
Some years ago the growing scholarly interest in avant-garde studies led to the formation of The Nordic Network of Avant-Garde Studies as a forum for attempts to map the cultural influence of the aesthetic avant-gardes in the Nordic countries. Part of this project is the writing of a four volume *Cultural History of the Avant-Gardes in the Nordic Countries*. The first volume dealing with the years 1900-1925 was published by Rodopi (now a division of Brill) in 2013, and the second and third volume will be published in 2015 and 2016. The editors of this history now call for papers to a conference dealing with the history, culture, aesthetics, and politics of the avant-gardes in the Nordic countries in the period 1975-2000. The first three volumes have focused mainly Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden. In volume four we particularly want to include Greenland, the Faroe Islands and the Sami areas. Our hope is that most papers can be rewritten and published as contributions to the fourth volume of the series, *A Cultural History of the Avant-Gardes in the Nordic Countries 1975-2000*. For the publication there will be editorial panels of scholars from the different Nordic countries who will act as peer reviewers.

**The Avant-Gardes in the Nordic Countries 1975-2000**

Is avant-garde a useful notion when it comes to contemporary art practices? And if so, how is the avant-garde to be defined today? Maybe the title of the conference and the last volume of *A Cultural History of the Avant-Gardes in the Nordic Countries* ought to be followed by a question mark? The artistic landscape of the period 1975-2000 seems to be more diverse and spread across different media, platforms, and new technological and social means of organisation and collaboration than has been the case earlier in the century. Our own nearness to the period also makes it harder to make the (always reductive) categorisations that are part of the selection mechanism of writing history. The nearness, however, makes it easier to look beyond canonisation and keep an open and nuanced approach to the wide range of themes, media and modes of expression present in the period; ranging from, for instance, focus on gender and postcolonial issues, dematerialised and participatory relational practices, to new modes of communication and networking due to new media.

Many of the artistic practices of the period deliberately draw on or refer to previous practices. Should the many re-enactments of earlier avant-garde manifestations be considered avant-garde themselves, or are they simply mainstream examples of already established artistic norms and standards? And what does it mean to discuss them in an avant-garde context? Should a contemporary avant-garde rather relate to technological changes and new media? Or to the social changes in a complex and globalised world? Should we look at the field of countercultures and subcultures? Or should we talk of many different contemporary avant-gardes? From relational art, feminist and queer manifestations, net art, flashmobs, and challenges of high and low in design and music to appropriation and digital piracy?

The frame of the conference is cross-aesthetic and transnational, focusing on avant-garde activities in the Nordic countries, as well as on Nordic avant-garde artists working abroad. It includes aesthetic activities within, between and beyond the traditional arts (painting, literature, theatre, film, photography, music, dance, architecture).
Contributions may focus on individual activities, arts, artists and works and genres – but preferably in a perspective involving broader historical, cultural, political and aesthetic contexts. Regarded within a national framework, avant-garde enterprises often seem isolated, sporadic and fragmentary. That is why the transnational perspective stresses connections between local, national, Nordic and international manifestations of the avant-gardes.

The papers should present case studies rather than encyclopaedic elaborations, i.e. instructive examples introducing new perspectives on phenomena that condense important currents, tensions and controversies. They should reflect the topics dealt with as avant-garde (and not e.g. as modernism) and may even discuss different aspects of the concept of “avant-garde” or “anti-avant-garde”. The purpose of the conference is to discuss the avant-garde not as a predefined theoretical concept but as a crucial perspective on aesthetic and cultural history.

Culture, history and aesthetics of the avant-gardes: aspects and dimensions
The panels of the seminar will include such themes, aspects and dimensions as:

- **Renewal in Repetition** - Re-mediation - Re-enactment – Digital Archives - Appropriation – Post-Production – Sampling
- **High/Low** (Industry, Institution, Market) – Design – Counterculture / Subculture – Kitsch – Music
- **Network/Infrastructure**: Magazines – Small Presses - Electronic Networks (Nordic) – Mail Art – Flashmobs - Copyright/Pirate – Market/Institutions
- **Intervention** – Art in Public Space – Relational Art – Micro Utopias – Political art – Street Art – Pirate/Copyright

The themes specified here are meant as provisional suggestions. The organising committee invites participants to suggest other topics and individual cases.

Practical information and deadline for application
The conference will take place at Copenhagen University from 3-5 December 2015. During these days we plan to present and discuss around 30 papers. Each paper will have 20 minutes of presentation followed by 10 minutes discussion, i.e. 3 papers in a 1½ hour session.

During spring term 2015 70 master students from Aarhus and Copenhagen have been working on the topic of the conference resulting in many interesting discussions and thought-provoking case studies. As a prelude to the conference we have made a special CfP giving the best students the opportunity to present a paper. The student presentations will take place 2 December and we hope that many of the participants will join this session too.

The conference fee will be 1000 DKK, covering coffee/tea, lunches and a conference dinner. We will help you book a hotel room if you wish and will provide further information about local travel, location and other practical details.
Arrival and departure: The conference will start by midday Thursday 3 December and end by midday Saturday 5 December, so conference participants can arrive in Copenhagen Thursday morning and depart Saturday afternoon.

The conference language is English. All participants should submit a title and a 2-300 word abstract before 10 August 2015. Abstracts should be sent to avantgarde@hum.ku.dk. Questions regarding the conference may be sent to this address as well or to a member of the organizing committee.

The conference is organised by

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