Call for papers:

Avant-gardes through the prism of gender in the German-speaking world from 1945 to the present day: Sociabilities, aesthetics, memories

Université Jean Moulin Lyon 3 - Lyon, 12-14 October 2023

International Colloquium organised by Susanne Böhmisch (Aix-Marseille Université), Cécile Chamayou-Kuhn (Université de Lorraine), Sibylle Goepper (Université Jean Moulin Lyon 3), Agathe Mareuge (Sorbonne Université), Élise Petit (Université Grenoble Alpes)

Building on the foundation of research considering the so-called "historical" avant-gardes through the prism of gender[1], our colloquium aims to study the influence of gender relations and logics on the practices, productions and historiography of artistic avant-gardes, experimental arts, and all forms of art claiming to be or belonging to the artistic "margins" from 1945 until today. In this context, the "prism of gender" refers to questions about the place reserved for women, gender relations, the categorization and symbolic hierarchy between the feminine and the masculine, as well as reflections on the (social and aesthetic) treatment of alternative masculinities, non-binary identities and sexualities, and the intersectional approach to the processes of undermining certain gendered identities.

All disciplinary fields are called upon: musicology (learned and popular music), art history, visual arts, architecture, visual arts (photography, video, cinema), performing arts (theater, dance, performance, circus), literature.

The choice of this period is based on a double postulate. On the one hand, the societal evolutions triggered by the "second wave of feminism[2]" in the West from the 1960s onwards seem more than ever to predispose artistic collectives and groups to evolve in terms of positions, positioning, and the relationships between artists. On the other hand, if Eastern avant-gardes and experimental art were de facto proscribed by the socialist realism, the formal equality guaranteed by the law was accompanied by real social advances for women from the 1950s onward. This singular set of circumstances could preside over the renewal of the gender relations within the avant-gardes emerging in the 1970s and 80s[3].

Another theory holds that the perpetuation of dominant patriarchal schemes within the historical avant-gardes led to the experience of a "margin in the margin" for the women artists, [first] from the point of view of the modes of functioning, of the assertion of their gendered identity, [and] then during the work of commentary and historicization of these movements. We would like to examine this theory by re-problematizing it for the periods mentioned above and by pushing our reflections to the present day. Do the experiences of women in post-1945 avant-

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[1] Guillaume Bridet, Anne Tomiche (Hg.), *Itinéraires*, 2012-1, *« Genres et avant-gardes »* [Online]: https://journals.openedition.org/itineraires/1223 (last access: 15/10/2022).

[2] Bibia Pavard, « Faire naître et mourir les vagues : comment s'écrit l'histoire des féminismes », *Itinéraires*, 2017-2, Online: http://journals.openedition.org/itineraires/3787 (last access: 15/10/2022).

[3] Angelika Richter, *Das Gesetz der Szene. Genderkritik, Performance Art und zweite Öffentlichkeit in der späten DDR*, Berlin, transcript, 2019.

garde circles, and more generally the gender relations within those circles, correspond to this pattern of double marginalization? Do these phenomena affect other gender identities in addition to women? How do they manifest themselves? Do the parameters of "race" and class increase them? When do marginalization and invibilization occur: during the artists' lifetime, or afterwards?

However, their status cannot be reduced to that of subalterns and/or outcasts. What are then the strategies put in place to overcome it? What are the practices of "demarginalization" at work and how do they affect both the dominant field and the avant-garde field itself? Are we witnessing an original variation of the aporia of the avant-garde, a "stillborn" movement[4]", carrying within it its own destruction? With which singular results on the level of the modes of functioning, of the elaborated aesthetics, but also of the claimed filiations and relations to posterity? On the discursive level, is there a gendered way of constructing and defining oneself on the artists' side? On the side of the reception, how did the gendered discourses on the artistic practices of the avant-gardes evolve according to the contexts? Is it necessary to claim to be part of an "avant-garde", and a feminist or explicitly "gendered" one at that, in order to be considered as belonging to it?

These are the interactions and dynamics that we propose to put at the heart of this colloquium by questioning them in the gender perspective.

The corpus studied will come from German-speaking countries or from the Franco-German field.
Proposals may fall into one of the following areas:

Area 1 - Equality in the margins? Utopia and reality

We are interested in the functioning of the avant-garde after 1945 from a sociological and political point of view: the place of women, gender relations, the discourse of the actors and actresses on that matter, the objectives in terms of gender equality within the artistic field, the organization of national and transnational networks, the presence in institutions. What are the successes, what are the failures? How do political and militant struggles (sexual revolution, fight for equality, for the right to have one's own body, etc.) and intellectual debates from 1968 to the present day interact with artistic practices and aesthetic reflections? What evolutions do we observe for women and men over the decades?

Area 2 - The aesthetics of the avant-garde for speaking about gender

We will question the impact of gender logics on the elaboration of aesthetics and on the singular reappropriation of avant-garde forms and processes by women artists: contributions of the affirmation of gendered identities, renewal of the representations of the masculine and the feminine, new figurations of the body, specificity of the supports and mediums to which one resorts, use of specific techniques and technologies? Do inter- or transmedia and multidisciplinary practices play a particular role in this context?
What are the artistic genres that best "speak about gender"? Do some arts resist these questions more than others or do they take them up according to different temporalities?

[4] François Noudelmann, *Avant-garde et modernité*, Paris, Hachette, 2000.

Area 3 - Filiations, canon and posterity

Recent research has shown that women artists who were known and recognized during their lifetime often disappeared in the course of history. We seek to question the gendered dimension of the historiography of the avant-garde produced after 1945 by artists, institutions and critics. Did women produce a different discourse than men on this issue? In which traditions are they inscribed, which filiations are drawn? How have women worked or not worked on their own posterity? Who writes the history of the avant-gardes and fixes a memory – a canon –, according to which logics of inclusion, exclusion, falsification, idealization, museification…? The reflection could be extended to other gender identities.

Area 4 – The gender of a contemporary avant-garde?

At a time when innovation has become mainstream, we can ask ourselves if the notion of the avant-garde has not become obsolete. How might one define margins and marginalities in a globalized world, sometimes perceived as devoid of center – because it is sewn with innumerable networks –, and designed according to numerous mobilities? Would gender be one of the markers of what could be a contemporary avant-garde, which would resonate with current societal issues or adopt exploratory forms to address these topics? How do the adopted modes of organization and diffusion (self-managed structures, digital networks, festivals…) contribute to this? Is there an encounter between gender issues and avant-garde practices in these places?

Proposals for papers in English, French, or German should include an abstract of approximately 500 words and a short bio-bibliography. They should be submitted to gender.avantgarde@gmail.com by January 31, 2023. Responses will be received by mid-March 2023. A publication is planned.

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