

## **Lengthening and Enhancing the Image: The Documentary Hybridity of the Digitally Edited Found Footage**

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### **Abstract**

I consider found footage films intermedial in the sense that Sara Collahan uses it in her article „*Analogue*”: *conceptual connotations of a historical medium*. She argues that the so-called digital turn opens the possibility of tapping into analogue photography as a conceptual and cultural sensitivity distinguishable from the technique. Collahan’s suggests that the notion of “the analogue” offers a useful way of thinking about media in terms of ontological and conceptual possibilities, by focusing not on what it means to shift from one medium to another, but what it means to evoke a medium as conceptual content in another medium.

Documentaries from the recent years, like *Three Minutes: a Lengthening* (2021, Bianca Stigter) or *Turn Your Body to the Sun* (2021, Aliona van der Horst) are such examples, that excavate the analogue archival material or supplement the missing picture through digital interventions. The documentary ecology of the short fragment is subverted into a rich treasure trove through AI and other digital tools.

In the article entitled *To narrate or describe? Experimental documentary beyond docufiction* Erika Balsom states that instead of documentary’s dependence on the indexical claim, contemporary documentary is expected to „reinvent itself on the new groundless ground of hybridity”, to more „sophisticated approaches to questions of truth”. Through the selection of films to be scrutinized I propose a revisitation of the status that photography and analogue media in general, hailed as the prototypical index, gains in this kind of docu-hybridity. What happens to Roland Barthes’ idea that the noeme of photography is the „this has been”? What is the role of the analogue media inserted in the digital imagery of a contemporary documentary film? Are they reappropriated in order achieve an archive effect, as temporal, metaleptic leaps into the past? Are they used to perform an ontological statement, or are they viewed as merely images that produce medially a different type of reality?

The main hypothesis is that documentaries in the digital age increasingly relying on archival images coming from different sources develop new, idiosyncratic methods to produce the “real” and to affect the viewer.

### **Keywords**

Hybridity, documentary, documentary ecologies, recycling, found footage films

### **Bio**

**Melinda Blos-Jáni** is Lecturer at Sapientia Hungarian University of Transylvania, Cluj-Napoca, Romania and assistant editor of the journal *Acta Universitatis Sapientiae, Film and Media Studies*. Her research interests include home videos and amateur films, silent cinema, documentary film, found footage films and archival images. She published the book: *The Genealogy of Home Movies. Transylvanian Amateur Media Practices from Photography to New Media* (in Hungarian), 2015. She has published articles in journals within the area of Film Studies, and recently contributed the essay “Photographic Passages to the Past to the Past in Eastern European Non-fiction Films” to *Caught In-Between. Intermediality in Eastern European and Russian Cinema*, Ágnes Pethő (ed.), Edinburgh University Press, 2020. Currently she is employed as a member in the exploratory research project, *Affective Intermediality. Cinema between Media, Sensation and Reality* supported by a grant of the Romanian Ministry of Research, Innovation and Digitization, CNCS – UEFISCDI.

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