

## New Book Announcement

*Petra Hanáková - Kevin B. Johnson (eds.)*

### **VISEGRAD CINEMA: POINTS OF CONTACT FROM THE NEW WAVES TO THE PRESENT**

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This book, which grew out of a visiting lecturer series at the Film Studies Department of the Charles University in Prague, brings together essays by scholars from Slovakia, Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic that examine the cinemas of the Visegrad region and their interconnections throughout the last fifty years. In contrast to current “Western” film scholarship, which often tends to imagine Central and Eastern European Cinema as one monolithic block, these essays not only underscore sites of contact, but also

emphasize differences between the national cinemas – starting with the basic fact that the phenomenon that can be broadly labeled as “New Wave” occurred at different periods in each country and perhaps, as some scholars claim in the case of Polish cinema, did not even happen at all. Nevertheless, whether described in terms of New Waves or not, all of the countries covered here saw periods in which filmmakers indulged similar impulses towards artistic, aesthetic, and thematic experimentation within the context of their state controlled and state financed film industries. The “New Wave” label here is thus understood as a sort of shorthand for these exceptional periods of artistic efforts, creative contacts, and mutual influences.

Although the New Waves serve as a general point of departure, several studies in this book deal with later periods, particularly the postcommunist times, in which the Visegrad cinemas found themselves confronting similar hardships and economic compromises as the former state controlled industries underwent transformation into standard commercial ventures. The reader thus finds a broad array of texts in the volume – from historical accounts that trace thematic developments in specific national cinemas, to comparative studies of motifs and issues, to analytic approaches that suggest new ways of reading both older and more recent films. Several of the essays focus on methodology and strive not only to provide useful methods for understanding Visegrad cinema, but also to seek out ways of repositioning it onto the map of international cinema.

### **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

1. World War II in Polish Cinema of the 1960s (P. Zwierchowski)
2. Eroticism, Power, and Fate in the Cinema of Central Europe (K. B. Johnson)
3. Images of the Holocaust in Polish and Other Cinemas of the Visegrad Region, 1948–1968 (M. Mikušová)
4. Artistic Dialogues in the Visegrad Cinema of the 1960s (A. Szekfü)
5. “Our Folks”: Ordinary People in Czechoslovak and Polish Cinema around 1968 (I. Kurz)
6. The Problematic Other and the (Im)possibility of Cross-Cultural Dialogue in Slovak Cinema after 1993 (J. Dudková)
7. Leading Tendencies in Polish Postcommunist Cinema: Auteurism, Genre, Vernacularism (E. Mazierska)
8. Imagining National Identity in Czech Postcommunist Cinema (P. Hanáková)
9. State Power and the Body: The (Anti-)Abortion Legacies of Communist Romania and Postcommunist Poland (A. Zielińska)