The Centre for Avant-Garde Studies
at the Faculty of Polish Studies, Jagiellonian University
and
CRICOTEKA
The Centre for the Documentation of the Art of Tadeusz Kantor

cordially invite you to participate in a conference entitled:
The Avant-Garde: Aesthetic Strategies and Participatory Art

8-10 December 2017
CRICOTEKA
Nadwiślańska 2-4, Kraków

The avant-garde, as an artistic and aesthetic phenomenon, has been looked upon from many different perspectives and examined in a variety of contexts. As there seems to be no coherent definition of the term, its use in the singular often creates confusion. Scholars recognize a profusion of 'avant-gardes' across literary histories, acknowledging their distinct objectives as well as different, if not contradictory, concerns. The aim of our joint conference is to provide a platform for discussion on this multifaceted phenomenon that has ever since provoked a multitude of responses and mutually exclusive critical assessments.

The year 2017 marks the centenary of the Polish Avant-Garde. As a closing event, the conference will provide an opportunity to review and evaluate the scholarly narrations that have emerged in the last few years. We also hope it will pave new ways of reading this ever-inspiring phenomenon.

Much as the avant-garde is a significant part of literary history, it also represents a timeless strategy for acting upon and *being-in-the-world*. Therefore, we believe that *reading* experimental art through a historical lens cannot be separated from *understanding* experimental art as *practice*. On the one hand, we intend to bring into focus a revolutionary shift in subject matter alongside formal innovations that were meant to broaden the spectrum of contingencies for the artist and subsequently enhance the very experience of a work of art. On the other hand, we would like to put emphasis on *practice* and comment on the political, social and mythopoeic dimensions of the avant-garde.

The conference will be divided into six thematic sections, each devoted to examining the following problems:

1. **Polimediality of the avant-garde: intermedia, hypermedia, interactive art, textual hybrids**
   - changes in the understanding of what a work of art is: a move from an artefact to a performative manifestation, rejection or redefinition of the organic form, fragmentation, prevalence of collage and montage techniques, testing the limits of the medium;
   - neo-avant-garde conceptions of intermedia (D. Higgins) or multimedia (B. Goldsteinn); the idea of interactive art or hypermedia;

- medium-related experiments characteristic of neo- and post-avant-garde, emergence of new media and their impact on society.

2. **Retro-Avant-Garde: originality and innovation versus tradition (an aesthetics of a rear-guard)**

   - the problem of the un/originality of the avant-garde and its attitude towards tradition (departure versus continuation models);

   - conceptions of a rear-guard (M. Perloff), retro-garde (A. Erjavec) and of the unoriginality of the avant-garde (R. Krauss) that stress "anti-avant-garde" elements within the aesthetic ideology of the new art.

3. **The avant-garde praxis of visual arts or contemporary avant-garde strategies**

   - current prospects for visual arts and their public presence;

   - links between visual arts – notably performative arts – and the everyday; challenges to the institutional framework of artistic practices and aesthetic modifications triggered by them.

4. **The avant-garde in the society of the spectacle**

   - performativity within the avant-garde and dramatization strategies

   - modes of avant-garde behaviours, understood as manifestations of the avant-garde's public presence, mechanisms of artistic provocation embedded in them (including patterns of behaviour intended to scandalize the public), multifaceted processes of transforming the artist/audience relation, and a change in the role of the spectator, who more and more frequently becomes an active participant or even a co-author of a performance;

   - the new art as a force reworking the modern society into the society of the spectacle (G. Debord), effacing the boundary between artistic practice and *Lebenspraxis,* favouring an aesthetic manifestation over an aesthetic work.

5. **Avant-garde engagement in the social and the political**

   - broadening the definition of the political (after Rancière): permeation into public discourse of established and new symbolic communities, focus on dissensus, departure from conceptual thinking (inspired by the Frankfurt School, mainly T. W. Adorno) and introducing into discourse subjects and objects thus far absent from it.

6. **The Avant-Garde: relational/participatory art?**

   - exploration of the following relations: artist–audience, creator–material, human–object, autonomy–engagement;

   - interdependencies between art, politics and society; art actively participating in shaping the modern *world picture*;

   - art stepping outside its artificially delineated boundaries and into the everyday life of an individual, his/her actions and ideological choices; reading of the avant-garde that is not limited to deciphering strategies behind formal experiments but rather focused on assessing the avant-garde's participation in social and cultural change, thus situating it invariably in relation to reality (C. Bishop, D. Ioffe).

The conference will be held in English.

Proposals including:

- author's first and last name, title and academic affiliation
- title of the paper and panel choice
- abstract (max. 1500 characters)

should be submitted via email by **15 September 2017** to the following address: **obaw@uj.edu.pl.**

Proposal acceptance notification:
You will receive a notification of acceptance via email on **30 September 2017**.
Paper presentation time **should not exceed 30 minutes**.

The organizers do not cover travel or accommodation expenses. A list of hotels offering discount rates for the participants will be provided. For further details please contact us at **obaw@uj.edu.pl**.

For the Organising Committee:

Jarosław Fazan
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Natalia Zarzecka
Director of Cricoteka