

## STATEMENT OF GRANT PURPOSE

Isaac W. Campbell, Hungary, *Visual Arts - Installation Art*

### “Exploring the Relevance and Applications of Historical Images in a Digital Society”

#### PROJECT SUMMARY

Working in collaboration with the Fortepan Archive (a unique Hungarian public archive featuring more than 100,000 photos of everyday life from 1900 -1990 its sponsoring agency is Summa Artium), and the Hungarian Museum of Ethnography, which carries numerous under-appreciated and mostly hidden photographic gems from the early 20th century, my goal is to raise public awareness and demand for these resources by combining innovative, interactive public photo exhibits throughout Hungary with a comprehensive and strategic internet-based marketing plan. By taking the valuable photo archives to the streets through public art displays, like wheatpastings and peekboxes, I hope to free these archival resources from the limitations of traditional applications and help them flourish as cultural icons in our modern, digital society.

Wheatpasting involves temporarily pasting biodegradable, printed displays (made from paper, water, and flour) to the sides of buildings, similar to posting advertisements for goods, political causes, or concerts. These images can be scaled to the size of buildings, are cost effective and homogenize with their surroundings to create larger-than-life, subtle-yet breathtaking visual displays. Peekboxes are small, closed wooden boxes that contain layers of back-lit images. A small viewing hole at the front of the box allows viewers to “peek” into the past. When strategically pointed at a historical building or site of cultural significance, and with an archival image inside featuring the same building or site from an earlier time, peekboxes offer viewers a magical three-dimensional point of reflection and reference.

Lastly, I plan to help Fortepan and the Museum of Ethnography strategically use social media, namely Facebook and Instagram, to extend the conversation about the relevance of historical photographs well beyond Hungary by featuring their resources and my work. Collectively, these installations will act as interactive and inspiring exhibits of Hungarian history and culture, marketing Hungary’s significant and compelling archival photography resources, building upon continued efforts to support and grow historical photo archives in Hungary and aims to draw world-wide attention to valuable collections. It will furthermore inform my own work with historical photo archives in the United States.

#### CONTEXT

The Fortepan photo archive, based in Budapest, chronologically displays over one hundred thousand photographs of everyday Hungarian life over the course of the 21st century. Its uniqueness comes from its timeline-based interface, which lyrically lays out photos over time that collectively tells a bottom-up narrative of Hungarian history. Over the 12 years since Fortepan was created, the archive has become a cultural icon, disrupting the typical photo archive in both display and accessibility. Unlike most photo archives, Fortepan is open source, and part of the Creative Commons; this means that anyone, particularly educators, students, and artists, can incorporate the archive’s many high-resolution photographs into their creative digital projects without fear of copyright violation. As Miklós Tamási, Fortepan’s creator explains, “These initiatives are aimed at the creation of a new archiving paradigm, based on openness, dialogue, and participation, which stand in contrast to the traditional values associated with archives, such as discretion, permanence and immutability”(Fotofestival, 2013)

In addition to Fortepan, the more traditional archival resources of the Hungarian Museum of Ethnography are teeming with untapped potential. Specifically, the autochrome collection from Sándor Gönyey and Istvan Györfey is extraordinary -- the ethnographers captured these vivid color images beginning in 1911, well before the development of subtractive color film in the 1930's. With their dreamy color palettes and provocative reds, these images are incredible pieces of art and portals into a world that we typically only recognize in black and white. The project proposed herein will help maximize the potential of this collection and will provide a template for future parallel projects at the Museum of Ethnography and other museums/archives.

## **TIMELINE AND OBJECTIVES**

Development and research for the exhibits and art pieces will begin upon arrival in September, 2018. Winter months will be used to build peekboxes, obtain permissions for the displays, and work alongside curators to plan exhibits and a promotion strategy. Public art will be installed at the first sign of spring, 2019. Some of the specific goals of this proposal are to:

- *collaborate closely with Fortepan's Miklós Tamási as a creative mentor*
- *enroll in a Hungarian Language class to help facilitate basic conversation and navigation*
- *collaborate with the Hungarian Museum of Ethnography to create and promote an exhibit of the Sándor Gönyey and Istvan Györfey autochrome collection*
- *engage with Hungarians in both urban and rural areas (such as Budapest, Pécs, Hévíz, Győr, and Keszthely) with public wheatpasting and peekbox displays to increase public awareness and accessibility to the archives and promote their upcoming exhibits. Ideally, I would like to install four wheatpastings and two peekboxes in each city, potentially more in Budapest.*
- *design and execute an internet--based marketing strategy, which utilizes photographs, custom photo animations, and videos to promote the museum and archives. Facebook and Instagram will serve as a portal to communicate with the public and to document the development and execution of the public art displays and exhibits.*

## **PROJECT SIGNIFICANCE**

Hungary stands at a pivotal point in establishing its role as a global leader in the modern approach to historical photo archives and their encouragement of collective memory. Although Fortepan is relatively unknown outside of Hungary, its upcoming exhibition at the National Gallery (April, 2018) attests to its established presence as a leader in photography and archiving. This newfound prominence presents a prime opportunity to promote the archive's value and showcase its potential applications to a global audience.

In light of my own professional development, I see this proposal as the opportunity to learn from some of the most influential minds in the field and to have access to explore and experiment with some of the greatest underutilized photo archives in the world. This research will add further legitimacy to my own work, promote new professional relationships and connections from around the world, and will pave the way for my future academic endeavors.

In conclusion, this proposal exemplifies the goal of Fulbright -- to promote cultural exchange and mutual understanding. In addition to my own growth and understanding of Hungarian history and culture at an individual level, the research and applications of my work in Hungary will serve as crucial evidence to support the advocacy of resources like the Fortepan archive, both here and abroad. It will also illustrate how we can better integrate history into the fabric of our communities, promoting our heritage in places beyond Hungary.

## PERSONAL STATEMENT

Isaac W. Campbell, Hungary, *Visual Arts - Installation Art*

Over the last six years, I have had four major academics--all Fulbright scholars who studied in Hungary--influence my life. Dr. Ronald Johnson, my collegiate music director, introduced me to Hungary through countless heartwarming stories about his Hungarian Fulbright experience, fueling my fascination for what he called his "second home." Soon after I was introduced to Dr. Bettina Fabos, who was assembling her team for the groundbreaking digital project, *Proud and Torn*, an interactive timeline on Hungarian history. I served as the project's animator; bringing historical images (many of which are from the Fortepan Archive) to life using animation and motion graphics techniques. Through this experience, I met two other Hungarian-based Fulbright scholars, Leslie Waters and Kristina Poznan who act as historical advisors on the project. They ultimately introduced me to the idea of pursuing a Fulbright Scholarship. These mentors and experiences with Hungary, perhaps coincidental, perhaps destiny, have been pivotal in my academic development and have shaped my life as a young adult and a global citizen.

My first trip to Hungary came in the summer of 2015 when I was invited by the award winning filmmaker Ferenc Török to study on the set of his recent film, *1945*. The one month stay turned into a full three month visit; I fell in love with Hungary - so much so that I even began looking into applications for residency. I tell people, "The only reason I left was because *both* of my visas ran out." Upon my return, I began working with Dr. Fabos on the Fortepan Iowa archive. In 2017, I helped organize the donation of the Michael W. Lemberger photo collection, conservatively estimated at over 1.5 million images and regarded as one of the largest privately held photo collections in the world, to the University of Iowa Special Collections and Fortepan Iowa. It was a perfect gift for the Fortepan Iowa project, and I saw it necessary to showcase what could be possible with a donation of this magnitude. Consequently, I worked with two local school districts to challenge teachers and their students to incorporate these historical photos into their class work. More than 80 students, from across all grades and all subjects, presented their work at a public celebration. The success of this initiative gave me a clear vision of the huge potential that archival photographs hold in educating our youth and inspiring our communities.

In addition to running my own digital media freelance business and working on the Fortepan Iowa archive, my passion for historical photography has only grown. I have secured funding for multiple wheatpastings and photo installations throughout my hometown of Ottumwa, Iowa, developed animated flip books, and am embarking on a commercial postcard project. My plan is to let this work serve as a springboard for other projects across the state; utilizing amateur "snapshots" from the Fortepan Iowa archive to help revitalize and re-energize communities and help Iowans reflect on their unique cultural heritage. As the Fortepan concept is adopted by other states and the globe, I imagine spearheading similar projects in other states in the U.S. and throughout the world.

I admire Hungary for many of the same reasons I admire my hometown: both are filled with untapped opportunities to make a real impact through the artistic and marketing areas I am skilled and passionate about. This impact requires a specific combination of personnel, timing, resources, and potential. I believe that my ambitious nature, skills in media production, and understanding of Hungarian history, combined with the underutilized resources of Hungary, will make lasting contributions to our shared understanding of each other and of the world we share.

# Exploring the Relevancy of Historic Images in a Digital Society

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*As a research grantee, I worked extensively with the Néprajzi Múzeum and Fortepan, two photo archives based in Budapest, which represent opposite ends of the archiving spectrum in terms of content, purpose, and access, to create public art exhibitions to showcase historic images. Both archives presented numerous additional opportunities for me to conceptualize, develop, execute, and promote initiatives with their photographic resources using digital skills and technology. Ultimately, my research has given me a clearer understanding of the archiving profession, and how digital technology and street art can be used in conjunction with these archives to create content that is engaging, accessible, and relevant to all generations in our ever-growing digital society.*

## 1. Introduction

During my appointment as a Fulbright research grantee, I had the opportunity to work with two world-class photographic archives: the collection at the Néprajzi Múzeum and the publicly supported, open source Fortepan archive. Both institutions provided me with excellent access to their resources, where I gained a better understanding of the archiving profession and the challenges archives face while ensuring the safety and longevity of their assets. This access provided a more solid foundation on which I could begin to explore public art initiatives that would help accomplish goals for the institutions as well as promote their resources by “taking the museum to the streets of Budapest”.

Originally, I had proposed two types of public art installations that would be used in conjunction with photographs from both archives. These included wheat pastings (large format, bio-degradable, non-destructive art pieces using a combination of paper, water, and flour) and peek-boxes (viewing boxes that feature images which are related to the location of the box). However, over the course of my grant period, I was presented with many additional new and unexpected opportunities to contribute to both institutions in ways that supported my research by utilizing a variety of digital skills and technologies. These opportunities included developing online exhibitions, preparing and executing a marketing campaign for the Fortepan exhibition in the national gallery *Minden múlt a múltam*, and developing a business plan for a revolutionary mobile app called “ForteGo”.

In summary, these additional projects and initiatives greatly enhanced my Fulbright experience and research by allowing me to gain further access to archival resources, strengthening relationships with professionals and institutions in Hungary, and exploring more potential uses for historic images using digital methods and technologies.

## 1. 1. Néprajzi Múzeum

With a collection exceeding more than 500,000 images, the Néprajzi Múzeum's photo archive is one of the largest and most diverse in Hungary. The collection primarily composed of images relating to life in rural Hungary throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century, and features many images taken by well-known Hungarian photographers. It boasts a variety of types of photographs including glass slides, negatives, autochrome photographs, and prints. Like most traditional photo archives, a majority of images have significant historical value due to the content of the image, the context in which they were taken, or the photographer who created the image. The museum utilizes a combined system of digital and physical methods to catalogue their images. With an archive of this size, proper training was crucial to effectively conduct research.

Hanga Gebauer, curator for the photo collection, was instrumental in training me to access the collection for my research. She taught me how to use the card and filing system, how to correctly handle images, and served as my liaison with other museum staff. We worked in close proximity for a number of projects, specifically the online exhibition *Téli ünnepekör*. Her guidance and experience with the collection was invaluable and has contributed to my overall knowledge of photographs, the archiving process, and the curation of images.

Additionally, I worked closely with Judit Csorba in the film archive department. Our common knowledge of video production positively impacted our working relationship; she very quickly became a valuable resource for my research in the museum. She trained me extensively on the digital catalogue system, where the archival footage is kept. Additionally, she played a major role in the development of *Téli ünnepekör*, as she helped me communicate with other team members from other departments. We spent a majority of our time conceptualizing ideas, editing films, and going over revisions to the project before it was released over the Christmas holiday.

Researching with the Néprajzi Múzeum provided an opportunity to experience photo and film archives in a traditional sense. I gained a better understanding of how a museum archive works, what resources they have available, and the limitations/benefits to this type of model of archiving. With this in mind, I have much clearer insight to the needs of traditional archives and kinds of creative initiatives the museum, and others like it, might be yearning for. I anticipate that this experience will lead to new opportunities with traditional archives in the United States and will serve as an important portion of my presentation at the upcoming Creative Commons Global Summit in Lisbon.

## 1. 2. Fortepan

Over the last decade, Fortepan has evolved from a small, passion project of two men who were saving negatives from the dumpster, to an incredible nationwide movement supported network of dedicated donors, historians, technicians, designers, and archivists. With over 100,000 images, the collection represents a new era of photo archiving, one that documents the past through the eyes (and lenses) of the people who lived it. All images are available to the public through their website, licensed under the Creative Commons, and are downloadable for any use (with attribution) free of charge. This is a bold, and arguably "radical" idea, for an

industry that is built on the ideals of protection through a limited-use or pay-per-use models. Fortepan's success showcases the public's demand and support for an archive of this model, and that there is massive public interest in preserving and distributing historic photographs.

My work with Fortepan began with András Török, chairman of Fortepan and former director of Summa Artium, the organization overseeing Fortepan. András has been an excellent resource to help explain many of the inner workings of Fortepan with regards to donors, administration, marketing, internal operation, and relationships within the political climate in Hungary. Fortepan doesn't apply for or accept any government funding, as they are determined to retain full autonomy from any entity that might try to influence the direction or purpose of the archive. Therefore, Fortepan relies heavily on private donations and volunteers to succeed. They have accomplished this, as the archive continues to grow and advance. They recently revealed a new and updated website along with surpassing more than 100,000 images in the collection. Their crowdsourcing campaign, in which information is input for individual photos by a dedicated group of historian volunteers, is unmatched. All in all, Fortepan is continuing to grow and evolve in a way that can be modeled by other Fortepan archives around the world.

I have also had the pleasure of working with Miklos Tamasi, co-founder of Fortepan. An introverted genius, Miklos is incredibly respected amongst colleagues and professionals around Hungary. During my grant period, I spent a majority of my time with him learning about the practical aspects of Fortepan – how he scans the photographs, what system he uses for categorizing the images, and how he curates the photographs. We spent most of our time together in his workshop; I observed his process and took notes throughout our sessions. Most interesting however, were our discussions surrounding his goals and ambitions for Fortepan. Understanding that I am part of the next variation of this initiative (Fortepan Iowa) I wanted to gain a better understanding of his purpose and passion for this project. As excited as he is to see the initiative grow and expand around world, his only true priority is to save as many Hungarian photos before they are lost to time. This answer exemplifies Fortepan's true spirit and priority: preserving the history of Hungary and Hungarians. Moving forward, both with Fortepan and Fortepan Iowa, I will always keep in mind this simple, yet powerful purpose.

Fortepan exemplifies a new era in public archiving where photos are made accessible to everyone. With little financial support, Fortepan has achieved an incredible feat, both in their collection, and the preservation of a public account of history. While Fortepan continues to grow and succeed, it presents a question: can adjustments be made toward the traditional model of archiving to make them more relevant and accessible in a digital society? I believe so. And while we may not be able to completely change the structure of how these traditional archives operate, we can think of new, creative uses for the photographs (such as public art) where others can enjoy them from their own environments.

## **2. Wheat Pastings**

The most prominent part of my grant research is in wheat pasting. As described earlier, wheat pasting is a non-destructive, bio-degradable art form, traditionally used in street art and public awareness campaigns. Flour and water are mixed together to create a glue which is then brushed on to a surface, such as a wall, window, stone, or street. The paper is then placed on top of the paste, where it becomes saturated and will stick to the surface. Another layer of paste is

then added on top to secure the paper to the surface when the paste dries. The method can be used for small pieces or large installations that are the size of buildings. This results in images that blend in with urban surroundings in a way that is unique to other methods, as they can be form fitted and designed to take advantage of the space that they are pasted in.

A majority of the pasting projects are being utilized as a promotional tool for the *Minden múlt a múltam* Fortepan exhibition in the Magyar Nemzeti Galéria. These exhibits will be constructed following the opening of the exhibition on April 17<sup>th</sup> – as their existence is only temporary. I have selected 3 districts for the pasting exhibitions in Budapest including VII, VIII, and XIII. These districts already support vibrant street art displays and are home to many abandoned buildings – perfect canvases for the art. They are also home to diverse groups of young locals and tourists – two target audiences that I want to capture with these installations.

My selection process for the pasting images began with the curated list of images from the national gallery. I wanted to focus using images from the exhibition for two reasons:

1. Using images from the exhibition would create a clear and understandable relationship between the exhibition and the art as part of a marketing campaign for the show
2. The subject matter of the exhibition coincides with my early ideas of what images I would like to see as art throughout the city

By using images that will be used for the exhibition for the public art, there is a greater chance that audiences will recognize overlap between official marketing efforts by the gallery and my street art. This creates a better sense of cohesion between the promotion and the call to action. For example, if people see a photo they like as a pasting and understand it is in an exhibition, they might be more inclined to visit the show. Additionally, many of the images for the gallery showcase beautiful, happy images of Hungarians and life in Hungary. Understanding the history of Hungary, I wanted to showcase images that promote a sense of joy, kinship, freedom, and community; challenging the idea/feeling that our collective history is surrounded by moments of grief, uncertainty, pain, and suffering.

## **2. 1. JR Au Louvre**

Following my participation at the Berlin Seminar in March, I had the opportunity of a lifetime: to participate in one of the largest pasting projects in the world. JR, a French artist who has gained international recognition for his pastings in various parts of the world, was commissioned to create an enormous pasting in celebration of the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Pyramid at the Louvre in Paris. After multiple failed attempts to register, I joined the ranks of more than 400 volunteers to help construct “The Mystery of the Pyramid”. I arrived in Paris for the final day of the 4-day build, which included 2,000 roles of paper and thousands more liters of paste. Most volunteers were from Paris - but a handful, just like me, made the exodus from other parts of Europe to participate in this incredible installation.

The exhibition utilized JR’s unique style of anamorphic design, which presents the art in three-dimensions to create an optical illusion. What makes anamorphic design truly unique is that it has only one point of view where the entire piece can be properly seen. From all other

directions, it makes little to no sense. Therefore, the piece was a total mystery until it was completed. The pasting was installed on the courtyard around the pyramid, giving the illusion that the pyramid was part of an ancient archeological dig, extending down into the ground for hundreds of meters. The piece, when completed, gained global news headlines and represented, what I believe, is the pinnacle achievement for this artform.

Being a member of the volunteer team, I gained an incredible amount of logistical and design knowledge about the project. This will prove to be incredibly useful as I plan to organize larger installations in the future. Below is an annotated list of my observations from that day.

1. The build was divided into 4 days, each with 2 segments (morning and afternoon).
2. Each segment had 50 volunteers, each which was divided into two groups of 25. These groups were then divided into 4 smaller, color coded teams. Each team had two professional leaders from JR's studio, managing the operations of the team.
3. Half of the team spent the time trimming edges off of rolls of paper to prepare them to be pasted. The others were sent to paste. Positions changed halfway through to help keep volunteers engaged and experience all aspects of the build.
4. The pasting was divided into approximately 50 sections, each of which had a unique code. The code was printed on the paper and also attached with a sticker.
5. Generally, sections were pasted from the center and extended outwards – however, there was no cohesive order of which sections were pasted at what time. Sections came together like pieces of a puzzle.
6. Trimming alternated sides of the paper, so that pieces always had a white strip that would be overlapped when the next piece was installed. This kept everything in order and helped preserve consistency.
7. Damage (rips, tears, moments of mis alignment) was not uncommon – however it was completely unnoticeable in the final viewing of the piece given the size.
8. Paste was made of a wall-paper paste rather than flour. Still effective and biodegradable.
9. A project of this magnitude required a staff of at least 25 people to execute.
10. Large monitors were essential in presenting a live view of the work, from the correct perspective to the public.
11. Public was completely enthralled with the work.

This experience, a total surprise, turned out to be one of the most eye-opening moments of my entire grant period. Understanding how a project of this magnitude is executed, let alone by the world's best and most prominent pasting artist, provided an un-paralleled learning experience – one that will enhance all of my future projects. It should be noted that JR is the artist who inspired me to begin pasting in the first place – having the opportunity to meet him, let alone participate in one of his projects, is truly unforgettable.

### **3. Peek-Boxes**

The second part of my originally proposed grant work is for the installation of peek-boxes. These devices are small viewing boxes that display an image on the inside. The box is backlit from a piece of opaque glass in the rear of the box. A photograph is printed on a transparent film, allowing the viewer to see the photograph. Peek-boxes utilize their location as the primary motivation for story-telling and interaction. The image inside represents the

surrounding area. This gives the viewer a sense of “stepping back in time” – creating a wonderful relationship between the photo and the space.

Early on in the development of this idea with Fortepan, I was introduced to ForteGo – a groundbreaking mobile app which geo-locates Fortepan photos on a map. The user is then guided to the locations of these photos where they can observe the area as it looked in the past. It became very apparent that the purpose of the peek-boxes could be diverted towards a more beneficial purpose – promoting the ForteGo app. I then began working with Luca Javor, the project lead for the app, in selecting locations for these boxes. Luca has been an invaluable asset over the last few months, as Fortepan became increasingly busy with the approaching National Gallery exhibition in April.

The peek-boxes will be used as a marketing tool for the mobile application. They will match the color and branding of the ForteGo app and even include the logo, with text encouraging people to download and try the application. Upon opening the app, users will be presented with the same photograph that they saw in the box – reinforcing this idea of a common history and place, and encouraging the user to explore with the app. Currently 3 boxes are being constructed and planned for deployment, as delays with the app’s development and the reprioritizing of resources for the national gallery slowed progress. I will then observe the boxes usage and track app downloads to see if they are having any effect on the popularity of the app.

## **4. Digital Initiatives**

Over the course of my grant period, I was fortunate enough to be presented with numerous other opportunities to collaborate within my host institutions. These projects greatly enhanced my research and Fulbright experience, exposing new areas for me to experiment with historic images and utilize many of my digital media skills and talents in valuable ways. These projects have strengthened my relationships with my host institutions and have laid the foundation for further collaboration upon my return to the United States.

### **4. 1. Téli ünnepkör**

One of the unique challenges that was presented early on with my research was the impending location change of the Néprajzi Múzeum. For the entirety of grant period, the museum was closed the public, as the museum is preparing to be relocated to a new, state of the art facility in Városliget. This came a surprise to me, as I was anticipating the opportunity to work with a current or future physical exhibition within the museum. However, this problem quickly presented a new opportunity, one that would introduce me to many different departments throughout the museum and add a new dimension to my research.

To our dismay, the museum was closed years before the new facility is scheduled to open. Subsequently, the museum’s audience, consisting of both tourists and locals, have limited to no access to the museum. This quickly became a problem that I, and the team at the museum, felt compelled to address. Therefore, we came up with the idea of creating an online, digital exhibition. Hanga and Judit enlisted other departments, including the director of communications

for the museum, Judit Lovas, to help create this exhibition. After our initial meeting, we agreed on a few critical points.

1. The exhibition would focus on graphic storytelling rather than text storytelling
2. The exhibition would utilize full screen images
3. The exhibition would be interactive and have downloadable content for children and families, along with factual information about the activities
4. The exhibition would follow a chronological timeline and be released to the public in sections, in conjunction with the holidays leading up to Christmas

After evaluating the museum's current website, we decided that the strict framework hindered many of our storytelling and design ideas. Therefore, I created a completely new and independent site for the project. By nature, this effort showcased the exhibition as a standalone and unique initiative. After two months of intensive work, we released Téli ünnepkör, or [www.teliunnepkor.org](http://www.teliunnepkor.org), to the public.

The site features nearly 30 beautiful full screen images from the archive and utilizes a variety of multimedia to enhance the viewer's experience. These include GIFs, videos, audio clips, and supporting images. The website utilizes a vertical parallax design which mirrors the vertical timeline established early in the project. Viewers learn about András nap, Szent Miklós nap, Luca nap, Karácsony vigíliája, Aprószentek napja, and Vízkereszt. A small paragraph gives a brief introduction to the holiday – the viewer is then given the option to read an extensive account about the holiday. However, this is a clickable link and doesn't impede the experience of the viewer or disrupt the storyline. Many of the activities, such as creating an Advent calendar, cooking dumplings, and building an advent display, are geared toward children and families to encourage interaction away from the computer.

From the standpoint of the museum, the exhibition was a huge success. Internally, the project created collaboration from members of different departments and utilized a number of very specialized talents and items, showcasing the strengths and assets of the museum. Approximately 800 unique users from 7 different countries visited the site over the two week period surrounding Christmas. Feedback from the public was very positive and the museum hopes to create similar projects in the future.

From my perspective, the piece was also a huge success, given many of the time and budget constraints. It featured the photographs in a unique and beautiful way, while combining a number of other archival elements. The images are protected from being downloaded, which is a common concern among traditional archives. I believe that this method and design, showcasing the archival photos, isn't just interesting, but helps position the museum in the eyes of the public as a progressive, creative, and vibrant institution. The foundation of Téli ünnepkör as a digital exhibition is an idea that can easily be replicated and serve as a basis for other future projects. I believe this approach could easily be adopted by other traditional archives in Hungary and the United States to make materials more exciting, relevant, and accessible to the public.

## 2. 2. Minden múlt a múltam

In celebration for the 100,000<sup>th</sup> image uploaded to the Fortepan archive, the Hungarian National Gallery has collaborated with Fortepan to create the exhibition “Minden múlt a múltam”. The exhibition tells the story of Fortepan, showcasing more than 200 images of life in Hungary through common struggles and celebrations amongst all generations of Hungarians. The exhibition is beautifully crafted and allows for hours of enjoyment and inspiration. During the official opening, I observed hundreds of people, of all ages and backgrounds, engaging with the photographs and with each other. It was a beautiful and inspiring sight – one that speaks to the power that photography has to connect us as humans.

Rather than organizing the exhibition chronologically, it is divided into stages of life of the subjects of the photo – children, adolescents, adults, and elderly. This provides a fresh and unique way to compare images of similar subjects, but from different years. For example, a photo from 1918 could be next to a photo from 1978. Themes, similarities, and differences between generations are highlighted – which encourages cross generational conversations between viewers. In addition to the 200 featured photographs, approximately 200 more are utilized throughout the display in unique, interactive displays. A massive, two-story, rotating Rubik’s Cube-esque animation greets visitors as they enter with faces across generations of Fortepan. Original prints with handwritten notes are pressed between glass on rotating poles where users can examine both sides. Budapest’s “Imaginary Street” (a collage of separate street photos) can be explored, pasted on a wall. Users can even explore Fortepan on two massive wall projection screens. In all, the exhibition is a fantastic tribute to decades of Hungarian photographs and the common bond that Hungarians from all generations share. It also serves as a testament to Fortepan’s success.

Unfortunately, the budget of the national gallery and the company in charge of design/promotion has left the exhibition at a severe disadvantage. So far, only a small social media campaign by the national gallery has marketed the show to the public. Local news has helped – but with most publications in Hungarian, the tourism industry has been completely alienated. Fortepan, an organization with no serious financial backing and no paid staff, has been essentially charged with marketing their own show to the public.

After learning of this situation, I approached the Fortepan team about offering my services and to help overcome this massive obstacle. We immediately began conceptualizing ideas on how we can tap into Fortepan’s massive network of volunteers and supporters to market the show with little to no budget. Working with Miklos, András, and Luca, we agreed on marketing campaign to raise awareness to local and international audiences for the duration of the exhibition. This plan includes:

1. Multiple videos for social media distribution
2. A social media photo campaign for photos from the show
3. A diverse listing of Facebook events for the show
4. A poster campaign in which custom posters are distributed via email. Participants will submit their favorite Fortepan photo ID. I will then take that photo and insert it into the poster. They will receive their poster via email and can print it off. Participants who share

a photograph of their poster on social media will be entered into weekly contests to win free tickets to the show.

5. A dedicated Facebook group, *Fortepan Kiállítás*, to help distribute posters around Hungary and promote the event to Fortepan supporters

The opportunity to help market the show is a fantastic chance for me to utilize all of my digital skills and research knowledge. The show also provides us the ability to track quantitative data with attendance, ticket sales, and social media reactions. This data will be used to analyze the effectiveness of the marketing campaign and provide support for my qualitative research data upon the completion of my grant.

I am confident that this opportunity to promote the exhibition will provide a new level of marketability and diversity to my research; showcasing that street art, or other unique uses for historic images, can in fact be used as tools to drive the public to a call to action. While these ideas will be used to promote Fortepan, the exhibition, and Fortepan Iowa's future goals – I anticipate that many other organizations, specifically in Iowa, will take interest in to my research and look to historic images to help promote their goals and programs as well.

### **2. 3. ForteGo**

ForteGo is Fortepan's most recent and ambitious project. The mobile application synchronizes the user's GPS location with a database of photographs from the Fortepan archive. Each photo has a unique GPS location; located on a map, the user can then navigate to the original location of more than 1,000 photos around Budapest. Once the user is in the correct location, they can take a photo and compare it to the original from Fortepan. Finally, the user can download a side-by-side comparison "postcard" to showcase their adventures throughout Budapest. Although still in the early stages of development, the app has seen a huge response from users and Fortepan supporters.

While the app utilizes photos from Fortepan, all photos loaded into the app are lower resolution from their counterparts in the actual archive. This separates ForteGo from Fortepan, allowing for greater flexibility. From my standpoint, this also gives the app a chance to grow in ways that are different from Fortepan. Therefore, ForteGo represents an important step forward for Fortepan as it could become a revenue stream to support the efforts of the archive. Upon my arrival, András and I had a conversation about developing a business plan for ForteGo.

I believe that the strongest business case for ForteGo is to remain free to the public and focus on annual subscriptions for institutions and organizations. These users will join the ForteGo community, a global network of geo-located photographs. Photographs can provide information that is interested to their own target audiences – for example, tourists or alumni at a university, to enhance their experience. Initially, our target users will reside in Hungary and Iowa. These include industries such as:

1. Walking Tours/Tourism Companies
2. Cruise Ships

3. Alumni Associations at Universities (UNI, Iowa, ISU)
4. Convention and Visitors/Tourism Bureaus in Iowa

In the future, I envision that users will be able to customize their experience with guided tours, film clips, and audio soundbites. For example, a cruise company could curate their own walking tour, specific to the interests and languages of their guests. Given the popularity and feedback from current users, we believe that this could be a very welcomed addition to enhance the experience of guests and tourists. Current market research shows little to no-competitors in this space and that, given Fortepan's expansive and growing collection, we have unparalleled access to the resources needed to expand.

However, many technical issues must be addressed first. Geolocating each photograph is a tedious and time-consuming job. Currently, all photos are located by hand using Google Street View. However, new technologies that combine GPS coordinates with current phone metadata are creating new possibilities to locate photos. Essentially, Fortepan could crowdsource GPS information through their users by taking the GPS coordinates of a digital photo taken in the same location as the original. This would allow for ForteGo to expand much faster than what is currently possible. With support for Fortepan in Hungary and abroad growing, we believe that ForteGo plays an integral role in the long-term expansion and success of Fortepan. I look forward to working with the Fortepan team on this exciting project following my return to the United States.

### **3. Conclusion**

Over the last 7 months, I have had the experience of a lifetime conducting research in Budapest. I have been offered incredible opportunities, many of which were not expected, to research the relevancy and value that historic photographs have in our society. My hosts provided me with unparalleled access and opportunities to learn, explore, and interact with their assets. In this, I've gained a whole new understanding of archiving and the groundbreaking work being done in Hungary. With the perspectives of those who work for Fortepan and the Néprajzi Múzeum in mind, I can create content that isn't just more exciting, engaging, and relevant to their audiences, but content that reinforces their missions, supports their needs, and garners more enthusiasm from the public. This will undoubtedly impact my work in the future and serve as common ground surrounding future initiatives between our two nations.

My research has shown me that there is an incredible amount of need for creative solutions that utilize historic images, help raise awareness and support for their archival institutions. This is not limited to traditional or non-traditional archives – in my experience, the need is universal. Sometimes, this need comes in the form of production (conceptualizing, designing, and creating) and sometimes, it comes simply in using tools like websites, Facebook, Instagram, and even our mobile devices, to better communicate with the public.

As I discovered, the challenge isn't trying to justify that photographs are relevant in our digital society – they absolutely are. Simply observing people at the national gallery confirms this. Watching a grandmother and grandson speak over a photograph that they both are connected to confirms this. Watching a young man suddenly stop to explore an amateur photograph in a

gallery, leaning closer and closer to satisfy his curiosity, confirms this. Telling a familiar story in a new way through images rather than words on a website confirms this. The true challenge is in the use and presentation of the photographs to find new ways to make them engaging and accessible. Accessibility and relevancy are not mutually exclusive qualities. The more accessibility we give to archival images, the more relevancy they have towards our society and future generations.

In conclusion, the Fulbright exchange program has been more than I could have ever imagined. The opportunities provided to me by my hosts, and the very nature of living abroad, have undoubtedly shaped my life in countless ways, many of which I'm certain that I have yet to discover. My research has confirmed that photographs play an important role in our society, inspiring everything from cultural exploration to intergenerational conversation. Even amongst the age of virtual reality, endless scrolling, and pop up video ads, all generations of people still procure a natural interest and curiosity for photographs. I'm honored to have had the opportunity to learn from and work alongside so many people who have dedicated their lives to the preservation of this part of our common history.

As I've come to understand, there are those who curate the past and those who protect it. There are those who garner support for photo archives and those who meticulously record information so it will never be forgotten. And there are those like me, who have the challenge and the opportunity to share these treasures with the world in new, unique, and exciting ways. Together, we will continue to preserve the past and promote the attitude of accessibility; ensuring that photographs of all kinds, professional and amateur, have the opportunity to excite and inspire all future generations in Hungary, Iowa, and beyond.