

**Research objective:** The project aims to develop a definition and sub-categories of the road movie in the post-war American avant-garde and experimental film and will result in the publishing of i) a monograph featuring an in-depth analysis of a selection of ca. 40-50 titles (mostly shorts); ii) an interview book featuring conversations with selected filmmakers whose works will be subject to the monograph. The project will also define a “feminine” road movie and develop an effective methodology to combine avant-garde and feminist film theory in the context of travelling as well as approach a multidimensional relationship between an embodied and/or disembodied experience of travelling and particular aspects of a road travel, namely that of the windshield, interior and exterior space of an automobile or another means of transportation as well as passing landscapes often framed by the highway system. The main hypothesis is that many woman (e.g. A. Child, C. L. Crane, B. Hammer, M. Menken, J. Murray, G. Snider, etc.) and men (e.g. D. Angerame, J. Behrens, J. Davis, L. Gottheim, H. Harris, M. Street, etc.) makers both draw on and challenge certain conventions of the genre while adhering to its traditional reliance on cultural critique as well as the representation of landscape and travel. Particularly, the project assumes that elements of the road movie’s iconography and mise-en-scène (e.g. the interstate highway system; vast, open landscape bordered by seductive horizons; wilderness heightened with pit stops, etc.), editing and montage (e.g. the traveling, panning and POV shot; montage-style and continuity editing; frame compositions, etc.) as well as narrative and character structure (e.g. an open-ended narrative; aimless journey and disintegration of the concept of home; American frontier and pastoral ideal; automobility and human-machine interface; tension between rebellion and conformity; individualism and liberation, etc.) are informed by aesthetics traditionally associated with the structural film, cinéma pur, cinéma vérité, city symphony, phantom ride, home movie, slow cinema or eco-cinema and hence offer a more creative comment on and/or critique of some major trends in contemporary U.S. and global culture.

**Research carried out in the project:** The first stage of the project will involve consulting materials for the methodology of the project, i.e. selection and collection of theoretical sources related to the road movie, including a feminine road movie, as well as avant-garde and experimental film, including avant-garde feminist film. The second phase will involve consulting materials for the analytical part of the project, i.e. selection and collection of the source material, as well as consulting materials for the historical and cultural background of the project, i.e. selection and collection of archival material relevant to the analyzed titles and filmmakers’ biography. During these stages, the PI will also conduct interviews with selected filmmakers (either personally or remotely) for the interview book. Next, the PI will analyze the theoretical, source and archival material for the project, utilizing the proposed methodological framework, which will form the basis for the content of the monograph. In the last phase, the PI will revise the manuscript of the monograph and interview book, followed by their submission to the publisher. The completion of each stage will be accompanied by a library and archival query, which will enable the selection and collection of the aforementioned materials, as well as conference trips, during which the PI will disseminate and popularize research outcomes.

**Reasons for choosing the research topic:** Somewhat surprisingly, although (road) travel has been always central for American literature and visual culture, particularly mainstream cinema, and despite the growing popularity of the road movie scholarship, also in non-American and global contexts, there is no research on how the aforementioned motif is represented in avant-garde and experimental films, particularly those made by women, whose work is often peripheral due to the road movie’s historical evolution as a masculine genre. Also, given the paucity of material offering a number of in-depth scholarly analyses of individual works from a more theoretical perspective, it appears that there is a growing need for scholarly publications in the field other than wide-ranging anthologies (e.g. Graf and Scheunemann; Sitney; Skoller, etc.) or collections of interviews (e.g. Juhasz; MacDonald), which should enable a more rapid development of scholarly research on avant-garde and experimental cinema, including women’s avant-garde film. Except filling a research niche in contemporary film and visual culture studies, the project will shed light on many forgotten productions, which have received no attention from researchers despite being successfully preserved in the consulted collections, and consequently revive interest in and popularize their study in the academia and beyond. The research outcomes will also contribute to the further development of some recent revisionist theories in (feminist) film criticism, which have moved beyond structuralist-formalist thinking to incorporate such approaches as intermediality and heterogeneity, corporeal turn in avant-garde film, expanded cinema practices or new materialism.