# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I.</td>
<td>INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II.</td>
<td>STATEMENT OF THE PROJECT</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III.</td>
<td>METHOD</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV.</td>
<td>IMPLICATIONS</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V.</td>
<td>SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI.</td>
<td>LIST OF FIGURES</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Kodak Sign</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Budapest McDonald Building</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Irene Toth's Interview</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>William Hegedus's Interview</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Hungarian Parliament</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Hungarian National Theatre</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Steven Wiesinger's Interview</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Budapest City Night Scene</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>Bill Radauwec Listening to a Videotaped Interview</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>Borderland: American-Hungarian Video Installation</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>Irene Varga's Interview</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>Marika Easley's Interview</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>Irene Toth's Videotaped Interview</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.</td>
<td>American-Hungarian Sign in Budapest</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21.</td>
<td>Bus in Budapest</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22.</td>
<td>Image of Television Monitors on Pedestals</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
23. Video Projection of Budapest Bus...........................................39
24. Video Projection of a Bus Window in Budapest.........................40
25. Hungarian Sign in Budapest..................................................41
26. Ken Richey Listening to an Interview......................................42

APPENDIXES

ABSTRACT................................................................. 43
The Borderland: American-Hungarian Video Installation project owes much gratitude to the many individuals in the United States and Hungary who have contributed much time and energy into its development. Without my grandmother Irene Toth's story of escaping from the 1956 Hungarian Revolution to the United States, this project would not have a personal history. My heartfelt thanks to my grandmother, Irene Toth, and Irene Varga, Marika Easley, William Hegedus, Steve Wiesinger, and Endre Munzberg for sharing their personal stories about their experiences with the American-Hungarian culture. The verbal accounts of their stories represent the fragmented memories of time and place as they describe their struggles with personal and cultural identities.

I thank my family in Budapest, Hungary, who so graciously opened their home and took me on many bus tours in Budapest to visit museums, castles, the Hungarian Parliament and the city life. They also informed me about the many changes Hungary has undergone since gaining its independence in 1989. Thank you Karoly Hortobagyi, Elizabeth Farkas Hortobagyi, J. Louis Hortobagyi, Krisztina Lisztopad, and Erszebet Lisztopad for all your love, wonderful Hungarian food, music and hospitality!

A special thanks to Scott Sherer, Professor of Art History and Director of the University of Texas at San Antonio, who taught me that critical theory is a lens through which we see an opening of ourselves, others, and question how meaning is created. I am grateful to my academic adviser and professor Martin Ball for his guidance, ideas and time. I wish to thank Darice Polo who through her letter of recommendation helped me to secure funding for the operating cost of the Borderland: American-Hungarian Video Installation.
I am deeply indebted to Sandy Althoff for her formidable editorial skills that greatly benefited the *Borderland: American-Hungarian Video Installation* Master of Fine Arts Thesis. To my partner Bill Radawec the *Borderland: American-Hungarian Video Installation* project is dedicated to him. His complete dedication, support, and knowledge to the project and me have been immeasurable and will always be appreciated.
Borderland: American - Hungarian Video Installation

Ibojka Toth

Introduction

Originally a painter, I now look to video installations as a more suitable means to express my objectives as an artist. My past and present works focus on documenting my creative process through direct life experiences. Responding to the atmospheric changes by painting outdoors had been the subject of my earlier work. On the days I was unable to paint outdoors due to freezing temperatures, the project continued through journal entries documenting the current weather condition, temperature, humidity, wind, and barometric pressure on a hourly basis. As a result, the weather journals became the objective records of my painting series. Marking time through weather documentation inspired a six-month study of photographing the effects of the daily sunrise predictions. The photographs were taken at the same location, Akron's Firestone Stadium, using WKYC's and United States Naval Observatory's sunrise forecasts. Afterwards, these digital photographs of the daily-predicted sunrises were displayed on the gallery walls as 84" x 96" monthly calendars.

Wanting to extend the framework of dialogue beyond my own response to my environment and to incorporate other voices from the community, I was motivated to explore video as an art form. My Reflective Portrait series allowed people from the Ohio community to create psychological and visual portraits of themselves by sharing their
innermost thoughts, experiences, and emotives on videotape. This work had been inspired by the democratic nature of Speaker's Corner in London's Hyde Park. George Orwell, Karl Marx, and Vladimir Lenin are a few of the people who have spoken there. Since there are no entry requirements, no rules of intellectual formality, and above all no class restrictions, Speaker's Corner may be seen as a universal portrait of mankind. The video installation called the Reflective Portraits series mirrored my creative response to the soapboxes at Speaker's Corner that gave people a platform to say anything they wanted to express, despite its eccentric or implausible nature.

Continuing to develop my art practices around the dialogue of diverse communities beyond institutional boundaries, I wanted to record cross-cultural conversations without sacrificing the unique identities of individual speakers. Due to strong connections to my Hungarian roots, I became interested in talking to the community of Hungarian immigrants in the Northeast Ohio region about their experiences with the Hungarian and American culture. As part of my research for my documentary project, I wanted to explore the universal struggle among the immigrants of various cultures to reconcile their personal and cultural identity within a prevailing modern lifestyle. As a way of examining the Hungarian immigrants struggle with assimilation into the American culture, I started inviting these individuals into my home for a Hungarian dinner and to talk about their experiences and traditions. Borderland embodies the results of each subject's storytelling alongside the projected images of my 2005 journey to Hungary. In Borderland, I hope to create meaning through a discourse about multiculturalism using a documentary-style production process.
Statement of the Project

Although documentaries solely based on objective reality do not exist, they have been widely accepted in our culture as records of real events. It is impossible in the documentary genre to observe and record reality due to technical choices, subjective and personal framework of the director and subjects, along with the expectations of the audience that patronizes it. To further analyze how reality is recreated, I will use my video installation, *Borderland*, as a model. Observed in its entirety, *Borderland* engages in a deconstructive discourse with a documentary-style production process. Within the installation space, I invite my audience to experience personal testimonies of the American-Hungarian subjects and the landscapes captured in my travels in Eastern Europe, and to rethink documentary's framework.

Method

*Borderland* draws attention to documentary techniques through the videotaped storytelling of American-Hungarian subjects juxtaposed with video projections of my 2005 journey to Eastern Europe documenting the geographical and cultural changes found in Hungary. Based on the complex stories of my subjects, the two video projections on the opposite gallery walls play continuous cycles of recreated landscapes of Budapest, Hungary. Although the video projections display everyday city life shot from moving vehicles in Hungary, one is videotaped during the day, the other at night. Travel in the videos represents the fractured memories and experiences of the American-Hungarian subjects. In addition to travel, advertisement, fast food chains, architecture,
and reflections act to engage the audience in a dialogue about multicultural signposts. Placed in the space of the viewers, the television monitors on pedestals, that equal human proportions, hold the verbal stories of my subjects. In order to listen to the subject's stories, each participant has to pick up the headphone placed beside each television monitor. Moving through Borderland's space, viewers create their own unique experiences from viewing the video projections and listening to the storytelling.

Borderland's documentary deconstructive process started with the subject's interviews. Although the emphasis is placed on shooting events in real time during the interviews with my American-Hungarian subjects, it appears that I, as the director, am completely invisible, neutral, and non-judgmental. By appearing to refuse to manipulate and distort the interviewees' words, I hope to establish an intimate relationship based on trust with my audience and subjects. The misconceptions about these interviews are that they appear to be journalistic, and as the director I am only observing and recording objective truth. However, my audience does not see my directing behind the scenes. For example, before the shooting begins my subjects are given five questions to address during the videotaping. These questions act as scripts, and draw attention to their experience with the Hungarian Revolution of 1956, journey to America, visits back to Hungary, and if they would consider living in Hungary now. Out of the camera's frame, during each of the video taped sessions, I am directing the interviews through eye contact and hand gestures. Although I am not seen in the viewer's framework, I still share the same space as the interviewee.
In addition to directing my interviewees' stories and sharing their space, framing each subject through the lens and position of the camera and lights, I am creating an artificial realism. An example of artificiality that takes place during the videotaped interviews is the manner in which my subjects fictionalize themselves. On camera my subjects want to present themselves differently from the way they act in their everyday lives. In addition to fictionalizing their characters, the subjects took on a very critical role of addressing the American and Hungarian community and its powers of authority during the interview process. There is no such thing as catching life on the run, or capturing the words of truth.1

My subject's videotaped stories and the projections of the Eastern European journey can be read as a kind of here and there structure. This structure represents a non-linear way of reconstructing reality. For example, looping the movement videotaped from moving vehicles in Europe acts as a metaphor representing travel from somewhere to nowhere and back again. These strategies of travel foreground the notion that the past is not linear, and those "real" places are forever reshaped or reimagined. For example, national and personal identities formed by geographical place are always fugitive and arbitrary.2 This is supported by the fact that Germany, Poland, and Hungary have been completely reshaped by Allied powers from World War One and World War Two. Capturing the movements of the landscape as the images move in and out of focus is like trying to recreate the memories and stories of my parents homeland. Walter Benjamin

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2 Shelley Hornstein, "Fugitive Places" Art Journal 59.1 (College Art Association, 2000), 44.
comments, "whether architecture and places continue to exist or not, our memory of them carries on; we are committed to connecting ourselves to the material ground, to the cities we yearn to see in order to trace the sites of past lives."3

Yet the sites in reality or memory cannot ever remain fixed. My experience visiting Hungary and Croatia as an adult, compared to my childhood memories, has been completely reshaped. Revisiting the sites of my childhood memories and family history in Budapest, Hungary, and the small village of Baranjsko Petrovo Selo Baranja Petarda, Croatia, created much anxiety and displacement. Only photographs and gravesites marked the absence of my childhood playmates, grandparents and relatives. During my trip I experienced flashbacks of my grandmother sharing stories of her and grandfather escaping with eleven children during the 1956 Hungarian Revolution. In Croatia I felt an overwhelming sadness when I viewed the war-ravaged homes and listened to my aunt's account of her experiences with the horrors of the recent Yugoslav Civil War.

Although video can bridge the gap of past and present, merge fact with fiction, it cannot capture reality. The video camera cannot completely capture my own or other people's experiences, and present to the audience a comprehensive view of the economic, social issues, and ethnic conflicts in Eastern Europe that produced so much hatred, death, and political challenges for so many. Without creating a closed narrative, which would provide identification with the heroes and sympathy for the victims, the audience would not experience closure and go home feeling satisfied. Closed narratives can be compared to closed stories, a defined ending provided for the viewers when finished viewing the

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documentaries. Types of documentaries that offer these kinds of closures produce very limited views of the topics presented to their audiences. Using the tools of closed narratives to create feelings of untroubled wholeness, sentiment and closure for the audiences have been widely accepted within documentaries and fictional films.\textsuperscript{4} However, within my video installation, I have abstained from using a singular, closed narrative. Instead, I have presented my audience with a wide selection of multicultural experiences expressed within the verbal accounts of the American-Hungarian subjects and my own hybrid ethnic history. In addition to creating one on one interaction between the subjects and viewers, I installed headphones on each of the television monitors. The headphones allow intimacy and interaction between the subjects and viewers. Within the \textit{Borderland} installation, leaving the narrative open ended for various interpretations gives the viewers an active role rather than a passive one.

Although I am inviting the audience to interact with this ethnic experience of the American-Hungarian subjects, I fully recognize that the space of \textit{Borderland} may be an overwhelming experience for my viewers. While the narrative remains partially open to the viewer's interpretations, I have included my own subjective involvement within the visceral collage of fractured languages and landscapes in both subtle and direct ways. I do not pretend to be neutral or objective, and certainly admit that this ethnic chaos has always been a part of my life. In some ways the agenda of \textit{Borderland} resembles the agenda of the British documentary movement, and gives representation to the underclass. The British documentary movement, however, romanticized the lives of the working

class by elevating their lifestyle. The aim of the early documentaries functioned as a public service, to inform the public about the everyday working of the industries and corporations that shaped lives. These documentaries, therefore, served to improve the public image of government and large corporations. However, rather than romanticize my ethnic culture as well as the lives of other American-Hungarian minorities, my goals involve sharing their hardships and making the spectators aware of the stages involved in making quasi-documentary. In Hungary I videotaped outdoor traveling scenes of American-Hungarian signposts such as fast-food chains, advertisement, architecture, and dress codes to portray the everyday life described by the American-Hungarian subjects, and to connect with the audience. By setting up signs of contradiction such as familiarity versus foreignness and displacement versus stability, I am asking the audience to personalize and actively engage with the installation by adding their own memories and experiences.

To juxtapose abstract images with actual sites of Eastern Europe videotaped from moving images required a lot of editing. The first step consisted of loading all the images from the camcorder onto a timeline computerized editing program. After the images were chosen, slow or fast motion was then added to each scene or transition between each frame, as well as adjusting and correcting color, tint, contrast, and lighting for each frame. The result of all these editing choices act to remind the viewers of its constructed reality.

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5 Warren Buckland, *Film Studies* (McGraw-Hill Companies, 2003), 133.
George Franju reminds us: "you must re-create reality because reality runs away; reality denies reality. You must first interpret it, or re-create it…When I make a documentary, I try to give the realism an artificial aspect…I find that the aesthetic of a documentary comes from the artificial aspect of the document…it has to be more beautiful than realism, and therefore it has to be composed…to give it another sense."6

With each decision involving the presentation of my subjects and events, I am continuously asking myself how stylized and dramatized my images and words need to be in order to allow my viewers to experience the full impact of my projected world. Regardless of whether it is staged or not, the act of videotaping and processing involves structuring which will result in a subjective interpretation, opposing the documentary's objective ideals. As Christian Metz, film theoretician in France suggested, "all moving images are fiction because they are representations. The train you see on the screen is not literally in the screening room."7

Since most people are familiar with documentaries and their codes by watching them on television, we as a culture seldom critically question these strategies. We often believe documentaries to be records of actuality, a raw footage of real life happenings. While this may be true in some non-fictional videos, this is just material for building a documentary. The raw footage is not the documentary itself. The material has to be shaped, remolded and given form. Even as the footage is shot, decisions have to be made about frame selection, lighting, and points of view. John Grierson, the founder of the

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British documentary movement, acknowledges that the videotaping of actual footage in itself does not constitute what might be seen as truth. He recognizes that actuality footage must be subjected to a creative process to reveal its truth. "This manipulation of material is both a recording of reality and a statement about reality."8

Although Borderland uses taped interviews of American-Hungarians and actual footage from Budapest, Hungary, it is far from making any claims to realism, or even a statement concerning life after communism. The space within my installation recreates the experiences of human subjects facing contradicting signposts of life's possible dramas, knitting together syntax of images that signal past-present, familiarity-foreignness, security-displacement, day-night, and fictional-reality. All these contradicting signs act to disturb our perception of time, and create a sense of imminent disaster, a permanent sense of fear and unease of what has happened recently, or is about to happen. Neither documentary nor fiction, Borderland transgresses formal and narrative structures of these genres. My work disrupts the traditional narrative order of conflict, climax, and closure. However, within my environment of opposing elements of images and sounds, each viewer can create his or her own narrative. In the end, Borderland, with all of its disjointed micro-events, displaced anticipation and drama, contains unity through the teller's experiences, and the audiences' interpretation.

The teller's experiences in Borderland are referencing my own interactions with the American and Hungarian cultures. I grew up listening to my grandmother's story of escaping from the 1956 Hungarian Revolution with her family, my father being one of them. My family and the immigrants from the Hungarian-American Club were part of

8 Jill Nelmes, An Introduction to Film Studies, (New York, NY: Routledge, 2003). 189
the 200,000 people who left Hungary because of the 1956 Hungarian Revolution, which started on October 23, 1956. While student organizations in Budapest participated in a peaceful demonstration, the Soviet-controlled police opened fire and killed hundreds of unarmed protesters. At that point, Hungarian soldiers arrived on the scene, and handed guns to the people. This was in response to the many abuses the Hungarians endured from the Soviet occupation since 1945.

The Hungarian rebels were led to believe by CIA-Radio Free Europe that Western support was on its way. After a short-term victory, and a promise of twenty million dollars from the Eisenhower Administration, Hungary's desire for neutrality was ignored by the United Nations, including the United States. On November 7, 1956, the cost of defeat to the Hungarian nation was devastating; causalities were close to 25,000. Another 20,000 were deported to the Soviet Union, 12,000 were executed, and 200,000 people fled to democratic countries. Fifty years later many Hungarians are still embittered by this lack of support from the communist-free countries to fulfill Hungary's desire for neutrality in 1956.9

Implications

I selected a random sample of six American-Hungarian individuals from the Northeast Ohio area to represent the Hungarian population living in the United States. My American-Hungarian subjects consisted of half females and half males ranging from twenty-eight years of age to ninety-one years old. During the video taped interview, each

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American-Hungarian subject was asked about their connection to the 1956 Hungarian Revolution, journey to the United States, challenges with assimilation into the American culture, Hungarian traditions, visits back to Hungary, and if they would consider living in Hungary now. All the Hungarian immigrant subjects involved with the Hungarian Revolution of 1956 thought the Soviets would kill them if they stayed in Hungary. Most of them felt very resentful about leaving their friends and family behind. Learning to speak the English language and finding full-time employment had been the major external challenges of these Hungarian immigrants. Many of them never fully reconciled their personal and cultural identity due to forming Hungarian subcultures where they spoke their native language, cerebrated Magyar holidays, prepared ethnic foods and drinks, and held their own market fairs. The Akron Hungarian community in 1935 formed their own Magyar Home in Akron, Ohio, to serve the common interests of the Magyars. This organization had large committees that recreated the cultural, social, and economic hierarchal structures of home. Not surprisingly, the Magyar Home flourished after the 1956 Hungarian Revolution when hundreds of immigrants joined their organization. Fifty years later none of them wanted to move back to communist-free Hungary, one hundred percent of them stated that they enjoyed their current lifestyle too much, and eighty-three percent would not move back due to family members living in the United States. However, all of the American-Hungarians agreed that whether in America or Hungary, the younger generation had abandoned their ethnic traditions for the American culture. In addition, the American-Hungarian subjects felt their adherence to the Hungarian traditions was much stronger in the United States than in Hungary.
One hundred percent of the immigrants and first generation American-Hungarians that I worked with were involved in Hungarian clubs or religious organizations that practiced their ethnic traditions such as native language, music, dancing and celebrating the Hungarian holidays. However, my research concluded that only thirty-three percent from the second generation living in the United States participated in the Hungarian organizations, or practiced the Hungarian traditions. Eighty-three percent of the American-Hungarians visited Hungary since it moved to parliamentary democracy in 1990. All of the subjects I interviewed thought Hungary had become too influenced by American commodification.

My 2005 journey to Hungary focused on documenting the kinds of geographical and cultural changes that had been expressed by the American-Hungarian subjects during their videotaped interviews. For example, before the political transition in 1989-90, franchising, as known in the United States, was unfamiliar in Hungary. Today in Hungary there are over four hundred franchise systems. Some of the popular American fast-food firms represented in Hungary are McDonald's, Subway, and Kentucky Fried Chicken. It has become a very attractive place for American companies like Citibank, Pepsi-Cola, and Proctor & Gamble to conduct business. Major malls enticing the Hungarians with western fashions have been popular in Budapest. Western retailers or Hungarian businesses assimilating their successes own many of the shops. The Lurdy Haz, a popular mall in Budapest, houses many American fast-food chains like Pizza Hut, big name retailers like Nike, a multiplex cinema, and ten-pin bowling. Due to support of the locals and tourists, the Lurdy Haz mall houses over 120 retail shops. However, many
of these American fast food or non-food franchises do not have much market penetration outside of the capital city of Budapest.

**Summary and Conclusion**

The *Borderland* video installation analyzes documentary myths of objective reality, and it allows the audience to experience the storytelling of the American-Hungarian subjects, and the projected imagery of Budapest, Hungary. Six television monitors and two video projectors are placed in a room on pedestals equaling human proportions. Each one of my American-Hungarian subject's videotaped interviews has been placed inside of a television monitor. To encourage one on one interaction between the subjects and viewers, I installed headphones on each of the television monitors. The two video projections on the opposing gallery walls use imagery based on the information from my American-Hungarian subjects' interviews as they described their experiences in Hungary. During the video editing process, the only imagery used were reflections, landscapes videotaped from moving vehicles, advertisement, American names or franchises, dress codes, architecture, bridges, and lighting. Reflections represented my subject's Hungarian history. Information and directional signs, American names, franchises, and dress codes referenced the kinds of geographical and cultural changes expressed by my American-Hungarian subjects. Images of architecture such as bridges could be used as universal signs; however, the site-specific details created cultural specificity. Various types of lighting were used in my video projections to display the historical buildings, monuments, and to show how various city lighting
changed over time. When the Budapest's Chain Bridge was built in 1930, it was equipped with incandescent lamps. Today the same bridge is lighted with contemporary floodlighting using compact fluorescent lamps for the light-chains, and high-pressure gas discharge and halogen incandescent lamps for the floodlighting of the pillars.

While engaging in a deconstructive discourse by using a documentary-style production process, Borderland acts to critically question documentary's claim or public acceptance of it being records of actuality, a raw footage of real life happenings. Using the American-Hungarians interviews from the Northeast Ohio region as my subjects gives Borderland a personal voice. Five questions regarding my subjects experiences with Hungary act as scripts, drawing attention to documentary's fabrication. Adding to the false belief of documentaries not being staged, my audience does not witness my intervention. Another example of artificiality that takes place during the videotaped interviews is the manner in which my subjects fictionalize themselves in front of the camera. In the process of editing my video projections of Hungary's landscapes, only imagery that documented the kinds of geographical and cultural changes that had been expressed by the American-Hungarian subjects during their interviews was used. Looping the movement filmed from moving vehicles acted as a metaphor representing the fugitive and arbitrary nature of national and personal identities formed by geographical place. Travel also signifies the fractured ethnic memories and experiences. While it is quite remarkable that the video camera can bridge the gap of past and present, it does not capture the reality of time. Nor does the video camera completely capture people's experiences, or give the audience a comprehensive view of the economic, social,
and ethnic conflicts in Eastern Europe. Although I left my installation open to various kinds of interpretations, many documentaries use singular closed narratives. Closed narratives can be compared to closed stories, a defined ending provided for the viewers when finished viewing the documentaries. This not only breeds audiences that are passive, but also makes them feel like they have contributed toward the resolution of the issues presented within the documentaries. This feeds into the misconceptions that by watching the documentary the problems or issues have been resolved.

While we as a culture believe documentaries to be records of actualities, a raw footage of real life happenings, this is just material that still has to be shaped, remolded, and given form. For example, lighting, framing and points of views are constructed elements of the documentation process. Adding more elements of artificiality to my Borderland documentary installation centered on the editing process of my videotaped imagery. Only those scenes that best documented the kinds of geographical and cultural changes that had been described by the American-Hungarian subjects, during their videotaped interviews were used. Slow or fast motion was then added to each scene or transition between each frame, as well as adjusting and correcting color, tint, contrast and lighting for each frame. The most difficult part was making the images and sounds seem natural and believable. This meant that the edited images needed to be more beautiful than reality. Within the space of my installation, that lacks a beginning, middle or end, I invite my audience to listen to each of the American-Hungarian subjects describe their struggles with personal and cultural identity within a prevailing modern lifestyle. However, in order to engage with the words of the American-Hungarian subjects each
one of the viewers has to pick up the headphone placed beside each television monitor to allow intimacy and interaction between themselves and the subjects. As the viewers move about the Borderland's space, they are creating their own unique experiences. The television monitors and video projectors on pedestals that equal human proportions act as parts of a jigsaw puzzle that invite each viewer to knit together the different fragments and emotions into a coherent narrative story, or experience the space as an abstract event.

Figure 1

Figure 2

Digital photograph of a video projection of a McDonald's building in Budapest, Hungary from *Borderland: American-Hungarian Video Installation.*
Figure 3

Digital photograph of video projection of Irene Toth's interview from *Borderland: American-Hungarian Video Installation.*
Figure 4

Figure 5

Figure 6

Digital photograph of Irene Toth's videotaped interview and video projection of the Hungarian National Theatre in the background of Borderland: American-Hungarian Video Installation.
Figure 7

Digital photograph of Steven Wiesinger's videotaped interview and video projection of a sign from Budapest, Hungary in the background of Borderland: American-Hungarian Video Installation.
Figure 8

Digital photograph of William Hegedus's videotaped interview and video projection of the Budapest city night scene in the background of *Borderland: American-Hungarian Video Installation.*
Figure 9

Digital photograph displaying the front view of *Borderland: American-Hungarian Video Installation*
Figure 10

Digital photograph displaying the front view of *Borderland: American-Hungarian Video Installation.*
Figure 11

Digital photograph displaying the front view of Borderland: American-Hungarian Video Installation.
Figure 12

Digital photograph displaying the back view of *Borderland: American-Hungarian Video Installation*. 
Figure 13

Digital photograph displaying the back view of *Borderland: American-Hungarian Video Installation*. 
Figure 14

Digital photograph of Bill Radawec listening to a videotaped interview housed in a television monitor in the center of *Borderland: American-Hungarian Video Installation.*
Figure 15

Digital photograph displaying the back view of *Borderland: American-Hungarian Video Installation*. 
Figure 16

Bill Radawec listening to Irene Varga's videotaped interview with projected image of a Budapest McDonald's building in *Borderland: American-Hungarian Video Installation*. 
Figure 17

Digital photograph of Marika Easley's videotaped interview housed in a television monitor of *Borderland: American-Hungarian Video Installation.*
Figure 18

Digital photograph of Bill Radawec with headphones listening to Irene Toth's videotaped interview in the *Borderland: American-Hungarian Video Installation.*
Figure 19

Digital photograph of Bill Radawec with headphones listening to a videotaped interview in the back of the *Borderland: American-Hungarian Video Installation.*
Figure 20

Digital photograph of a video projection portraying an American-Hungarian sign in the

*Borderland: American-Hungarian Video Installation.*
Figure 21

Figure 22

Digital photograph of Bill Radawec with head phones in the *Borderland: American-Hungarian Video Installation* listening to an interview housed in a television monitor on a pedestal that equal human proportion.
Figure 23

Digital photograph of a video projection of a Budapest bus in the *Borderland: American-Hungarian Video Installation.*
Figure 24

Video projection of a bus window view in Budapest, Hungary displayed in the

*Borderland: American-Hungarian Video Installation*
Figure 25

Video projection of a Hungarian sign from a window view in Budapest shown in the *Borderland: American-Hungarian Video Installation.*
Figure 26

Digital photograph of Ken Richey in the *Borderland: American-Hungarian Video Installation* listening to an interview housed in a television monitor on a pedestal that equal human proportions.
Toth, Ibojka, M. M.F.A., December, 2006

Borderland: American - Hungarian Video Installation

Director of Thesis: Martin Ball

The Borderland American - Hungarian Video Installation developed from my interaction with the American and Hungarian cultures. I grew up listening to my grandmother's story of escaping from the 1956 Hungarian Revolution with her family. Due to these experiences, I became interested in talking to the community of Hungarian immigrants in the Northeast Ohio region about their experiences with the Hungarian and American culture. I invited individuals into my home for a Hungarian dinner and to talk about their experiences and traditions. Borderland embodies the results of each subject's storytelling alongside the projected images of my 2005 journey to Hungary. In my work I hope to create meaning through a discourse about multiculturalism using a documentary-style production process.

While Borderland Video Installation questions documentary myths of objective reality, it encourages the audience to experience the videotaped storytelling of American-Hungarian subjects and the projected imagery of my 2005 journey to Eastern Europe. Placed in the space of the viewers, the television monitors hold the verbal stories of the subjects. The verbal accounts of my subjects represent fragmented memories of time and place as they describe their struggles with personal and cultural identities. Based on the complex stories of the subjects, the two video projections on the opposite gallery walls play continuous cycles of recreated landscapes of Budapest, Hungary. The signs used in the video projections consist of reflections, landscapes videotaped from moving vehicles, advertisement, American-Hungarian names and franchises, dress codes, architecture, bridges and lighting.

In order to listen to the words of the American-Hungarian subjects and sounds from the video projections, viewers have to pick up the headphone placed beside each
television monitor and projector. As the viewers move about the Borderland's space, they are creating their own unique experiences. The television monitors and video projectors are on pedestals that equal human proportions, and act as parts of a jigsaw puzzle that invite each viewer to knit together the different fragments and emotions into a coherent narrative story, or experience the space as an abstract event.