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Journal of Performing Arts Theory

Academic Symposium

CONNECTING AVANT-GARDES AND THEATRE: HOW TO REVOLUTIONISE THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE PERIPHERY AND THE CENTRE

9-11 October 2024

Slovenian Theatre Institute, Ljubljana



Call for submissions

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” (August 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 for collective identification.

We invite consideration on the following topics:

How do we conceptualise the European theatrical avant-garde from today’s perspective?

In what ways have avant-gardes resisted the asymmetry of international artistic forces and revolutionised the relationship between periphery and centre, both historically and in contemporary contexts?

What is the current state of research on Eastern European and Central European avant-gardes? Has the map of European theatrical avant-gardes shifted significantly in recent decades?

To what extent do the avant-gardes that emerged in Central and Eastern Europe require specific frameworks for understanding their origins and functions?

How do contemporary perspectives on cultural appropriation and global capitalism alter our views on avant-gardes?

How have the studies in Eastern European and Central European avant-gardes evolved in the last decade?

Avant-garde and society: autonomy of art?

How far the avant-gardes formed in Central do and Eastern Europe require different frameworks to understand their emergence and function?

How do aesthetic avant-gardes connect with past, present and future social movements?

How does the “weak” avant-garde (Ewa Majewska) connect the feminist rejection of the patriarchal understanding of genius to emancipatory perspectives of the periphery?

How are contemporary arts connected to 20th-century avant-garde movements?

What is the avant-garde legacy in contemporary performance practices and contemporary (including interdisciplinary, new media) art?

How do the current perspectives on cultural appropriation and global capitalism change our views on avant-gardes?

We invite both theatre researchers and practitioners to join us with their papers addressing the abovementioned issues or elaborate on them with their own views and perspectives at the international symposium that will take place in Ljubljana from 9 to 11 October 2024. The working languages of the symposium will be Slovenian and English. The time allocated for a paper is 20 minutes, plus 10 minutes for discussion.

Please send the title and the abstract of your paper (max. 250 words) and a short bio (max. 120 words) in English and/or Slovenian by e-mail to amfiteater@slogi.si. This is also the go-to address for any additional questions. The deadline for submissions is **10 May 2024**. You will be notified by 1 June 2024 if your paper has been accepted into the symposium.

Authors whose papers have been accepted will be invited to expand their papers into articles (either in Slovenian or English) to be published in a forthcoming issue of *Amfiteater* journal in early 2025. All articles will be peer-reviewed.

Head of the symposium: Tomaž Toporišič

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

Contact:

Maja Murnik

Slovenian Theatre Institute

Mestni trg 17, 1000 Ljubljana, Slovenia

E amfiteater@slogi.si

T +386 31 504 432

Symposium organisers:

The Slovenian Theatre Institute (SLOGI) is a national public institution founded in 2014 as the legal successor of the National Theatre Museum of Slovenia, founded in 1952. SLOGI focuses on continuing the evolution of theatre culture at the national level and on raising awareness of theatre's role and importance in developing society and individuals. SLOGI engages in collecting, preserving, documenting, researching, examining, interpreting, promoting and presenting Slovenian theatre culture, its heritage and contemporary theatre arts, both at the national and international levels.

The Academy of Theatre, Radio, Film and Television of the University of Ljubljana (UL AGRFT) performs educational, artistic and research work in the fields of theatre, radio, film and television. From its founding in 1945 to 1975, it operated as an independent higher education institution with a rector and then became a member of the University of Ljubljana.

***Amfiteater* – Journal of Performing Arts Theory** is a scientific journal that publishes original articles on performing arts with a broad spectrum from dramatic theatre, drama, dance, performance and hybrid art forms. Authors can analyse the forms and content of artwork and art phenomena from the field of performing arts, their history, their present and their future, as well as their relationship to other art forms and the broader (social, cultural, political ...) context.

The Slovenian Society of Aesthetics was established in 1983. The organisation focuses on research into avant-garde formations in culture, its main theoretical references. It is a member of the International Association for Aesthetics (IAA/AIE) and organises regular international colloquia.

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The symposium is being organised within the framework of the research programme UL AGRFT Theatre and Intermedia Studies (P6-0376), co-financed by the Slovenian Research and Innovation Agency (ARIS) from the state budget.



Slovenian Research and Innovation Agency