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Experimental (Structural Film) as the Concept of Film Innovation (Mihovil Pansini and Geff)

Abstract: This paper concerns the historical presentation of avant-garde streams and the interpretation of their general characteristics. Emphasis has been placed on the neo-avant-garde art practice, especially European and American neo-avant-garde film, with the aim of carrying out a theoretical platform for the analysis and interpretation of the structural film by Yugoslav film experimentalist Mihovil Pansini. Its aim is also to understand and interpret the events that caused the establishment of world's first experimental film festival, the GEFF (Genre Film Festival). The idea of film innovation, as a film experiment, was at that time much more feasible in democratically open Western societies than under the conditions that governed the hermetically strict environment of the socialist realism of postwar Yugoslavia. The paper will attempt to prove that the phenomenon of Yugoslavian amateur cinema clubs as such was an ideal and perhaps only possible solution for the realization of innovative, radically subversive and experimental film ideas.

Keywords: experimental film; structural film; GEFF; Mihovil Pansini; amateur cinema clubs

Avant-gardes, neo-avant-gardes and post-avant-gardes determination of the film

When speaking about avant-garde film or about the period of avant-garde in general, one should bear in mind its fundamental characteristics, based on the radical artistic practices, determinate by the urge and need for innovative, excessive, subversive and experimental but also on a critique of historical, social, political, cultural and artistic scope of modernism and post modernism. Film critic and theoretician Turković construes that: “due to need for innovation, the avant-garde film period initiated a whole new range of creating possibilities and new areas of imaginative shaping, and different stimulation of perception.”¹

¹ Hrvoje Turković, “Što je eksperimentalni (avangardni, alternativni) film,” *Filmske sveske* 4 (1981): 253–61.

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Furthermore, he indicates that:

the avant-garde film is only the genre name for a special, recognizable movie type (a special film genre²), which has its own historical development from its early years to the present, its own inner style and style differentiation and a relatively distinct place in the context of other film types.³

From the previously mentioned new range of creative possibilities, new film forms evolved, derived, as such, from the dominant characteristic of avant-gardes. In that regard, the period of avant-garde films, called the first Avant-garde or the historical Avant-garde (1910–1930), relates to the futuristic, dadaistic and surrealist films, but also to American experimental art practice before World War II, to German expressionistic film and soviet revolutionary film experiment, although, as Šuvaković claimed, the latter two film movements are borderline cases. Films from this period emerged from the avant-garde stream of European modernism in the phase of its rise and they became the dominant periodic style.

The second period of film avant-garde, the so-called neo-avant-garde, relates to experimental film produced from the end of World War II to the 1970s. In this context of defining and generating new experimental film subspecies, amateur cinema clubs played a specific role. In such places, which can be seen as ‘checkpoints’ in which existed a kind of ‘democratization’ (which applies to society dominated by totalitarian regimes), artists could be completely free and uninhibited. Accordingly, there was the largest shift in the conceptual sense, but also in terms of experimentation with the capabilities of film, of which more is written below. Additionally, in the framework of the experimental, or neo-avant-garde film, experiments occurred in other artistic fields, including literature, theater and fine arts, resulting in a kind of transgression. In this sense, transgression leads to the surpassing of media and disciplinary boundaries.

Whereas the period of neo-avant-garde incurred certain artistic streams, such as pop art, post-surrealism, fluxus, underground, neo-dadaism, etc., it is understandable that the film classifications are inevitably linked to the aforementioned artistic directions.

Under the terminology “experimental film” we can subsume the following subtypes:

- 1. Post-surrealist film.** Formed in the 1960s its primary characteristic is that surrealist themes, such as the display of the unconscious, violent or repressed, are presented through parody or irony. Representatives of post-surrealist film include filmmakers Maya Deren, Hans Richter, Hiroshi Teshigahara, Wojciech Has, Vera Chytilová et al;⁴

² Hrvoje Turković, “Tipovi filmskih vrsta,” *Hrvatski filmski ljetopis* 47 (2006), http://www.hfs.hr/hfs/ljetopis_clanak_detail.asp?sif=1677, acc. October 14, 2017.

³ Hrvoje Turković, “Što je eksperimentalni film,” *Zapis* (2002), http://bib.irb.hr/datoteka/239544.Sto_je_to_eksperimentalni_film.doc, acc. October 14, 2017.

⁴ <http://www.tasteofcinema.com/2014/the-30-best-surrealist-films-not-directed-by-luis-bunuel/>, acc. October 31, 2017.

2. **Underground film.** Originated in the 1960's and is a critically-minded film regarding the dominant artistic practices of post-modernism, neo-avant-garde and post-avant-garde. That criticism refers to art that resists conventional film, and its actors in the fullest extent are socially marginal figures, amateurs and artists. Underground film, like humor and controversial art aesthetics, introduces problematical, unacceptable, and deviant social behaviors (transvestism, drug addiction, homosexuality, exhibitionism) and related, marginal groups thus exploring questions of ethical, sexual, political, and aesthetic norms of society.⁵ The most famous American underground filmmakers include Andy Warhol, Stan Brakhage, Paul Morrissey, Martin Sharp, Jack Smith, Michael English, and Adolfo and Jonas Mekas. The most famous representatives of the European underground are Valie Export, Otto Muehl, Vinko Rozman, Mihovil Pansini, Dušan Makavejev, Kokan Rakonjac et al.;
3. **Structural film.** Named by P. Adams Sitney, this genre developed from underground film in the late 1960s. Its fundamental characteristics are manifested in repetition and utilization of one or more actions, ideas, and extended recordings or long lasting impressions of the same scene (the Warhol movie *Sleep* includes approximately eight hours of footage of sleeping). Structural film also utilizes stroboscopic effects (Ernie Gehr's *Serene Velocity*), as well as the principle of the closed circle (loop) or loops during installation. The use of the above-mentioned techniques highlights the form and not the actual content of the films. This means that the structural content of the movie, in this way, becomes its form. The most significant representatives of structural film are Andy Warhol, Paul Sharits, Michael Snow, Hollis Frampton, Ernie Gehr, Peter Kubelka et al.;
4. **Expanded cinema.** Also occurring during the sixties, this genre's main characteristic is that the medium of the moving image is no longer used in conventional ways, therefore extending its conceptual and projectional options. Thus, instead of being projected onto traditional movie screens or displays, the film, as a multi-screen projection, projects to other projection surfaces or runs multiple exposures. As in the structural film, wherein the film's content becomes its expanded form, it is the film content itself that becomes a projection. The most significant representatives of the expanded film are William Raban, Annabel Nicolson, Carolee Schneemann, Lis Rhodes. In *Dresden Dynamo 1971-72*⁶ Rhodes extends the film medium's auditory elements to the point that sound represents a moving image, and a moving image sound. The connection between these two media is consequential, raising the question as to whether the movie expanded to the medium of music, or if music entered the medium of film.

⁵ Miško Šuvaković, *Pojmovnik suvremene umjetnosti* (Zagreb: Horetzky, 2005), 652.

⁶ About expanded cinema – Lis Rhodes, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I7xoNWzm7PQ>, acc. October 31, 2017.

The post-avant-garde after 1968 can be divided into two specific periods. The first period can be connected to conceptual film which, as an artistic form, can be carried out in the form of video work.

Šuvaković made a triple classification of conceptual film:⁷

1. The genre is a document of work with a subject, situation, event or entity (body art or performance);
2. The genre is a structural syntactic-semantic work utilizing the language of film or the language of art (film as an analytical concept work or theoretical object); and
3. The genre is a second-distance discursive form of appeal analysis and discussion of the concept of art, semantics, ideology and the theory of art.

The second period tied to post-modernistic film as a movie-text or movie-discourse and, as such, represents a semantic deconstruction of the history of art and the history of cinema. Not with the aim to show the traditional relationship between the movie and the pictures of the world, but to establish a post-structural mimesis of the mimesis itself.⁸

The definition of experimental film, as a creation that with its innovativeness and experiment goes beyond the established boundaries of film media, is the widest and most common of its definitions. The main aspects of experimental film works were in the first place: to liberate the film of the story as the basic principle of structuring of forms, to include the impact of and relationship to other art on film – such as painting, literature, theatre, music, etc. – and at the end the effort to take advantage of the opportunities that the medium of film offers as such. Its characteristic appearance is, firstly, of the experiment that has a tendency to change attitudes about the perception of film and impair the existing convention of its traditionalism, meaning it occurs as a need for a change of attitude towards the current commercial cinema. It is necessary to point out that this is more a work of art completely devoid of commercial qualities, and the role of the audience, as the consumers of this kind of film, takes on an entirely new dimension that includes different perceptive and cognitive experiences than the one that is offered via commercial films.

The origins of structural film

Structural film as a form can be placed in the period of the second avant-garde, or so-called film neo-avant-garde, and is defined as a subtype of experimental film. It is often identified, in the broadest sense, with minimalist art, reduced to the primary and consistent structural relationship of its constituent elements.⁹ This means that a

⁷ Šuvaković, *Pojmovnik*, 217–8.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ *Ibid.*, 373.

kind of structural doctrine is based inversely, so that the dominant narrative standards that a classic film possesses, is renounced. In other words, simplicity, reduction, and the principle of structurality give the primacy to the active perception of the viewer.

Some of the key films from this period include: Peter Kubelka's *Arnulf Rainer* (1960), Stan Brakhage's *Art of Vision* (1965), Tony Conrad's *The Flicker* (1965), Michael Snow's *Wavelength* (1966–1967), Paul Sharits's *T, O, U, C, H, I, N, G*, (1968), Hollis Frampton's *Zorns Lemma* (1970) and Ernie Gehr's *Serene Velocity* (1970).

One of the most significant structural films is considered to be Michael Snow's *Wavelength*. The film runs for 45 minutes, and with a sharp, energetic sound displays a slight zoom of photos on the wall, on which the waves on the ocean are displayed. Soon the development of American structural film influenced his expansion in Europe, especially in Germany and England (Malcom Le Grice's *Little Dog for Roger*¹⁰).

According to P. Adams Sitney, who introduced the concept of structural/materialist film, the period of structural film in American avant-garde film starts in the 1960s with Andy Warhol's movies *Sleep* (1963),¹¹ *Eat* (1963),¹² *Empire* (1964),¹³ *Harlot* (1965) and *Beauty* (1965).¹⁴ Each of these films emphasizes the temporal component of the recording and Warhol represents the first director/author who has introduced extended recording times of the same scenes in the movies.

As a pioneer of structural film, Warhol incites the viewer on the long-term observation of the same movie frame, which calls into question his concentration and focus of the film in question. An element of the presence of the actor-author-director, visibility of what he sees from his perspective, focalization, the reaction of his camera and later editing represents the one big change preceded by the development of structural film.¹⁵

Conceptual determination of the structural film

The frame as natural component of the film itself, actually its constituent, gives film its spatiality limits, as it is its time limit. Whereas the structural film largely uses the static camera position, audience attention is focused towards the particular scene, showing actors, actions, or states (Andy Warhol's *Sleep* or *Eat*). A static camera highlights the movement or modification and by using the framework establishes a sort of structural relationship.

¹⁰<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m7tE0gybo3g&list=PL4pC197K4ljlvt0CGx8eYO3yPvw-Ouq39&index=1>, acc. October 25, 2017.

¹¹ <https://vimeo.com/4880378>- acc. October 25, 2017.

¹² <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XoQcGAczNTE>, acc. October 25, 2017.

¹³ <https://www.youtube.com/embed/-sSsWj2HWk0>, acc. October 25, 2017.

¹⁴ Adams P. Sitney, *Visionary Film: The American Avant-Garde 1943–2000* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 350.

¹⁵ *Ibid*, 351.

According to Peterlić: “The static camera is focusing on sight, on events or phenomena within it, so from the scene is waiting for some kind of statement.”¹⁶

In such a way in structural film, the simulation of reality is cancelled, or an illusion that is present in the feature film, the emphasis is upon the form, structure and material.¹⁷ The most important features of structural film include prolonged recording, or the progress of the reduction and the repetition of one or several procedures. From that, according to Turković, “structural film is ultimately conceptual work, the startup of innovative concept, with a clear aim of its intention to be open to the end and unfinished.”¹⁸

Since the mimetic representation of reality is not the primary idea of structural film, from it in structural film is evident such dichotomy, oppositional relationship between the dominant narrative norms and procedure of transformation with the aim of departure from the same. In other words, structural film strives to minimize content, plot, and narrative in favor of the structure of the film by directing its subject according to technical possibilities and their internal content. In this case, the real content of the film becomes a form of that content, in which there are countless opportunities for the integration of the cinematic process.

In structural film the rules of feature film – narration, gradual introduction of characters, dismissal of a particular problem that the movie itself presents, conventional camera placement or angles, the standard use of cameras and editing, etc. – do not apply. Structural film offers its own rules based on the idea that the actions of film-making represent a sort of demystification of the process used by the film media. That kind of demystification makes procedures such as fixed-frame camera position, flicker effects, interrupted recording, re-photography, looped or repeated scenes transparent, as it is in feature film transparent specific to content or storyline. The only content in this type of film is its form, and the sole narrative is that of the story occurring in the thought processes of the viewers themselves.¹⁹ In other words, the primary idea of this movie includes the value of repetition, and thus becomes a sort of meditative process that does not lead to illusory reality displays but add illusion as a secondary importance. To achieve such a meditative component, narrative must be minor.

The phenomenon of cinema clubs in Yugoslavia in the 1960s, and their influence on culture

When talking about the domestic neo-avant-garde film, the second avant-garde is inherently triggered by activist, critical and political engagement, which points

¹⁶ Ante Peterlić, *Osnove teorije filma*. (Zagreb: Filmoteka 16, 1977), 86.

¹⁷ Peter Gidal, “Structural Film Anthology,” BFI, [http://www.luxonline.org.uk/articles/theory_and_definition\(1\).html](http://www.luxonline.org.uk/articles/theory_and_definition(1).html), acc. August 4, 2015.

¹⁸ https://bib.irb.hr/.../306996.TURKOVIC_Avanguardni_film_-_redigirana_verzija.doc, acc. October 2, 2015.

¹⁹ Andre Brooks, “Structural Films: Meditation through Simple Fo,” <http://www.waysofseeing.org/struct.html>, acc. October 23, 2017.

to the social, cultural, artistic and political contradictions within Yugoslav Socialism from the 1960s onwards.²⁰ In such conditions the resulting neo-avant-garde movements in visual art such as the movements Gorgona, EXAT 51, *Nove tendencije*, the magazine *Bit international*, the Zagreb music biennale, or the experimental film festival, GEF, which was held also as a biennale from 1963 to 1970, and ultimately the movement of the New artistic practice.

Due to the support of state cultural policy in the former Yugoslavia, numerous cinema clubs were established (cinema club Zagreb, cinema club Split and cinema club Belgrade) where film culture was co-financed and encouraged. This form of advocacy film culture through the establishment of cinema clubs, as a model of good practice, was taken directly from the French film critic and theoretician André Bazin.²¹ Whereas the members of such clubs were not controlled by the state apparatus, they could freely articulate their critical views and practices according to the current political power, therefore these clubs were an excellent platform for experimental beginnings of the avant-garde. Such artistic freedom most certainly would never be realized within the framework of professional cinematography.²²

The following filmmakers were engaged in these cinema clubs:

1. Cinema Club Zagreb: Ivan Ladislav Galeta, Vladimir Petek, Tomislav Gotovac, Mihovil Pansini, Oktavijan Miletić, Branko Janjić, Tomislav Kobia, Milan Šamec, Ljubiša Grlić;
2. Cinema Club Split: Lordan Zafranović, Ante Verzotti, Ivan Martinc, Mate Bogdanović, Šime Ujević, Martin Crvelin, Ranko Kursar, Vjekoslav Nakić, Andrija Pivčević; and
3. Cinema Club Beograd: Marko Babac, Živojin Pavlović, Arsa Milošević i Aleksandar Petković, Dušan Makavejev, Vojislav Kokan Rakonjac, Dušan Stefanović, Velja Milošević, Borko Niketić, and Adam Mitić, Srđan Karanović.

These filmmakers developed separately in their own different film orientation or streams, and that, according to Turković, resulted in the development of four thematic-structural and methodological streams:

1. Materialist orientations, with Vladimir Petek at the head. Artists who worked within this stream included Tomislav Gotovac, Mihovil Pansini, Zlatko Hajdler and Milan Šamec. They intervened directly on celluloid through a “controlled mechanical damage to the filmstrip, gluing the smaller ribbon on a larger, cutting and mergers of the ribbon along the movie pictures, use the negatives and the tone of the negatives, the optical trail of mechanical manipulation”;²³

²⁰ Miško Šuvaković, Nevena Daković, “Druga avangarda-ili-filmska neoavangarda,” in *Istorija umetnosti u Srbiji XX vek, I tom: radikalne umetničke prakse*, ed. Miško Šuvaković (Beograd: Orion Art 2010), 351.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Tomislav Brčić, “Fenomen i kultura kinoklubova šezdesetih godina i utjecaj novih tendencija na festival GEF,” *Zapis. Bilten hrvatskog filmskog saveza* 62, http://www.hfs.hr/hfs/zapis_clanak_detail.asp?sif=32450-acc. October 25, 2017.

²³ Ibid.

2. Abstract film, whose devotees, apart from Vladimir Petek, Ante Verzotti, and Milan Šamec, included EXAT 51's Aleksandar Srnec. He, in creating abstract film, used his lumino-cinetic methodological and structural principles in the 1960 movie *A man and a shadow* (*Čovjek i sjena*). Likewise, in 1961 Vladimir Kristl created his animated film *Don Quixote*;
3. Reductive, or the minimalist stream later to evolve in a structural film, was based on a long-term, continuous shot or repetition of the same recording of film frame. The artists associated with this movement included Ivan Ladislav Galeta, Mihovil Pansini, Tomislav Gotovac, and Vladimir Petek et al. Referring to this kind of structural film, created by Zagreb-based experimental filmmakers, Dušan Stojanović coined the name *Fixation Film*. This term implies that such a movie with dynamic assets, even though it is a moving picture, suggests a static mode, and the action is based on seemingly banal, and inconsequential moment in life; and
4. The extended-film performance movement included filmmakers such as Zlatko Hajdler and Ivan Ladislav Galeta, who simultaneously projected film on several screens, or on some other non-cinema surface in multiple expositions and “acted on the expansion of the media and conceptual framework of the film”²⁴ from which will later develop, in the 1970s and 1980s, video art (Dalibor Martinis, Ivan Ladislav Galeta, Željko Kipke, Goran Trbuljak, Tomislav Gotovac, Sanja Iveković Mustać, and others).

When discussing a period in the development of video art, it should definitely be noted that the Multimedia Centre (1976), managed by Ivan Ladislav Galeta, was a key checkpoint around which formed a multimedia art scene, and experienced very important events. Namely, Galeta called, in the name of the MMC, the world's most important guests, representatives of the experimental, neo-avant-garde film circle such as Peter Kubelka, Peter Weibl or Valie Export.²⁵ In this way, an implicit confirmation was made that the artistic aspirations and activities of the aforementioned generation of filmmakers, had proceeded in step with global experimentation in the medium of film.

Mihovil Pansini and GEFF

How important, then, was the founding of cinema clubs, where creative and free artistic venues provide countless possibilities of communication and experimentation, as implied by the fact that from the Cinema Club of Zagreb, originated the term *anti film* as a theoretical concept. The term was coined by Mihovil Pansini and

²⁴ Šuvaković, *Pojmovnik*, 216.

²⁵ Lejla Topić, “Eksperimentatori i njihova djeca,” <https://modernagalerija.wordpress.com/2011/02/11/predavanja-v-okviru-razstave-vse-to-je-film-eksperimentalni-film-v-jugoslaviji-1951-1991/>, acc. October 25, 2017.

Tomislav Kobia, two of the most prominent film experimenters at the time. That concept, according to Brnčić, was created as a show of resistance to conventional cinema where the:

new types of films developed in the framework of the experience acquired in modern art, culture of mass media, counterculture of young people and post-modern aesthetics, and so they eliminate all previous concepts of the cinematographic sign and code.²⁶

Furthermore, Brnčić interprets that the characteristics of the new tendencies in the field of experiment in the movie (*anti film*), follow the characteristics of radical changes in the other arts. He lists some of these characteristics: precision of performance, balance of ideas, cleanliness of appearance, simplification of the works to the maximum, abandoning the traditional funds in the implementation of the film, the movie stops being an expression of some sensitivity, exists only as a purely visual-acoustic phenomenon, acquitted of philosophical, literary, psychological, moral and symbolic meanings.²⁷

Cinema Club Zagreb, with the help of the League of Yugoslav Amateur Clubs was the main organizer of GEF, the first Festival of experimental film in the world, held December 19 to 22, 1963. At the helm of the conceptual and organizational aspects of the festival was Mihovil Pansini, whose aims included monitoring the conceptual analogy that appended to the neo-avant-garde radical attitudes of the Yugoslav art scene. It was referenced primarily to the representatives of the 'second-line' (as interpreted by Ješa Denegri), in which belonged EXAT-51, Gorgona, Nove tendencije, Music biennale, Art Informel in Belgrade and Zagreb, Slovenian 'Dark Modernism', as well as minority groups, and peripheral and individual artistic phenomena. Such artistic heights were largely on the international artistic phenomena, events, courses, languages, trends and contexts.²⁸ Bearing in mind the just specified statement of fact about the analogy GEF with other radical neo-avant-garde movements, one can draw parallels between GEF and, for example, the Nove tendencije, and in terms of thematic similarities according to which derived the names of individual festivals or exhibitions (for example: *Cybernetics and Aesthetics: Computers and Visual Research/ the Relationship of Cybernetics and Art*).

The thesis upon which rested GEF's radicalism were structured from the idea of connecting the arts, technological innovation, science and everyday life, but they were constructed from five informal talks between members of GEF in 1962 and 1963, and that represent a manifest of *anti film*. Those conversations were recorded on

²⁶ Tomislav Brčić, "Fenomen i kultura kinoklubova šezdesetih godina i utjecaj novih tendencija na festival GEF," *Zapis. Bilten hrvatskog filmskog saveza* 62, http://www.hfs.hr/hfs/zapis_clanak_detail.asp?sif=32445-acc. October 24, 2017.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ješa Denegri, *Posleratni modernizam, neoavangarde, postmodernizam. Ogledi o jugoslavenskom umetničkom prostoru* (Beograd: Službeni glasnik, 2016), 34.

tape. Five years later, after the transcription thereof, they were published in the book (*The Book of GEF-63*), edited by Mihovil Pansini. In addition, Pansini also published the *Pansini antifilm* book in 1984.

According to Šuvaković, *anti film* was created as a product of critical re-actuation of avant-garde film, underground, the film of the new wave and early structuralism, and as a result of over-emphasized influence of the post-existentialist spirit of anti-art, and the absurdity of the Zagreb art scene: Kristl was engaged in anti-poetry, Knifer in the concept of anti-painting and Pansini, as previously mentioned, the concept of *anti-film*.²⁹ In parallel with the emergence of the term *anti-film* in the field of film media, the prefix 'anti' is used in its connotative meaning, in the sense of expressing the change in the form of experimentation and rejection of all traditional values and the past artistic periods and in other fields of the art. And so in the area of literature (novels and poetry), theatre, music, fine arts, like anti-theatre, anti-novel, anti-magazine (e.g. the anti-magazine Gorgona), anti-painting, new music, etc.

Examples of anti-film, on the verge of structural art film achievements, in which they are brought to reduced film procedures, include Mihovil Pansini's *Piove* (1958), *Siesta* (1958), *Dvorište* (*Garden*, 1963), *Zahod* (*Toilet*, 1963), *K3, ili čisto nego bez oblaka* (*K3-clear sky without clouds*, 1963), *Scusi Signorina* (1963), Ivan Martinac's *I'm Mad* (1967) and *Armagedon* and Vladimir Petek's *Ahat* (1966). Here is most commonly used one fixed camera position, fixed recording of static scenes, introducing aleatory methods of recording, then physical interventions made directly to the film strip (burning, scratching, perforating, coloring, etc.) or the application of only one of the visual processes. An example of such reductive structural movement film is Tomislav Gotovac's trilogy: *Kružnica* (*Circle*, 1964), with prolonged repeated moving of the camera forward while shooting the railway, then *Circle* (1964) where he frequently repeats the spiral vertical and horizontal panorama, filmed from the top of the building, and the *Blue Rider* (1964) conceived as a movement of cameras, which select random focal centers, without any other plan. Ivan Ladislav Galeta also applied some of these anti-film artistic procedures in *PiRaMidas* (1972–84). In this movie Galeta, in the process of editing, constructs a visual pyramid, that is, inversely the positive-negative principle, approaches to the point of infinity (zero point), and then away from it and departs.

Mihovil Pansini, as a specific, modernist art phenomena with his non-conformist attitude toward cinema, was prone to radical change and experiment, and is considered a key contributor to the development of conceptual research in the film medium. Although he was not formally educated in film art (he was a doctor), he showed a great interest in film and film experimentation. After the first few films with strong poetical existentialism (*Korčula* and *Mr. Doctor*, both released in 1953), he made his first experimental film, the documentary-oriented *Doomed*, in 1954. This was followed in 1959 by *Piove*, in 1963 by *K3-clear sky without clouds* and as abstract films, *Toilet* and *Garden*, as structural films (films of fixation), and the film *Scusi signorina*.

²⁹ Šuvaković, *Pojmovnik*, 54–5.

If Barthe's post-structural concept of the idea of the *death of the author* occurred in 1968, it can be concluded that Pansini was thinking about this idea several years earlier, specifically 1963 while making *Scusi signorina*. In this film, the works of filmmaker is superseded since the camera, attached to the filmmaker's back, make filmed shots completely arbitrarily. Accidentally recorded reality leaves the viewer the option to use his perceptive and cognitive skills and experience to complete the film as well as that through arbitrarily-chosen texts of culture, in the meta-dimensional area of texts, resume reading text on a the basis of their own knowledge, traditions or culture. Both cases dethroned the integrity of the subject. In the movie *K-3 clear sky without clouds* Pansini showed an empty filmstrip on which he intervened by inserting various filters in color, and in the movie *The Toilet* (dedicated to Dušan Makavejev) the filmmaker focused on an older man carrying a bucket with water and constantly soaking and washing down the toilet. As a preliminary and conceptual organizer of GEF and creator of the concept of anti-film, Pansini is considered the key person who prompted the development of the thorough, radical and subversive changes in the area of experimental film in post-war Yugoslavia.

Conclusion

This work derives conceptually the definition of the avant-garde, a historical view and classification of the avant-garde movements, and the interpretation of their basic characteristics. A special field of interest in this text represents the neo-avant-garde, or experimental and structural film. As a radical and innovative art practice, the neo-avant-garde film had a tendency towards experimentation, research, stating the standard film limit, and the violation of established film with the aim of establishing norms of a new, different cinematic language. On the relation between the global-local (American and European avant-garde vs. Yugoslav avant-garde), although new artistic tendencies arose in different historical, social and cultural contexts, we can put an equal sign. The above-mentioned analogy is evident, for example, in the emergence of international film and Pansini's underground anti-film. Both movements incurred as a need for stratification of conventional, commercial cinematographic industry, where the negation of standard film convention implies marginal, amateur or nihilistic art. It can therefore be concluded that the amateur cinema clubs were a unique phenomenon, resulted from a specific political and cultural space of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, and that as such, they represent a significant platform for experiment and research of alternative film.

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