

The Annual Amfiteater International Academic Symposium

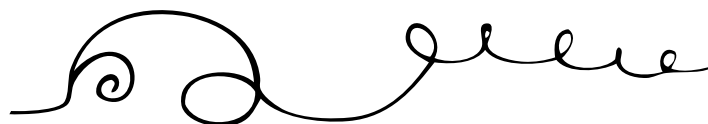
Connecting Avant-Gardes and Theatre: How to Revolutionise the Relationship between the Periphery and the Centre

organised by

**Academy of Theatre, Radio, Film and Television,
Slovenian Theatre Institute,**

Amfiteater - Journal of Performing Arts Theory and
Slovenian Society of Aesthetics

9–11 October 2024, on the premises of the **Slovenian Theatre Institute**, Mestni trg 17, Ljubljana



The symposium aims to map various geographical and historical attempts to revolutionise the relationship between the periphery and the centre in Europe and beyond. It will focus on the historical avant-gardes in the 1920s, the neo-avant-gardes in the 1960s and 1970s, the post-avant-gardes around the turn of the millennium and contemporary radical performance art after 2000.

The symposium will examine whether the neo-avant-gardes and post-avant-gardes, as well as contemporary activist arts, have revived fundamental ideas from constructivist, futurist, expressionist, surrealist, suprematist and other utopian questions in different national, political and aesthetic contexts. It will explore how these movements have fragmented, deconstructed and appropriated avant-garde ideas in the global exchange of historical avant-gardes, becoming a lasting source of inspiration and a possible starting point for contemporary work.

The discussion also delves into how different generations, embodying aesthetic revolutions, take pride in being heirs to the artistic generation of historical avant-gardists, promoting smaller avant-garde focal points as centres of new art. It explores attempts to build new bridges between

East and West, envisioning new cities as “garages of rapid world beauty”, acting as centres from which “pilots prepare for a flight around the world with mental machines” (Avgust Černigoj).

The avant-gardes thus resisted the asymmetry of international artistic forces and revolutionised the relationship between the periphery and the centre. The new avant-garde global order was supposed to represent a specific asymmetry, as described in the dark Balkan humour of Ljubomir Micić in his manifesto from 1921: “[C]lose the doors / East – North – and Central Europe / Barbarians are coming / close, close / but we will still enter.” We will examine to what extent the peripheries have also radically redefined centrality and marginality. We will scrutinise Diana Miškova’s hypothesis that “edges do not exist merely as extensions of the core”. They have their autonomy, challenging asymmetric conceptualisations by the centre and asserting their agency through the formation of alternative regional categories and alternative modes of collective identification.

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PROGRAMME

Wednesday, 9 October 2024

13.30 Opening of the symposium:

prof. mag. Žanina Mirčevska, Academy of Theatre, Radio, Film and Television, University of Ljubljana
dr. Gašper Troha, Slovenian Theatre Institute

14.00 Plenary lecture

Aleksandra Jovičević: Where Do You Come From?

14.40 discussion

15.00 coffee break

15.15 First session

Moderator: Gašper Troha

Hanna Veselovska: From Generation to Generation: Avant-garde and Neo-Avant-garde Visionaries of the Ukrainian Theatre

Kristina Pranjić: Decentring the Avant-Garde and the Yugo-Dada Network

Mojca Puncer: The Noordung Project and the Care of Avant-Garde Heritage: Changing the Relationship Between Periphery and Centre

16.15 discussion

16.30 coffee break

17.00 Second session

Moderator: Maja Murnik

Valentyna Chechyk: Avant-Garde Scenography of Ukraine: Vadym Meller's Version

Narvika Bovcon, Aleš Vaupotič: Did the Avant-Garde Become Materialised in New Media? Techno-Performance and Socialisation

Tery Žeželj: Ephemeral Practices of the Periphery: Bogdanka Poznanović's Artistic Practice and Networking Through the Perspective of the River

18.00 discussion

18.30 coffee break

18.45–19.30 Panel: book presentation

Polona Tratnik (ed.): *The European Avant-Garde – A Hundred Years Later* (Brill, 2024)

Thursday, 10 October 2024

9.30 Plenary lecture

Dariusz Kosiński: Performing a Hermitage: Jerzy Grotowski's Tactics of Periphery-Centre Policy

10.10 discussion

10.20 Book presentation:

Dariusz Kosiński (ed.): *A Lexicon of the Central-Eastern European Interwar Theatre Avant-Garde* (Performance Research Books, 2024)

10.45 coffee break

11.00 Third session

Moderator: Tomaž Toporišič

Lada Čale Feldman: Exalted Periphery: The Confusing Case of the Lero Student Theatre in Dubrovnik, Croatia

Valentina Hribar Sorčan: Atmosphere in Avant-Garde Theatre

Ana Kocjančič: The Reflections of Modern Art Movements and Theatrical Historical Avant-Gardes in the Scenography of Vasily Ulyanischchev at the Professional Theatres in Slovenia

12.00 discussion

12.15–13.30 lunch break

13.30 Fourth session

Moderator: Barbara Orel

Maja Murnik: The Issue of Space in Post-Avant-Garde Art: A Discussion of Several Examples

Nika Leskovšek: Towards War and Violence and Away: A Violent Echoing of the (Historical) Avant-Gardes in Yugoslav Performing Arts and Their Alternatives in Feminist Performance Art

Knut Ove Arntzen: From the Historical to the Post-Avant-Garde in Norway and Scandinavia, 1920–2010

14.30 discussion

15.00 coffee break

15.15 Fifth session

Moderator: Gašper Troha

Barbara Orel: Fran Žižek's Independent Theatre: A Dialogue with the Prague Avant-Garde

Nenad Jelesijević: The Avant-Garde Exotic

Samo Oleami: How We Went Looking for the Neo-Avant-Garde and Missed It

16.15 discussion

16.30 coffee break

17.00 Sixth session

Moderator: Aldo Milohnić

Darko Štrajn: Discontinuity, Disruption and Subversion as Theatrical Gestures

Lela Angela Mršek Bajda: The Avant-Garde and Subculture in the Subversion of the Periphery and the Centre

Gašper Troha: Peter Božič and the Question of the Authentic Theatrical Avant-Garde in Slovenia in the Second Half of the 20th Century

18.00 discussion

18.30 coffee break

19.00 final discussion of the second day

Friday, 11 October 2024

9.30 Plenary lecture

Tomaž Toporišič: How to Revolutionise the Periphery-Centre Relationship: Three Historical Avant-Garde Cycles Between East, West, South and North

10.10 discussion

10.30 coffee break

10.45 Seventh session

Moderator: Jakob Ribič

Krištof Jacek Kozak: The Fatal Woman of Slovenian Dramatic Modernism

Sanita Duka: Flânerie as a Strategy for Transmitting Revolutionary Ideas of Avant-Gardes: Creative Co-Authorship by Asja Lācis and Walter Benjamin

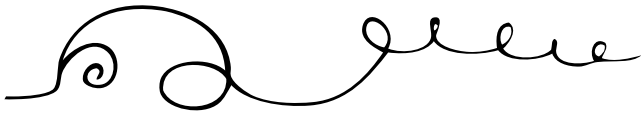
Petra Ježková: Scrapbook of One of Them as an Original Source of Research on the Czech Theatrical Avant-Garde

Aldo Milohnić: Václav Vlček, Lidija Wisiak and Prampolini's Futurist Theatre

12.00 discussion

12.30 final discussion of the symposium

ABSTRACTS



Knut Ove Arntzen: **From the Historical to the Post-Avant-Garde in Norway and Scandinavia, 1920–2010**

In Norway, the historical theatrical avant-garde (1920–1950) was oriented towards cabaret dramaturgy and symbolism. There was a direction towards political theatre, as well as tendencies towards a more poetic-theatrical kind of theatre. Directors like Agnes Mowinckel and Hans Jacob Nilsen were central in both private and institutional theatres. A major director of the avant-garde was Stein Bugge, who also wrote grotesque comedies. In the 1960s, there were a few tendencies of neo-avant-garde in the sense of laboratory theatre, mainly Odin Teatret, which was founded in Oslo in 1964 and left Norway for Denmark after a couple of years. In the 1970s, social and popular-theatrical group theatre appeared with political and poetical revues such as Tram Teatret and Perleporten. A performative avant-garde came about in the 1980s, which should be spoken about as post-avant-garde theatre based in visual performance and ambient theatre, expressing an intersection between the textual and the visual, putting the means of expression on an equal footing. It was nearly connected with a general Scandinavian wave of Visual Dramaturgy in the works of the Danish Billedstofteater and Hotel Pro Forma or Norwegian companies such as Baktruppen and Verdensteatret. The author describes this as an urban ambient wave of post-mainstream; little by little, an ethnic post-mainstream of the peripheries came about in Sámi theatre as well as in Greenlandic.

Knut Ove Arntzen, born in 1950, is a professor emeritus of theatre studies at the University of Bergen, Norway, and a visiting professor at different universities in Lithuania, Belgium and Germany. He has worked as a freelance theatre critic at the paper *Arbeiderbladet* in Oslo and as a consultant to the Bergen International Theatre. He has participated in many international conferences, for example, in Glasgow, Amsterdam and Copenhagen, and attended INST's cultural studies conferences (<http://www.inst.at/trans/9Nr/inhalt9.htm>). He has published a series of articles and books analysing development in the scope of a visual kind of dramaturgy and post-mainstream. He has cooperated with, among others, the Eurokaz Festival in Zagreb. An attendee of workshops about new theatre and theatre research internationally, he has also given several guest lectures about new theatre developments, post-mainstream and site-specific/ambient theatre. Currently, he specialises in aspects of theatre and landscapes.

Narvika Bovcon, Aleš Vaupotič: **Did the Avant-Garde Become Materialised in New Media? Techno-Performance and Socialisation**

This contribution builds on Lev Manovič's resounding thesis that connects the historical avant-garde montage of originally unrelated parts with the construction of communicative wholes through new information and communication media, whereby avant-garde procedures are incorporated into the very operation of software, and the computer as a meta-medium completely transcodes the reality. The text examines the foundations of computer science in mathematical formalism. It considers Turing's computing machine as a starting point for the generative aspect of computer art, which enters into a relationship with the performativity of the body in process in neo-avant-garde art. Data processing introduces into today's world a decoupling between understanding and agency that was once thought to require active thinking. Jurij Lotman's idea of marginocentricity is illustrated by the shift of mechanical and (once) avant-garde procedures to the centre of globalised culture. At the same time, the image of a human is radically changing: she is no longer a Cartesian mind in foreign matter but finds herself in a new homogeneous environment made of information. She becomes an information organism, an inforg (Luciano Floridi), together with artificial and hybrid agents as well as multi-agent systems. Identity as informational integrity is discussed with the examples of performances and happenings of Srečo Dragan from the neo-conceptualist period when he also collaborated with Nuša Dragan and the extended OHO Group. The discussion extends to the latest new media works, techno-performances that take place on the stage of mixed and augmented reality, where a multitude of interfaces (sensors, algorithms) mediate between the self-awareness (memory, declaration) and the body (perception, movement) of the participant and build an archive of connections for a society that is established through technology. It focuses on Dragan's concept of socialisation through artistic communication, which is a performative educational practice that interferes with the user's identity.

Narvika Bovcon is a professor of video, new media and animation. She received her doctorate from the Academy of Fine Arts and Design, University of Ljubljana, in the theory and history of new media art and visual communications, with an emphasis on Slovenian authors. She is employed in the Computer Vision Laboratory at the Faculty of Computer and Information Science, University of Ljubljana. Her research deals with the connection of digital humanities with new media art. She devotes herself to digital animation, data visualisation, analysis of digitised art collections, user interface design, mixed reality and digital reconstructions of exhibition setups. Since 2016, she has been the editor-in-chief of the journal *Likovne besede/Artwords*. She is the author of new media art projects and exhibitions, the academic monograph *Umetnost v svetu pametnih strojev (Art in the World of Smart Machines, 2009)* and several academic articles.

Aleš Vaupotič is a senior research associate at the Research Center for Humanities, University of Nova Gorica. Between 2021 and 2023, he was the director of the Museum of Modern Art in Ljubljana. He obtained the title of Master of Arts in the field of video and new media from the Academy of Fine Arts and Design, University of Ljubljana, and received his doctorate in the intermedia approach to realism in arts from the Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana. He leads the research project Sustainable digital preservation of the Slovenian new media art (ARIS J7-3158), which is an example of an interdisciplinary approach to the issues of the informational turn, the understanding of digitisation in the field of culture and the issue of preserving cultural memory during the transitional period in the face of the pervasive digitisation of culture. He is the author of the academic monograph *Vprašanje realizma (The Question of Realism, 2019)* and numerous articles in the fields of digital humanities, comparative literature and media theory.

Lada Čale Feldman: **Exalted Periphery: The Confusing Case of the Lero Student Theatre in Dubrovnik, Croatia**

In her paper, the author will present and discuss the intriguing geo-cultural and chrono-poetic position of the Dubrovnik-based student theatre Lero, a rare jewel on the Croatian map of non-institutional theatre. In its more than fifty years of uninterrupted existence (it was founded in 1968), Lero has maintained firm ideological and expressive links to the European historical avant-gardes and post-avant-gardes while at the same time holding on just as strongly to Dubrovnik's cultural heritage, literary tradition and a kind of isolated nostalgia for the times when this city was an independent state and a thriving cultural centre of southeastern Europe.

The later, highly aestheticised and oneiric tendency in Lero's poetics has crystallised more and more over the last thirty years under the direction of Davor Mojaš, clashing bizarrely with the more subversive aspects of his avant-garde strategies, especially when one considers that his performances have been sporadically included in the repertoire of Dubrovnik's professional theatre and even in the programme of the high-profile annual Dubrovnik Summer Festival. Another dimension opens with the gender dynamics that characterise Lero's performances, as during the aforementioned period, they were staged with an all-female cast, which enabled the director to take an unorthodox feminist stance on both historical and contemporary cultural politics.

Theatre Lero thus represents a confusing case of a rather long-lived, internationally recognised and yet deliberately peripheral artistic project that demands its own interpretative framework and even defies the logic of local reproduction of the centre-periphery model, which unwittingly favours Zagreb-based groups and imported standards in its "asymmetric conceptualisations" of what constitutes relevant Croatian avant-garde practice.

Lada Čale Feldman is a full professor and the chair of Theatre Studies at the Department for Comparative Literature, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Zagreb in Croatia. Her areas of research are theatre and performance studies and feminist criticism. Besides her six authored and two co-authored books in Croatian – the latest one, *Hiniti i biti (To Pretend or To Be)*, was published in 2023 – she also co-edited several special issues of journals and numerous collections, among them, in English (with I. Prica and R. Senjković), *Fear, Death and Resistance: An Ethnography of War: Croatia 1991–1992* (1993) and (with M. Blažević) *Misperformance: Essays in Shifting Perspectives* (2014). She is a recipient of one international and three national awards.

Valentyna Chechyk: **Avant-Garde Scenography of Ukraine: Vadym Meller's Version**

The lively interest of every new generation of Ukrainian specialists in the art of these artists is understandable. Vadym Meller (1884–1962), a graphic designer and, of course, to a greater extent, a theatre master, occupied one of the key positions in the artistic and theatrical avant-garde of Ukraine from the 1910s to the early 1930s.

An adept of Oleksandra Ekster's pictorial and scenic conception, Vadym Meller established himself as an innovator and consistent avant-garde artist. He began with cubo-futuristic compositions for the Kyiv ballets of Bronyslava Nizhynskaya (1918–1921) and gradually evolved in his scenographic projects to constructivist abstraction in the productions of Les Kurbas and his students in 1922–1925.

In the history of Ukrainian scenography, Meller established his reputation as a "rationalist": among the themes in his programmatic performances for Ukrainian scenic constructivism, the intellectual and emotional, the constructive and the pictorial occupied balanced positions. In the second half of the 1920s, the artist went to the pictorial system, which, in the coordinates of the work of the Ukrainian art director of Berezhil Theatre (1922–1933), Kurbas, received the conventional name "expressive realism" (1926–1933). The synthesis of plastic ideas of the avant-garde, their free interpretation and the search for their own visual language were continued by Meller's students: his workshop at the Berezhil Theatre was not only a school but also an active experimental site where the methodology of modern scenography was tested.

Valentyna Chechyk, PhD, is an art historian and the head of the Theory and History of Art Department at Kharkiv State Academy of Design and Arts in Ukraine. Research interests include the fine arts of Ukraine in the 20th and 21st centuries and issues of avant-garde scenography. A participant in international scientific conferences and research projects (Czech Republic, Poland, Ukraine, etc.). She is the author of publications on scenography of the Ukrainian avant-garde in collective monographs and specialised academic publications. Her work focuses on the following stage designers: Boris Kosarev, Volodymyr Bobrytskyi, Oleksandra Ekster, Les Khvostenko-Khvostov, Anatol Petrytskyi, Oleksandr Tishler, Georgy Tsapok, Mykola Danylov, Vadym Meller, etc.

Sanita Duka: **Flânerie as a Strategy for Transmitting Revolutionary Ideas of Avant-Gardes: Creative Co-Authorship by Asja Lācis and Walter Benjamin**

In her paper, Sanita Duka discusses the essay "Naples" (1925), co-authored by Asja Lācis (1891–1979) and Walter Benjamin (1892–1940). This case study reflects flânerie used as a creative strategy. The narrator, a figure of urban wandering and detached observation, was played out by co-authors stressing differences in the interpretation by a man and a woman – a flâneur and a flâneuse. Naples is reflected in the essay by the contrasting perspectives of the co-authors: Benjamin, the philosopher, views the city as a system, examining its structures and categories, while Lācis, the theatre director, approaches it as a dynamic performance. This convergence of viewpoints creates a unique narrative voice that challenges traditional hierarchies. Transmitting and transiting the philosophical and artistic ideas of revolutionary avant-gardes are essential outcomes of wandering in the streets, i.e., flânerie. Beyond "Naples", the paper also highlights subsequent collaborations between Lācis and Benjamin in Moscow and Berlin, particularly in the field of artistic pedagogy. Asja Lācis used artistic ideas extracted while working with the drama studios in Riga at the People's University and the Central Office of Riga Trade Unions. Her innovative artistic approach was in collective co-creation, with the aim of developing devised performances. Her intervention was instrumental in fostering the development of the Riga Workers' Theatre as a professional scene. The paper concludes by addressing the broader implications of any collaborative journey across Europe, that flânerie serves as a metaphor for the diffusion and transformation of conventional boundaries and reshaping the asymmetry of periphery and centre to polycentric collaboration.

Sanita Duka is a doctoral student, and her dissertation on the Riga Workers' Theatre (1926–1934) continues the topic of master's studies at AAL. Incorporating the results of her research into her creative practice, Sanita has curated the exhibition *Stories from the Museum Collection: Riga Workers' Theatre* and the participatory performance <<Peers>> for a young audience. Recently, she has been involved in the project *Walking Through Time: Flânerie and Modernity in Latvian Interwar Culture* led by IFLA. Previously, she studied philosophy at the University of Latvia and culture management at the Jāzeps Vītols Music Academy of Latvia. To further her research, she is interested in a multidisciplinary approach to studying art and theatre and the possibilities of constructing new knowledge by curating.

The paper is supported by the Latvian Council of Science within the project *Walking Through Time: Flânerie and Modernity in Latvian Interwar Culture*, project No. lzp-2022/1-0505.

Valentina Hribar Sorčan: **Atmosphere in Avant-Garde Theatre**

In this paper, the author will discuss the link between art and atmosphere, as theatre is closely linked to the creation of a certain atmosphere. First, she will focus on drama and theatre in the period of Slovenian, Austrian and German Expressionism. Then, she will touch upon the research associated with the historical avant-gardes in theatre (Stanislavski, Reinhardt, Grotowski, etc.) and their influence on the emergence of Gestalt therapy. Both lines of research are linked by the creation of different moods and atmospheres that co-shape the emotional space or the interaction between the actor, the space and the participants. It is an aesthetics of existence that begins with the historical avant-gardes and then significantly inspires later artistic and therapeutic currents. Although these artistic, philosophical and psychological currents of thought are situated in Europe and the United States, their domain is global and not socially exclusive.

Valentina Hribar Sorčan (born 1969), PhD, is an assistant professor of philosophy in the Department of Philosophy of the Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana, where she received her bachelor's degree in philosophy and French language and literature. She currently lectures on the philosophy of art and culture, aesthetics, and philosophical anthropology. She is a member of the Slovenian Society for Aesthetics and the European Association for Aesthetics.

Nenad Jelesijević: **The Avant-Garde Exotic**

Avant-garde is an ambivalent term, often used with the aim of integrating breakthrough creativity, as a kind of clinical exotic, into the control reality. We call this reality the *field*, having in mind the simulacra confines of the so-called culture, which are illuminated by Bourdieu, Haug, Pekić and Sartre. The projection of the avant-garde into the *field* reflects the psychopathology of the strategies of appropriation, named once by the word "revolution", second by "transition", and thirdly by "green transition".

Our view cannot bypass the ontologically schizoid perception of the autonomy of artistic activities as a "right" allegedly guaranteed within the "rule of law". How does the genre niche of the theatrical avant-garde fit into it? How does the performative evade the spectacle of avant-gardism in order to speak unhindered in a situation-performance?

We are highlighting the ideological difference between the affirmation of the past (by strengthening the conceptual emptiness of "historical avant-garde") and the originality of making a statement in the present – a creative presence in a community context. With the awareness of this difference, the recognition of the avant-garde narrative as an embellishment of the *field's* hegemonism begins. The presence affirmed in an artistic act defines avant-garde as an attitude that cannot be assimilated.

Multimedia artist **Nenad Jelesijević** is a researcher of performance, stage arts and film, a writer, architect and designer, artistic director of the Kitch Institute and coordinator of its long-term programme *The Performance Theory and Practices*. His artistic work and writings often intertwine the phenomena of spectacle and pop. He regularly publishes online at *Performans*, which is also an extensive collection of his writings on performativity, film and related topical phenomena. More than 250 of his texts are published in journals, books, dailies, theatre playbills and various printed and online publications, as well as broadcast on radio.

Petra Ježková: Scrapbook of One of Them as an Original Source of Research on the Czech Theatrical Avant-Garde

In the library of the Arts and Theatre Institute in Prague are the so-called *Rád's Albums*, scrapbooks with photographs from productions, dramatic texts, costume designs, clippings and inscriptions, which tell authentically about the work of leading Czech avant-garde theatre artists. They are evidence of the period's enchantment of improvisation, play, lightness and style that crossed all boundaries. This original source will be presented as an excellent means of interpreting and correcting interpretations of the avant-garde, including the potential to show its greatest strengths, as well as its weaknesses and limitations.

Petra Ježková, PhD, is a theatre historian and editor dealing with Czech theatre in the 19th and the first half of the 20th century. Since 2007, she has worked at the Czech Theatre Studies Department at the ATI, where she is the main guarantor of the project *Czech Theatre Encyclopedia*; she also started and manages the book series *Nota bene*. Since 2018, she has been the head of the Czech Theatre Studies Department at the ATI. Since 2024, she has been the editor-in-chief of a professional periodical, *Divadelní revue (Theatre Revue)*.

Aleksandra Jovičević: Where Do You Come From?

This year, the Venice Biennale opened under the title *Foreigners Everywhere*. In the central pavilion were displayed works of three hundred artists from all over the world, out of which only three come from Eastern Europe (Anna Zemánková, Iva Janković and Želimir Žilnik). This is not the first time that artists from Eastern Europe have been neglected or treated as the missing "Other" on the margins of Europe's new geopolitical, economic and cultural fault lines. In the ongoing decolonisation and deculturalisation, it seems there is little space for that part of the world once divided between the Soviet bloc and the non-aligned Yugoslav Federal Republic (SFRJ). Obviously, the region needs to be resituated as an important focal point for understanding different art practices of the late 20th and early 21st centuries in ways that venture beyond the generalised divide between the neoliberal capitalist West and post-socialist East.

One of the most notable discourses in performance studies in the 21st century comes from introducing an intersectional perspective on queer, black and Indigenous artists and performance tactics, tools and methods, but this is altogether missing when we are talking about Eastern Europe. In her paper, therefore, the author will try to re-establish the importance and centrality of performance art in former Yugoslav republics (that are now all independent states) and to give an insight into their status and connection to the epistemologies that derive from different practices, tracing the consequences in terms of methodologies, genealogies and epistemological shifts. It is important to mention that these performances existed already in the 1960s but were, above all, parallel universes. In case we establish performance art in Eastern Europe as an object of study and historicisation like in the West, then we will figure out that performance art in the East evolved in many directions, including body art, conceptual art, happenings, actions, theatre and performance, "in parallel and in dialogue with practices in Western Europe and North America, despite its exclusion from the canon of that history" (A. Bryzgel, 2017). Therefore, it is not enough to apply the comparative method of Piotr Piotrowski's "horizontal art history" (2012) because the dissimilarities among the countries of Eastern Europe require more diversified interpretations. By analogy, it is impossible to imagine similar histories of performance art in Western Europe since 1960.

After 1989, with the triumph of neoliberalism in most of these countries, the discourse of performance art as a model for an alternative art changed from politically subversive to socially critical. Therefore, several principal questions need to be answered: how and why the discipline of performance art is still divided between East and West,

how we can move beyond the East-West binary towards a truly global performance art history, and how we can place the Eastern European artists from Europe's margin in its centre?

Aleksandra Jovičević, full professor at the Department of History Anthropology Religions Art Performance (SARAS Storia Antropologia Religioni Arte Spettacolo) at La Sapienza University in Rome, teaches performance theory and history. Her most recent publications include the book *Orson Welles and Theatre: Shakespeare and Beyond (Orson Welles e il teatro. Shakespeare e oltre*, Bulzoni Editore, 2022) and "Voices from Semi-Peripheries: Pressure, Self-Censorship, and Micropolitics of Resistance in the Western Balkans" (with Milena Dragičević-Šešić) in *Theatre Censorship in Contemporary Europe, Silence and Protest*, Chris Megson and Anne Etienne, editors, University of Exeter Press, 2024, pp. 34–56.

Ana Kocjančič: **The Reflections of Modern Art Movements and Theatrical Historical Avant-Gardes in the Scenography of Vasily Ulyanischchev at the Professional Theatres in Slovenia**

The Ukrainian scenographer Vasily Mitrofanich Ulyanischchev (1887–1934) came to work at the National Theatre in Ljubljana in 1930 and stayed there until his death. He was a scenographer on both the theatre and the opera stages in Ljubljana and created fifty-five scenographies.

Ulyanischchev replaced the stage designer Ivan Vavpotič, who had already introduced the expressionist style in stage design. Ulyanischchev, who once worked with the director Vsevolod Meyerhold, was oriented towards the Russian avant-garde styles, especially Russian futurism, but he was also familiar with other theatrical avant-gardes. In 1930, the representatives of our theatrical avant-garde also entered the professional theatres in Ljubljana. Directors Ferdo Delak and Bratko Kreft connected with Ulyanischchev, who became their stage designer, helping them with his knowledge and avant-garde-oriented scenography work. With Kreft, he created avant-garde sets for Audran's operetta *La Mascotte*, Massenet's *Werther*, Beatzky's *Three Musketeers* and with Delak, he created Offenbach's *Robinson Crusoe* and Gregorc's *Erica*. On the drama stage, among others, he created Blazac's *Mercadet* with director Branko Gavella, Nestroy's *Ground Floor and First Floor* with Osip Šest. Ulyanischev also created the avant-garde set design for Delannoy's ballet *The Lady's Jester*, which was based on the Bauhaus *Triadisches Ballett* by Oskar Schlemmer.

In the presentation, the author will consider the importance of Ulyanischchev's work for the avant-garde orientation of Slovenian scenography at professional theatres. She will ask whether he helped the young generation of directors, Delak and Kreft, by introducing all avant-garde novelties that were previously characteristic of the amateur and workers' theatres to the professional theatres in the 1930s. Was Ulyanischchev really the engine of our theatrical avant-garde on the professional stages?

Ana Kocjančič (b. 1977), MA, is an art historian, curator, gallerist and researcher for the history of scenography in Slovenia. She completed her master's degree with the thesis "Scenography in Slovenian Drama Theatres between the World Wars (1918–1941)" in 2006 at the Department of Art History, Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana. Since then, she has been researching the history of Slovenian scenography and its connection with the development of Slovenian fine arts and the effects of European theatre movements and European fine art on its development. She is a professional assistant in the field

of scenography and theatrical techniques in the creation of the new theatre terminological dictionary and the co-author of the published edition (2008) by the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts (SASA/SAZU) in Ljubljana. She is the author of the monography *Prostor v prostoru: Scenografija na Slovenskem od 17. stoletja do leta 1991* (*The Space Within the Space: Scenography in Slovenia before 1991*) and many articles, exhibitions, television and radio shows on the development of Slovenian scenography.

Dariusz Kosiński: **Performing a Hermitage: Jerzy Grotowski's Tactics of Periphery-Centre Policy**

Polish director Jerzy Grotowski (1933–1999) is generally considered one of the most important representatives of the theatrical avant-garde of the second half of the 20th century. Even if from a certain moment he himself opposed this accolade, in his practice, he developed a whole net of strategies inspired by the historical avant-garde – both Polish (Reduta and Cricot theatres, Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz, Witold Gombrowicz) and European (Vsevolod Meyerhold, Emil František Burian, Antonin Artaud, among others). One set of this net's strings is connected strictly to the relation between the periphery and the centre. Being an heir of a culture that considers itself peripheral (and tries reluctantly to counteract such a label), Grotowski developed a life-lasting policy of periphery and centre. Consequently, choosing the former as his own “base” or maybe even a “home”, he consciously haunted and invaded the latter, disturbing conventional relations and hierarchies. The lecture presents an outline of the history of the strategies Grotowski had been developing from his decision to leave the central town of Kraków for provincial Opole in 1959 until his performance of a “hidden hermitage” in Pontedera (Tuscany) in the 1990s. Hopefully, this presentation will result in recognising the tactics (to use Michel de Certeau's term) of periphery-centre policy that may be considered an important part of the avant-garde performance (following Mike Sell's proposition).

Dariusz Kosiński is a professor at Jagiellonian University in Kraków. He is the former research director of the Grotowski Institute in Wrocław (2010–2013) and former deputy director of Raszewski Theatre Institute in Warsaw. He is also a member of the editorial board of Jerzy Grotowski's collected texts. Kosiński has written texts on the history of Polish theatre and performances – published also in German, Chinese, Russian and English (*Performing Poland*, Performance Research Books, 2019) – and a few books about Jerzy Grotowski.

He initiated and co-created the website grotowski.net with the “Grotowski Encyclopedia” (for which he wrote a substantial number of entries) and the online magazine *Performer* (until now, he is its chief editor). He is also active as a theatre critic of the important Polish political and cultural weekly *Tygodnik Powszechny* and the editor-in-chief of the publishing house *Zywo-slowie*, which specialises in theatre books.

Krištof Jacek Kozak: **The Fatal Woman of Slovenian Dramatic Modernism**

The key feature of the cultural periphery is that it is rarely a place of original creation. Instead, it servilely repeats the ideas and achievements of the centre, usually calming, diluting, watering them down, adapting them to the habitually more conservative taste of its audience, which does not have the same sharpened aesthetic tastes, let alone needs, as in the centre. It was no different at the time of the historical avant-gardes, such as on the route Vienna–Ljubljana.

Around the turn of the century, Vienna was, of course, the leading city of the modernist, secessionist, fin-de-siècle and even expressionist approach to art, within which music, painting and literature should be particularly emphasised. Especially the latter – emboldened by the trends of decadence and symbolism – ventured into the realms of hitherto unknown themes or treated familiar themes in a novel way. Therefore, it is possible to highlight a topic that has particularly blossomed as a “flower of evil”, namely the relationship between the sexes. In the fin-de-siècle male artistic understanding, women frequently assumed the role of fatal beings whose key function was the subjugation (and consequent destruction) of men. Viennese literature, under the pens of F. Wedekind, A. Schnitzler, O. Kokoschka and others, formed the type of femme fatale as an immoral, depraved, corrupt woman who was not concerned about her “good name” but, in her moral indifference, dragged already fully ensnared men into the abyss.

As a provincial reaction to a revolutionary theme, one would expect in Slovenia a softening of the moral decay of female protagonists. However, here we encounter an opposite phenomenon: in the period between the two world wars, an entire series of authors (for example, E. Gangl, A. Robida, A. Cerkvnik) clung to the theme of the femme fatale and distorted it to the extreme: fatal women thus became satanic creatures, destroyers of men par excellence.

Krištof Jacek Kozak studied philosophy and comparative literature at the University of Ljubljana and received his PhD in comparative literature from the University of Alberta in Edmonton, Canada, in 2003. He is employed at the Department of Slovene Studies of the Faculty of Humanities, University of Primorska. He has published two monographs (the second one appeared in Serbian, Slovak and English translations) and numerous scholarly and professional articles. He has also worked as a theatre critic, translator and dramaturg and has been a guest lecturer at various foreign universities.

Nika Leskovšek: **Towards War and Violence and Away: A Violent Echoing of the (Historical) Avant-Gardes in Yugoslav Performing Arts and Their Alternatives in Feminist Performance Art**

Against the backdrop of the current worldwide trend of rising violence and the rapid spread of war zones, Nika Leskovšek will look deeper into the position of (historical) avant-gardes towards violence and war. Her discussion stems from such examples as the notorious and highly debatable statement of Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, the author of *Futurist Manifesto*, who wrote in “War, the World’s only Hygiene” at the start of the Great War in 1915: “We Futurists [...] have glorified the love of danger and violence, praised patriotism and war, the hygiene of the world, are happy to finally experience this great Futurist hour of Italy.”

In the first part of the paper, the author aims to consider exactly these kinds of ethically divisive ideological positions of the avant-gardes towards violence and war. These examples place themselves on the negative side of the spectrum by not only ideologically promoting violence but also exercising it in their practical artistic endeavours. By that, she tends to demonstrate the ways in which violence has been used in performing arts as an echo of the avant-garde movements, using examples mostly (but not exclusively) from Yugoslav performing arts of the 1960s and 1980s. The paper also aims to explain the underlying reasoning behind the usage of violence by presenting a wider picture of the sociopolitical context in which these performances were staged.

In the second part of the paper, she proposes the potential for positive alternative practices, as can be observed from the examples of feminist performance art and/or female artists who, in their relation and stance towards violence and war, offer a positive exemption and an alternative artistic practice by dissecting, exposing and diverting, even subverting the prevailing governing mechanisms and power relations in the field of arts and politics. Again, the examples of female performing artists will be based mostly (but not exclusively) on the Yugoslav performing arts.

Nika Leskovšek is a theatre researcher, critic and dramaturg. She has been working independently in the field of (Slovenian) performing arts as a theorist, theatre critic and dramaturg, publishing research on and analyses of (Slovenian) performing arts. She curated the 10th Biennial of Puppetry Artists in Slovenia in 2019 and the 57th Maribor Theatre Festival in 2022. She earned her PhD from the Academy of Theatre, Radio, Film and Television, University of Ljubljana.

Aldo Milohnić: Václav Vlček, Lidija Wisiak and Prampolini's Futurist Theatre

Enrico Prampolini was one of the most groundbreaking visual artists of Italian Futurism. He often created set designs for the theatre, occasionally for film, and even directed some performances. In the 1920s and 1930s, he collaborated with many prominent representatives of the then-avant-garde movements throughout Europe. As an expert in the visual and performance art practices of Italian Futurism, Prampolini was invited several times to participate in the preparation of important international exhibitions, such as the Exhibition of Modern Italian Art in Prague (1921) and the International Exhibition of New Theatre Technique in Vienna (1924). In his paper, Aldo Milohnić will briefly outline Prampolini's collaboration with Eastern European (Czech, Polish and other) avant-garde artists as well as with Italian and Slovenian avant-garde artists in Trieste, Gorizia and the Friuli-Venezia Giulia region. The author will devote the central and most extensive part of the paper to the participation of Václav Vlček and Lidija Wisiak, who were pioneers of Slovenian dance theatre, in the productions of Prampolini's Futuristic Pantomime Theatre (*Teatro della pantomima futurista*) in 1937 in Paris and the following year in some Italian cities. This albeit short but important collaboration of the Czech-Slovenian artistic tandem with Enrico Prampolini is still almost completely unexplored. Milohnić believes that his contribution, for which he also draws data from primary archival sources, will illuminate and critically evaluate the achievements of this significant collaboration between Italian, Slovenian and other theatre artists in the period of the historical avant-gardes.

Aldo Milohnić, PhD, is a professor of the history of theatre at the Academy of Theatre, Radio, Film and Television, University of Ljubljana, and the head of its Theatre and Film Studies Centre. He is the author of the monographs *Theories of Contemporary Theatre and Performance* (2009), *Art in Times of the Rule of Law and Capital* (2016), *Theatre of Resistance* (2021) and *I Worked for 40 Years: Dramatisations and Adaptations of Cankar's The Bailiff Yerney* (2022). He is a co-author of several other books and edited volumes and the author of numerous articles in cultural journals. He is an editorial board member of the journals *Amfiteater* and the *European Journal of Theatre and Performance*, a member of the International Federation for Theatre Research and a co-founder and board member of the European Association for the Study of Theatre and Performance. His research interests include the history and theory of theatre and the sociology of culture and arts.

Lela Angela Mršek Bajda: The Avant-Garde and Subculture in the Subversion of the Periphery and the Centre

This contribution of avant-garde theorising relies on the hermeneutic method and a critical analysis of social relations. It compares the relationship between subcultural and avant-garde practices and considers the networking/institutional model of the relationship between the cultural centre and the cultural periphery. The comprehension of the centre and periphery in culture is subject to historical changes, and in this process, instead of being monolithically paradigmatised, it becomes itself a complex of multiplied multifacetedness. In the paper, the author develops the thesis by observing the events between the performativity of Neue Slowenische Kunst (NSK) and Ljubljana's urban subculture around 1980 and between the performativity of NSK and the para-civic movement NSK Folk Art around 2010. Among the aforementioned practices, performative appropriations occurred, which led to the subversion of the central and peripheral within the cultural counter-current to social hegemony. The latter is the result of the ability or inability to build a habitus, that is, a web of memory and understanding of history, expressible in the grammar of a (sub)cultural group. It shows that the subjectivation of the community of NSK artists takes place heteronomously in intercultural networking while developing its autonomous social topos, thus, reinforcing the consensus on the cultural position of its identity. NSK remains an aesthetic impulse that empowers thought engaged in social action but loses its position as the absolute centre of this thought because it moves away from its embodiment, thereby – paradoxically – intensifying the existential dimensions of its own performativity. The border between the cultural centre and the cultural periphery also becomes blurred, thus complicating the avant-garde attack on hegemony, for example, on culturally expressed hegemonies as defined by Peter Bürger.

Lela Angela Mršek Bajda (born 1963) is an artist, curator and writer with the status of a self-employed cultural worker. She lives in Ljubljana. She obtained a PhD in 2023 with the dissertation *Autonomy, Work, Institution by Peter Bürger and the Avant-Gardism of Neue Slowenische Kunst*, a university degree in comparative literature (with the thesis *NSK and Historical Avant-Gardes*) in 2014 and a university degree in philosophy (with the thesis *F. W. Nietzsche: Morality and Creative Personality*) in 1987, all from the Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana. She is the author of expert articles on contemporary art and the editor of monographic editions on locally-situated topics.

Maja Murnik: **The Issue of Space in Post-Avant-Garde Art: A Discussion of Several Examples**

In the paper, Maja Murnik discusses selected examples from contemporary performing and media art that are explicitly based on the legacy of avant-garde art. She focuses on their understanding of the space by which these artworks gain a certain continuation and upgrading of the basic avant-garde aspirations on which they rely.

Thus, she analyses the function and the role of space in the works of Slovenian artists Dragan Živadinov (especially his post-gravity performances) and Marko Peljhan (*Makrolab*, above all). Both artists sought their inspiration in the Russian avant-garde, but each of them pursued different issues in it. While Živadinov's post-gravity work focuses primarily on the issues of gravity and abstract art that will gain its accomplishment in outer space, free from the constraints of terrestrial conditions, Peljhan's project *Makrolab*, on the other side, is oriented towards a critical stance of contemporary power structures. In both, particular importance has been attributed to the notion of space, which – especially in the case of Peljhan – is also data space, since *Makrolab*, as a complex and autopoietic system environment, tries to intercept and analyse data from various systems (i.e., communication, climate, migration). In Živadinov's case, by launching the artwork into outer space, we encounter a “fall upwards” and, therefore, a “complete reorganization of vision” (P. Virilio).

A particular attitude and reference to the avant-garde tradition can be found in the performance art cycle *Extima* by Olja Grubić (Via Negativa), as well as in a series of lived reenactments of neo-avant-garde performances in virtual environments. Through these examples, the issues of space, embodiment, audience, liveness and attitude to history are addressed in a particular yet uncommon way.

Maja Murnik, PhD in philosophy and theory of visual culture, BA in dramaturgy and comparative literature, is currently employed as a researcher at the Faculty of Computer and Information Science, University of Ljubljana and as a freelance art critic. She is the editor-in-chief of the journal of performing arts theory *Amfiteater* and a co-founder of the Institute of New Media Art and Electronic Literature (www.inm.si). Her major research interests include contemporary performing arts, media art and theory.

Samo Oleami: **How We Went Looking for the Neo-Avant-Garde and Missed It**

If with the neo-avant-garde of the 1960s, art shed its aura of self-sufficiency, if in 1965 Iztok Geister wrote in his article “A Living Poem” that an artist “knows what they want” only if they analyse their work, if three years later, Roland Barthes announced the death of the artist and as a result art became an intertextual practice or a performance in a contextual field – what happens to such a work when the context changes? More specifically, what happens when we try to reconstruct or re-enact contextual works of art after the historical, political and social context has already changed? Between 2006 and 2009, Oleami participated in three different re-enactments of theatrical or performative works of the Slovenian neo-avant-garde – as assistant director and dramaturg in two reconstructions by Janez Janša – the 2006 performance *Pupilija, papa Pupilo pa Pupilčki – reconstruction* (*Pupilija, Papa Pupilo and the Pupilceks – reconstruction*, original from 1969), the 2009 performance *Spomenik G2* (*Monument G2*, original from 1972); He did his own research between 2008 and 2010 on the neo-avant-garde urban performances of the OHO Group and other contemporary artists from Yugoslavia and Central Europe and tried to reproduce these works as literally as possible. Where Janša reconstructed *Pupilija* from a television recording, and it was relatively easy to distinguish the difference between the historical contexts of the original and the reconstruction, distinguishing this difference was more difficult in the other two projects. Although *Monument G* itself was reconstructed from memory by the team of the original – Dušan Jovanovič, Jožica Avbelj and Tomaž Jarc – the distance of memory has allowed differences to creep in, which fundamentally transformed the performative approach of the reconstruction as compared to the original. After a few years of performing the *Walk Performance* project, Oleami had to admit, however, that his basic assumptions were completely misplaced. In this paper, he will use these three re-enactments as examples to try to show those aspects of the events that are not reproducible but have become apparent precisely through attempts at repetition.

Samo Oleami (formerly Gosarič) (1979) is a writer, dramaturg and artist in the field of performing arts. Since 2019, he has been publishing theatre reviews on Radio Študent and writing for the journals *Mentor*, *Maska* and *Dialogi*, as well as for the web portal *Neodvisni*. In his writing and critical reflection, he covers a wide spectrum of performative practices, from drama theatre, contemporary performing arts and performance art to festivals of improvisational and street theatre. Since 2021, he has been running workshops known as Street Criticism at the festivals Ana Desetnica, Gibanica, Mladi levi and Naked Stage. Through his studies, artistic projects and published papers, he has been primarily involved in the Slovenian neo-avant-garde (OHO, Theatre Pupilija Ferkeverk).

Barbara Orel: **Fran Žižek's Independent Theatre: A Dialogue with the Prague Avant-Garde**

During his studies with Emil František Burian in Prague, the director Fran Žižek developed a unique version of allusionist theatre, the so-called synthetic theatre. He presented it at the international congress of avant-garde theatres in 1937 in Prague, the centre of the Central European avant-garde. Žižek advocated an ascetic version of total theatre as a synthesis of literature, drama, dance, music and visual arts that is established in an empty space, with acting as its main component. He sought to enrich the possibilities of actor's expression with moving scenic devices or "stage machines" powered by new technologies, while projections and spotlights created the dynamics of movement on stage. This idea of synthetic theatre was realised in the Independent Theatre, which he founded in 1938, and further developed on the stage of the Okrajno gledališče na Ptuj (Ptuj Regional Theatre) in the 1938/39 and 1939/40 seasons. Although Žižek reflected on his work in-depth in his book *Moja zgodnja gledališka leta* (*My Early Theatre Years*, Obzorja Publishing House, 2000), this chapter of the Slovenian avant-garde has remained largely unexplored. It was probably neglected in the processes of historicising (Slovenian) theatre because Žižek's avant-garde endeavours took place at the Ptuj theatre, which was considered a peripheral theatre venue in relation to nearby Maribor. While elaborating on Žižek's concept of synthetic theatre, the paper focuses on the question of how the director's theory and practice entered into a dialogue with the Prague avant-garde.

Barbara Orel is a professor of performing arts at the Academy of Theatre, Radio, Film and Television, University of Ljubljana. Her main areas of research are experimental theatre, avant-garde movements and performance across disciplines. Her publications include *Prekinitve s tradicijo v slovenskih uprizoritvenih umetnostih 1966–2006* (*Breaking with Tradition in the Slovenian Theatre and Performance 1966–2006*) and several edited collections, including *Uprizoritvene umetnosti, migracije, politika* (*Performing Arts, Migration, Politics*) and *Začetki slovenskega gledališča moderne dobe* (*The Beginnings and Achievements of the Slovenian Theatre of the Modern Age*, with Štefan Vevar). Since 2008, she has participated in research projects of the Theatrical Event Working Group of the International Federation for Theatre Research. She was also a selector of the Slovenian national theatre festivals, the Week of Slovenian Drama and the Maribor Theatre Festival.

Kristina Pranjić: **Decentring the Avant-Garde and the Yugo-Dada Network**

In recent years, the field of avant-garde history and theory has greatly contributed to the decentring of the universal narrative of the avant-garde and the story of modernity.¹ As a result, avant-garde phenomena beyond the West or its established artistic centres such as Paris, Berlin, London, New York and others, as well as beyond the central representative avant-gardists, who until recently were almost exclusively male, come into the forefront. Although peripheral parts of Europe and female avant-gardists were generally considered to have produced some activities/works, they were seen as lacking original character or significant influence, reflecting a substantialist view of the avant-garde as a production of artistic artefacts. However, thorough research shows just the opposite – that they are essential parts of avant-garde movements. Furthermore, these historically neglected, peripheral areas of Eastern and Central Europe are where avant-garde practices truly manifest their radicality.² Several recent studies have also corrected the established opinion that Dada belongs to Western European cultural centres and reinforced the importance of Eastern and Central European Dadaist phenomena.³

In this contribution, the author presents relevant approaches that have enabled the decentring of the avant-garde canon: among others, methods from the field of digital humanities, network analysis and digital visualisation, critical theory and critical geography, as well as the "global turn" in literary and art history. As an example, the author analyses the network of Yugoslav Dadaism and present the central theoretical framework for understanding the specificity of its emergence and functioning.

Kristina Pranjić is an associate professor at the University of Nova Gorica's School of Humanities and Research Centre for Humanities. Her research focuses on alternative epistemologies of avant-garde art and techniques of estrangement and abstraction in poetic and visual language. She explores art's emancipatory and posthumanist potentials and investigates forms and networks of transnational collaboration among avant-garde artists. She graduated in comparative literature and Russian language and literature from the University of Ljubljana, where she defended her doctoral dissertation on the objectlessness of sound and image in symbolism and the avant-garde. Forthcoming book: *Jugoslovanska avantgarda in metropolitanska dada* (*The Yugoslav Avant-Garde and Metropolitan Dada*, Ljubljana: Sophia, 2024).

¹ Tania Ørum et al. (ed.), *A Cultural History of the Avant-Garde in the Nordic Countries* (Leiden: Brill, 2016–2022); Per Bäckström, Benedikt Hjartarson (ed.), *Decentring the Avant-Garde* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2014); Ming Tiampo, Gutai: Decentering Modernism (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011); James M. Harding, John Rouse, *Not the Other Avant-Garde: The Transnational Foundations of Avant-Garde Performance* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2006).

² Zrinka Božić Blanuša, "Decentred Geographies: Poetics and Politics of the Avant-Garde", *Poznańskie Studia Slawistyczne* 18 (2020), 49–66; S. A. Mansbach, "From Leningrad to Ljubljana: The Suppressed Avant-Gardes of East-Central and Eastern Europe during the Early Twentieth Century", *Art Journal* 49 (1) (1990), 7–8.

³ Oliver A. I. Botar et al. (ed.), *Cannibalizing the Canon: Dada Techniques in East-Central Europe* (Leiden: Brill, 2023); Tom Sandqvist, *Dada East: The Romanians of Cabaret Voltaire* (Cambridge: MIT, 2006); Stephen C. Foster et al. (ed.), *The Eastern Dada Orbit: Russia, Georgia, Ukraine, Central Europe and Japan* (New York: G.K. Hall & Co., 1998).

Mojca Puncer: The Noordung Project and the Care of Avant-Garde Heritage: Changing the Relationship Between Periphery and Centre

In the context of recent heritage-science initiatives and debates that are shaking up cultural heritage, especially in terms of identity, sustainable management, and social and environmental changes, the author of the proposed paper raises the question of the role of contemporary (new media) art in caring for the heritage of the historical artistic and scientific avant-garde using the example of the fifty-year theatrical performance-in-process *Noordung: 1995–2045* by Dragan Živadinov and his collaborators. Particular attention is paid to the positioning of the Noordung project from the point of view of the asymmetry of international artistic forces and the shift in the relationship between periphery and centre, both in the historical and contemporary context. The social changes that accompanied the disintegration of the former common state of Yugoslavia and the independence of Slovenia also characterised the appropriation of the avant-garde heritage by the Slovenian retro-avant-garde in the 1990s as a specific post-socialist avant-garde (avant-garde heritage as a building block of national, Eastern European cultural identity, etc.), while in the new millennium, the appropriation/revival/caring of/for the avant-garde tradition takes place through the attempt to overcome the consequences of such geopolitical definitions in the face of the global weight of ongoing social and environmental changes. The research is situated at the intersection of the philosophy of art, aesthetics and heritage studies, particularly in relation to discourses of care and curation in contemporary art. Using the Noordung project as a case study, innovative ways of interpreting avant-garde heritage are highlighted, in which the results of research and the engagement of the artists themselves contribute significantly to its reconstruction, restoration and revitalisation (Trieste Constructivist Cabinet, Cosmokinetic Cabinet Noordung, KSEVT, the naming of the fifty-year Noordung theatre process, etc.).

Mojca Puncer holds a PhD in philosophy from the University of Ljubljana. She is an associate professor of philosophy at the Department of Fine Arts of the Faculty of Education, University of Maribor. She also works as an independent researcher, theorist, critic and curator in the field of contemporary art practice. She is a member of the editorial board of the magazine for the fine arts *Likovne besede/Artwords* and the executive committee of the Slovenian Society of Aesthetics. She is the author of the books *Contemporary Art and Aesthetics* (2010) and *Interspaces of Art* (2018).

Darko Štrajcn: Discontinuity, Disruption and Subversion as Theatrical Gestures

As avant-gardes decisively sprung up after World War I, the art based on disruptive gestures acquired explicit articulations in diverse artistic products and actions. In a growing number of instances, avant-garde art took sides with revolutionary movements, tending towards being an integral part of social change. However, the avant-garde groups and trends – as can be demonstrated – rarely worked on any teleology of revolutionary politics. What they mostly attempted, was the creating of conceptual subversions within the established social orders and mindsets. Throughout their trajectory of experiencing disappointments and euphoric breakthroughs, avant-gardes procured a transcultural understanding of art and of its role in society. As it were, the final “success” of later avant-gardes (1960s and 1970s) happened on both sides of the iron curtain. Theatre and cinema at the time expanded the subversions of the “system” in actual art forms, based on the usages of the signifiers of discontinuities and on the radical renouncing of the usual codes of messages to the public. The world, which happened to be “subverted”, was the same in Paris or Prague or Belgrade or Ljubljana. It can be argued that in so-called real socialism, avant-gardes inscribed themselves into the movements that tried to reorient the path of emancipation towards a final modernist project of interaction between autonomous art and social freedom. Many cases of “experimental” theatres, films, poetry, etc., along with philosophies of liberation, in Yugoslavia among other “peripheral” countries of real socialism, can be classified as examples in this venue.

Darko Štrajcn graduated in philosophy and sociology from the Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia, where he acquired his doctorate on Fichte’s philosophy. Along with his work at the Educational Research Institute in Ljubljana, he lectures on film theory at the School of Arts at the University of Nova Gorica and on the epistemology of humanities at the Ljubljana School of Humanities (AMEU–ISH). His research comprises topics such as philosophy, aesthetics, film studies, politics, education and social change. He has authored six books and many book chapters as well as hundreds of other published texts. His most recent book (2017) was published in English under the title *From Walter Benjamin to the End of Cinema*.

Tomaž Toporišič: How to Revolutionise the Periphery-Centre Relationship: Three Historical Avant-Garde Cycles Between East, West, South and North

The presentation will outline three attempts to revolutionise the periphery-centre relationship in Central and Eastern Europe. The first attempt belongs to the time of the historical avant-gardes of the 1920s, the second to the neo-avant-gardes of the 1970s and the third to the post-avant-gardes at the turn of the twentieth to the twenty-first century. The second and third cycles re-enacted and reinterpreted some basic ideas of Constructivist and Futurist utopian questions, linking them and adapting for new historical and political circumstances. The neo-, retro- and post-generations were proud to announce that they are the heirs of the artistic generation of the constructivists and zenitists, who wanted to promote Trieste, Ljubljana, Zagreb, Belgrade as the centres of the new art, to establish a new bridge between the East and West, South and North.

The author aims to discuss to what extent the Central European avant-gardes developed thoughts that are close to the specific horizontal perspective of art history as defined by Piotr Piotrowski. To what extent did the three avant-gardes, together with the modernist, neomodernist and postmodernist colleagues at the margins of European Cultural Space, radically redefine centrality and marginality and undermine the tools of cultural appropriation? Using the examples of Ferdo Delak, Katja Pollak, August Černigoj, Ljubomir Micić, Marij Kogoj, Bratko Kreft in dialogue with Marinetti, Prampolini, Der Sturm; Dušan Jovanović, Lado Kralj, Ljubiša Ristić in dialogue with Grotowsky, Schechner, Mnouchkine, Fluxus; and Neue Slowenische Kunst in dialogue with the American avant-garde and Heiner Mueller, he will try to show, how “margins do not merely exist as extensions of the core” (Diana Mishkova). In addition, he will examine how they produce a specific autonomy of their own with which they challenge their asymmetric conceptualisation by the centre and assert agency through the construction of alternative regional categories and alternative modes of collective identification.

Tomaž Toporišič is a dramaturg and theatre theorist. He is a full professor and head of the research group in dramaturgy and performing arts at the Academy of Theatre, Radio, Film and Television and lectures in theatre sociology at the Faculty of Arts, both of the University of Ljubljana. He is also an associate member of the Slovenian Academy of Science and Arts. For his outstanding contributions to the field, he was awarded the Knight of the Order of Arts and Letters by the French Republic in 2013 and the Grün-Filipič Award for achievements in Slovenian dramaturgy in 2017. He is the author of six books on contemporary performing arts: *Between Seduction and*

Suspicion: The Relationship Between Text and Performance in Slovenian Theatre in the Second Half of the 20th Century (2004); *The Vulnerable Body of Text and Stage: The Crisis of the Dramatic Author in the Theatre of the 1980s and 1990s* (2007); *The Ecdyses of Drama and Theatre* (2008); *Intermedial and Intercultural Nomads* (2018); *Dangerous Liaisons of Drama and Theatre in the 20th and 21st Centuries* (2021); and *Dramatic Writings of the Century: From Ivan Cankar to Simona Semenič and Beyond* (2023). His essays include “Deconstructive Readings of the Avant-Garde Tradition in Post-Socialist Retro-Avant-Garde Theatre” (in *The Aesthetics of Matter: Modernism, the Avant-Garde and Material Exchange*, 2013); “Oliver Frljić, an Artist Touching Society’s Raw Nerves” (in *The Routledge Companion to Contemporary European Theatre and Performance*, 2023); “The Slovene Historical Avant-Garde and Europe in Crisis” (*Theatralia*, 2022). His primary interest is in creating a dialogue between theory and practice.

Gašper Troha: Peter Božič and the Question of the Authentic Theatrical Avant-Garde in Slovenia in the Second Half of the 20th Century

Peter Božič was a Slovenian playwright whose most important plays were written at the beginning of his career, between 1955 and 1961. This writing is strongly connected to the experimental theatre named Stage 57, which presented an opposition to the then-prevailing style of socialist realism in Yugoslavia. Young dramatists, directors and actors were searching for new ways of expression, leaning on existentialist philosophy, Artaudian theatre and modernist literature.

However, when asked about the influences on his work, Peter Božič replied: "When I was writing *Človek v šipi* (*A Man in the Window* – his first play), I was leaning on my own life experience, not knowing that this form was, in fact, avant-garde theatre. It was later, when I first saw Ionesco on stage, that I realised, this is it." And later on, when he explains the influence of Beckett and Ionesco on his plays, he admits that they were important to him in a "cultural sense. However, when it comes to the contents of my plays, it was the war that had a much stronger influence. During the war, all my values were shattered to pieces."

How authentic was the development of the avant-garde theatre of Peter Božič on the European periphery? To what extent can it be compared to the works of Beckett and Ionesco?

This relationship between the centre in France and the Slovenian periphery will be analysed through a comparison between the early plays of Peter Božič and works of Beckett and Ionesco that he saw or read in Slovenia, *The Bald Soprano* and *The Lesson* by Ionesco and *Waiting for Godot* and *Endgame* by Beckett.

Gašper Troha holds a PhD from the Department of Comparative Literature and Literary Theory of the Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana. His research interests include the sociology of literature, especially the contemporary world and Slovenian drama and theatre. He is a researcher at the Academy of Theatre, Radio, Film and Television, University of Ljubljana and the managing director at the Slovenian Theatre Institute (SLOGI). He has published in numerous national and international scientific journals. He is a co-author with Vanesa Matajč and Gregor Pompe of *History and Its Literary Genres* (Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2008), *Literarni modernizem v »svinčenih« letih* (*Literary Modernism in the "Leaden" Years*, Študentska založba, 2008) and *Lojze Kovačič: življenje in delo* (*Lojze Kovačič: Life and Work*, Študentska založba, 2009). In 2015, he published the monograph *Ujetniki svobode* (*Prisoners of Freedom*, Aristej) about the development of Slovenian drama and theatre under socialist rule.

Hanna Veselovska: From Generation to Generation: Avant-Garde and Neo-Avant-Garde Visionaries of the Ukrainian Theatre

The proposed paper aims to highlight the continuity of artistic ideas and their linkage with social tasks in the Ukrainian theatrical avant-garde of the 1920s and its neo-avant-garde reincarnation of the 1960s. While the phenomenon of the original theatrical avant-garde has been studied quite extensively, much less known is about how and why the theatre of that historical period, in general, and its visionary projects, in particular, became a platform for the soon-to-arrive neo-avant-garde. In Ukraine, this latter artistic phenomenon arose during the so-called Khrushchev Thaw and manifested itself as a relay of revolutionary aesthetic ideas and current social meanings. In effect, despite the artificial generation gap created by the years of the Great Terror, dissident rebels of the 1960s essentially revived and even lent some legitimisation to the radical visionary projects of the 1920s. The research perspective that is being proposed thereby enables us not only to examine the interconnection between the avant-garde and neo-avant-garde stages in the history of the Ukrainian theatre but also to discern and discuss the ensued flare-ups and synchronisation of avant-garde artistic thinking in the broader European context.

Hanna Veselovska is a professor, theatre critic and scholar from Ukraine. She is the head of the Department of Theatre Studies at the Modern Art Research Institute of the National Academy of Arts of Ukraine. Her research interests include modern theatre theory and the Ukrainian theatrical avant-garde. She is the author of over 220 published works, including "On the Path to Innovation and Experiment: Ukrainian Theater in the first third of the 20th century" in *Staging the Ukrainian Avant-Garde of the 1910s and 1920s*, New York (2015); "National Theatre Open to Debate" in *East European Performing Arts Companion*, Lublin-Warsaw (2016); "The Movement of Bodies: Gender Issues in Ukraine Avant-Garde Theatre" in *Spaces and Stages of Avant-Garde Theatre in Central-Eastern Europe*, Warsaw (2018); "From Utopia to Ideology: 1920s' Theatre Studios in Ukraine" in *Quart* (no. 4 (66), 2022); "The Choreography of Innovation: Avant-Garde Ballet on Ukraine's Stage in the 1920s" in *A Lexicon of the Central-Eastern European Interwar Theatre Avant-Garde*, Warsaw (2023).

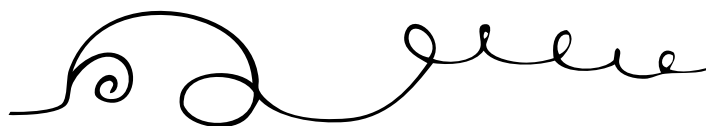
Among her published books (all in Ukrainian) are *The Twelve Productions by Les Kurbas* (2005), *The Theatrical Intersections in Kyiv: 1900–1910s. Theatrical Kyiv's Modernism* (2006), *Ukrainian Theatrical Avant-Garde* (2010), *Modern Theatrical Arts* (2014), *More than a Theatre: Ivan Franko National Theatre (2001–2012)* (2019).

Tery Žeželj: **Ephemeral Practices of the Periphery: Bogdanka Poznanović's Artistic Practice and Networking Through the Perspective of the River**

The cultural and artistic practice of Vojvodina artist Bogdanka Poznanović (1930–2013) encompasses a wide range of activities. With a background in visual arts, she was one of the first in socialist Yugoslavia to work with mail art, artistic interventions in public spaces and artists' books. As a professor at the Novi Sad Academy of Fine Arts, she established the first course in Yugoslavia dedicated to new media. As an art critic and writer, she was one of the founders and a member of the editorial board of *Tribina mladih* and a regular contributor to the magazine *Polja*, where she wrote and reported on contemporary art. Last but not least, together with her husband, Dejan Poznanović, she is the founder of Atelje DT20, one of the key spaces for local and international artistic exchanges. As Sanja Kojić Mladenov points out in her book *Bogdanka Poznanović: Contact Art*, among other things, her gender and the diversity of her activities account for the lack of research in the past that analyses and historicises her cultural-artistic practice beyond individual artworks or disciplines.

In a conversation for the book *Vojvodanke (1917–1931): životne price*, Poznanović points out, "Rivers are very important to me, they connect, they are like a bloodstream" (305). In this contribution, Tery Žeželj will try to look at her practice as a mobilisation of networks and artistic intertwinements through the idea of a river in two of her actions from the 1970s, the *Cubes-Rivers* and *Rivers Transmission*. Through Ewa Majewska's concept of a "weak" avant-garde, the author will try to define possible "peripheral" strategies that loosen up the boundaries between artistic disciplines and operate transnationally and beyond the idea of the centre.

Tery Žeželj (1995) holds a BA in dramaturgy and performing arts from Academy of Theatre, Radio, Film and Television, University of Ljubljana, and an MA in contemporary theatre, dance and dramaturgy from Utrecht University. During her studies, she worked as a dramaturg on student and professional productions. She did her master's internship at Framer Framed in Amsterdam and in the project *How to Exit a Reality (Attempt 1 of 19)* by Andrea Božić and Julia Willms. After graduating, she became self-employed in culture and worked mainly as a dramaturg, researcher, editor and member of the artistic board at Glej Theatre. Last year, she joined the University of Nova Gorica as a young researcher.



The Annual Amfiteater International Academic Symposium

Connecting Avant-Gardes and Theatre: How to Revolutionise the Relationship between the Periphery and the Centre
organised by

**Academy of Theatre, Radio, Film and Television, University of Ljubljana,
Slovenian Theatre Institute,
Amfiteater** – Journal of Performing Arts Theory and
Slovenian Society of Aesthetics

Head of the symposium: Tomaž Toporišič

Organising committee: Tomaž Toporišič, Gašper Troha, Polona Tratnik, Aldo Milohnič, Barbara Orel and Maja Murnik

Edited by: Maja Murnik

Language editing: Andraž Polončič Ruparčič (Slovenian) and Jana Renée Wilcoxon (English)

Proofreading: Maja Murnik and Tomaž Toporišič

Designed by: Andrej Ovsec

Published by: Slovenian Theatre Institute, represented by Gašper Troha

Ljubljana, October 2024

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UNIVERSITY OF LJUBLJANA
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**SLOVENSKO
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Slovenian Society of Aesthetics

The symposium is organised in cooperation with the Academy of Theatre, Radio, Film and Television, University of Ljubljana within the framework of the research programme *Theatre and Interart Studies* (project no. P6-0376), co-financed by the Slovenian Research and Innovation Agency (ARIS) from the state budget.

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