



Participatory Video in the Museum

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Abstract: Since the turn of the 2000s, the institution of the museum has become increasingly open and participatory, with an emphasis not only on engaging the public, but also on active involvement, community empowerment and shared knowledge creation. The resulting process, in which the museum adapts new methodologies to its toolkit, entails the introduction of participatory video. In this article, the author examines how participatory video can be used as a museum pedagogical and/or method of mediation. Through selected examples, she presents the methodology of participatory filmmaking and its adaptations in museums, analysing the project *The Living Cultures: Decolonising Cultural Spaces* (2020). She also presents two participatory filmmaking museum sessions in Hungary: the *Participatory Filmmaking Camp* of the Hungarian Jewish Museum (2015) and the *MyStory* pilot project of the Sopron Museum (2018).¹

Keywords: museum, participation, participatory video, museum pedagogy, InsightShare.

Introduction

In this essay I will focus primarily on two museum participatory video programs in Hungary and offers an in-depth understanding and analysis of these programs in the context of international historical and contemporary examples and methodologies. I will explore the manner in which this type of video technique can find a place in the museum pedagogical toolbox of museum mediation, and

¹ The present article was originally published in Hungarian in the social science journal *Replika* (Varga 2022) and has been revised for the English version. Both the Hungarian and the English version were produced within the framework of the four year long research project titled, *The History and Current Practices of Hungarian Participatory Film Culture, with an Emphasis on the Self-representation of Vulnerable Minority Groups* (2019–2023), no. 131868, supported by the Hungarian Scientific Research Fund of the National Research, Development and Innovation Office.

how participatory video can be used as a museum pedagogical and/or mediating method in the museum.

In the course of the analysis, I would like to highlight one of the enduring and pressing issues of participatory and collaborative museum practice: where and how the interests and knowledge of the initiators and the participants meet. Their encounters take place in the contact zone created by the museum (Clifford 1997), “a where cultures meet, [...] often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power” (Pratt 1991, 34). The issue is how participatory video can function as a mediating device in this asymmetrical situation.

The *InsightShare* website² defines participatory video as a method of engaging a group or community by having participants make their own film based on a script prepared by the participants, with the professional help of the initiators (Asadullah, Muniz 2015). Through the medium of film, participatory video helps groups or communities think through issues important to them and articulate problems together. The process of making the videos is as important as the final product and, in fact, often even more important. In many cases, the shared messages expressed in the video format are also significant for supporting decisions. Participatory video can generate change within the community of video makers and, through the internet, it can also inform a global audience about the situation of particular groups or communities and the issues they articulate.

The method of participatory video does not require much in terms of infrastructure and technical basis. All it takes is a camera, a dedicated and competent facilitator/mediator and a group of interested people who can learn about filmmaking techniques and the methodology of participatory video in a series of sessions. By learning the technical aspects of filmmaking, how to use video and audio recording equipment, how to write a script and how to go through the editing process, participants will acquire useful skills that they can apply later on, even after the program.

The participatory video method is not only about teaching the technical skills of filmmaking, but also about physically handing over the camera. The films that are made do not present the story in the voice of a director, but the community itself can articulate the issues and problems that they consider important by scripting, composing the footage, and editing the film. In other words, participatory filmmaking has an empowering/affirming role; “the method enables disadvantaged communities in particular to speak with their own voice and make a film about themselves as active participants in the whole process”

2 See: <https://insightshare.org/>. Last accessed 02. 03. 2023.

(Haragonics 2020). According to Sára Haragonics (2020), the camera acts as a catalyst in the film shooting situations, facilitating communication and knowledge exchange between participants, thus a given participatory video project opens up different boundary situations and initiates significant learning processes, generating different opportunities for connection and knowledge acquisition for the participants.

This is where I would like to link participatory video with the institution of the museum and with museum education. Since the museum is the location or program-making element of the participatory video projects analysed in my study, it seems appropriate to address the participatory aspects of museums more generally. Thanks to the new museology (Frazon 2012), some museums become increasingly open, self-reflexive and also participatory. “The idea of knowledge circulation creates an open museum model” (Schleicher, Wilhelm 2018), where the museum and its field become a space for collaboration and shared knowledge production through the active involvement of museum users; the knowledge shared by museum professionals, visitors, and researchers complement each other and are even integrated into the museum’s collection as a potential new interpretation. Museums place increasing emphasis on mediation, using an expanding range of museum pedagogical methods and tools.

Museum pedagogy is an alternative form of learning that generates open learning processes in the museum in an inclusive and practical way (Éliás, Joó 2020). The place, theme and inspiration for mediation programmes can be a specific museum, a collection or an exhibition. Museum pedagogical programs based on collaboration and participation – such as workshops, drama pedagogical workshops, joint exhibition creation, thematic community walks, etc. – all offer new experiences, learning and sensitization opportunities for participants. An excellent example is participatory video, which can be used as a collaborative museum pedagogical method (Joó 2016) to create knowledge through the popular cinematic medium in a collaborative and experiential way.

Very few participatory video workshops have been realized specifically in or by museums in Hungary, and I will discuss two of these examples in detail. To contextualise the analysis, I will draw on historical and contemporary international examples to illustrate the possible links between participatory video and the museum.

My analysis consists of three parts. In the first part, I present early examples of participatory filmmaking related to the museum, Sol Worth’s video *Not Much to Do* (1966) and the Indian Film Crew’s *Travelling College* (1968) and

the circumstances of its making. In the second part, I will examine international participatory video projects that specifically reflect on being presented in the museum and were produced in collaboration with the organization InsightShare. In the final part, I will present examples of participatory video projects in Hungary that were created in the framework of museum pedagogical sessions. In the projects I present, the museums used the method of participatory video: during a camp at the Hungarian Jewish Museum in the fall of 2015 and during museum pedagogical sessions at the Sopron Museum in 2018.

This analysis is based on qualitative research: in addition to looking at international and Hungarian video projects, I interviewed museum professionals in Hungary who had participated in the organization of participatory video programmes.

Early Examples

I will present two early examples of participatory videos, in which the museum appears as a venue and a theme, but that is the extent of its role in the films. One type of participatory filmmaking methodology is linked to anthropologist Sol Worth,³ a major pioneer of participatory video. He led one of the first participatory video projects in the US in collaboration with the Navajo.

One of Sol Worth's early works was *Not Much to Do*,⁴ a film he made with young people from Harlem and Philadelphia (Worth 1972, 48). The film Worth wanted to make with teenagers living in impoverished areas of America's big cities was meant to show where they lived and what their living conditions were. However, the young people participating in the project did not follow the proposed theme, and filmed their daily activities as they walked around the city.⁵

The makers of *Not Much to Do*, six African-American boys aged eleven to fourteen from Philadelphia, were taught how to use a camera, write a script and edit the film by Ben Achtenberg, a student of Sol Worth's. In the film, marginalised

3 Sol Worth was an instructor at the Annenberg School for Communication at the University of Pennsylvania, who did research on the filmmaking characteristics of a Navajo community with the help of John Adair in 1966, and published *Trough Navajo Eyes* (1972) as a summary of the research. See also the website, *Navajo Films Themselves – Giving Background to the 1966 Film Series*. <https://www.penn.museum/sites/navajofilmthemselves/>. Last accessed 02. 03. 2023.

4 See: <https://digital.history.pcupa.org/islandora/object/islandora%3A145181>. Last accessed 02. 03. 2023.

5 Pastor Robert D. Stoddard, who led the Tabernacle Film Club for teenage boys in West Philadelphia, proposed the other idea, namely to film biblical stories, but they eventually abandoned that theme and the topic of where they lived on Worth's advice, and the young people involved decided what they wanted to film (David 2011).

young people navigate between legal and illegal situations, pushing boundaries and re-purposing locations. In the film, the young people sneak into an abandoned fire station, and in another scene they sneak into a university museum pond to steal goldfish, then they go to the Wistar Institute's anatomy museum to marvel at the various animal and human skeletons, and in the next scene they take a dip in the fountain at the Philadelphia Museum of Art. In between scenes, the figure of a policeman appears several times, and the boys have to flee from him. According to Worth and Adair, the boys' actions were legitimized by the presence of the white teacher (Worth 1972, 48), whose mediating role enabled the disadvantaged African American youths to conquer the museum as a "white institution" with their unsanctioned operation.

Not yet a museum adaptation of the participatory video method, this example should rather be considered a cultural anthropological experiment, where the main question is how a social group makes a film when it is their first opportunity to do so, and how that group represents its own reality in the film. Participatory video was used as a tool for disadvantaged young people to appropriate certain sites in the city, including the museum. The appropriate technical conditions and infrastructure, the situation of filming and the presence of a legitimizing mediator had a notable motivating effect on the young people, who could present members of their community in the urban scene through their own perspective.

The other early example also comes from North America, namely Canada. In 1968, the *Indian Film Crew* made a video entitled *Travelling College*,⁶ which was made possible with the support of the National Film Board of Canada. The nine-minute, evocative film was directed by Ernie Benedict,⁷ who also stars in the film. The film raises awareness about the importance of preserving Indigenous culture. Benedict invites community members, his "brothers and sisters" as he calls them, to participate and ensure that Native American culture is not erased by mainstream American culture, to collect craft traditions and to keep the community together. He speaks of the need to cultivate their own Indian culture, which has its proper place in the museum.

The video is also a promotional compilation of the work of the *Travelling College*, a body travelling between on Indian reservations in Canada, preserving and disseminating "new knowledge and old wisdom" (Stewart 2007). The *Travelling*

6 See: <https://www.nfb.ca/film/travelling-college/>. Last accessed 02. 03. 2023.

7 Ernie Benedict (1918–2011) was an activist and Mohawk Council leader who co-founded the Native North American Travelling College with Michael Kanentakeron Mitchell in 1969. The organization was dedicated to the collection, presentation and preservation of Native Canadian cultural heritage. See: <https://www.nnatc.org/>. Last accessed 02. 03. 2023.

College is best described as a travelling ethnographic collection. It is a “mobile museum” that collects, displays and mediates both the artefacts of a community and the associated personal stories. Workshops are also organized to pass on craft traditions and also to give the community business and marketing skills.

In this example, both the setting and the subject of the video made by the Indian film crew, is the museum. This film cannot be considered a museum adaptation of the participatory video method either. Based on the selected videos, it seems that these early pieces used the museum more as a setting or, in the second example, as a way to reinforce indigenous identity through tradition. This is still not a museum pedagogical adaptation of participatory video and the convergence of the genres of museum and video. Beyond the location, the films are only linked to our topic insofar as both video makers were prominent figures in early participatory film projects. The films analysed simultaneously address the majority society and their own (indigenous) community. In terms of the function and role of the moving image, *Not Much to Do* was an experimental film in which marginalised young people captured their subjective urban impressions, or more precisely their own picaresque, urban adventures (the story unexpectedly takes a tragic turn at the end, and the film turns from a documentary into a fiction film). In this film, the museum functions as a site of majority power, which would be impossible for participants to enter except for the opportunity created by the situation of filmmaking. *Travelling College* encourages the participation of the indigenous community. The film can be interpreted as an invitation to be an active participant in the indigenous museum in order to cultivate community traditions. These early examples can inspire current participatory video projects insofar as the creation of a film can open up border situations for its makers, even in museums.

Contemporary International Examples

InsightShare is an Oxford-based non-profit organisation that has been running participatory video workshops around the world since 1999, teaching community members the basic techniques of filmmaking. They do this so that communities can use participatory media to report on their own situations, often to solve problems or to facilitate decision-making. In addition to running workshops, they also train participatory video facilitators, in the hope that participants can return their newly acquired knowledge to the community and create local video hubs and their own media workshops there.

The two videos analysed in the contemporary international examples section of this paper were produced in collaboration with InsightShare, more than ten years apart, at the Pitt Rivers Museum in Oxford. The Pitt Rivers Museum (PRM) collection was donated to Oxford University by General Pitt Rivers in 1884, with the express condition of preserving the donor's preferred method of display, based on the formal classification of objects, which is still maintained in the museum display today.⁸ The museum's collection is based on acquisitions from the colonies of the British Empire. The PRM's collection and exhibitions can be seen as symptomatic of the colonial past⁹ in the sense that the museum's collecting and display practices are still influenced by the processing of colonial collections.¹⁰ The decolonisation of the museum is the current strategic objective of the PRM,¹¹ and an important point within this is the processing and rewriting of the remnants of past classification practices (e.g. reworking racist terminology in object descriptions and labels – *PRM Labelling Matters project*).

The Pitt Rivers Museum has been trying to deal with its colonial legacy and to come to terms with its colonial past for years, and decolonisation is in progress in the institution at several levels.¹² “Museum anthropologists and curators have increasingly attempted to rethink the museum as a ‘contact zone’ (Clifford 1997), a space in which past histories and disparities of power are acknowledged, and a fresh moral relationship negotiated. By facilitation interaction between representatives of originating communities and those who work within museums, creating easier access to collections and consulting more sensitively about histories and on-going potency of museum objects” (Harris, O’Hanlon 2018, 16) PRM staff are in constant dialogue with representatives of different ethnic groups,

8 Pitt Rivers Museum. History of the Museum. <https://www.prm.ox.ac.uk/history-museum>. Last accessed 30. 12. 2022.

9 “Since many of the collections now held in European ethnographic museums were accumulated during the colonial period, the legacy of that time can still be said to shape their present form and, just as ‘colonialism and its forms of knowledge’ (Cohn 1996) varied from nation to nation in the past, so too do contemporary attitudes to that past. While some institutions have tried to erase the colonial context of their collections by abandoning the edifices that originally housed them (as in Paris) and/or re-designating them as ‘World Art,’ the majority still prefer to exhibit objects from their historic collections as representative of other ‘cultures’ but with more ‘modern’ narratives attached to them. Usually this is done without reference to the troubled histories of their acquisition.” (Harris, O’Hanlon 2018, 16.)

10 Pitt Rivers Museum Reopening Reveals Critical Changes to Displays as Part of Decolonisation Process. https://www.prm.ox.ac.uk/sites/default/files/prm/documents/media/news_pittrivers-ethicalreviewdisplaychanges-140920.pdf?time=1600099421537. Last accessed 30. 12. 2022.

11 See: Pitt Rivers Museum. Critical Changes. <https://www.prm.ox.ac.uk/critical-changes>. Last accessed 30. 12. 2022.

12 Pitt Rivers Museum. Committed to Change. <https://www.prm.ox.ac.uk/committed-to-change>. Last accessed 30. 12. 2022.

tribes and communities on repatriation issues through participatory research projects. Several cases of repatriation have already taken place. In addition, they are working with representatives of each of the communities in the collection to develop a mode of representation acceptable to that community.

In the second half of the 2000s, the PRM's Education Department started to organise participatory video programmes at the museum in collaboration with InsightShare.¹³ The aim of the project was to introduce the museum to hard-to-reach teenage audiences, using the tool of filmmaking. During the four-day session, the young people learned the technical basics of filmmaking and got to know the museum. Working in teams, the participants gained a focused insight into the PRM's collection, and the filmmaking process explored issues of museum representation, identity and heritage.

The video *Voices*,¹⁴ made in 2007, is both set in the museum and thematically reflects on the Pitt Rivers Museum and its collection (InsightShare 2007). The genre of *Voices* is given as "spoof horror" on InsightShare's YouTube platform¹⁵ and as "horror" on the Vimeo channel of the Pitt Rivers Museum. InsightShare filmed with young people of African-American descent living in Oxford,¹⁶ using the museum's permanent exhibition as a backdrop. In the story, the young people visit the Pitt Rivers Museum, where they view the colonies' former heritage, treasures and curiosities collected from around the world. Masks, totems, jewellery, ritual costumes and fighting tools are on display. While looking at the exhibition, the protagonist is suddenly struck by a strange sensation: he begins to hear voices, but no one else can hear the cries for help from the exhibits (*Help me! Help me out! Can you hear me? Join us!*). The screams become louder and more and more unbearable for the protagonist, who gets dizzy and tries to escape from the museum. However, the doors are locked, he cannot find a way out and faints at the loud screams. The museum's guards then take the unconscious man into a room, where all we hear is a long scream. The next moment we see the protagonist as an exhibit, motionless behind the glass of a glass case, a native with a painted face. The film closes with a desperate cry for help, now coming from him.

13 See: Engaging with hard-to-reach audiences. <https://abcofworkingwithschools.files.wordpress.com/2011/06/film-making-with-teenagers-pitt-rivers-case-study.pdf>. Last accessed 30. 12. 2022.

14 See: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e4z1lcBcXK8&t=290s>; <https://vimeo.com/32514833>. Last accessed 5. 9. 2021.

15 InsightShare YouTube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/c/Insightshare>. Last accessed 30. 12. 2022.

16 In the version uploaded to Vimeo, the creators are listed by first name in the closing credits as Anthony, Josh, Joy, Howlah, Nelly, Alicia, Spencer, Tendor, Moses, Ailah, Andy, and Suzy (InsightShare 2007).

What this video captures perfectly is the feeling that representatives of cultures can experience when they see their own objects behind the glass of the display cabinets, which may also refer to the gesture of colonization. The young people involved in the project used participatory video to process and record a particular reading of the permanent exhibition at the Pitt Rivers Museum, highlighting the need to decolonise museum representation. Closely linked to this example is another participatory video project produced more than ten years later with InsightShare, made at the Pitt Rivers Museum between 2017–2020. The objective of *Living Cultures: Decolonising Cultural Spaces*¹⁷ was to collectively recreate and share knowledge about museum collections. Within the framework of this project, the medium of participatory video was used as a tool for the Maasai tribe to convey their message that they are not satisfied with the museum image representing them. The initiative was launched by Maasai activist Samwel Nangiria, who is also a trained facilitator of InsightShare. In 2017, Nangiria visited the Pitt Rivers Museum as part of InsightShare's *Indigenous Associates* meeting programme and was struck by the way in which Maasai ritual objects were displayed. She then took the initiative to review the Maasai objects in the museum's collection and to jointly develop a museum image that represents them in a way that is acceptable to the community.¹⁸

On the occasion of two visits to the museum in 2018 and 2020, Maasai tribal delegates reviewed the Maasai collection held in the museum and compared the knowledge of museum experts with tribal knowledge, and indigenous partners shared their knowledge of the traditional uses and sometimes spiritual significance of the objects (Lunch, Jenkins 2020).

Nangiria's primary communicative device was participatory video, which not only allowed her to communicate her own views, but also to convey those of the Maasai tribal representatives to the museum first-hand. The delegates, in their turn, also used the participatory video to share the experiences of their visits to the Oxford museum with the tribe members. These videos are accessible on InsightShare's YouTube channel.¹⁹ With the knowledge imparted by InsightShare – basic technical skills of video production and facilitator training – the representatives of the Maasai indigenous group were able to initiate and maintain

17 See: <https://insightshare.org/decolonising-museums-cultural-spaces/>. Also: Nick and Jenkins (2020). Also: Pitt Rivers Museum. Maasai Living Cultures Project. <https://prm.web.ox.ac.uk/maasai-living-cultures>. Last accessed 02. 03. 2023.

18 This coincided with an ethical review of the collection and exhibits initiated by Laura Van Broekhoven, Director of the Pitt Rivers Museum (Basics 2021).

19 See: <https://www.youtube.com/@Insightshare>. Last accessed 02. 03. 2023.

a dialogue with the ethnographic museum representing Western academic knowledge. This also provided an opportunity to criticise the objects kept in the museum, the inadequate museum representation and insufficient knowledge. The participatory video in this example functions as a tool of mediation, a visual megaphone that acts as a channel of communication between continents, between African indigenous culture and European museums.

Let me illustrate this with the museum presentation of the *orkatar*, a ritual Maasai object. These bracelets are shown in a display cabinet in the film, with only their place of origin indicated (Africa) without any detailed reference to function. The Maasai experts recognized these objects, called *orkatar* in Maa, which have spiritual significance in their culture. According to their original function, the bracelets are passed down from father to son among the male members of the tribe. Among the Maasai, these jewels function as a kind of generational inheritance, symbolizing intergenerational relationships (Elliott 2020). It is for this reason that tribal representatives object to the museum display of objects, as the bracelets do not belong in display cases but are for descendants, which can be seen as a Maasai critique of museum representation or collection. Andrew McLellan, head of education at the Pitt Rivers Museum, agreed and stressed the need for tribal knowledge in this way: “without that story, it is just a piece of metal. With the story it then connects to humanity.”²⁰

In this case, participatory video is truly a means of mediating between the representations of different cultures, different perspectives, but one should also note that the case in question was not implemented as a museum pedagogical program, but was rather a tool of the decolonisation process. That said, the example can still be interpreted as a museum pedagogical program based on Emese Joó and István Éliás’s definition of museum education previously mentioned. In fact, it is a pedagogical process in the sense that through the democratic participatory partnership implemented, the process reverses the teacher-student relationship, turning the museum visitor into a teacher and the museologist into a student.

Contemporary Examples from Hungary

As I noted earlier, participatory video museum pedagogical programs are not common in Hungary. When analysing examples from Hungary, I have specifically selected participatory videos that were implemented as museum pedagogical programs. The locations of the programs were a museum in the capital and

20 See: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3midDMjvLLo>. Last accessed 02. 03. 2023.

another in the countryside. While the two programs differed in time, space and delivery method, the participants were young people of primary and secondary school age in both cases.

Located in a wing of the building complex of the Dohány Street Synagogue in Budapest, the Hungarian Jewish Museum researches, collects and exhibits the cultural values of the Jewish community in Hungary. In addition to permanent and temporary exhibitions, the museum places great emphasis on accompanying programmes, mediation and education.

In the fall of 2016, the Hungarian Jewish Museum organised a four-day film day camp for children, focusing on participatory filmmaking. The camp was organised in close cooperation with the Gyerekszem Art Association.²¹ The staff of Gyerekszem provided the technical know-how and equipment, guided the preparation and filming, and the museum provided the theme and location for the films. Short films were made about museum objects pre-selected by museum educators. During the filming process, the children got to know the museum's collection and, by discovering the history of the objects, they also got closer to the cultural history that the museum conveys. Based on the information they learned, the children co-wrote a script, including the dialogue, worked together to plan the shots for each scene and operated the camera. This method was used to make the short films *The Secret of the Model – or a Found Story (A makett titka – avagy egy megtalált történet, 2016)* and *Take 8 (Csapó 8, 2016)*.²²

The Secret of the Model – or a Found Story tells the story of the making of a tin model of the synagogue and the life story of its maker. In the filmmaking process, the children visited and interviewed the donor, who told them about her father's life and the circumstances of the donation. The team members learned about the history of the synagogue building in detail and also gained insight into daily life in the building thanks to the rabbi.

The video *Take 8* focuses on the Hanukkia. In the filmmaking process, the children got in touch with the object and its history in the museum. In the video, the children also shared their own interpretation of the story of the Hanukkah celebration and re-enacted it in a scene.

The films were shown to parents at the end of the camp, and the family presentation was a great success with adults and children alike. The films are not

21 Founded in 2003, the Gyerekszem Művészeti Egyesület (Children's Eye Art Association) has organized filmmaking workshops, film festivals and film camps for children under the leadership of Nándor Grosch. See: <http://gyerekszemegyesulet.hu/hu/rolunk>. Last accessed 30. 12. 2022.

22 Source of information: author's unpublished interview with Vera Dancz, art mediator of the Hungarian Jewish Museum (22. 04. 2021).

accessible publicly, but they have been added to the museum's collection and are occasionally shown on theme days and in museum pedagogical sessions. On these occasions, the videos are used as a discussion starter, and the tone and perspective of the young people's films bring the subject matter closer to the participants.

The Hungarian Jewish Museum used participatory filming through a facilitator – a commissioned film expert and facilitator working closely with museum educators – to introduce the history of museum artefacts and their wider context. Filmmaking gave the makers of the film new ways of reading museum artefacts. During the filmmaking process, the young people gained a deeper knowledge of the museum's collection based on the chosen object/theme, and during the filming they got closer to the people and their stories related to the exhibits. In the end, as can be seen from the films produced, the theme and location provided by the museum, as well as the situation of participatory filming, group work and the catalysing effect of the camera, generated a productive and educational situation for the participants.

The Sopron Museum in western Hungary includes 12 exhibition sites, such as the Fire Tower, the Storno House and the Cobblestone Children's Museum and Community Space. The institution places great emphasis on museum education with regular activities for all ages in its permanent and temporary exhibitions.

In the case of the Sopron Museum, a MyStory participatory video pilot project of museum education was developed under the rubric of community video within the framework of a grant at the Museum Education and Methodology Centre of the Open-Air Museum.²³ Zita Szabadhegyi, the project leader on staff at the Sopron Museum, had learned of the community-building genre of community video from a talk by Veronika Hackl, an Austrian participant, at the museum pedagogical conference *DiverCity* in 2017.²⁴ After studying the methodological publications of InsightShare extensively, she adapted them to the Hungarian

23 The Museum Education and Methodology Centre of the Open-Air Museum (MOKK) is an organization of museum and pedagogical professionals in Hungary, which is active in up-to-date museum methodological research and development, the development of pilot projects and the maintenance of a professional network. The analysed MyStory pilot project was implemented as a museum methodological development project in the framework of the program "Our Museum – Museum and Library Development for All."

24 *DiverCity – Diving into Diversity in Museums and the City (2015–2016)* is an international collaboration between seven European partner organisations, including the Budapest Museum of Ethnography. During the project, participants exchanged experiences in museum education, held workshops, and published a methodological summary. See: *DiverCity Professional Day 2015*. <https://divercitysite.weebly.com/szakmai-nap---muacutezeumpedagoacutegia-generaacutecioacuterkoumlzti-paacuterbeszeacuted-eacutes-interkulturalitaacutes.html>. Last accessed 30. 12. 2022.

museum environment. In this case, the museum educator trained herself in participatory video methodology and became the project facilitator.

The MyStory pilot project included museum pedagogical community video workshops for three groups with five sessions each in 2018.²⁵ Young people with special educational needs from different backgrounds were introduced to the basics of video-making techniques in the spaces of the Sopron Museum (Szabadhegyi 2019). This is how the following short videos of three to five minutes were made:

Horror Storno (2018):²⁶ the setting of the Storno House provided a perfect backdrop for those fleeing the ghost.

The Fight for the Princess (Harc a királylányért, 2018):²⁷ also inspired by the Storno collection, it follows the story of the knights pleading for the princess's favour.

The Salt (A só, 2018):²⁸ made during the summer camp at the museum, where the children insisted on filming this tale.

The workshops took place in the museum exhibition space or in the museum's educational activity room. In the first session, participants were introduced to the methodology of community filmmaking and the technical background of filmmaking, in addition to getting to know each other and formulating a common goal. Then, the children explored the museum space, the exhibition and the artefacts, where they recorded improvised guided tours on video. In the third session, the script for the film was co-written and the roles were assigned, followed by the shooting of the planned scenes and post-production. The last session was a joint evaluation of the workshop after the presentation of the finished film. A detailed description of the museum pedagogical process of filmmaking can be found in the publication *MY STORY - Közösségi videózás a múzeumban* (MY STORY – Community Video in the Museum) (Szabadhegyi 2019).

The goal of the workshop was for the group to explore connections among participants and to the topic through a creative collaborative process, to develop intra-group communication, to help each participant find their own role and task in the project and, last but not least, to create opportunities for interaction with the museum and the objects. Through group work in community, young people carrying cameras in the situation of filmmaking explored the museum's exhibition

25 Source: author's interview with Zita Szabadhegyi, art mediator of the Sopron Museum (12. 04. 2021)

26 See: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=baFKml3YndQ>. Last accessed 05. 09. 2021.

27 See: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g7PKeumCRiU>. Last accessed 05. 09. 2021.

28 See: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G_bCPjGrpYU. Last accessed 05. 09. 2021.

from a new perspective. Community video provided an opportunity for young people to get to know the museum as a place to which they may return with familiarity. On the other hand, the process also developed the participants' self-awareness, self-evaluation, empathy and cooperation skills within the group.²⁹

An accompanying methodological publication provides extensive guidelines and detailed descriptions to help other institutions implement their community video projects (Szabadhegyi 2019). Within the framework of the grant, MyStory methodology was taught and adapted to the staff of a mentored institution, the Laczkó Dezső Museum in Veszprém, where a short video entitled *The Vajkai Family (A Vajkai család, 2018)*³⁰ was also made.

In her methodological summary, Zita Szabadhegyi (2019) calls the museum one of the most ideal places for community film projects, as the objects kept in the museum have different stories and everyone can find connections to them. In other words, the museum provides both a space and topics for the unfolding participatory filmmaking process, as the focus is on the shared process of learning and creating rather than on the finished product. The interview made with her for this current study also revealed that running a participatory film project like this in a museum is both incredibly exciting and a great responsibility. Insofar as participatory filmmaking is a time-consuming, complex process, it should best be identified as a radical museum pedagogical project, a collaborative practice within museum pedagogical methodology (Joó 2016).

Summary

My study has explored the potential uses of participatory video in museums with a focus on examples of participatory video in Hungary, but I examined an array of historical and contemporary international and Hungarian examples to provide a context for the analysis. I explored how and in what forms this type of video technique can find its place in the toolbox of museum mediation, and how participatory video can be used as a museum pedagogical method. I have examined the relationship between the museum and participatory filmmaking, its boundary situations, and the different ways in which participatory video can be used. I have presented this through film projects that use the methodology of participatory video and are related to the museum in some way.

29 Source: author's interview with with Zita Szabadhegyi, art mediator of the Sopron Museum (12. 4. 2021).

30 See: <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=587336111686435>. Last accessed 05. 09. 2021.

In most of the cases, the museum has been both the setting and the subject of the videos. In the early examples analysed here – that is in the early years of the participatory video genre – the museum was just a location and the filmmaking was not used for museum education. In the film *Not Much to Do*, the act of “conquering” the museum, an institution of power considered culturally distant, was a way for marginalized young people to transgress the limits of legality (as the sign on the museum stated they were only permitted to enter with an accompanying adult, yet they were unaccompanied according to the story). In the film *Travelling College*, a representative of a minority group called his community’s attention to the need for the institution of the museum, so that the indigenous community could create its own museum and thus create an autonomous institution to preserve its traditions.

The examination of contemporary international examples shows a growing use of the participatory video method for the purposes of museum education. The Pitt Rivers Museum has been collaborating with InsightShare on organizing educational filmmaking workshops that use participatory video techniques to engage younger audiences since the mid-2000s. An excellent example is *Voices* (2011), a film that uses techniques of genre films to capture the permanent exhibition of the museum from the perspective of African-American youth. The PRM’s collection and exhibition practices are also the subject of *Living Cultures: Decolonizing Cultural Spaces* (2020), a film based on an ongoing discourse between Maasai tribal representatives and museum staff. In this example, the way participatory video is used can be understood both as a mediator in the process of intercultural translation and as a pedagogical method.³¹

Participatory filmmaking was used as a museum pedagogical method in the classical sense in both contemporary examples in Hungary that are the focus of the present study. Both in the camp of the Hungarian Jewish Museum and in the Sopron Museum workshops, the methodology of participatory video was successfully adapted to the site, theme and situation of the museum. In the cases in question, the role of the camera as a catalyst was crucial, and experiencing the situation of filming in the museum enabled the participants to view the exhibitions from a new perspective, to reflect on them together, and to formulate questions about certain exhibited objects together.

Based on the examples analysed, it can be concluded that the participatory

31 See: Citizen Reporter. Decolonising Museums: The Maasai & Oxford (podcast). <https://citizenreporter.org/2020/03/ctrp520/>; Citizen Reporter. Maasai Women: Creatros of Culture, Keepers of Knowledge (podcast). <https://citizenreporter.org/2020/03/ctrp523/>. Last accessed 30. 12. 2022.

video methodology can be successfully adapted to the museum and works well in museum education programs; in workshops and summer camps, it can actively involve young people in the life of the museum. It opens up new ways for the public to read museum objects and the stories they tell. Thus the use of participatory video as a museum pedagogical method can generate new points of connection between the museum and its audience.

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