from their homelands by oceans and political barriers had no opportunity for border relations of any kind. In the *Anecdoted Archive* there is a room called the *Reference Library*, which contains a sampling of printed materials, journals, books, news items and records on Cold War topics. Included in this room are the following subdivisions: *1956 Hungarian Revolution; Communism; Some Western Reports; News Documentation; Exotica; and Recordings*.

Here, I will examine the last two sections of this room, *Recordings* and *Exotica*. With *Recordings* I will present one early attempt to overcome obstacles in connecting the dispersed family with relatives in the homeland before communications became possible and affordable by telephone or air travel, while in *Exotica*, I will examine why this attempt did not even guarantee successful communication.

Clicking onto *Recordings*, the assembled selection of assorted record covers (Fig. 12) includes interviews with George Lukács, Hungarian political songs from the revolutionary days, Russian versions of Western 1960's European and American pop songs and Lenin's speeches recorded in 1919 and 1920.²⁸ The second record cover in this section stands out because it is the sole amateur recording amid the four other commercial productions. Legrady explains:

In 1960, four years after immigrating to Montreal, my father made an amateur sound recording to send to his mother in Budapest. Its purpose was to provide her with something more than a letter could offer since at that time long distance telephone

²⁸ For each cover, Legrady provides descriptive information, including how he acquired the record and then by clicking the mouse, we can hear each recording. Parts of the descriptive texts read as follows: "Interviews with George Lukács (1885-1971) Hungaroton, LPX 15047"; "Torch Carriers: Songs, Heroes, Memories, 1919 Volume 3. Qualiton, Made in Hungary"; Russian versions of Western 1960's European and American pop music, Melodiya, C) 1533"; "Lenin's speeches, recorded in 1919 and 1920. Melodiya, the Institute of Marxism – Leninism. Made in the USSR."

calls were too costly. The tape includes some of my father's pop compositions, my piano playing, stiff and awkward conversation, my brother Miklos explaining the joys of bicycling, Tommy crying, my mom trying her best to be nice to her mother-in-law.

The image we see on the screen is the homemade record cover, a reel-to-reel tape box (Fig. 13). On the next page is the same box with the tape sticking out half way (Fig. 14), then, clicking once again on the tape, we hear all of the above-mentioned recordings.

Another category in the *Reference Library* is the section entitled *Exotica*, featuring six scanned book or pamphlet covers, each dealing with more 'exotic' aspects related to the Soviet Union. The six featured covers include Ceausescu's elections in Romania, "Mailing to the Soviet Union", a 1964 Soviet culinary guide and table settings, a Hungarian centenary celebration (1873-1973) of city planning, a pamphlet about the Berlin Wall and "Rambo," a Russian manual on fighting techniques.²⁹ The second of these six covers features the title "Mailing to the Soviet Union." Clicking on this image opens to a page inside the pamphlet and the following questions (Fig. 15): "What will happen if the Soviet Union cannot account for my mail item!", "What happens if I don't hear anything within 5 months!" and "What if the Soviet Union claims that my mail has been delivered and I know that this is not true!". Legrady's scan of this page does not make the answers to these questions legible as their print is too small, but while the questions seem straight forward on the surface, their implications unmask a political system determined to make communications difficult, promoting feelings of separation and insurmountable distance.

²⁹ In this section, all six covers are presented together, side-by-side on the first page. Upon clicking each cover one after the other, we can access scans of the pages inside. Usually, multiple pages are scanned, with the exception of "Mailing to the Soviet Union" where only one interior double page is provided. Additionally, no other information is given by the artist, as he did in the previous *Recordings* section. Hence, we do not know how the artist acquired these books, nor do we have access to the translations of Romanian, Russian, Hungarian or German.

Characterized by mutual distrust, suspicion and misunderstandings, the Cold War was a term used to describe the intense rivalry that developed after World War II between the Communist and non-Communist nations, or between the Soviet Union and its satellites and the United States or Western bloc. Never escalating to war and fighting on a large scale, this conflict became known as the Cold War. While communications technology was rapidly developing, the Cold War prevented any normal quotidian exchange of information. In the absence of proper communication and exchange with family and friends in Hungary, memory was relied upon to sustain an image of the place left behind.

Personal Documents: 1971 Budapest Bus Pass

Circumstances in the world have changed dramatically since the 1950s and travel has become possible between multiple 'homes'. No longer confined to one location, travel has become a means of discussing the varied forms of cultural displacements that exist today, enabling us to examine how physical displacement impacts who we are in terms of how we define belonging and our identity. While his parents were trying on new identities and keeping lines of communication open between the old country and their new home, Legrady had his own experience. Growing up in an environment filled with a constant and tangible Hungarian presence, as a result of its perpetuation and interpretation through the memory of his parents, the absence of any actual contact with the real place had its own effect. As a form of cultural invention, exile often conjures up something new in the act of looking backward, and travel to-and-fro opens up even more possibilities. Legrady documents his first visit back to Hungary, since the family's

escape fifteen years earlier, in the second option of the *Personal Documents* room entitled *1971 Budapest Bus Pass*. The contents of the rest of the room include scans (front, back and inside) of his birth certificate, his father's 1950's Hungarian identification documents, his mother's invitation to study at Rutgers University in New Jersey and other documents and sound recordings of his father's early Canadian music career.

Entering the *1971 Budapest Bus Pass* section, we see the bus pass on the left side and the following text on the right:

My brother Miklos and I were strongly aware of our Hungarian cultural differences while growing up in the French and later English schools we attended in Montreal. It was with great anticipation that I returned to Hungary at age 21 to experience the culture I had left as a child. Once there, I was shocked to discover that even though I was familiar with the language and customs, my 'Hungarian' identity as I knew it had only a ghost-like resemblance to the culture that was in place. Time had gone by and I found myself displaced in the space between three cultures part of each but belonging to none.

Dragging our mouse over the bus pass photo, a caption appears "Photo taken in commercial studio next to bus office. Image retouched by photographer" and over the pass itself, a translation of the document "Bus Pass good for June 1971" (Fig. 16). With another click of the mouse, Legrady allows us to access the back of the bus pass to which he has pressed a "four leaf clover found in Viségráad woods" (Fig. 17).

This first visit to Hungary was in fact the first of many visits, one which initiated Legrady's motivation to begin this collection.³⁰ The preserving of an insignificant object

³⁰ My question to Legrady: "At what point did you start collecting? How conscious was it in the beginning? I posit that the 1971 bus pass/four-leaf clover and your first return to Hungary as an adult was the beginning of your active collecting." His response: "1971, you are right but also:
- Research went back to the early 1980's, and explorative research trip to Socialist urban centers : East Berlin, Prague, Budapest to collect visual material dealing with the iconography and ideology of Socialism.
- Followed two years later with a trip to four major urban centers in Mainland China: Guangzhou, Xian, Beijing and Shanghai to study the iconography of billboards, again looking at the overlapping elements of narrative construction through ideology, form, and historical relation to communist aesthetics.

such as a monthly bus pass indicates a value beyond its immediate material significance. Additionally, its juxtaposition with the four-leaf clover, traditionally a symbol for good luck to represent a rare find, reveals what Legrady really felt about this trip. Perhaps he identifies with the four-leaf clover, a rarity among countless three-leaf clovers. Legrady feels like the rarity among the different communities within which he finds himself.

The artist's visit to Hungary put him in direct contact with new emotions. In his condition of exile, he was forced to confront the discrepancies between the home he had hoped to encounter and the reality that he found, thus discovering that there is no guarantee that the home one hoped for corresponds to the structure that memory built. The experience of displacement had always been mediated by communications technologies, such as letters, telephones, photography, video, electronic or print media. As a result of the globalization of travel, the condition of exile effectively changes, it could either be seen as coming to an end, or the opposite, it becomes a global postmodern condition, specific to each individual experience. Even though the family's escape from Hungary was a very specific event at the core of his displacement experience, Legrady has chosen to celebrate his place in-between, constructing an identity in line with exile as a postmodern condition and as a form of cultural invention.

- Between 1988 and 1992, during the political transition period and end of communism, I revisited East European cities and villages (East Germany, Rumania, Ukraine, Hungary, Slovakia) this time collecting video documentation of places, situations, impressions, architectural details, monuments, prior to their removal and eventual erasure as landmarks.

- By 1991, I had produced a laserprint document titled « hybrids » that included a number of the projects that eventually made their way into the *Anecdoted Archive*.

Email to the author. op. cit.

Images: Border Crossings

This section will explore two subdivisions from the *Anecdoted Archive*, *Border Crossings* and *Budapest Street Signs*. In the room entitled *Images* from *Border Crossings*, Legrady lists the most important borders he had crossed in his life thus far. For each border, he recounts his story and shows an image of a map featuring its location. In each instance he pairs his ephemeral experience of travel and encounter with the rigid lines and stable structure of the map. From a similar and related perspective, *Budapest Street Signs* examines how physical locations are not really as stable as the maps would indicate, and how in reality, names, places and borders are easily changed and manipulated in the hands of political regimes. The emphasis in the analysis of these rooms will be the importance of memory for remembering the histories which shaped identities, and how this relates to the archive as defined by Derrida.

Images, which is the last room, features “various public and personal images representative of the aesthetics, values, paradoxes and iconography for both sides of the Cold War.” The very first section is called *Border Crossings*. Beginning with his very first border, “Crossing at Night, Hegyeshalom, Hungarian/Austrian Border, 1956” (Fig. 18), Legrady describes each crossing in detail. Each page features one description, the text on the left hand side and the map on the right. The first description reads as follows:

Cold November night. Walking in the wet marshes. Every so often a Soviet flare lights up the sky and we dive down to the ground. Earlier in the afternoon we had to turn around after warning shots were fired at us. Waited in the train station for night. We are now alone, walking in the dark, hearing my footsteps on the frozen vegetation. It seems endless. The faint sound of a car goes by. My father goes ahead to see while we wait. He returns and says we have crossed the border.

The second page features a map of Newfoundland and recounts the story of the “First Encounter in America, Goose Bay, Labrador, 1956” (Fig. 19).

Our first steps on North American soil take place on a military base. We are led into the cafeteria for a meal. I see crew cuts and white sponge bread for the first time. It all seems orderly and sterile.

The third page returns back to “Hegyeshalom, Hungarian/Austrian Border, 1971” (Fig. 20).

The young gypsy woman, her baby and I alone in the train compartment going from Vienna to Budapest. Silence. Later she wants to know about my shoulder length hair and shyly mentions the word Beatles.

The last three crossings include two to the United States from Dorval International Airport in Montreal, 1981 and 1987, and another return to Hungary on the Sturovo/Szob, Czechoslovak/Hungarian border in 1983, an episode in which he was identified as a ‘56 escapee.’ Far from a complete list of every border he has crossed, (other sections of the *Archive* include souvenirs collected from trips around the world and throughout Eastern Europe) here Legrady selects only six. Such a selection parallels the workings of memory, remembering only the most important events.

Each border crossing features text on the left with a map on the right. This juxtaposition brings into contrast the stability of fixed geography with the instability of his experience at each crossing, representing the physical location where one passes from one place to another. Upon closer examination, even the stability of geographical borders, cities and landscapes are questionable for they are dependent upon political systems and have also been manipulated over the course of time by human hands. One example of this is found in the second room, *Stories II*, called *Budapest Street Signs*. Upon entering, we see a screen split into six small images (Fig. 21), each featuring a close-up of a building corner with its affixed street sign. Underneath these images is a type written letter on white paper, which we can scroll down to read. All of these building corners feature not one, but two signs. One

current, the other former as identified by its red diagonal line across the sign, customary in European road signs to signify the end of a zone or speed limit. As we click on each of these six images, a twenty-second video starts to play, featuring the street noises at the time of filming. At the bottom of the page, the type written letter from his father answers questions posed by Legrady. The letter reads as follows:

Dear George,
Was it necessary to spend \$11.50 for the express letter? I'd receive it otherwise next week. For your questions: Oktogon-square became Lenin-square, now I think it's Oktogon again. You're right, this was Mussolini-square. Marx-square was Berli-ni-tér before they changed it in 1949. Now I don't know the new name. There was also a Franz Joseph-square, but where, I don't remember. Probably around the Szabadság-bridge, which was Franz Joseph Bridge before. East of Henger-utca was the Zsigmond-utca, which became first Zsigmond király útja before 1945, after Frankel Leó utca, after a Hungarian Jew in the 1870 Paris commune.

This letter demonstrates how political systems have imposed their power through the change of names. We see how Legrady's father is able to confirm certain questions, and unable to answer others. Precise locations and names become jumbled in the memory of those who lived through that period.

Over the course of time, places change or are purposefully manipulated to serve political agendas. Forming the backdrop to these stories of home, longing and displacement, is the relationship between the places of life and passage, and the sites of memory and imagination. Every landscape is a work of the mind, a repository of the memories and obsessions of the people who gaze upon it. The homeland, or site of departure, becomes reconstructed in memory, thus landscape becomes a metaphor for the archive.

The fall of the Berlin wall in 1989 symbolized the end of the Cold War, coinciding with the death of Legrady's father and the beginning of the transformation of

the collection into an artistic archive project.³¹ The end of the Soviet Empire signalled for many, the potential elimination of exile, as there is no longer any political obstacle to return. Legrady's own experience of identity at a crossroads, at a point between here and there, is a powerful marker of consciousness and the focus of his *Anecdoted Archive*. His intention, perhaps, is to employ metaphors of his cultural identity, collected over his lifetime, transforming them to allow for a flexible process of incompleteness and invention. Within the metaphorical practice of identity, Hall allows for the "inventiveness in the inventing of one's past." To fulfil this pursuit, Legrady had adopted many guises, artist, journalist, researcher, archivist, historian and curator in order to learn about his identity. Occupying all the positions within a practice is an attempt to collect and preserve fragments, remains of a life against the passage of time. Legrady has revealed a multitude of stories of everyday life empowering him to become more aware of who he is by better understanding where he has been.

In the face of so many changes, the end of the Cold War and the elimination of the immediate condition of exile, the transformation of the collected objects into an archive not only allows for the possibility of self-invention, but in this process, the role of memory becomes important for what is remembered and what is forgotten. Memory preserves stories, personal and collective, against the passage of time. While the former home or homeland will always remain unchanged in the memory of the refugee or exile, the fragmentary nature of memory prevents even the most ambitious collections from achieving any permanence in the face of history.

³¹ Legrady, George. 6 May 2001. <<http://contactzones.cit.cornell.edu/artists/legrady.html>>.

Memory

John Frow's examination of memory in his book, Time & Commodity Culture: Essays in Cultural Theory and Postmodernity, will be useful to segue from the discussion of identity, immigration and exile into Derrida's archive. Frow writes:

memory as *tekhne* [...] is to say that the logic of textuality by which memory is structured has technological and institutional conditions of existence. By 'technological' I mean on the one hand storage-and-retrieval devices and sites such as books, calendars, computers, shrines, or museums; and on the other hand particular practices of recall – techniques of learning acquired in school, structured confession or reminiscence, the writing of autobiography or history, the giving of evidence in court, the telling of stories related to an artefact or a photograph [...].³²

Legrady has filled his *Anecdoted Archive* with both technological and institutional conditions of memory. The CD-ROM as such, is the most obvious example, viewed in the technological category as a system of storage and retrieval. However, each and every section of the *Archive* contributes to the interrelated process of memory. For example, every 'anecdoted' section is a practice of recall, about the telling of stories related to artefacts, the writing of autobiography or the practice of reminiscence. Legrady collects these fragments of narratives and assembles them in one place.

Legrady does more than just collect the stories, he directs the entire process of memory. He participates in the technological condition of memory by assembling and depositing his collection into the archive, but he also establishes the institutional parameters of memory by asking for stories and writing his autobiography. For example, he asks his family to draw drawings according to the six categories he has laid out in the *Escape Story Narratives*. While we can argue he is familiar with the

³² Frow, John. Time & Commodity Culture: Essays in cultural theory and postmodernity. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997. 230.

mythic narrative and has no difficulty remembering the sequence of events as repeated over and over again throughout his childhood, he is also shaping his own mythic narrative by the process of selection, writing his autobiography in the construction of the archive project. The same mythic narrative from the escape story is continued into the new immigrants pictures, then, it is picked up again in the border crossings. In this catalogue of crossings, the identical story is re-told in the very first example, on the Hungarian/Austrian border, but by the third crossing, Legrady's first return to Hungary, the story being told becomes his own mythic narrative. A process of selection occurs in the construction of the *Archive*, which borders to include, which ones to leave out. It is in this selection that Legrady tells his story which we can interpret as a transition between the inherited narrative of the escape story and the creation of his own autobiography.

The *Anecdoted Archive* began as a collection from his first trip to Hungary as an adult, and became about the overwhelming influence of memory and its role in the shaping of identity. A significant change in political climate, the end of the Cold War, inspired Legrady to transform this collection using the archive metaphor as the technological condition of memory, a stable base, upon which to build a construction housing his collection devoted to feelings and stories of ephemeral experience. In the next chapter, I will examine the other technological condition of memory, the museum, the second metaphor Legrady employs.

The archive as domicile

Derrida writes in *Archive Fever*:

the meaning of the work 'archive' comes from the Greek *arkheion*: initially a house, a domicile, an address, the residence of the superior magistrates, the *archons*, those who commanded. The citizens who held and signified political power were considered to possess the right to make or to represent the law. On account of their publicly recognized authority, it is at their home, in that place which is their house (private house, family house, or employee's house), that official documents are filed. [...] It is thus in this domiciliation, in this house arrest, that archives take place. The dwelling, this passage where they dwell permanently, marks this institutional passage from the private to the public, which does not always mean from the secret to the nonsecret. (It is what is happening [...] when a house, the Freud's' last house, becomes a museum: the passage from one institution to another.)³³

Derrida stresses the 'domiciliation' of the documents of the archive and their sheltered existence and patriarchic function without which no archive would come into being. The archive shelters itself and once sheltered, it becomes concealed. The archive must not only be grounded on a stable structure, but it assembles

the functions of unification, of identification and of classification [which] must be paired with [...] the power of consignation – the gathering together of signs. [...] In an archive, there should not be any absolute dissociation, any heterogeneity or secret which could separate, or partition, in an absolute manner. (Thus) [t]he archontic principle of the archive is also a principle of consignation, that is, of gathering together.³⁴

Shelter and home are two of our most fundamental human needs. By providing the history of the archive, Derrida opens a discussion to the similarity of the home and the museum and archive. The border between home, museum, and archive is fluid, as stated in the above-mentioned example. Housing his collection of personal objects and stories within the appropriated space of the former Workers' Movement Museum, Legrady opens up a discussion regarding the notions of home and house, in relation to the archive and museum as domiciles for collections. Legrady's collection makes the transition from private to public through the *Anecdoted Archive*. It is also interesting to

³³ Derrida, Jacques. *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression*. Trans. Eric Prenowitz. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996. 2-3.

³⁴ *Ibid.* 3.

note that he has ‘housed’ his collection devoted to metaphorical homelessness, creating a home for his collection, in place of finding a home for himself.

During the last decade, since the end of the Cold War, there been a renewed interest in the writing of history, reminding us of the importance of the archive. Derrida writes that there is no political power without control of the archive, if not of memory. He cites Sonia Combes *Archives interdites* (Forbidden Archives) a work in which “she asks numerous essential questions about the writing of history, [...] about the [...] ‘archive’ as ‘power of the state over historian’”.³⁵ Combe, a researcher and specialist in Eastern Europe, demonstrates that the state appropriates national memory by practices reminiscent of totalitarianism. She acknowledges how in Soviet national archives very often information is lost or destroyed.³⁶ This ultimately impacts the writing of history, the recording and preserving of facts, and the inscription of memory. This can also be applied to Legrady’s own archive, in the sense that he has not archived his entire life, but only fragments of his existence. It is through the selection and omission of stories and events, where the writing of Legrady’s narrative begins.

In *Archive Fever*, Derrida also discusses the origin of the word archive, *arche*, which

names at once the *commencement* and the *commandment*, coordinating two principles in one: the principal according to nature or history, there where things commence [...] but also the principle according to the law, there where men and gods command, there where authority, social order are exercised, in this place from which order is given.³⁷

³⁵ Ibid. 4.

³⁶ Combe, Sonia. Archives interdites : les peurs français face à l’histoire contemporaine. Paris : Éditions Albin Michel, 1994.

³⁷ Derrida, op cit. 1.

Therefore every archive is at once institutive and conservative. We see how on one hand the archive gives the impression of remembering and safely preserving, however actually the opposite effect is achieved. Outlined by Derrida, the “concept of the archive shelters in itself [...] this memory of the name *arche*. But it also *shelters* itself from this memory which it shelters: which comes down to saying also that it forgets it. [...] It is thus in *domiciliation*, in this house arrest, that archives take place.”³⁸

While the structure of the archive superficially appears to encourage a process of remembering, the mortality of history cannot be escaped. Legrady employs the archive metaphor in order to find a configuration within which he could deposit all of his objects and stories, so that they would no longer occupy space in his head. He told an interviewer “I didn’t want to carry all that material in my head anymore.”³⁹ Derrida’s definition of the archive as a dwelling is especially poignant since, Legrady’s items are about his exile and homelessness. However, as Derrida describes, once inside the archive everything becomes concealed, sheltered on the one hand, forgotten on the other.

In this chapter, I examined definitions of exile and refugeeism (its connotation to both verb and noun refuse), thus encountering a particular relationship to home and homeland. This relationship has been employed by Legrady, and exists at the core of his memory work. The end of World War II, the beginning of the Cold War and the Hungarian Revolution sparked the migration of millions, the artist’s family included. These conditions ignited Legrady’s personal preoccupation with history. Thus, the Cold War, its historical significance and consequence, is at the foundation of this work. In the

³⁸ Ibid. 2.

³⁹ Legrady quoted in interview by Lovink, Geert. “An Anecdoted Archive from the Cold War.” *Mediamatic*, Vol 8 #2/3 (1995). 16 Feb. 2004 <http://www.mediamatic.nl/magazine/8_2/Lovink-Legrady.html>.

writing of history, the *tekhnè* of memory work, the archive's importance cannot be underestimated. By framing this discussion within the culture of exile, with a reference to the former Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War, I focused my attention to the construction of identity in the aftermath of trauma and the ensuing culture of memory work. Since the opening of borders between Eastern and Western Europe, our attention has been focused on the event that prompted their closing, the end of World War II and its related aftershocks, such as the invasion of Hungary to repress the Revolution in 1956.

CHAPTER FOUR

The Museum Metaphor: Private and Public

When objects from daily life are wrenched from their environment and meticulously displayed and catalogued as if they were treasures, they take on new meaning. They become collective monuments.⁴⁰

Within the first few minutes of entering George Legrady's work, we easily recognise that we are navigating through a museum. Both the introduction and the title *An Autobiographical Archive According to the Floor Plans of the Former Hungarian Workers' Movement (Propaganda) Museum, Palace of Buda Castle, building 'A', Budapest* point to Legrady's second metaphor, the museum. This chapter will examine how Legrady employs the museum to legitimate his collection of objects and stories related to his experience of immigration and exile. The museum seems to be an ideal metaphor, for it has both storage and exhibition spaces. A storage and retrieval device, the museum is a building used for the collection and display of objects, such as antiquities, natural history and art. As well, I will explore how the museum is not a passive institution but in fact controls both the storage and exhibition of its contents.

The last decades of the twentieth century saw a proliferation of museums. Every possible human activity aspired to find a place to conserve its traces of development. Legrady creates his museum in the same vein, aiming to conserve traces of his history. Storing and exhibiting his collection devoted to his preoccupation with his displaced Hungarian identity within the concrete structure of a museum, he places objects and artefacts related to ephemeral or vague experiences with blurred borders within the exact and predefined historical configurations of a museum.

⁴⁰ Boltanski, Christian quoted in Legrady, George. *An Anecdoted Archive*. op. cit.

This chapter will begin by dividing the museum into two sections, the public and private, or in other words, the official and the personal. The official, public museum is the first, obvious example. Tony Bennett's exhibitionary complex will be used to examine the museum's institutional history, and its relations between disciplinary and power relations. In terms of political power, Legrady's structure is based on the floor plan of the former Hungarian Workers' Movement Museum, one which was dedicated to the proliferation of Communist propaganda. Included in my examination is a parallel discussion of the Soviet museum by Boris Groys, who investigates the peculiar conditions of the Soviet totalitarian aesthetic atmosphere. I will examine two sections from Legrady's *Anecdoted Archive* where he uses contents from the original Workers' Museum in his collection, first, in the introductory screen saver section of the *Archive* and second as part of his *Propaganda Archive* entitled *Archive Photographs 1948-1953*. This includes a series of photographs recuperated from the original collection of the Workers' Museum, which Legrady visited in 1983. I will demonstrate how the museum's function was both a means of controlling its citizens, and how it also served as an educational institution teaching the people how to properly live their lives.

Within this context, I will introduce Andreas Huyssen's examination of the museum as a monument. Huyssen argues that monuments may not remember events so much as bury them altogether beneath layers of national myths and explanations. To illustrate this point, a selection of random Soviet wall plaques from the *Archive* will be used to demonstrate how assigning monumental form to memory does not guarantee that the event will be remembered forever.

As a bridge from the public to the private museum, I will look at a room entitled *Money*, featuring Legrady's collection of inherited coins and collected currencies. This section will be used to demonstrate the importance of the souvenir and the telling of related stories in the remembrance of history. Essentially a collection of worthless monies, this will initiate a discussion which will be continued in the end of the chapter about the collection of garbage and its implication in personal history.

The next section about the private or personal museum will be based on Susan Stewart's theoretical writings from her book *On Longing*. She writes that the museum serves as the central metaphor for the collection, and speaks about the necessity for every household to have a museum within its walls. Here I will discuss Legrady's *Old Flower Patterned Pottery* from the room called *Objects*, which features a personal collection from Eastern Europe and the West, functional things, curiosity items, mementos, things of historical interest and family items. I will show how Legrady assembles a collection of souvenirs and experiences and positions them within a CD-ROM in an effort to conserve them from disappearance, forgetting and death.

The Exhibitionary Complex

Not only a site of memory for the inscription of the social collective imagination, the museum is also a site of the representation of power. A brief look into the institutional history of the museum since the nineteenth century, reveals the museum's 'other side'. In his 1995 essay "The Exhibitionary Complex" Tony Bennett explains how the museum, housing a collection of objects, opened its doors to the public in the

nineteenth century to create a spectacle that emphasized the relationships between disciplinary and power relations.⁴¹

Bennett examines the formation of the exhibitionary complex as a set of cultural technologies intended to organize a voluntary self-regulating citizenry.

Through the power to command and arrange things and bodies for public display – they sought to allow the people, and *en masse* rather than individually, to know rather than be known, to become the subjects rather than the objects of knowledge. Yet, ideally, they sought also to allow people to know and thence to regulate themselves; to become, in seeing themselves from the side of power, both the subjects and the objects of knowledge, knowing power and what power knows, and knowing themselves as (ideally) known by power, interiorizing its gaze as a principle of self-surveillance and, hence, self-regulation.⁴²

As Bennett notes, since the nineteenth century, the state increasingly became involved in cultural activity, where museums and galleries played a pivotal role in the formation of the modern state and were fundamental to its conception as a set of educative and civilizing agencies. Thus, the exhibitionary complex provided a context for the *permanent* display of power and knowledge.⁴³

Legrady appropriates the former Workers' Movement Museum in Budapest, a museum designed to exhibit and reflect the ideology and power of the occupying Soviet army, the underlying cause for Legrady's forced exile. Keeping this in mind, I would like to add another dimension to this discussion of the museum and its relationship to power and knowledge, an examination of the museum in relation to the Stalinist aesthetic

⁴¹ Bennett's analysis hinges on the comparison of Michel Foucault's carceral archipelago, which developed at about the same time as the exhibitionary complex. The museum's nineteenth century public were essential witnesses to a display of power as their ancestors had been essential witnesses before the spectacle of punishment (such as hangings and burnings) in the eighteenth century. The museum as an institution of exhibition formed complex relationships between disciplinary and power relations. Bennett explains that by examining the concurrent histories of these two systems, we discover that new "exhibitionary forms which, in simultaneously ordering objects for public inspection and ordering the public that inspected, were to have a profound and lasting influence on the development of museums, art galleries, expositions and department stores. Bennett, Tony. "The Exhibitionary Complex." The Birth of the Museum: History, Theory, Politics. London: Routledge, 1995. 59-61.

⁴² Ibid. 63.

⁴³ Ibid. 66.

of Socialist realism, “the project for creating a single, total space of aesthetic experience – a space of the coincidence of art and life.”⁴⁴ Boris Groys writes in “The Struggle Against the Museum,” that the Socialist aesthetic strove to equalize “museum exhibits and their surrounding milieu, accomplished by physically filling the milieu with art indistinguishable from that in museums. It is this strategy of equalizing what is in museums with what lies outside them that creates the very specific aesthetic atmosphere found in totalitarian societies of the Stalinist type.”⁴⁵

Within this uninterrupted environment of life as art and the instrumentalization of artistic tradition, it meant that the entire space of Soviet life gradually became filled with an enormous number of posters, monuments, frescoes, mosaics which were all modelled on museum art. As a result, the boundaries between the space of real life and museum exhibits were gradually erased,⁴⁶ perhaps becoming the ultimate exhibitionary complex. While Bennett’s focus is nineteenth century Britain, his argument could easily be applied to the total aesthetic project of Socialist Realism. Bennett writes:

to identify with power, to see it as, if not directly theirs, then indirectly so, a force regulated and channelled by society’s ruling groups but for the good of all: this was the rhetoric of power embodied in the exhibitionary complex – a power made manifest not in its ability to inflict pain but by its ability to organize and co-ordinate an order of things and to produce a place for the people in relation to that order.⁴⁷

The people in the Soviet order were the monumentalized workers and all efforts were directed in producing a place for them. “Art became situated in the system of proletarian education. In order to construct the beautiful in life itself the proletariat first

⁴⁴ Groys, Boris. “The Struggle Against the Museum.” Museum Culture: Histories, Discourses, Spectacles. Eds. Daniel J. Sherman and Irit Rogoff. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994. 161.

⁴⁵ Ibid. 157.

⁴⁶ Ibid. 156-7.

⁴⁷ Bennett, op. cit. 67.

needed some ideal of beauty to embody.”⁴⁸ Thus the goal of the Soviet museum was to present object and artefacts which were useful from a didactic point of view. “This new museum was oriented not toward the heterogeneity of historical artistic styles or the representation of the historically original in art, but towards homogeneity, the establishment of common ground, and the elucidation of what is identical in all of world culture.”⁴⁹ The Workers’ Movement Museum in Budapest was such a site of education and idealization.

Legrady includes references to the Workers’ Movement Museum in two sections of his *Anecdoted Archive*, first in the introductory screen saver (described in chapter one) and then in *Archive Photographs 1948-1953*, the first option in the room called the *Propaganda Archive*. The small texts used in the introduction are from the museum’s brochure,⁵⁰ popping up in random order on the screen in red text boxes. Three examples from my introduction are:

Struggle in order to bring about a People’s Democracy in Hungary. Elections in 1945 and in 1947. Nationalism of factories and banks. Fusion of the two workers’ parties (1945-1948).

The counter-revolutionary uprising in 1956 and its defeat.

Hungarians struggle against fascism abroad. Liberating military operations of the Soviet army in Hungary. Formation of the first democratic Hungarian National Assembly and government; their first measures. Distribution of land. (1944-1945)

Each of these examples not only portrays the life of the heroic worker, but also establishes common ground, indoctrinating an identification with power.

In the *Anecdoted Archive*, Legrady manipulates these small texts, removing them from their original context and placing them in the introduction to his collection. He uses

⁴⁸ Groys, op cit. 146.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Legrady, George. E-mail to the author. op. cit.

them as a screen saver, where they pop up in random order, removed from their historical chronology. Thus, Legrady perforates the seamless construction of the Soviet museum, signifying its lost power. The museum's original contents were placed in storage in 1991, when the Workers' Museum was replaced by the Ludwig Museum. Today, the Museum of Contemporary Art occupies the building. Legrady himself notes that the Workers' Museum's location, ironically, was in the Hapsburg castle on the Buda hill.⁵¹ The Hapsburgs were one of Europe's most famous royal families who ruled the Holy Roman Empire for nearly 400 years, and its members occupied thrones in Europe from the 1200s to the early 1900s. With the change of power from the ruling royal family to the revolutionary state, the worker became the heroic leader (or so dictated the propaganda). Thus, the role of the Workers' Museum was educative, and the shift from one use of the building to another, enabled identification with the current regime.

The second example of Legrady's appropriated contents from the Workers' Museum includes some photographs devoted to the monumentalized worker. He acquired these pictures in 1983 on one of his visits to Hungary when he spent two days in the Workers' Museum's photographic archive making selections, and taking his own images of these photographs near an open window for light.⁵² On this specific visit, he was interested in conceptually-based, staged photography influenced by deconstructing advertising in California. "When I came to Budapest in 1983 to do research at the Propaganda museum I was interested in the construction of ideological narratives during the transitional period to communism in 1945-52. My

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid.

desire was to contrast them to the advertising narrative strategies that I was coming across in everyday life in California.”⁵³

Clicking on this section, music starts to play, trumpet calls and men’s chorus voices merrily sing us along to work. We read the following text:

Photographs from the archive of the Workers’ Movement Museum
In 1983 I selected 30 photographs from the archives of the Workers’ Movement Museum in Budapest. The collection of 60,000 photographs document the Communist based events between 1945-1956. My research topic was the ‘role of women in the Socialist World’. Final selection was based on visual clarity, contrast between rural and urban environments, the transition to an industrial world, historical events and other ideologically directed imagery. The images were photographed with available light using a Russian single lens reflex and Czechoslovakian film. The Museum’s archive is now in permanent storage

Following the arrow in the upper right hand corner, the next click brings us to six small photographs on one screen (Fig. 22). The captions for the photographs read as follows:

1. Woman Locomotive Conductors
2. Party Organizing
3. Post WW2 Reconstruction
4. Peasant Land Grants & Harvest
5. Tractors & Stalin
6. Women in Industry

Clicking on each of these six images reveals additional examples of each type. In the first example, *Women Locomotive Conductors*, we find the following subdivisions: ‘portrait at work’ featuring a woman standing in the foreground looking happily at the camera; ‘cleaning the machine’, ‘polishing the breaks’ and ‘repair work’ featuring a woman standing on top of a train performing each of these descriptions; ‘shopping for shoes’ we see a woman standing outside of a shoe store, looking into the window at the display, and the last image, ‘planning the weekend in front of a kiosk advertising “Uncle

⁵³ Legrady quoted in interview by Geert Lovink. op. cit. A comparison between the Socialist project of Socialist realism and the Capitalist advertising is not the focus of this thesis.

Tom's Cabin" theatre play,' a woman stands in front of a street bill boards reading the advertising posters.

Each photograph presents a model for how to live as proper Soviet citizens. Displayed together, they educate, teaching others to comply. Adding some elements from the original contents of the Workers' Museum into his own collection, Legrady brings selections from the past into the present.

The museum is not a passive receptacle containing and making available information about the past. It is a public institution that controls the construction of a national (or other) identity through memory. Legrady writes in the *Archive Narrative* section:

The objects are to be grouped according to standard museum categories and classification contextualised by descriptive texts of each object's history and specific reason for its inclusion in the artist's collection.

Within this statement, Legrady assumes that standard museum categories as such, exist.

As museum director, curator, building planner, etc., Legrady himself occupies every side of this story. In the same *Archive Narrative* section he writes, "these objects in my collection reflect and reveal the construction of my history." Using this collection of personal objects, he imposes order on them in the act of placing them in a museum. Keenly aware of Foucault's ideas about the construction of knowledge, he devised categories, presenting them to us in a deliberate order. Therefore, we do not encounter these objects objectively, Legrady has classified them, positioning them in certain relations, and in short, imposing his order. The creation of the *Anecdoted Archive* CD-ROM can be viewed as Legrady's opportunity to tell his story from his own current position of power. Building his memorial to the traumatic event of his immigration, Legrady's museum functions as a monument for the display and storage of memory.

While the interactor is looking at Legrady's floor plan, deciding which room to enter, we hear footsteps echoing in a hallway. Legrady uses this device to make us aware that we are not alone. Simulating the architectural structure of the museum, the CD-ROM allows us to draw a parallel back to the exhibitionary complex, where Bennett wrote that the museum "shifted progressively away from organizing spaces of display for the private pleasure of the prince or aristocrat and towards an organization of space and vision that would enable museums to function as organs of public instruction."⁵⁴ Museums "frequently contained galleries affording a superior vantage point from which the layout of the whole and the activities of other visitors could be observed."⁵⁵ This "transform[ed] the crowd into a constantly surveyed, self-watching, self-regulating, and [...] consistently ordered public – a society watching over itself."⁵⁶

While Bennett's analysis is true in communist totalitarianism's 'real life' museum, in Legrady's structure we are alone, clicking and entering one room after another. Aware that this navigation is an intensely private experience, I cannot help but wonder if the sound of echoing footsteps we encounter during our stay in the *Anecdoted Archive* is meant to remind us of the possible presence of others. Thus, even though the technology of this digital work enable us to navigate in privacy, Legrady provides a reference to the external 'real' world, one with which we are all familiar, reminding us to not lose ourselves in the intimacy of the work, but to remain conscious of the fact that we may be observed at any moment.⁵⁷

⁵⁴ Bennett, op.cit. 68.

⁵⁵ Ibid. 69.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ There is also a difference between the private experience of viewing this work on a home computer versus the shared experience of a museum installation. In the installation version of this work, Legrady acknowledges that the interactor makes his or her selection public, becoming a performer while the rest of the audience watches. (Legrady quoted in interview with Sven Spieker. op. cit.). In this case, the interactor

Propaganda Archive: Wall Plaques

Andreas Huyssen distinguishes between monuments which articulate official memory, becoming invisible or deposed, and “lived memory, located in individual bodies, their experience and pain, even when it involves collective, political or generational memory.”⁵⁸ The fifth option in this room is called *Wall Plaques*, and clicking into it we are offered a choice of three images. Choosing the first, we see a photo of a wall plaque on the left side, and a translation of the text on the right. The text reads as follows:

Memorial

On the spot where the two trees stand, two unidentified young Soviet Red army soldiers, here to liberate our homeland, lost their lives, killed by fascist bullets.

Rolling our mouse over the lower section of the wall plaque, another text appears, a translation of the lower section (Fig. 23):

This memorial was destroyed during the 1956 ~~counter~~ (spray-painted out) revolution. Replaced April 4, 1957 by the members of the 5th district of the Communist Party.

Here the plaque functions in a similar fashion to the museum, as a monument to the past. Even though it was destroyed, and rebuilt, this plaque does not have the same meaning today. By including these elements from the Soviet regime, Legrady attempts to make their history part of his own. Legrady selectively appropriates parts of the original collection of the Workers’ Museum, including random outdoor memorials, transferring

may not feel comfortable with such a performance, and would instead prefer to not interact and make their choices known. The private experience parallels that of the private museum, for purely personal benefit.
⁵⁸ Huyssen, Andreas. “Sculpture, Materiality and Memory in an Age of Amnesia.” *Displacements*. Toronto: Art Gallery of Ontario, 1998. 31. Huyssen suggests that monuments may not remember events so much as bury them altogether beneath layers of national myths and explanations. It is as if once we assign monumental form to memory, we have to some degree divested ourselves of the obligation to remember. Additional texts on the issue include: Harbison, Robert. “Half-Truths and Misquotations: A skeptical look at monuments.” *Harvard Design Magazine*, Fall (1999): 21.; Young, James E. “Memory and Counter-Memory.” *Harvard Design Magazine*, Fall (1999): 4-5.

them into his *Anecdoted Archive*. Although the original works have been in storage since 1991, he brings out a few pieces, displaying them conceptually in the space they once occupied. Legrady as curator, selects only a few elements for inclusion in his museum, however, even though he ‘rescues’ these from the past, his own project is not immune to the tragic forgetfulness of the memorial.

Money: Loose Change

The *Anecdoted Archive* in its entirety functions as a collective monument to the notion of home (the universally constructed signifier of place and belonging), within the context of the Cold War and to the lived personal histories of lives influenced by political instability. Housing these objects within the architectural and institutional structures of the archive and the museum Legrady employs most of Frow’s defined technological practices of memory, using both storage-and-retrieval devices such as shrines, museums or archives, but also particular practices of recall, structures of confession or reminiscence, the writing of autobiography or history and the telling of stories related to an artefact or a photograph. All of these memory devices are clearly developed in this personal collection. The room entitled *Money* is an example of the practice of recall, the telling of stories related to artefacts, preserving the past from falling into oblivion. Appropriately, such a section devoted to historical coins could even be found in a real museum. *Money* is subdivided into nine inner sections, the first, *Loose Change*, is by far the most extensive, as I will demonstrate shortly. Each of the other eight sections features a different type of money, its front and back view can be accessed at a click of the mouse, and a corresponding anecdote regarding its acquisition or historical facts can

be read as a didactic panel. The following monies are included: *Hungarian WWII Money*, *Hungarian post WWII Money*, *Hungarian Socialist Money*, *Czechoslovakian Money*, *Rouble & Russian Coins*, *Romanian Money* and *Ukrainian Coupons*. The last section, *Romanian Napkin Story* replaces the money with a scrawled upon napkin.

Entering the first room, *Loose Change* we see six coins, three on top, three on the bottom (Fig. 24) with the following text in the middle:

This grouping of coins traces the major shifts that Hungary has experienced through foreign political intervention since 1849. They are presented here within the framework of personal anecdotal recollection. I came across the coins in Budapest, Sept 1988 while looking over my grandmother's (Rosza Várady) belongings after her death.

As we drag the mouse over this text in the middle, it disappears, and is replaced by another text, a type written letter with explanations from his father:

(My father's responses to my questions about coin stories)
Dear George 1991, júnus 6
Was it necessary to spend \$11.50 for the express letter? I'd receive it otherwise next week. For your questions:

Throughout this section Legrady presents two different texts, one superimposed over the other. The hidden text is revealed only when passed over by the mouse. Clicking on the first coin in the upper left hand corner, it appears again, alone, on the left side with text on the right. This model is repeated for each coin:

In 1849, the Hungarians lost the war of independence against the Hapsburgs. I remember a phrase from my childhood that went something like "that isn't even worth a Krajczár", a phrase that was used to denote a worthless thing.

Dragging the mouse over this text, a typewritten letter appears:

1) The Independence War was defeated in 1849 and one of our far relatives, General Lajos Aulich was hung. The "krajczár" slogan was true. At this time our language, our freedom of press, freedom of assembly was forbidden.

Another click brings me to the next coin:

The crown of Saint Stephan was given to the Hungarian king by the pope around 980 AD. It was smuggled out to the West during WWII, kept in Fort Knox, and later returned to Hungary in the mid '80's. I found colourful postcards of it proudly displayed at the Propaganda Museum in Budapest, next to Socialist posters and pictures of proletarian workers.

The accompanying hidden letter revealed at a roll of the mouse:

2) St Stephan's Holy Crown story is true. It was only the upper part (semi-global) which was given by the pope, the lower part was given by one of the Byzantine emperors. I think it is still at the National Museum.

The sixth click features the last coin:

My grandmother told the cab driver to take us to the Franz Joseph square in the centre of Budapest. He answered, "Lady, this is 1971, You mean Karl Marx square!"

6) When your grandmother was here in 1987, she addressed a postcard to Horthy Miklós ut. Which is now Bartók Béla ut. The card came back with the remark "no such street".

This section is similar to *Budapest Street Signs* from chapter three, in that in both examples, Legrady asks his father to remember facts about local geography and national history, which had been manipulated over the course of decades to serve various political agendas. Instead of simply presenting his collection of coins or video images for the viewer to decipher or interpret on their own, Legrady provides anecdotal information, thus contributing to the collection and demonstrating the complexity and necessity of memory work. Each coin, or street corner, has been connected by memory to the past. Although some information is lost, an attempt to piece together a history has been gained.

This entire room contains coins or monies which are no longer in use. Each represents a change in political system and the imposition of a new order. Legrady came across most of these coins in his grandmother's apartment. It is unclear if she had kept them for their historic or sentimental value, or if they were found by chance among her things in the amassings of life. In either case, Legrady deemed them exhibition worthy, connecting them to his autobiography by placing them within his constructed museum,

acknowledging the fragility of information, especially anecdotal information. Building a memorial, he attempts to preserve these stories beyond the end of his grandmother's life. The last section, *Romanian Napkin Story*, describes the fragility of the meaning of money, and how it can become worthless as a result of political instability.

(In the summer of 1991, the guest house manager in Brasso, Transylvania described to me the desperate situation in Romania.)

Salary	3000 lei/month
1 tomato	3,50 lei
1 egg	1,80 lei
butter	11,00 lei
bread	5,50 lei
meat	28 lei/kg

In her review, Rogoff describes this section as “a history of money as a non-capital entity, money which does not circulate, whose value is not in its live buying power but in its dead symbolic power, money which serves as a testament to all the failed political and national and military adventures which printed it as their most pervasive and widely circulating representation.”⁵⁹ While these monies no longer circulate officially, their value lies in their ability to trigger a memory and bring history into the present. Intertwining personal and collective histories, both Legrady and his father practice recall, remembering and telling stories related to the artefact. In the writing of history, the *tekhnè* of memory work, the museum's importance as a storage venue for the accumulation of artefacts and stories cannot be underestimated especially its association to memory and memorialization.

⁵⁹ Rogoff, “False Endings.” op.cit. 5.

Objects: Old Flower Patterned Pottery

Returning to the theme of exile, Susan Stewart examines the notion of memory and longing in relation to the home or homeland in her book On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection. Stewart writes that the museum serves as the central metaphor for the collection. The museum strives for authenticity and for closure of all space and temporality within the context at hand. Stewart acknowledges that museums seek to represent experience within a mode of control and confinement, while one cannot know everything about the world or the particular subject, we can at least approach it through the collection. Mentioned in Stewart's text is a book on collecting, written for children, where the author recommends that every house should have a 'museum', even if it is only a shelf or a cupboard. Thus

we have directions for the homemade universe; nature is nothing more or less than that group of objects which is articulated by the classification system at hand, in this case a 'personal' one. When objects are defined in terms of their use value, they serve as extensions of the body into the environment, but when objects are defined by the collection, such an extension is inverted, serving to subsume the environment to a scenario of the personal. The ultimate term in the series that makes the collection is the 'self,' the articulation of the collector's own 'identity.'⁶⁰

As an example of such a museum, the box can be viewed as a container for preserving and transporting things, functioning as a container for the self, the history of a self and elements of memory. Thus the institutional model of the museum can be brought down to a very basic, intimate level. The box is a container for preservation, no matter how mundane an item is. Its personal and historical significance can render it precious and worthy of preservation. Interpreted as a container for securing and transporting, the box carries with it a theme of exile and its universal personal

⁶⁰ Stewart, Susan. On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection. Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1984. 162.

consequences. While undoubtedly, the Legrady family was able to escape Hungary with a few possessions, some of which are featured in this collection, the box can not only be interpreted as a smaller version of the architectural museum model, but the *Anecdoted Archive*'s CD-ROM cover is literally a box, one which actually contains Legrady's collection. By examining the objects in this collection we have become aware of different facets of his identity, as every object and story has an intimate relationship with its collector.

We saw how the *Money* room featured not only a collection of objects, but their related anecdotes as well. All together, they make multiple, varied connections to the past. A more intimate example relating to Stewart's notion of objects in the home is found in the *Objects* room, entitled *Old Flower Patterned Pottery*. Here we encounter two images of vases, one white the other black. Clicking on the left hand white vase, its accompanying text reads:

Unusual Hungarian tulip patterned peasant pottery. Given to me by my grandmother in 1971 when I saw it in her Budapest apartment. She did not know its age but said that it was in the Viségráad house ever since she was a child.

The next click feature this text:

By coincidence I came across two other similar pieces at the Budapest Flea Market in June 1993. The seller identified the pieces to be from the early 1900's, made by a potter named Balón Bodór from Kúnszentmárton, Mezötúr country. (The Kún were one of the Asiatic tribes to settle in Hungary after the Huns.)

Another click features the same vase, still on the left hand side of the screen, with a black and white photograph of four women sitting at a table next to it (Fig. 25). In the photograph, the vase is perched on a shelf in the corner of the room. To make sure the viewer sees the vase in the photograph, Legrady points a yellow arrow in its direction. The next click shows the same photo on the right hand side, and its backside, with

handwritten notes, on the left of the screen (Fig. 26). Yet another click, and the handwritten notes are still on the left and their translation on the right reads:

Breakfast in Viségrád at the Várady House (c. 1938) Translation.

On the terrace of the Várady house in Viségrád! From left to right:

Julia Várady (Mrs. László Wolfner)

Katanka Várady (Mrs. Thomas Légrády)

wife of Dr. Jenő Várady (Rozsa Lányi) (Katinka's mother)

Maria Várady (Mrs. Dennis Hetherington)

Legrady does not mention if his grandmother also gave the photograph to him, or if it was found in his parent's belongings. The precise labelling on the back of this picture reveals a great care for remembering everybody who was there. Despite the casual breakfast morning, a careful account of all participants was deemed important. Even the position of the vase in the photograph reflects this attention to detail, perched up high in the corner it is well removed from harm's way.

These two examples, the collected money, the vase, as well as every other object, drawing, video clip and story make connections to the past and have been classified and ordered in a very particular way by Legrady. These are all souvenirs Legrady collected since his childhood or from his travels back to the homeland. Stewart defines the souvenir as an object or memento of individual experience, not available as general consumer goods, but instead, intimately mapped against the life history of that individual.

She writes that the souvenir

tends to be found in connection with rites of passage as the material sign of an abstract referent: transformation of status. Such souvenirs are rarely kept singly; instead they usually form a compendium which is an autobiography. [...] The double function of the souvenir is to authenticate a past or otherwise remote experience and, at the same time, to discredit the present. The present is either too impersonal, too looming, or too alienating compared to the intimate and direct experience of contact which the souvenir has as its referent. This referent is authenticity.⁶¹

⁶¹ Ibid. 139.

Another example of this kind of souvenir is the saved 1971 bus pass and four-leaf clover I examined in chapter three. I argued that Legrady's first return to Hungary was the motivation behind the beginning of his collection. This was the moment when he realised his displacement, finding himself unable to reconcile the identity he thought he had, with the one he encountered on this trip. Thus this realisation can be understood in relation to Stewart's rites of passage and transformation of status. At the point of Legrady's return to Hungary, he was forced to also make a return to the very beginning, to his escape in 1956.

Revolving around the trauma of his family's exile, Legrady's entire collection of souvenirs deal with a rite of passage, which led to the transformation of their status. The act of memory connects each souvenir in the collection. "The souvenir must be removed from its context in order to serve as a trace of it, but it must also be restored through narrative and/or reverie. What it is restored to is not an "authentic," that is, a native, context of origin but an imaginary context of origin whose chief subject is a projection of the possessor's childhood."⁶²

The Forgotten Souvenir and Alternate Sites of Memory

To conclude with Stewart's notion of the souvenir, she writes that the actual locale of the souvenir is proportionate with its material worthlessness. She writes that the attic or cellar are often the location of souvenirs, away from the context of everyday life. The souvenir is thus "destined to be forgotten; its tragedy lies in the death of memory, the tragedy of all autobiography and the simultaneous erasure of the autograph."⁶³ Instead of keeping the souvenirs in his attic or basement, Legrady stores his collection on a CD-

⁶² Ibid. 150.

⁶³ Ibid. 151.

ROM, employing the archive or museum model. However, nevertheless removed from the context of everyday life, these structures could be seen in a similar light to the attic or basement.

The Legrady family was forced to flee, no longer welcome in their homeland. They had become refuse, 'liquid waste' and disposable. Similarly, collections are accumulations of objects and memories significant and important to one, yet trivial and worthless to another. Legrady's personal, worthless artefacts, painstakingly selected and arranged on the floor plan of the museum could be seen as a juxtaposition of orderliness and insignificance.

A link is made to the museum as a repository for artefacts referring to past histories, however, once the work is deemed exhibition worthy, it dies when placed in the museum collection. Groys states that all cultural forms and products face a historical death, either they turn into museum pieces or end up in the garbage heap of history. The boundary between museum and garbage dump is very fluid, and subject to historical revision⁶⁴ as we have seen exploited by the communist regime and the boundary between museum and real life.

Appropriating the structure of the museum, Legrady is able to metaphorically house his collection of personal items and stories within an already existing model. While initially this may appear to pose an attractive solution to the problematic issue of remembering stories and events, including anecdotal information pertaining to the lived history of his family as well as to a collective experience, in reality, the museum model itself contradicts its own monumental status. Just as collecting is an activity of selection,

⁶⁴ Groys, Boris, David A. Ross and Iwona Blazwick. *Ilya Kabakov*. London: Phaidon Press Limited, 1998. 50.

the museum as a public institution controls the construction of a national identity through (selective) memory.

Legrady assembles a history of representations drawn from his family's flight from Budapest during the Hungarian Revolution, and interweaves them with the public propaganda that surrounded the Revolution. The *Anecdoted Archive* is an act of retrieval and extension, memory and speculation, in which Legrady explores the relationship between his work as a collector and the activity of the museum which records, preserves and makes available information about the past. This work investigates the constructed nature of identity, and the way in which memory, history and public institutions such as the museum are repositories of our public memory. Legrady's CD-ROM structure is based on the floor plan of the former Hungarian Workers' Movement Museum providing a context for the permanent display of power and knowledge. Legrady's *Anecdoted Archive* assembles a collection of souvenirs and experiences in an effort to conserve them from disappearance, forgetting and death, however, by positioning them within the structures of the museum and archive, he actually may have achieved the opposite.

CONCLUSION

Collecting is a form of practical memory. The collected objects or stories trigger memories of an event. Personal or collective, these memories can be powerful shapers of identity. Central to the story in this thesis is an escape from a homeland and the subsequent immigration to Canada with refugee status. Viewed from the distance of time, a collection can be seen as an autobiography of the individual collector, demonstrating the history and influences in the construction of identity and belonging. In *An Anecdoted Archive From the Cold War*, George Legrady manipulates his collection of stories and objects by placing them into an interactive CD-ROM. Instead of constructing his own structural environment, Legrady borrows two existing institutional spaces: the archive and the museum. Through this appropriation, Legrady accesses their languages of legitimation thus infusing his collection with additional meaning.

Through an examination of these two metaphors, we see how his initial intention is to preserve and remember history, both personal and collective. He carefully organizes his collected items, forming a monument to his fractured identity, a perpetual continuous reminder. However, in both cases, the archive and museum do little more than simply forget what has been so carefully placed within. It is as if in publishing this CD-ROM, Legrady gets all of this history out of his system. A collector at heart, he acknowledges that he collects and stores his things in order to be able to find one particular item if necessary at some point in the future, but, rarely does he ever see or need what he stores again.⁶⁵ This begs the question, why does he do it in the first place? Perhaps the inability to throw away stems back to his immigrant experience and early hardship, when an

⁶⁵ Legrady, George. Sven Spieker. op. cit.

enormous significance was given to the objects at hand, their value outgrowing their material worth.

Regarding the question of storage, Legrady is especially interested in digital space. Not the focus of my interest, it does however raise interesting questions, which deserve to be mentioned. For example, does the fact that Legrady's *Anecdoted Archive* is a CD-ROM make any difference in the attempt to keep memory alive? Modern technologies of travel and communication have permanently changed our relationship between the world's places and people, and I wonder if having the opportunity to purchase and view such a collection in the intimate space of my home makes a difference, or if it is the same as visiting an institution. Homi Bhabha asks what form of media would be appropriate to represent the modern experience of exile? Is there a mediatic temporality that could be usefully described as 'exilic'?⁶⁶ Is Legrady's digital archive a move in that direction?

Most of Legrady's other work⁶⁷ deals with the use of technology, data structures and interface metaphors. The very nature of the digital archive or museum can be regarded in their connection to memory and exile. The use of technology on one hand enhances systems of retrieval and access, as well as storage capabilities. Our condition of exile in relation to the world's places, appear to make technology an attractive alternative, although it may not actually achieve more success with memory than the architectural models.⁶⁸ The *Anecdoted Archive* story still begins with footsteps that

⁶⁶ Bhabha, Homi K. "Arrivals and Departures." *Home, Exile, Homeland: film, media and the politics of place*. Ed. Hamid Naficy. New York: Routledge, 1999. x.

⁶⁷ For example: *Pockets Full of Memories II*, 2003; *Algorithmic Visualization*, 2003; *Chance Encounters*, 2002; *SensingSpeakingSpace*, 2002; *Pockets Full of Memories*, 2001; *Eternal Summer*, 2000; *A Sense of Place*, 1998; *Tracing*, 1997; *Slippery Traces*, 1996; *[The Clearing]*, 1994; *Equivalents II*, 1992.

⁶⁸ I bought the CD-ROM last August from Printed Matter in New York City. It opens up on my computer in Operating System 9 while I generally operate in OS 10. I asked Legrady if he will provide updated

weave places and objects together. Legrady highlights this familiar act of walking in the opening floor plan of the *Anecdoted Archive*, which we have to return to time and again to gain access to the other rooms. Appropriating our lived experience by this simple metaphor, Legrady enables us to access this collection. We are also able to draw upon memories of previous visits to real life museums.

The *Anecdoted Archive* is rich with metaphors. Within the metaphorical practice of identity, Hall allows for the “inventiveness in the inventing of one’s past.” To fulfil this pursuit, Legrady had adopted many guises, in order to learn about his identity. In this process Legrady has revealed a multitude of stories of everyday life empowering us all to become more aware of who we are by better understanding where we have been.

In conclusion, Legrady assembles a history of representations drawn from his family’s flight from Budapest during the Hungarian Revolution, and interweaves them with the public propaganda that surrounded the Revolution. The *Anecdoted Archive* investigates the constructed nature of identity, both personal and national, and the way in which memory, history and public institutions, particularly museums and archives as repositories of our public memory, control that construction and ultimately enable it all to be forgotten.

versions which will continue to be compatible with future systems, or if one has already been upgraded. In his emailed response, he said no, but he will do a Windows version for compatibility with IBM systems. E-mail to the author. op. cit.

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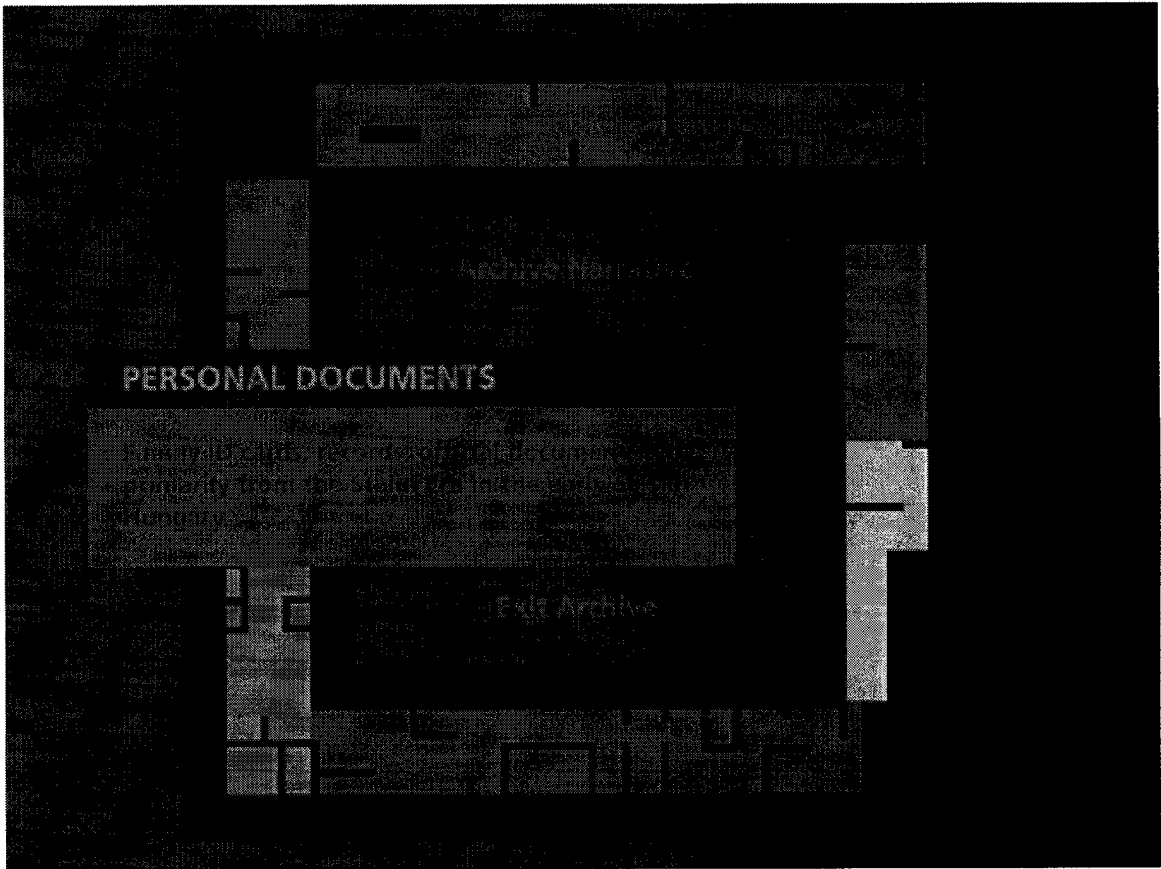


Fig. 1 George Legrady, An Anecdoted Archive from the Cold War, Detail, Introduction Screen Saver, 1994. [An Anecdoted Archive From the Cold War: According to the Floor Plans of the Former Hungarian Workers' Movement (Propaganda) Museum Palace of Buda Castle, Building 'A' Budapest. HyperReal Media Productions, 1994.]

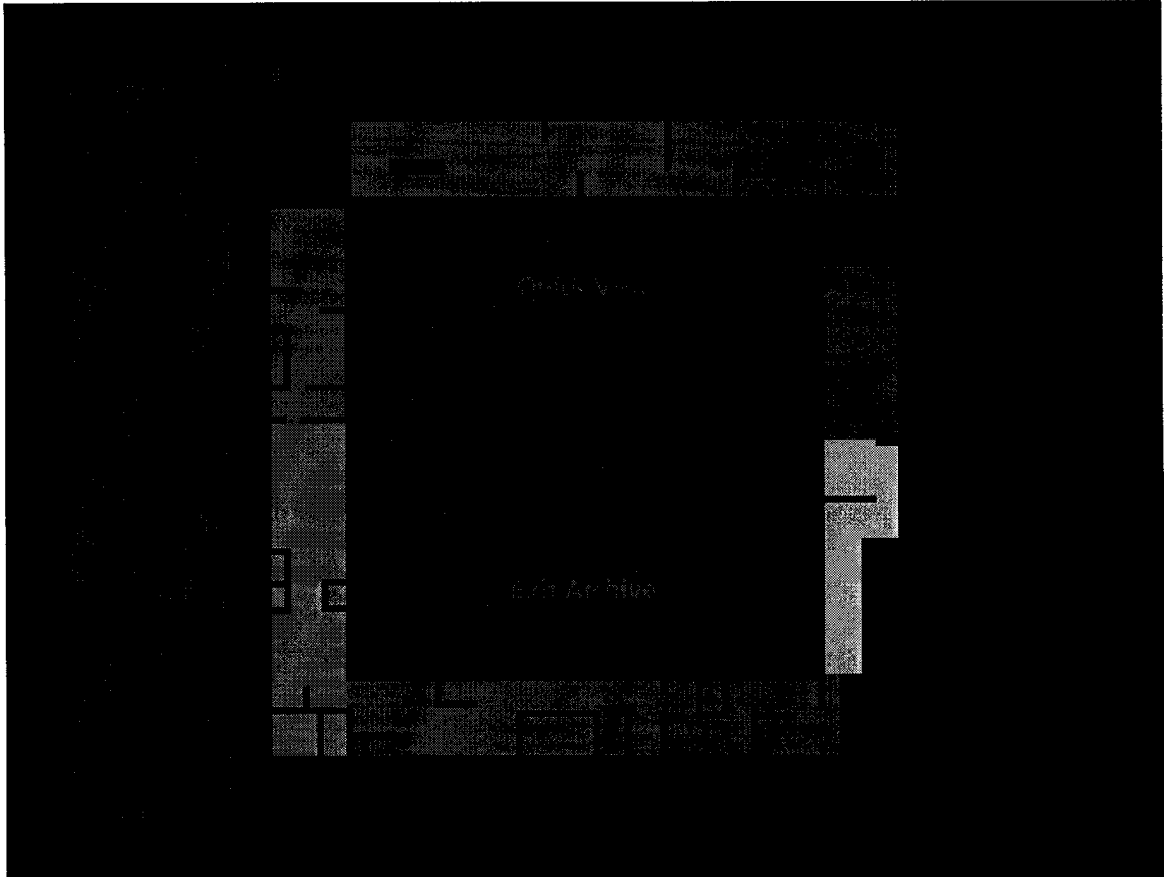


Fig. 2 George Legrady, An Anecdoted Archive from the Cold War, Detail, Floor Plan, 1994. [An Anecdoted Archive From the Cold War: According to the Floor Plans of the Former Hungarian Workers' Movement (Propaganda) Museum Palace of Buda Castle, Building 'A' Budapest. HyperReal Media Productions, 1994.]

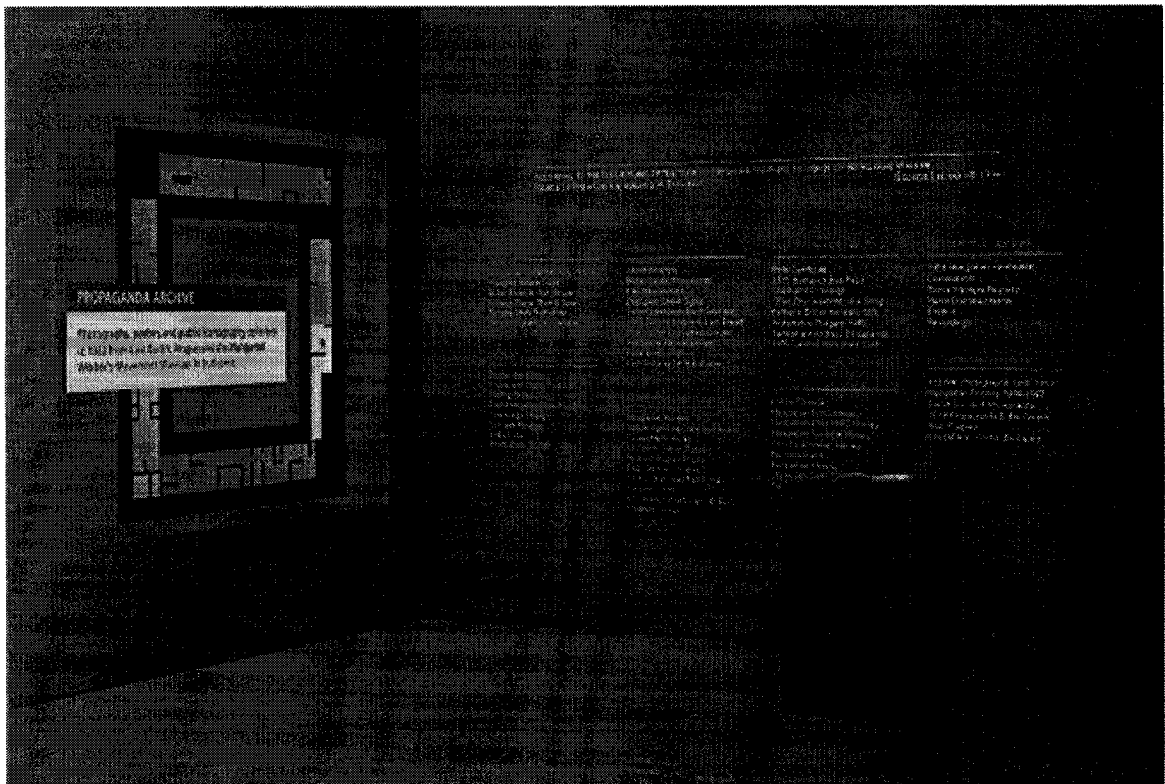


Fig. 3 George Legrady, An Anecdoted Archive from the Cold War, Installation, 2004. [George Legrady Studio, <<http://www.mat.ucsb.edu/~g.legrady>>.]

Installation Lay-out: An Anecdoted Archive from the Cold War

Dimensions: Variable to suit installation location
Date: January 2004

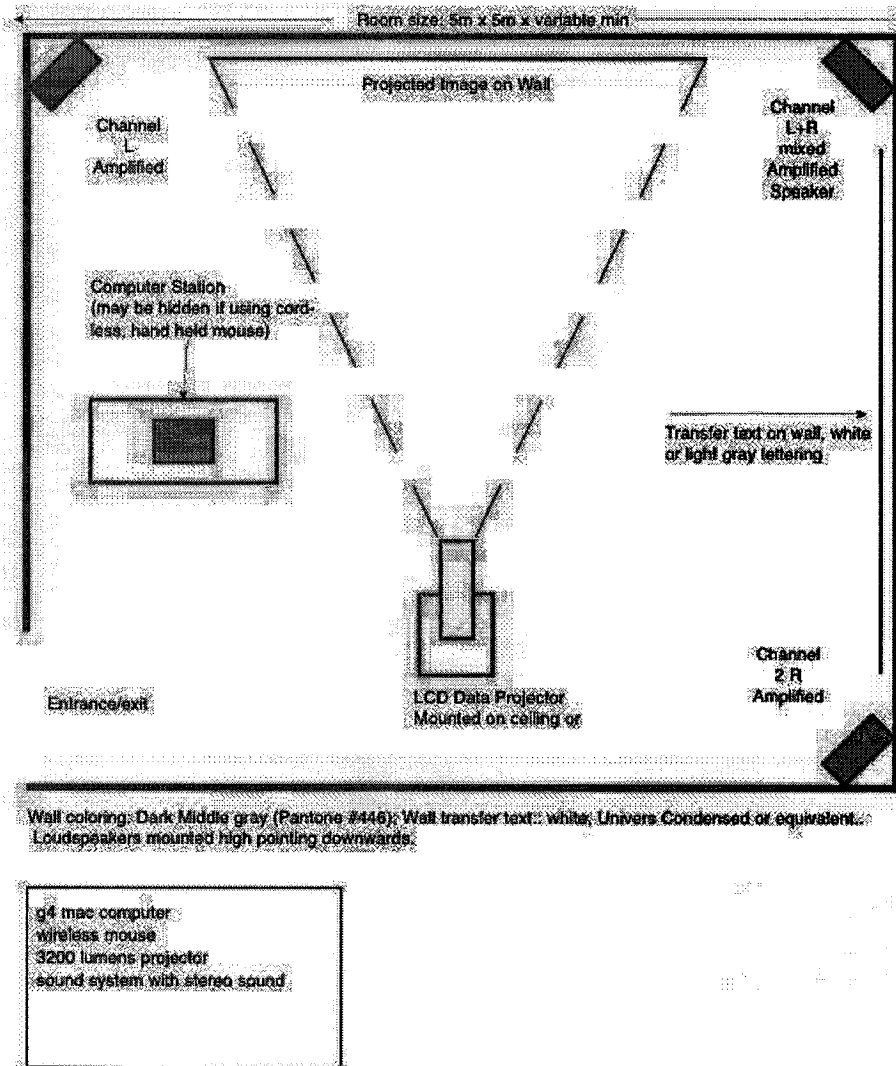


Fig. 4 George Legrady, An Anecdoted Archive from the Cold War, Installation Lay-out, 2004. [Courtesy of the artist.]



Fig. 5 George Legrady, An Anecdoted Archive from the Cold War, Detail, Stories I, Escape Story Narratives, All Three Stories Compared, 1994. [An Anecdoted Archive From the Cold War: According to the Floor Plans of the Former Hungarian Workers' Movement (Propaganda) Museum Palace of Buda Castle, Building 'A' Budapest. HyperReal Media Productions, 1994.]

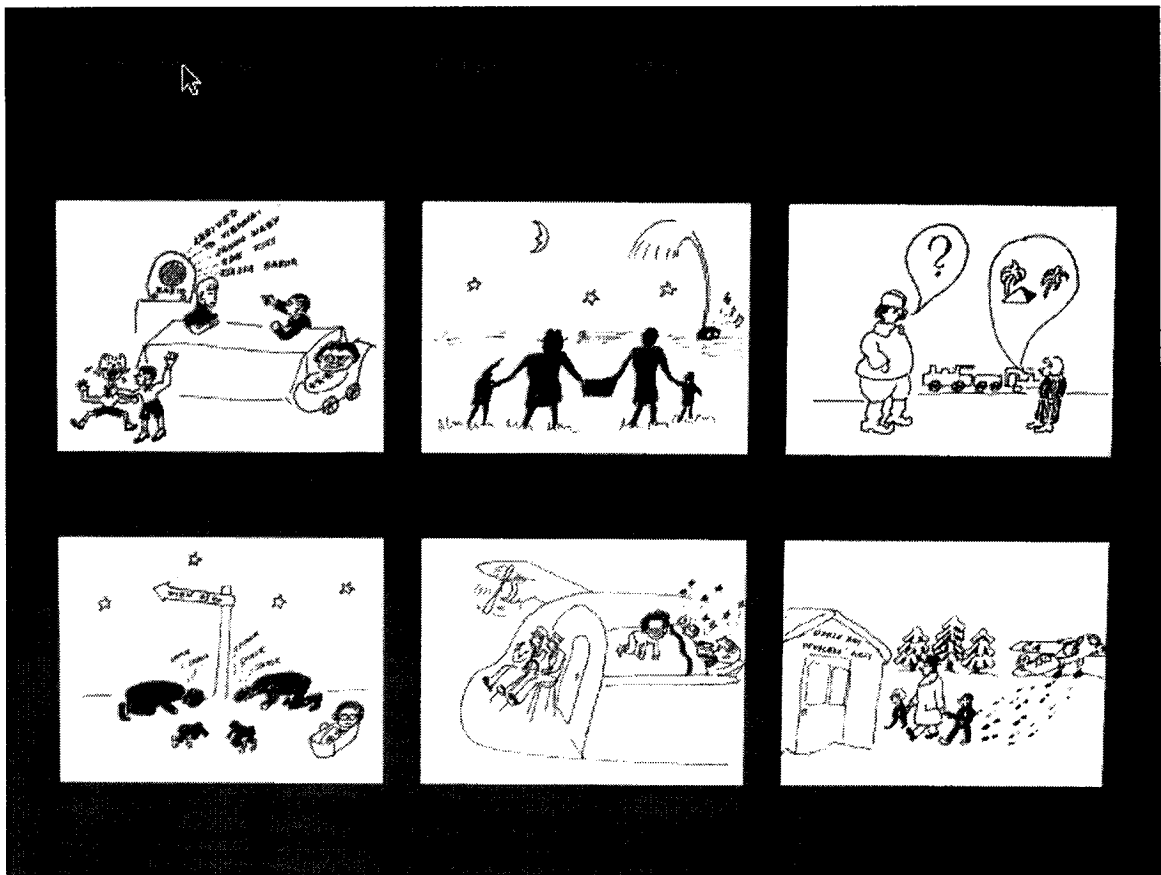


Fig. 6 George Legrady, An Anecdoted Archive from the Cold War, Detail, Stories I, Escape Story Narratives, Each Person's Version, My Father's Version, 1994. [An Anecdoted Archive From the Cold War: According to the Floor Plans of the Former Hungarian Workers' Movement (Propaganda) Museum Palace of Buda Castle, Building 'A' Budapest. HyperReal Media Productions, 1994.]



Fig. 7 George Legrady, An Anecdoted Archive from the Cold War, Detail, Stories I, Escape Story Narratives, My father's Version, One of the first moments on Austrian soil, 1994. [An Anecdoted Archive From the Cold War: According to the Floor Plans of the Former Hungarian Workers' Movement (Propaganda) Museum Palace of Buda Castle, Building 'A' Budapest. HyperReal Media Productions, 1994.]



Fig. 8 George Legrady, An Anecdoted Archive from the Cold War, Detail, Stories I, Escape Story Narratives, My Brother Miklos' Version, One of the first moments on Austrian soil, 1994. [An Anecdoted Archive From the Cold War: According to the Floor Plans of the Former Hungarian Workers' Movement (Propaganda) Museum Palace of Buda Castle, Building 'A' Budapest. HyperReal Media Productions, 1994.]

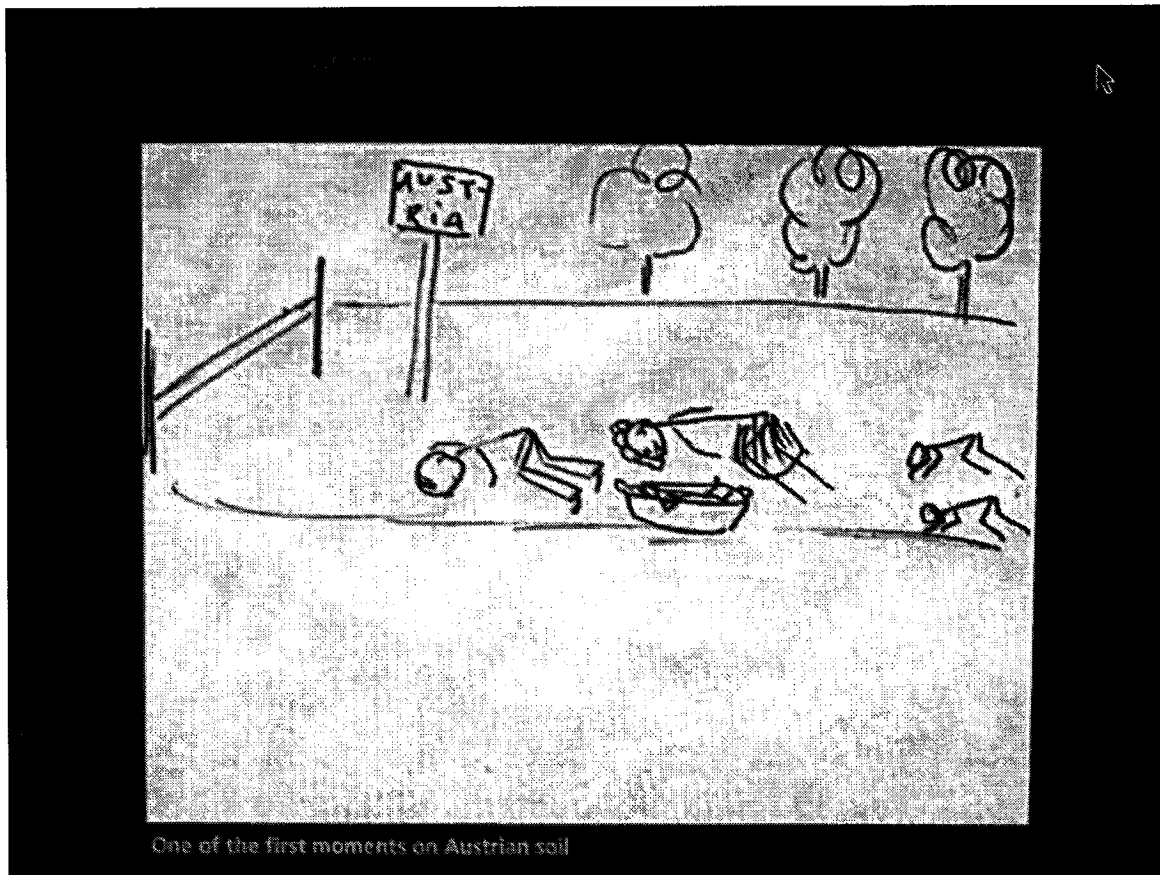


Fig. 9 George Legrady, An Anecdoted Archive from the Cold War, Detail, Stories I, Escape Story Narratives, My Mother's Version, One of the first moments on Austrian soil, 1994. [An Anecdoted Archive From the Cold War: According to the Floor Plans of the Former Hungarian Workers' Movement (Propaganda) Museum Palace of Buda Castle, Building 'A' Budapest. HyperReal Media Productions, 1994.]



Fig. 10 George Legrady, An Anecdoted Archive from the Cold War, Detail, Stories I, New Immigrants in Canada, 1957 Mom on a Spring or Summer afternoon, 1994. [An Anecdoted Archive From the Cold War: According to the Floor Plans of the Former Hungarian Workers' Movement (Propaganda) Museum Palace of Buda Castle, Building 'A' Budapest. HyperReal Media Productions, 1994.]

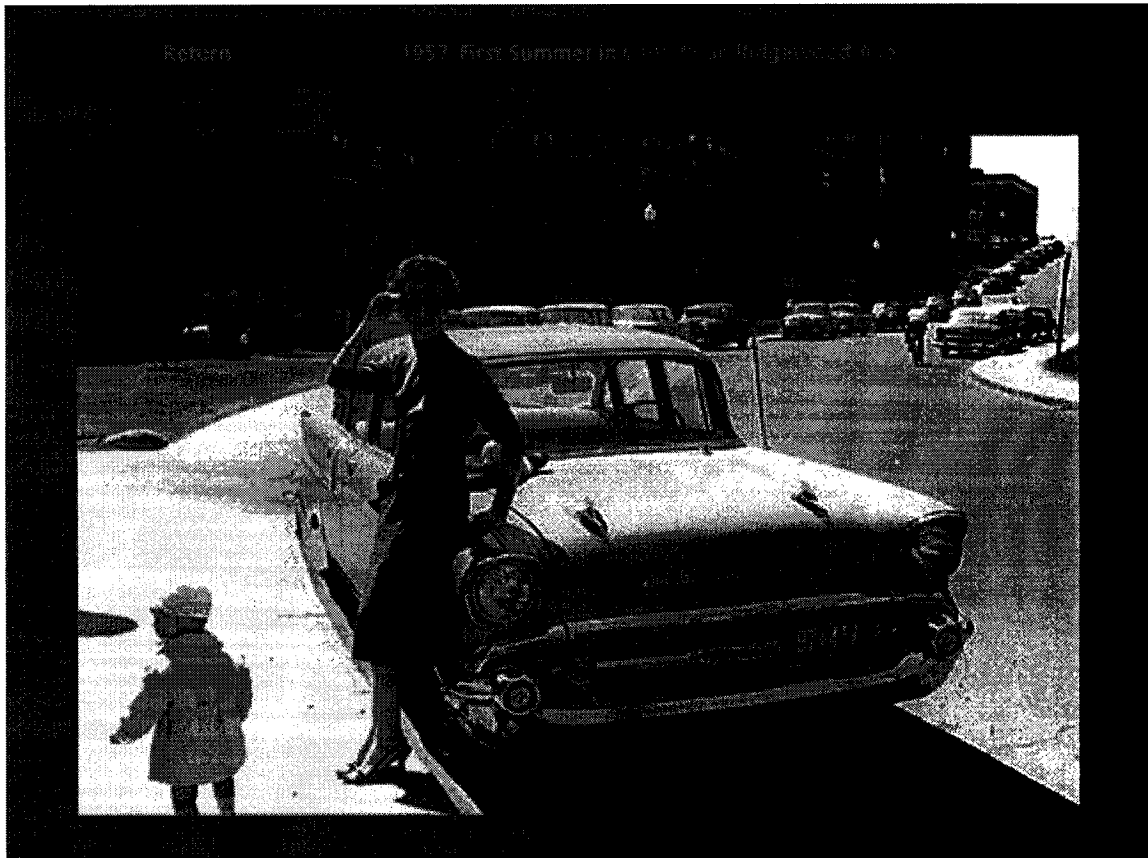


Fig. 11 George Legrady, An Anecdoted Archive from the Cold War, Detail, Stories I, New Immigrants in Canada, 1957 First Summer in Canada on Ridgewood Avenue, 1994. [An Anecdoted Archive From the Cold War: According to the Floor Plans of the Former Hungarian Workers' Movement (Propaganda) Museum Palace of Buda Castle, Building 'A' Budapest. HyperReal Media Productions, 1994.]

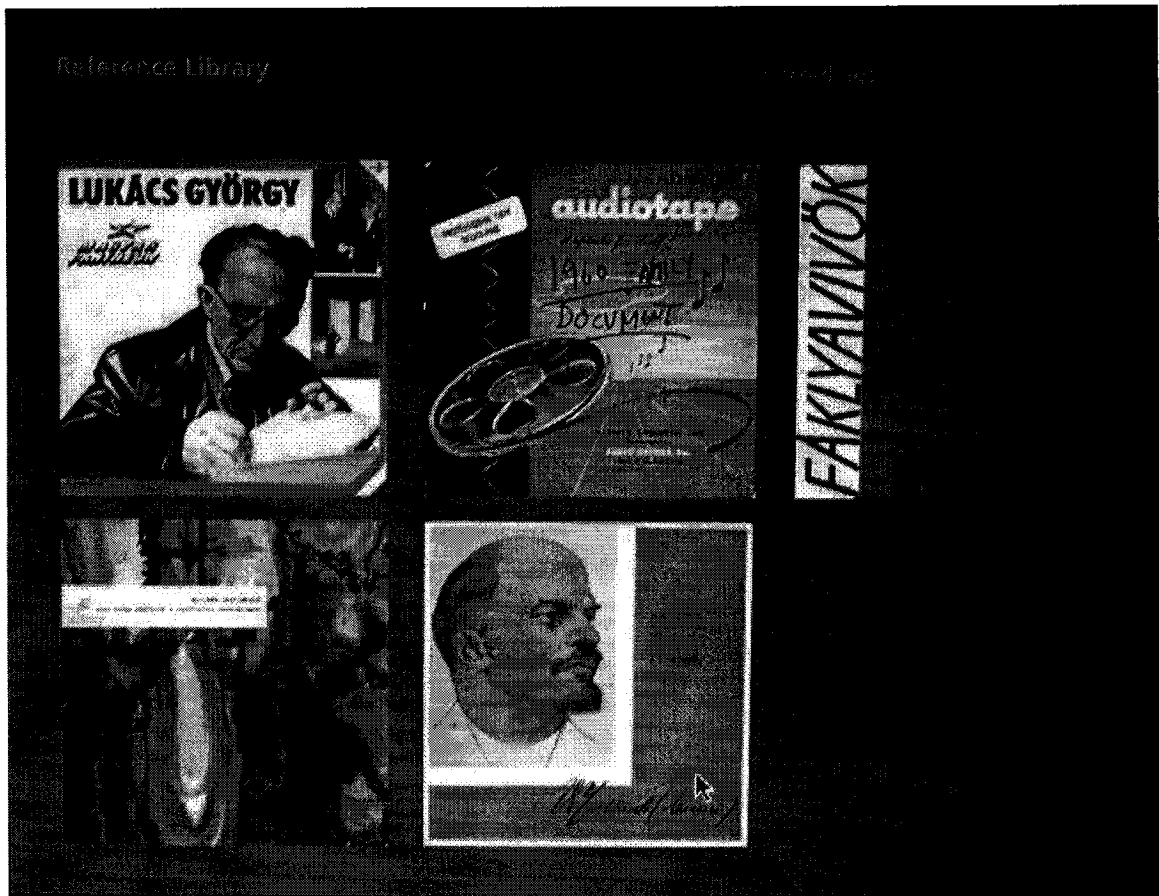


Fig. 12 George Legrady, An Anecdoted Archive from the Cold War, Detail, Reference Library, Recordings, 1994. [An Anecdoted Archive From the Cold War: According to the Floor Plans of the Former Hungarian Workers' Movement (Propaganda) Museum Palace of Buda Castle, Building 'A' Budapest. HyperReal Media Productions, 1994.]

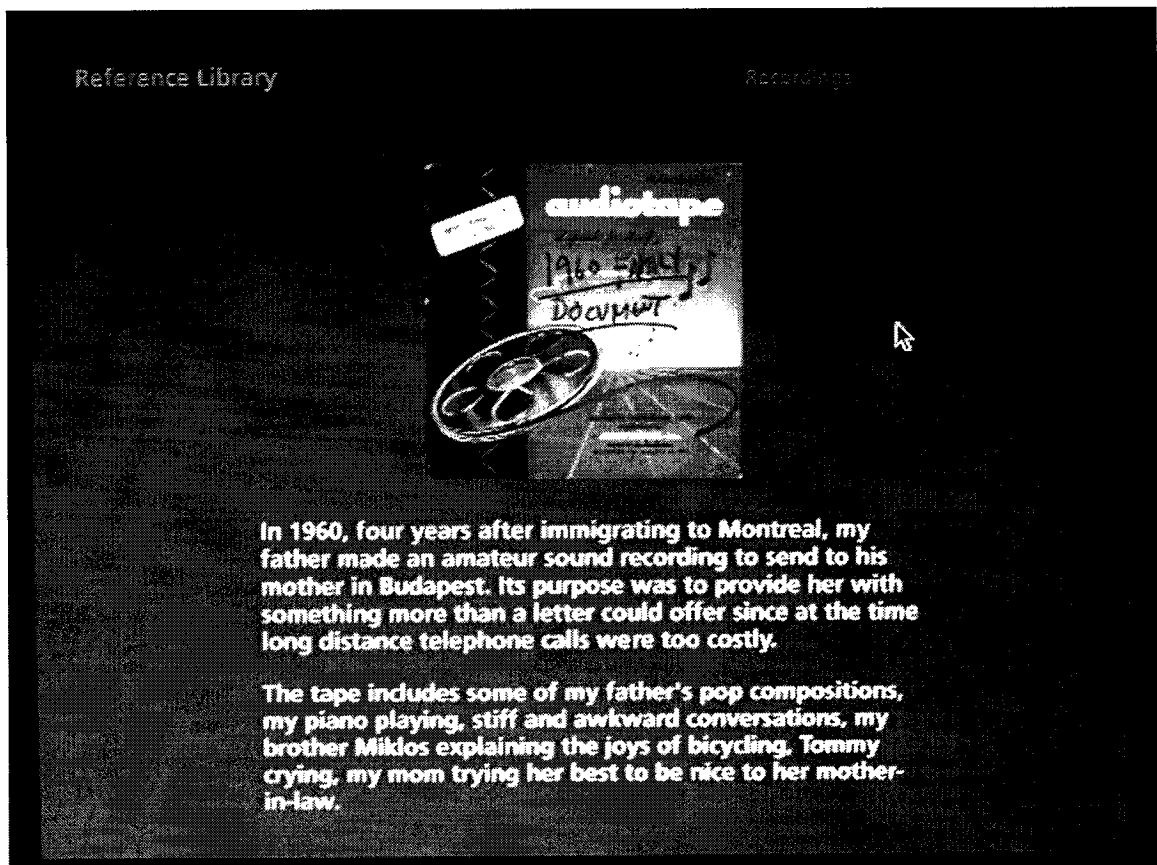


Fig. 13 George Legrady, An Anecdoted Archive from the Cold War, Detail, Reference Library, Recordings, 1994. [An Anecdoted Archive From the Cold War: According to the Floor Plans of the Former Hungarian Workers' Movement (Propaganda) Museum Palace of Buda Castle, Building 'A' Budapest. HyperReal Media Productions, 1994.]

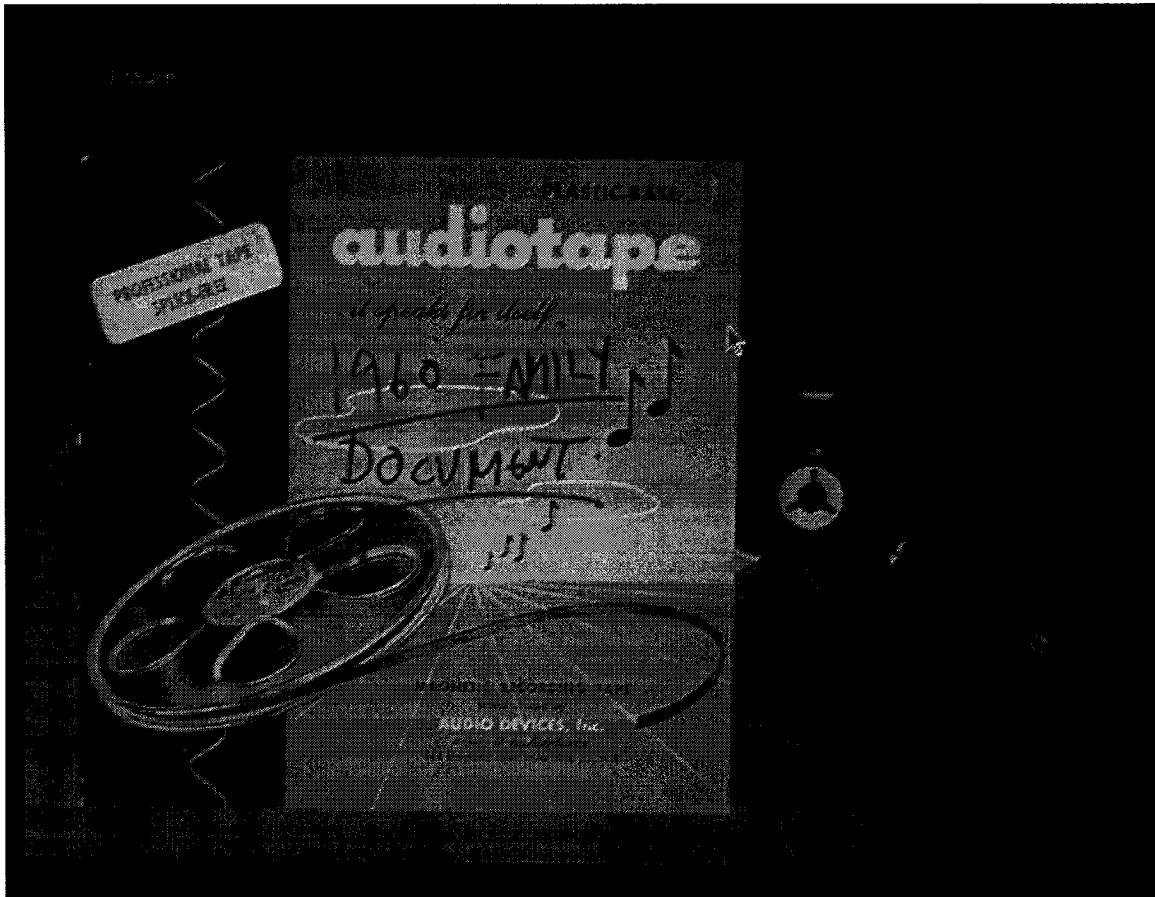


Fig. 14 George Legrady, An Anecdoted Archive from the Cold War, Detail, Reference Library, Recordings, 1994. [An Anecdoted Archive From the Cold War: According to the Floor Plans of the Former Hungarian Workers' Movement (Propaganda) Museum Palace of Buda Castle, Building 'A' Budapest. HyperReal Media Productions, 1994.]

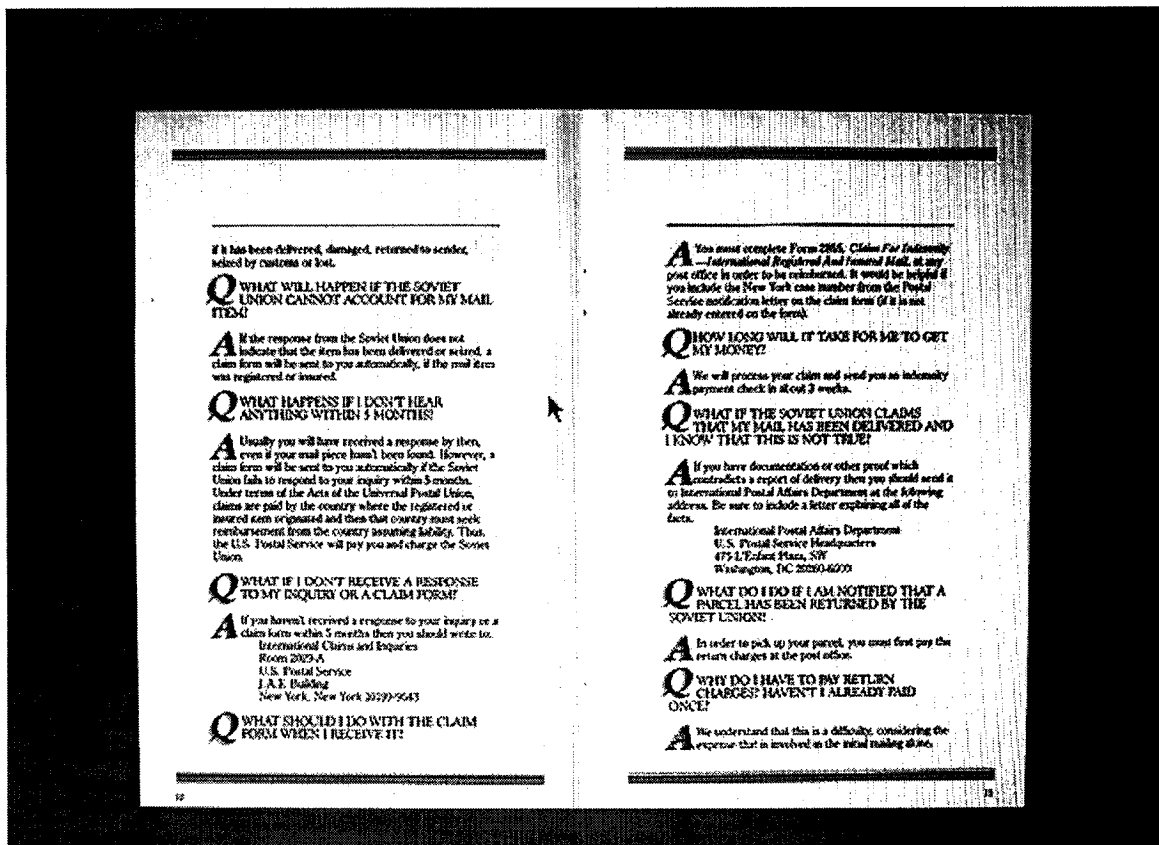
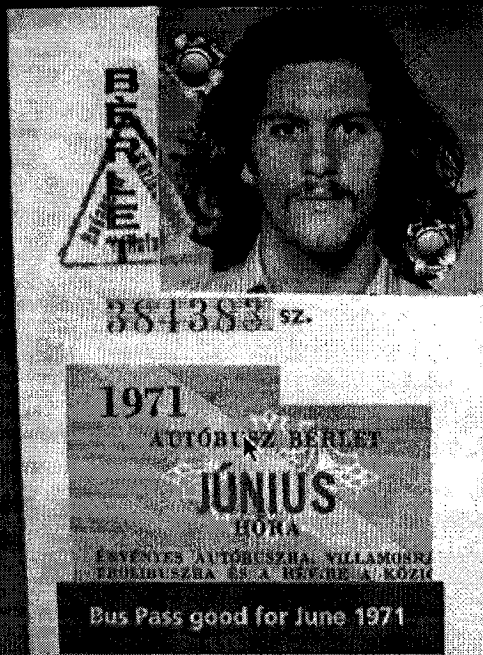


Fig. 15 George Legrady, An Anecdoted Archive from the Cold War, Detail, Reference Library, Exotica, 1994. [An Anecdoted Archive From the Cold War: According to the Floor Plans of the Former Hungarian Workers' Movement (Propaganda) Museum Palace of Buda Castle, Building 'A' Budapest. HyperReal Media Productions, 1994.]

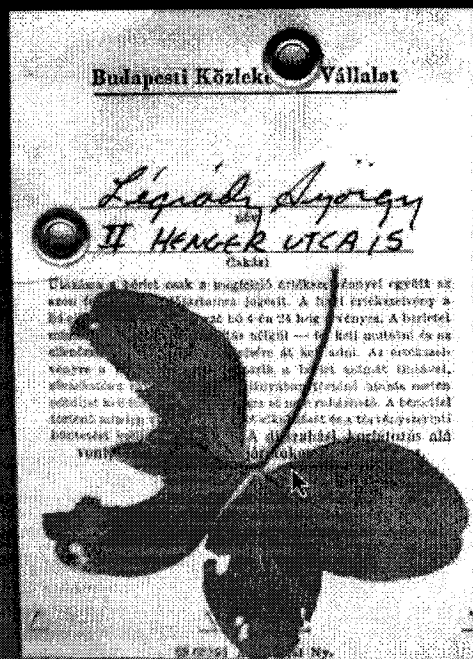


My brother Miklos and I were strongly aware of our Hungarian cultural differences while growing up in the French and later English schools we attended in Montreal.

It was with great anticipation that I returned to Hungary at age 21 to experience the culture I had left as a child.

Once there I was shocked to discover that even though I was familiar with the language and customs, my "Hungarian" identity as I knew it had only a ghost-like resemblance to the culture that was in place. Time had gone by and I found myself displaced in the space between three cultures, part of each but belonging to none.

Fig. 16 George Legrady, An Anecdoted Archive from the Cold War, Detail, Personal Documents, Budapest Bus Pass 1971, 1994. [An Anecdoted Archive From the Cold War: According to the Floor Plans of the Former Hungarian Workers' Movement (Propaganda) Museum Palace of Buda Castle, Building 'A' Budapest. HyperReal Media Productions, 1994.]



Four leaf clover found
in the Viségrad woods.

Fig. 17 George Legrady, An Anecdoted Archive from the Cold War, Detail, Personal Documents, Budapest Bus Pass 1971, 1994. [An Anecdoted Archive From the Cold War: According to the Floor Plans of the Former Hungarian Workers' Movement (Propaganda) Museum Palace of Buda Castle, Building 'A' Budapest. HyperReal Media Productions, 1994.]

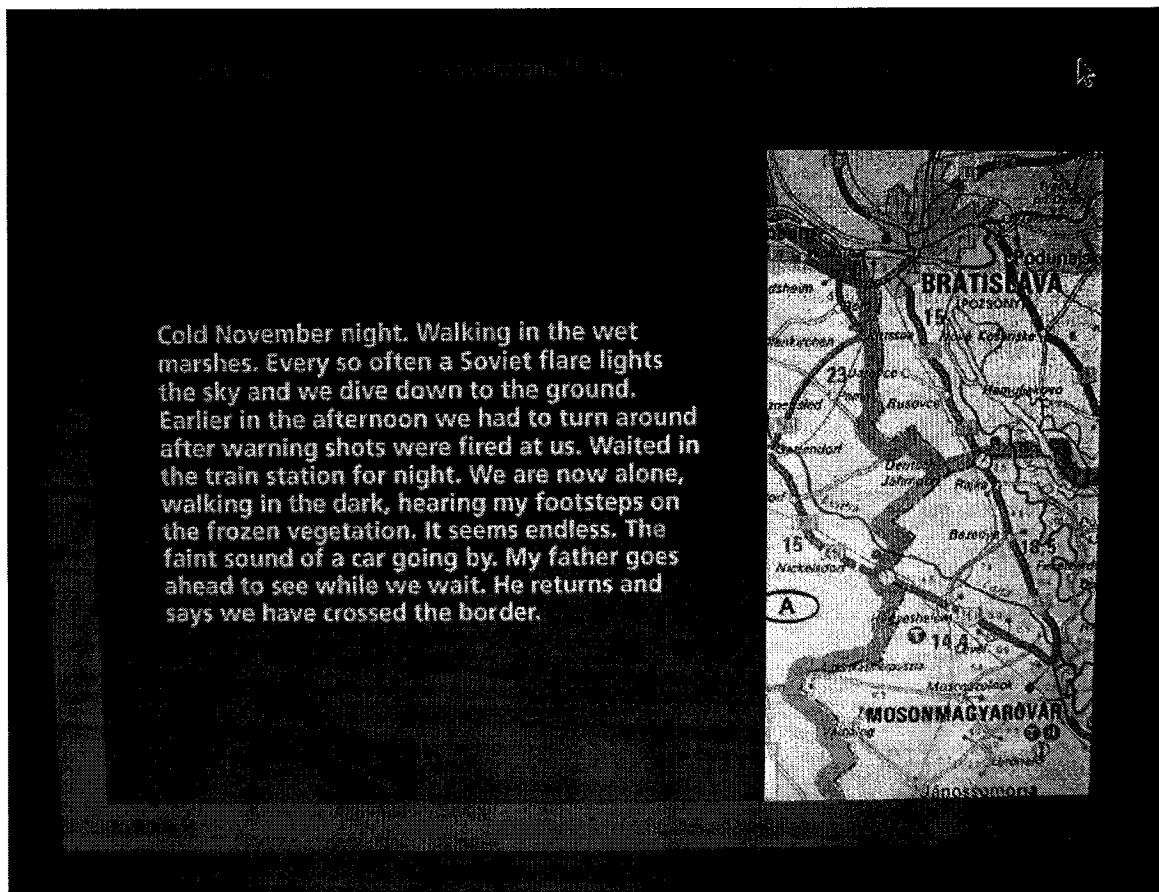


Fig. 18 George Legrady, An Anecdoted Archive from the Cold War, Detail, Images, Border Crossings, Crossing at Night, Hegyeshalom, Hungarian/Austrian Border 1956, 1994. [An Anecdoted Archive From the Cold War: According to the Floor Plans of the Former Hungarian Workers' Movement (Propaganda) Museum Palace of Buda Castle, Building 'A' Budapest. HyperReal Media Productions, 1994.]

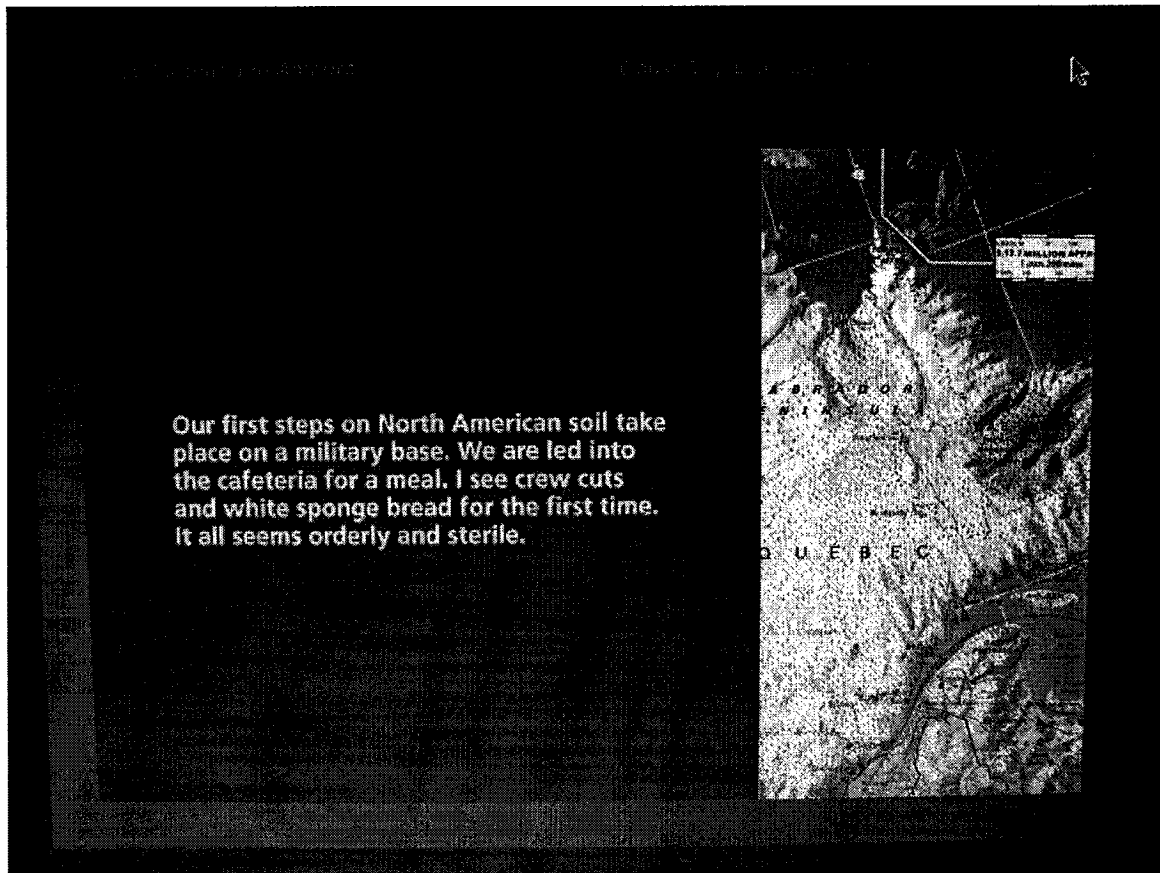


Fig. 19 George Legrady, An Anecdoted Archive from the Cold War, Detail, Images, Border Crossings, First Encounter in America, Goose Bay, Labrador 1956, 1994. [An Anecdoted Archive From the Cold War: According to the Floor Plans of the Former Hungarian Workers' Movement (Propaganda) Museum Palace of Buda Castle, Building 'A' Budapest. HyperReal Media Productions, 1994.]

The young Gypsy woman, her baby and I alone in the train compartment going from Vienna to Budapest. Silence. Later she wants to know about my shoulder length hair and shyly mentions the word 'Beatles'. She asks me to watch the baby and leaves. Before we arrive at the border she returns and hands me a wristwatch to wear. The train stops. Immigration police come in. They look at the woman, one man angrily accuses her of stuffing gold inside the baby. He looks at my passport and says he can't let me through as my hair length does not match the photograph. Sensing trouble the gypsy woman asks for the watch back. An hour later they return. A man with a flashlight turns the seats inside out. One of them grabs my Newsweek, stuffs it in the suitcase and they leave.

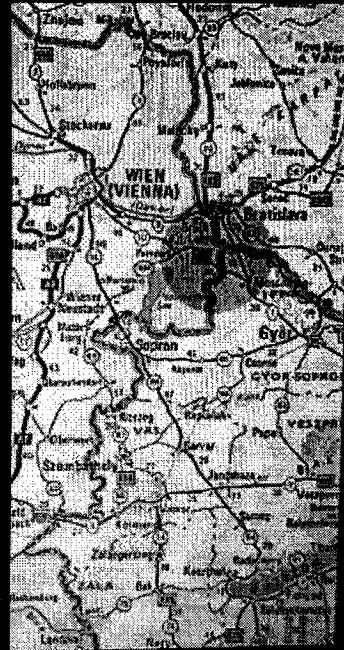


Fig. 20 George Legrady, An Anecdoted Archive from the Cold War, Detail, Images, Border Crossings, The Gypsy Woman, Hegyeshalom, Hungarian/Austrian Border 1971, 1994. [An Anecdoted Archive From the Cold War: According to the Floor Plans of the Former Hungarian Workers' Movement (Propaganda) Museum Palace of Buda Castle, Building 'A' Budapest. HyperReal Media Productions, 1994.]

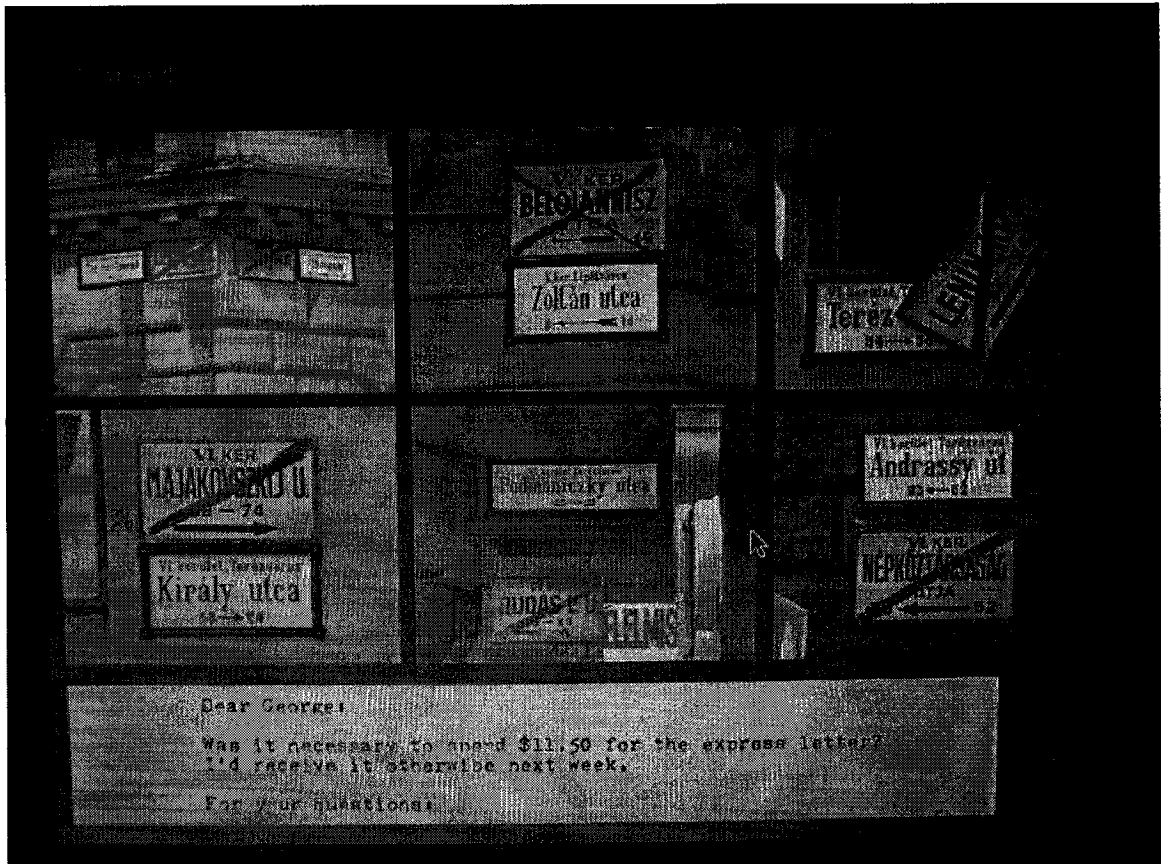


Fig. 21 George Legrady, An Anecdoted Archive from the Cold War, Detail, Stories II, Budapest Street Signs, 1994. [An Anecdoted Archive From the Cold War: According to the Floor Plans of the Former Hungarian Workers' Movement (Propaganda) Museum Palace of Buda Castle, Building 'A' Budapest. HyperReal Media Productions, 1994.]

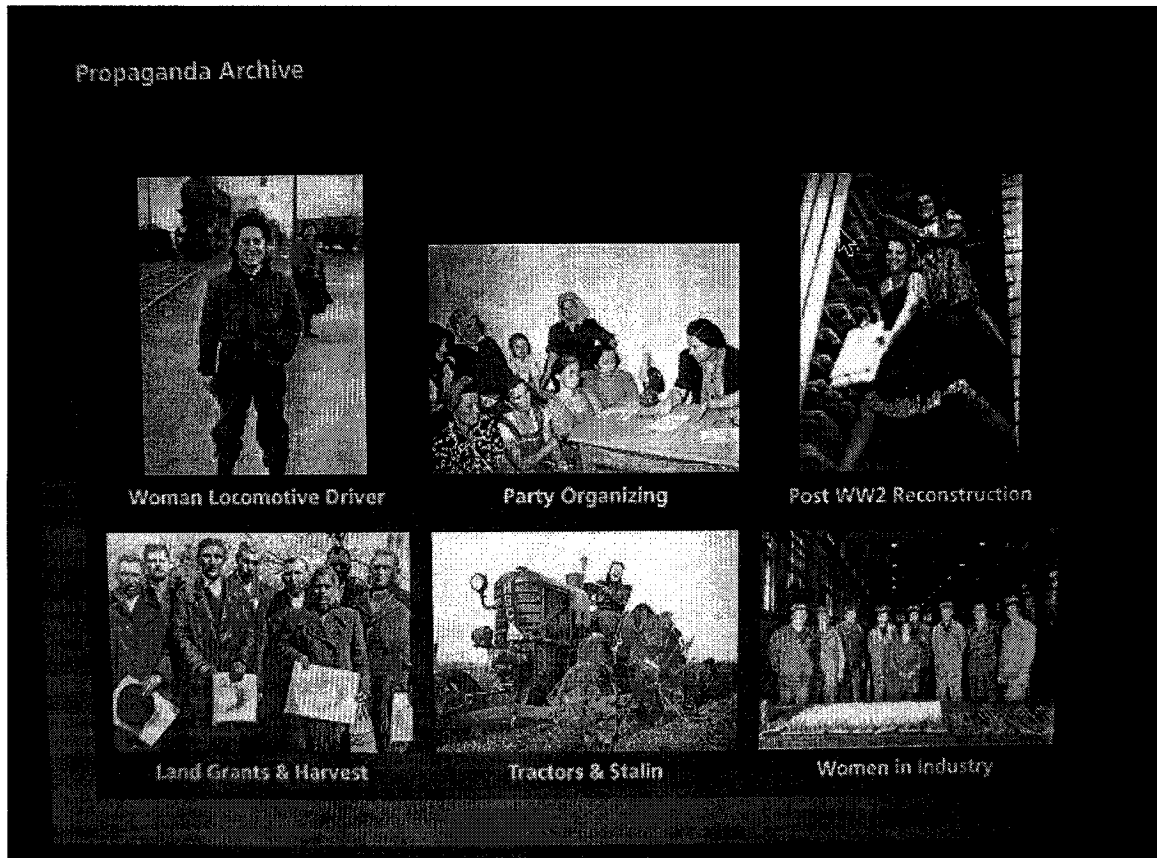


Fig. 22 George Legrady, An Anecdoted Archive from the Cold War, Detail, Propaganda Archive, Archive Photographs 1948-1953, 1994. [An Anecdoted Archive From the Cold War: According to the Floor Plans of the Former Hungarian Workers' Movement (Propaganda) Museum Palace of Buda Castle, Building 'A' Budapest. HyperReal Media Productions, 1994.]

Return

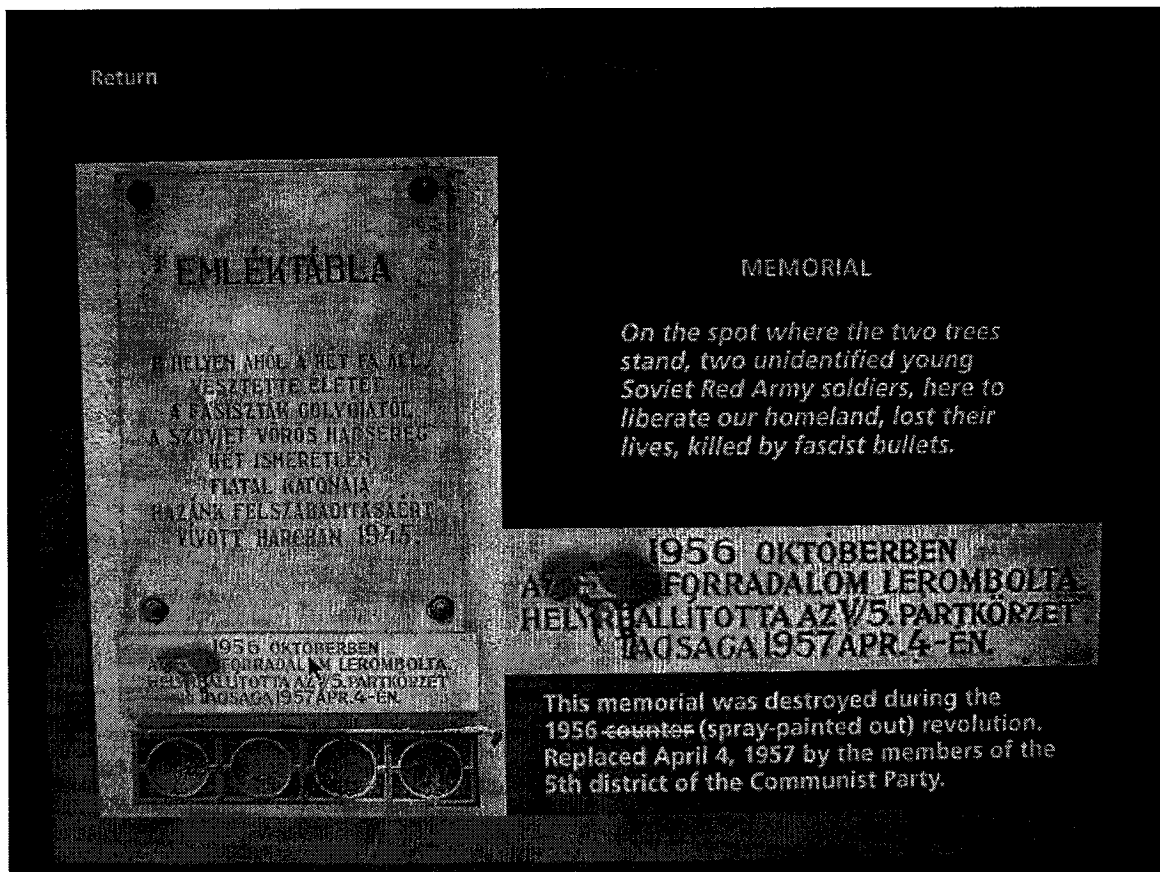


Fig. 23 George Legrady, An Anecdoted Archive from the Cold War, Detail, Propaganda Archive, Wall Plaques, 1994. [An Anecdoted Archive From the Cold War: According to the Floor Plans of the Former Hungarian Workers' Movement (Propaganda) Museum Palace of Buda Castle, Building 'A' Budapest. HyperReal Media Productions, 1994.]

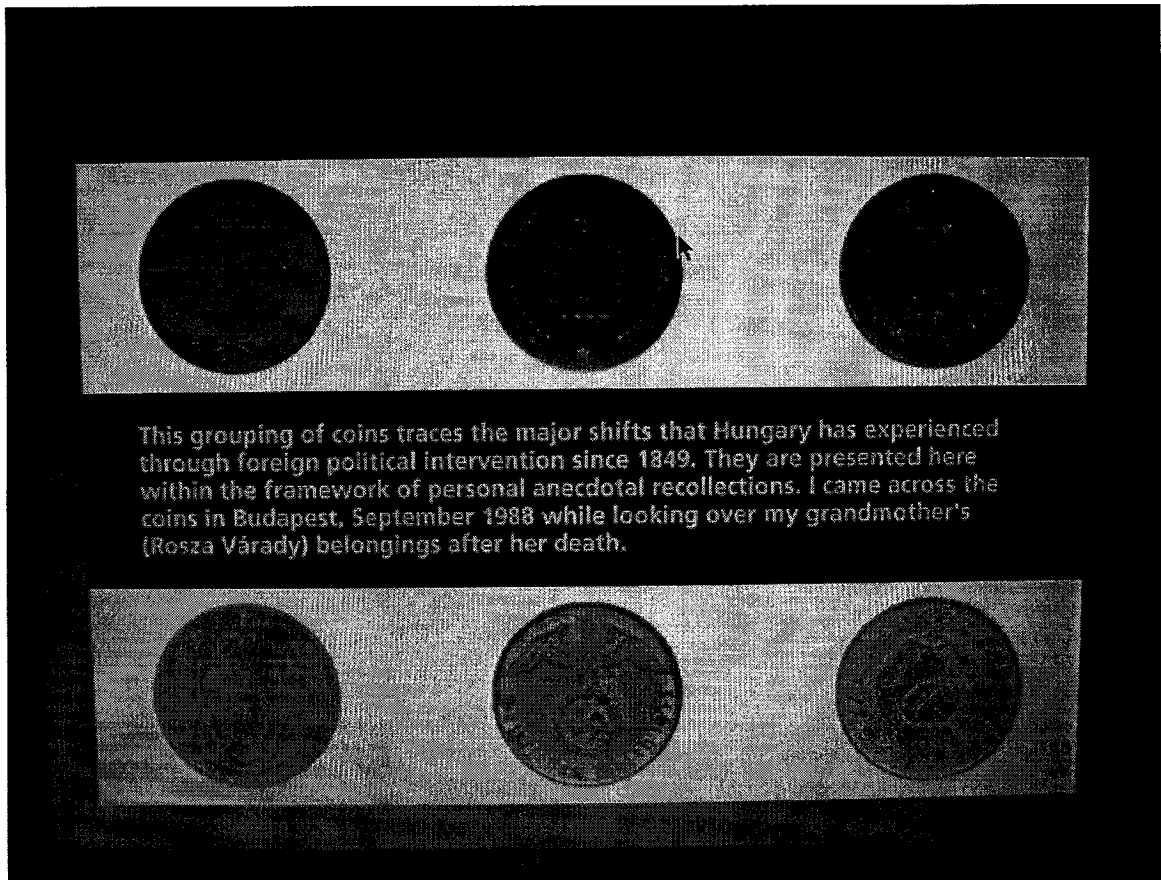


Fig. 24 George Legrady, An Anecdoted Archive from the Cold War, Money, Loose Change, 1994. [An Anecdoted Archive From the Cold War: According to the Floor Plans of the Former Hungarian Workers' Movement (Propaganda) Museum Palace of Buda Castle, Building 'A' Budapest. HyperReal Media Productions, 1994.]

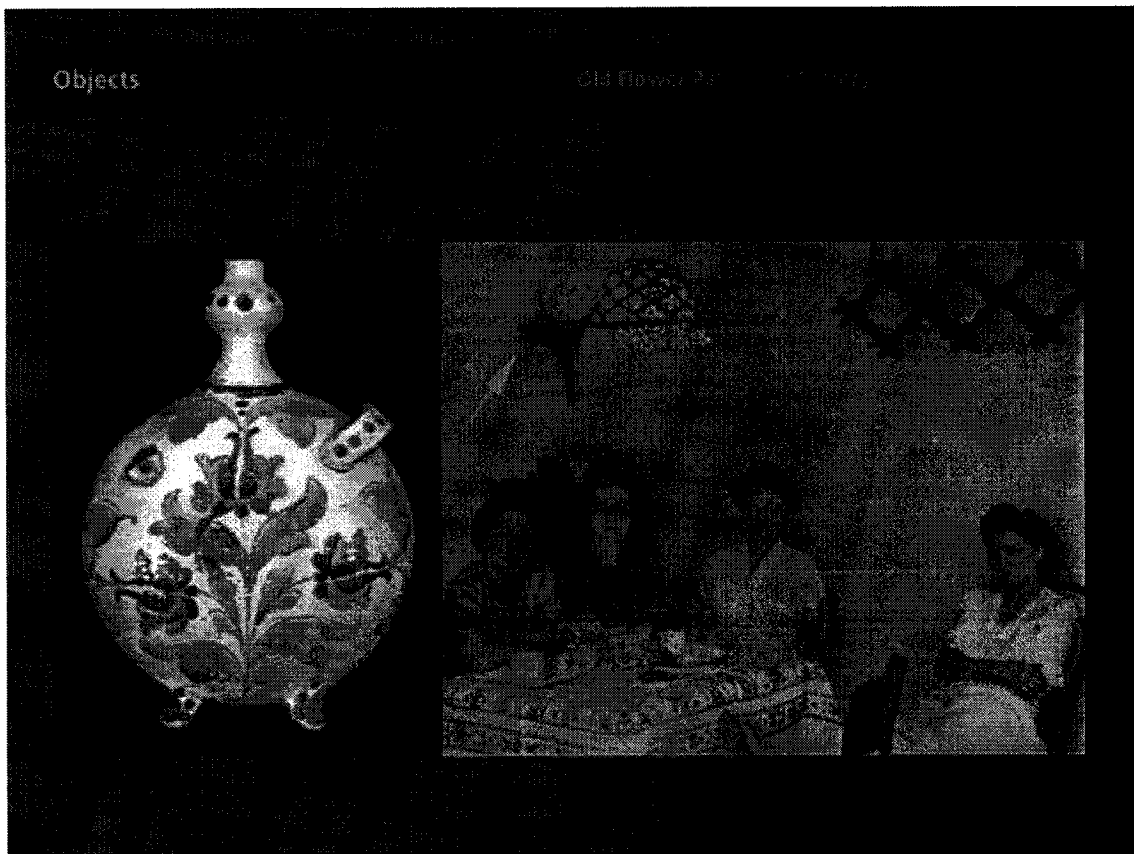


Fig. 25 George Legrady, An Anecdoted Archive from the Cold War, Detail, Objects, Hungarian Pottery, Old Flower Patterned Pottery, 1994. [An Anecdoted Archive From the Cold War: According to the Floor Plans of the Former Hungarian Workers' Movement (Propaganda) Museum Palace of Buda Castle, Building 'A' Budapest. HyperReal Media Productions, 1994.]

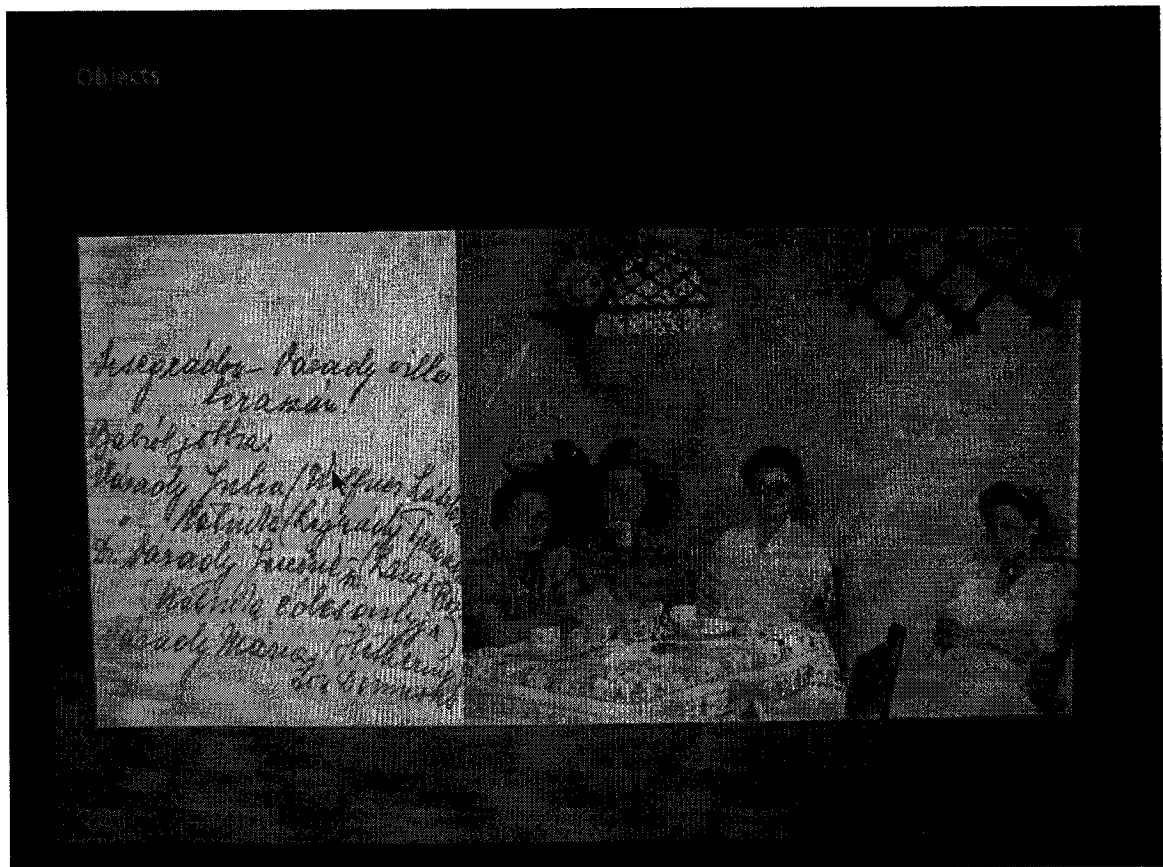


Fig. 26 George Legrady, An Anecdoted Archive from the Cold War, Detail, Objects, Hungarian Pottery, Old Flower Patterned Pottery, 1994. [An Anecdoted Archive From the Cold War: According to the Floor Plans of the Former Hungarian Workers' Movement (Propaganda) Museum Palace of Buda Castle, Building 'A' Budapest. HyperReal Media Productions, 1994.]