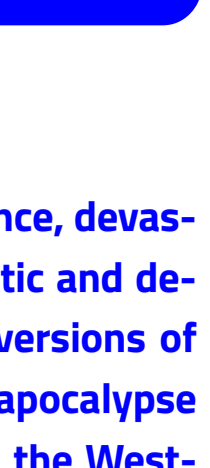


AVANT-GARDE AND THE END OF THE WORLD

10 – 12 October 2024
NOVA GORICA



In today's world, we bear witness to violence, devastation, and terror, conveyed through chaotic and destructive imagery that anticipates many versions of an apocalyptic event. The narrative of the apocalypse stands as one of the oldest archetypes in the Western culture, fostering diverse ideas and images about utopian or dystopian futures. However, the end of the world is a much more immediate experience – many worlds are constantly ending or have already ended through ongoing imperialisms and colonialisms.

By growing insensitive to comprehend “the end” we seem to be encountering troubles with navigating through the myriad of mutually conditioned, interwoven crises that affect our daily lives. Thus, it becomes imperative to recollect and revisit the historical initiatives, concepts and actions that sought to critically contemplate the world before its end, and more crucially – to transform it. While the 20th century was marked by numerous endings and failures, characterised by perpetual wartime instability and the nuclear threat, the avant-garde viewed the idea of an end as an opening for transformation or radical turn. Even today, the avant-garde still acts as an open and active project focused on (re)imagining a new vision of the world and articulating alternative societal structures, emphasising not only the moment of disruption, but also the significance of participatory, engaged and relational practices.

By considering the aesthetic, political, intellectual, and cultural contributions of the avant-garde, the conference will seek to address questions such as: What are the meanings of “the end” in the context of avant-garde? What roles can avant-garde play in facing contemporary crises? What insights can be gained from the artistic practices and collective actions of avant-garde groups from disparate corners of the world? Can avant-garde practices help in envisioning an end to the neoliberal, capitalistic world and the injustices perpetuated by its ideological, political and economic structures? How do avant-garde strategies teach us to build futures to fight for, and imaginaries to move towards?

The *Avant-Garde and the End of the World* conference aims to (re)ignite the will for (co)creating a radical vision of the new world by discussing the role of avant-garde art, literature, and activism in facing the present struggles. Through connecting the past and contemporary artistic practices and revolutionary projects aimed at fostering “optimal projections,” we will explore the types of worlds that the avant-garde seeks to preserve or envision, as well as those it endeavours to dismantle.

The international scientific conference, accompanied by an artistic programme, commemorates the centenary of *The First Constructivist Exhibition* by the avant-garde artist Avgust Černigoj. His work made a key contribution to the understanding of socially engaged art and overcoming the boundary between life and art in the context of the European avant-garde.

AVANT-GARDE AND THE END OF THE WORLD

International Conference with Artistic Programme

Editors:

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PROGRAMME

10 October 2024

Xcenter

11.30–13.30: STREET INTERVENTION

CONSTRUCTIVIST A POEM

Constructivist workshop with Mateja Kralj, Simon Kastelic, and Rafael Vončina

Xcenter

16.00–18.00: NEW MEDIA ART INSTALLATION *VEDUTA CRUMBLES I*

Ana Pepelnik, Lina Rica, and Miha Šajina – Shekuza

Kromberk Castle

19.00: INAUGURAL OPENING OF THE CONFERENCE

Moderated by Polona Torkar

(This event will be in Slovenian language.)

Opening Speeches: Vladimir Peruničič, Director of the Goriški muzej; mag. Marko Rusjan, State Secretary at the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Slovenia; dr. Boštjan Golob, Rector of the University of Nova Gorica; dr. Oto Luthar, Director of the Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts (ZRC SAZU) and Head of the Research Programme “Historical Interpretations of the 20th Century;” and dr. Lev Kreft, Sophia Publishing House

Opening Keynote by Peter Krečič alongside the works of Avgust Černigoj as part of the Goriški muzej exhibition: *Avgust Černigoj and the Foundation of Slovenian Historical Avant-Garde*

11 October 2024

The Slovene National Theatre Nova Gorica

10.00–18.15: SCIENTIFIC CONFERENCE

10.00–11.30 : Revolutionary Time (chair: Lev Kreft)

Sanja Bojanič: *Endings and Continuities: Avant-Garde and Meaning-Making*

Joseph Grim Feinberg: *The Folk Is Dead, Long Live the People! On the New and the Old in Czech Marxist Poetism*

Ivana Peruško: *The Apocalypse of Avant-Garde Time: Bolshevism vs. Futurism*

11.45–13.15 : Prophetic Visions (chair: Kristina Pranjic)

Antonio Milovina: *The Decline of Atlantis and the Rise of the East: The “Revival in Flames” in A. N. Tolstoy’s Aelita*

Vid Bešter: *The Prophet Without God*

Miroslav Griško: *Total Art of the True Anti-Demiurgic Spearhead*

15.00–16.30 : Imagination amidst the Apocalypse (chair: Peter Purg)

Lev Kreft: *Variations of the End of the World*

Tery Zezelj: *Bogdanka Poznanovič, Katalin Ladik, and Milica Mrđa on the Shorelines: Aqueous Imaginaries to End this World*

Tatjana Petzer: *Eschaton, or Harmony. Bohdan-Ihor Antonych’s Green Poetry*

16.45–18.15 : Final Transformations (chair: Ivana Peruško)

Tomaž Toporišič: *Kosvel’s Diaries “Through the Nothingness of Negativism to the True Constructive Path.”*

Tijana Koprivica: *The Last Word at the End of the World: Lie and Suicide in Ravstka Petrovič’s Otkrojenje (1922)*

Lela Angela Mršek Bajda: *Neue Slowenische Kunst and the End of the World*

Bevk Square

20.00: THEATRE PERFORMANCE

EVACUATION OF THE SPIRIT, xMobil (GO! 2025)

Directed by Aljoša Živadinov Zupančič

(This event will be in Slovenian language.)

12 October 2024

Xcenter

10.00–17.00: SCIENTIFIC CONFERENCE

10.00–11.30 : Subversive Interventions

(chair: Joseph Grim Feinberg)

Giorgja Maurovich: *Terrorism as One of the Fine Arts*

Primož Krašovec: *Real Subsumption of Intelligence*

Francesco Scarel: *Serendipity: A New Perspective for Artistic Avant-Garde*

11.45–13.15 : Beyond the End (chair: Tatjana Petzer)

Lana Zdravković: *After All: The End or a New Beginning?*

Emilija Vučičević: *Stuck in the Form(at): The Image of Angelus Novus in the Poetry Book *Ictus* by Bojan Vasič*

Dragan Živadinov: *THIRD ITERATION: 1995 – 2025 – 2045*

15.00–16.00: CLOSING KEYNOTE

Tania Ørum: *To be Continued.*

16.15–17.00: ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION:

Kristina Pranjic, Peter Purg, Tery Zezelj

Mostovna

19.30: NEW MEDIA ART PERFORMANCE

VEDUTA CRUMBLES II

Blaž Božič, Farah Sara Kurnik – Liara T’soni, and Aleš Hieng – Zergon

Mostovna

21.00: CONCERT SULLA LINGUA (AUS/ITA)

Anthony Pateras, Stefano Pilia, and Riccardo La Foresta (organised by Sajeta Music Festival)

ACCOMPANYING RADIO PROGRAMME BY RADIO ŠTUDENT

6. 10. at 20.00: Literarni incest

Confrontation of Apocalyptic Avant-garde

Poetry (Srečko Kosovel) with Actual Apocalypse in the Field, Matjaž Zorec

13. 10. at 20.00: Objekt meseca

Avgust Černigoj: An Unconventional Figure from Trieste, Andrea Zabrc

14. 10. at 20.00: Teritorij teatra

Slovenian Theatrical Avant-garde, Metod Zupan

16. 10. at 13.15: Kulturni obzornik

Report from the Conference Avant-garde and the End of the World, Editorial Department for Culture

20. 10. at 20.00 Radio Experiment

Blaž Šef

21. 10. at 20.00: Temna zvezda

Interview with Matevž Jerman and Jurij Meden, authors of the film *Was There Anything Avant-garde (on the history of avant-garde/experimental film in Slovenia)*, Oskar Ban Brejc

27. 10. at 20.00: Repetitio

Medieval Eschatology, Tadej Pavkovič

CENTENARY OF THE FIRST CONSTRUCTIVIST EXHIBITION OF AVGUST ČERNIGOJ

Avgust Černigoj

Katarina Brešan, curator, Goriški muzej

The Goriški muzej’s collection includes works from various periods of Avgust Černigoj’s activity. The eclectic, avant-garde artist from Trieste, who made a living in a variety of occupations throughout his long life (painting, ship decoration, art teaching, illustration, design, stage design, costume design, interior decoration) was constantly intensively creative. He tried his hand at many styles, from an early, Secessionism form, which moved into Expressionism, then took on traces of Futurism, Cubism, became Constructivist, moved from Realism to Abstraction, and then back to cubic design again. The artist embraced a wide range of techniques and interconnected a variety of materials in his oeuvre. He was a unique personality, cosmopolitan, sarcastic, witty, socially and politically engaged. His constructivist period in the mid-1920s represents the peak of his work. Disappointed with his studies at the Munich Academy, which were too conservative for him, he went to Weimar, to the famous international Bauhaus school, where he was the only Slovene to experience the avant-garde atmosphere and became enthusiastic about Constructivism. In 1924, he organised the first exhibition of this kind in Ljubljana, and also collaborated with the poet Srečko Kosovel and director Ferdo Delak on the avant-garde magazine *Tank*. However, the environment in Ljubljana was too tight for his charismatic personality and socialist ideas, so he had to return to Trieste, which was more receptive to innovation. In his home town, he continued to develop Constructivism, which culminated in 1927, when Černigoj and other artists created the *Constructivist Art Ambience*. He educated and influenced several generations of artists who, in his spirit, continued, with their individual works, to develop new directions and expressions in the visual arts.

OPENING KEYNOTE

Avgust Černigoj and the Foundation of Slovenian Historical Avant-Garde

prof. dr. Peter Krečič

In 2024 we celebrate the centenary of *The First Constructivist Exhibition* in the gym hall of Ljubljana Technical School. Its author was 26 years old Avgust Černigoj who came to Ljubljana some months earlier directly from Weimar Bauhaus School where he had spent just one semester. He exhibited sculptures, Tatlin “counter reliefs”, architectural models, the motorcycle, some machine parts, the overalls of an American worker and posted revolutionary manifestos. His art’s revolutionary message which drew its basic elements from contemporary Russian artistic movements created curiosity among the young left-oriented intellectuals. In July 1925 he exhibited once more in the Jakopič Pavilion in Ljubljana. With this exhibition he aimed to present, in didactical terms, the constructivist way towards the new art. In autumn 1925 he was forced to leave Ljubljana because a certain communist newspaper was found in his mail. Back in Trieste he tried to found a school taking the Bauhaus as a reference point and got cofounders among young artists like Girgio Carmelich and Emilio Mario Dolfi. Nothing came from the school, instead Černigoj’s studio in Via della Fornace became a meeting place for some Slovenian and Italian artists. These formed a nucleus which took part in 1927 at the Mostra Sindacale and the Circolo Artistico under the heading of the Gruppo Costruttivista di Trieste which produced the complete *Art Ambience* furnished with the constructivist paintings, architectural projects and sculptures. Some of them were so-called mobiles that rotated in space. The exhibition represents the artistic summit of the Slovenian constructivist movement. The last chapter of the movement happened in Berlin in 1928 at the 50th anniversary of Herwarth Walden, the editor of the magazine *Der Sturm*. Ferdo Delak the editor of *Tank*, Slovenian avant-garde review and Milan Kosič, the actor, presented the activities of the Slovenian avant-garde what was, with the cooperation of the critic Heinz Lüdecke, published in *Der Sturm* in January 1929.

AVANT-GARDE AND THE END OF THE WORLD: THE INTERNATIONAL SCIENTIFIC CONFERENCE

REVOLUTIONARY TIME

Chair: prof. dr. Lev Kreft (University of Ljubljana)

Endings and Continuities:

Avant-Garde and Meaning-Making

prof. dr. Sanja Bojančič (University of Rijeka)

"Why all these signs around us that make me doubt language and submerge me in meanings..." Jean-Luc Godard, *Two or Three Things I Know About Her* (1967)

In November 1959, Mark Rothko presented his recipe for a work of art at the Pratt Institute in New York, attempting to distil its essential formula. This presentation delves into the intricate relationship between the avant-garde art and the process of meaning-making, highlighting the dynamic interplay between endings and continuities. It examines how the avant-garde practices introduce disruptions of meaning, transforming traditional forms and conventions. The presentation investigates the enduring elements central to avant-garde practice – innovation, experimentation, critical engagement, challenges to conventional perceptions – and explores whether these elements create new meanings or play with endings as formal and technical devices.

The Folk Is Dead, Long Live the People! On the New and the Old in Czech Marxist Poetism

Dr. Joseph Grim Feinberg (Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic)

In this paper I will explore the avant-garde's approach to popular culture and tradition, through the example of the Czech "poetist" movement, as conceptualized by critic and typographer Karel Teige, by poet Vítězslav Nezval, and by literary historian Bedřich Václavek. The Czech avant-garde, like most of its international counterparts, was convinced that institutions like art and literature had outlived their historical function, as had capitalist society and the bourgeois understanding of "the nation" and "the people." But their work also illustrates how the wholesale rejection of these institutions and concepts overlay a more complex view of cultural legacy and the traditions of the working masses. While the Czech poetist movement had no need for literature and believed that rural folklore was a thing of the past, it saw "poetry" as an essential aspect of human expression, which needed to be liberated from earlier constraints, becoming a new art of the people. Nezval demonstratively drew on "low" genres, writing gothic novels and imagining surreal carnivals. Teige championed the circus and urban street culture as a "new folk art." And Václavek traced the circulation of modern poetry and songs, making the case that new folklore was continually emerging as the culture of the emerging classes which would replace the old. This complex interplay of new and old, I argue, offers a model for the prefiguration of a new world that still might survive the end of this one.

The Apocalypse of Avant-Garde Time:

Bolshevism vs. Futurism

assoc. prof. dr. Ivana Peruško (University of Zagreb)

In 1918, Vasily Rozanov, a prominent and controversial Russian philosopher and writer, wrote *The Apocalypse of Our Time* (the full version was published in 2000). This work chronicled the chaos and destruction of old Russia, notably introducing the phrase "iron curtain" in its historical context: "An iron curtain is being lowered, creaking and squeaking, at the end of Russian history."

The early Soviet era witnessed the marginalization of influential Russian modernist pre-revolutionary writers and thinkers, including L. Andreev, I. Bunin, S. Bulgakov, N. Berdyayev, N. Gumilev, V. Rozanov, A. Remizov, and others. These figures faced official criticism for their perceived "bourgeois individualism" (Lenin, 1905) and lack of revolutionary spirit. Concurrently, Russian Futurists such as V. Mayakovsky, V. Kruchenykh and O. Brik adapted their avant-garde poetics to align with Bolshevik revolutionary ideology, exemplified by Mayakovsky's Kom-Fut organization.

Paradoxically, while the early Soviet avant-garde presented itself as a revolutionary political and aesthetic movement, Bolsheviks maintained a dismissive attitude towards Futurists and the LEF group. In Literature and Revolution L. Trotsky asserted that "futurism is no less a product of the poetic past." This disconnect suggests divergent interpretations of "revolution" and "revolutionary" between Bolsheviks and Futurists. Boris Groys emphasizes that the October Revolution was more traditional than the avant-garde aesthetics, positioning the avant-garde as counter-revolutionary art.

This paper aims to examine the factors contributing to the brief flourishing of avant-garde in post-revolutionary Russia. Furthermore, it seeks to demonstrate that Rozanov's apocalyptic vision of old Russia encompassed not only societal transformation but also the demise of avant-garde poetics.

PROPHETIC VISIONS

Chair: assoc. prof. dr. Kristina Praničič (University of Nova Gorica)

The Decline of Atlantis and the Rise of the East: The "Revival in Flames" in A. N. Tolstoy's *Aelita*

assist. Antonio Milovina, MA (University of Zagreb)

In the early Soviet period, science fiction was a very flexible genre, whose authors experimented with various thought-provoking cultural concepts. This can be said about A. N. Tolstoy's novel *Aelita*, initially published in 1923 with the subtitle *The Decline of Mars*. The novel undoubtedly belongs to the very top of the Soviet SF-canon, although it achieved such fame only after the author redacted it to fit the official literary dogma. Before that, the early version provided a base for Y. Protazanov's influential 1924 avant-garde adaptation of the novel. Tolstoy's multi-layered modernist work concealed commentary on the contemporary socio-political situation in Europe and Russia – "a non-political apologetics of Russia", as E. Tolstava (2012) writes. The ideological background of the novel revolves around the ideas of "Skiftstvo" and "Smenovekhovstvo" movements. The idea of new "hot blood" from the East, from newly-formed Soviet Russia, which was meant to revive the declining Western civilization, is embodied in the novel's mystical and occult story about the revival of "softened" Martian civilization, following the apocalypse of Atlantis. The same motif is then reintroduced in a typical SF-adventure plot where "hot-blooded" Soviet space travellers try to revitalize the dying planet – in the crucible of Mars' revolution. The aim of this contribution is to put the novel's narrative pattern of "civilization's apocalyptic revival" in the context of recurring mythologemes and ideologemes of European and Russian culture – the decline of Atlantis and "the purification from the East." The same concepts will further be actualized by placing them in the context of modern-day European geopolitical dynamics.

The Prophet Without God

Vid Bešter

The end of the world (as we know it) has been proverbially unthinkable at least since the declaration of the end of history. Our exhausted world insists on enduring unchanged and unchangeable and we wait in vain for a revelation of a new world and new humanity.

The book of Ecclesiastes reports on such a world. Its author, Ecclesiastes, does not hear the voice of God and therefore lives in a mute and exhausted world. For him, too, traditional genres and wisdoms are "less understandable than hieroglyphics." In response, he developed his own rhetorical strategy of radical reductionism despite his indisputable literary ability, which seemed so dangerous to a later editor that they felt obliged to write warnings and instructions to the future reader he is not possessed of the visionary enthusiasm of the apocalyptic writers. Ecclesiastes writes only about what his senses reach, what his hands touch, and what his heart feels. He is pessimistic, and yet he sets himself to an arduous task of prying open the jaws of the barren world; squeezing out of it the law of nature, the law of time, and the law of human life.

In my paper, I will reflect on the subversive potentials and the risks of Ecclesiastes' reductionist rhetorical strategy. I will proceed from the anachronistic assumption of kinship; the feeling that, like Ecclesiastes, we too are condemned to a world that no longer serves us, and a new one has not yet been revealed to us.

Total Art of the True Anti-Demiurgic Spearhead

dr. Miroslav Griško

Demiurges are to be dethroned and killed because they are lesser, counterfeit Gods. But the motive behind their liquidation can be equally counterfeit. In *The Total Art of Stalinism*, Boris Groys describes the Soviet avant-garde artist as a gnostic/demiurgic force committed to world death and new world creation – and if Groys's use of gnostic language is not just an analogy, aesthetics lies at the core of a deeper reality, driven by an ongoing esoteric war. The gnostic is at war with the demiurge because the demiurge creates a world of only evil and suffering. But to destroy this world and then create a new world requires a force equivalent to the force with which a demiurge brings a world to life (the gnostic must become demiurge). If avant-garde artistic practice is not analogous to gnostic concepts, but the actual vanguard/spearhead for world annihilation and creation, aesthetics is located at the heart of the world. Yet to annihilate the world through aesthetics directed against evil and suffering negates the sense in which evil and suffering are integral to aesthetics – and without which aesthetics loses its full force. The vision of an esoteric war with aesthetics at its centre does not contrast an ontologically total art with its opposite – the trivialization of aesthetics in relation to the most fundamental level of what exists – but understands everything as a war between enemy aesthetics. There is a reason to hate and annihilate the world that has nothing to do with evil and suffering.

IMAGINATION AMIDST THE APOCALYPSE

Chair: assoc. prof. dr. Peter Purg (University of Nova Gorica)

Variations of the End of the World

prof. dr. Lev Kreft (University of Ljubljana)

The avant-garde's approach to the end of the world starts from duality of meaning of the "end", when something dies, or, when something reaches its perfection. First, this paper will sketch a path from Kant to Fedorov. Furthermore, a grid table of different approaches to the end of the world will be constructed. The basic structure of narration about the end of the world is A – B – A. This kind of totemope brings time into the garden of Eden, then falls into earthly pains, and expects that the promise of salvation will be fulfilled together with the end of the world. Christian doctrine does not value this world very much. It is just the entrance into a better world through the gates which will open when this world perishes. Most versions of the end of the world do not accept this approach because they see it as a catastrophe, but it is telling that Augustine and Russian avant-garde are both orthodox in this aspect: this world must come to complete and final end. Avant-garde has no programme for this destruction. It is what the existing world brings upon itself. Avant-garde is just reporting that the world is structured in a way which contains its progress towards auto-destruction. When this auto-destructive force endures life, avant-garde enters everyday life to fight for its continuity. When this auto-destructive force survives another of its final crisis, avant-garde re-enters the realm of art to present its aesthetic power of free play, dolce far niente, disinterestedness, and the right to dream.

Bogdanka Poznanovič, Katalin Ladik, and Milica Mrđa on the Shorelines: Aqueous Imaginaries to End this World

Assist. Tery Željčič, MA (University of Nova Gorica)

In the book *Bodies of Water: Posthuman Feminist Phenomenology* (2017), Astrida Neimanis emphasizes the inseparable link between feminism and posthumanism. She highlights the intricate relationship between our perception of water and the current water crises. She calls for a reimagining of our bodies as a way to rethink our relationship with water, stating that "changing how we think about bodies means changing how we think about water" (p. 19). Building on this notion of intervening in our conceptual frameworks in order to change the way we live with the world, this contribution seeks to intertwine three performances by three female authors who are, all through different strategies, engaging with water.

Bogdanka Poznanovič (1930–2013), Katalin Ladik (1942–), and Milica Mrđa (1960–2021) are three most prominent female performance artists from Vojvodina who worked in the period of socialist Yugoslavia. While, as Miško Šuvakovič writes in the book *Konceptualna umetnost* (2007), their artistic practices align with various artistic pigments: neo-avant-garde, post-avant-garde, or post-historical (p. 259), they can all be found on the peripheries of art history, cultivating feminist and environmental imaginaries rooted in their distinct cosmologies. By delving into their engagements with water, unravelling the aqueous imaginaries they crafted, this research aspires to contemplate how their narratives can show us a path away from the world that is steeped in extractivist logic.

Eschaton, or Harmony.

Bohdan-Ihor Antonych's Green Poetry

prof. dr. Tatjana Petzer (University of Graz)

In the 1920s, Ukrainian modernism reached its peak with the architectural avant-garde movements in the urban centres of Kharkiv and Kyiv. This cultural upswing was silenced by Stalinist repression in the 1930s. However, the artistic milieu of interwar Lviv – a city at the crossroads of Polish, Jewish, Ruthenian, Ukrainian, and Austro-Hungarian histories – provided the breeding ground for the continuation of the aesthetic renewal of Ukrainian literature. Against this background, this paper will shed light on the aesthetics of Bohdan-Ihor Antonych (1909–1937), who, originally from the Galician Lemko Region in the Carpathian Mountains and the son of a Greek-Catholic parish priest, came to Lwów/Lviv to study Polish philology and became an influential Ukrainian poet. Soon after his debut as a poet, Antonych started a poetic exploration of religious themes in *Velyka harmonia* (The Grand Harmony), which, however, was not meant for publication. He turned to the apocalyptic code of modernist poetry shortly before his early death. The collections *Zelena Ievanheliia* (*Green Evangelium*) and *Rotatsii* (*Rotations*), including the poem "Kineč' svitu" "The End of the World", were posthumously published in 1938, the year before the Soviet occupiers of Eastern Galicia plunged the poet into oblivion. In contrast to the avant-garde's destructive character, Antonych's rhythmic verses were less experimental in form but unusual in their thought-provoking imagery, approaching both material objectives and metaphysical topics. In my reading, Antonych's critical perspectives on unnatural urbanism will be juxtaposed with his affirmation of green environments, and his pagan mythopoeitics with the biblical eschaton.

FINAL TRANSFORMATIONS

Chair: assoc. prof. dr. Ivana Peruško (University of Zagreb)

Kosovel's Diaries "Through the Nothingness of Negativism to the True Constructive Path."

prof. dr. Tomaž Torporičič (University of Ljubljana)

The presentation focuses on Srečko Kosovel and his need to speak in a new, non-classical way about the paradoxes of the contemporary world and the modern experience of it. His work addresses an acute crisis of the subject and of civilization, encapsulated in his famous statement: "We will have to go through the nothingness of negativism to get to the true constructive path." (*Collected Works III: 700*) Kosovel's texts can be considered "a pebble that acted provocatively, revolutionarily, non-academically, subversively, and groundbreakingly." (Janez Vrečko)

We will concentrate on the phenomenon of his diaries, juxtaposing them with the diary entries of his contemporary, the founder of Italian futurism, F. T. Marinetti. Their diaries cover one of the most dramatic moments of the twentieth century, encompassing the experience of the Great War in Italy and Slovenia. It is highly interesting to compare this period with the one we are living in, a hundred years later, in the same region of Europe that has undergone significant changes. Using some examples, we will demonstrate how Kosovel's diaries produce one of the most remarkable perspectives on the cultural and political history of the twentieth century's first decades, reflecting in a specific way the first decades of our century. Kosovel's diaries thus represent an unexplored segment of 20th-century diaries, captivating the contemporary reader with an unusual but appealing mixture of literary tactics, whereby the diary transcends being merely a document to belong increasingly to fiction as well as reality.

The Last Word at the End of the World: Lie and Suicide in Rastko Petrovič's *Otkrovenje* (1922)

Tijana Koprivica, MA (University of Vienna)

Published in 1922, *Otkrovenje* (*Revelation*) is the sole completed poetry collection by Rastko Petrovič. Its title explicitly alludes to one of Christianity's central texts, *The Book of Revelation* – here reinterpreted through a distinctly avant-garde perspective, thereby reframing the narrative of the end of the world in the context of poetic and, more generally, artistic creation. For this reason, this contribution will delve into various aesthetic aspects of the book, specifically into those connected to the representations of the act of suicide as an ultimate liberation of both body and spirit. Moreover, the concept of a lie as a spiritual creation, as Petrovič puts it, will be put under scrutiny in this paper. Through this lens, the analysis aims to explore the complex interplay between the notions of life, death, and artistic expression in Petrovič's work, providing insights into the broader avant-garde apocalyptic experience and its implications for poetic and artistic endeavours.

Neue Slowenische Kunst and the End of the World

dr. Lela Angela Mršček Bajda

When we see the complex of interacting avant-garde practices of Neue Slowenische Kunst (NSK) in the spiritual-aesthetic connection of the art collectives Laibach, Irwin and Scipion Nasice Sisters > Theater Red Pilot Cosmokinetic Theater > Noordung Cosmokinetic Cabinet > Dragan Živadinov & Dunja Zupančič, several artistic articulations of envisioning an end to the neoliberal, capitalistic world and the injustices perpetuated by its ideological, political and economic structures emerge. The most concrete, but multifaceted, is Živadinov's theatre performance *Odilo. Obscuratio. Oratorio*. It symbolically puts an end to: a society based on a system of economic exploitation, with regard to capitalism, as accelerated by Nazism; the ideological search for the Truly Harmful Man, identified in the Grand Narrative of the persistent polarization of East and West by Eda Čufer (Irwin); absolutism of ontological nihilism in relation to the philosophy of Peter Mikar (individual unit in NSK). Parallel to this, we can observe two processes in NSK, at the core of which is the question of the end of the specific avant-garde as a cultural phenomenon: Laibach realizes its ultimate goal to define all human attitudes with an aesthetic vision, by abstracting eternity into a universal moment, which enables cosmogony, in which everything present is until-end and permanently just-before-end simultaneously and therefore the end of the World is postponed; Irwin, by the energy sculpture *State in Time* NSK, which as an existence is almost as much as the lives of the artists who create it, creates a tension between the finitude of its material conditions and the infinity of thinking about it – the latter transcends the lives of the artists from Irwin, and aims at the end of social antagonisms and existential traumas.

SUBVERSIVE INTERVENTIONS

Chair: dr. Joseph Grim Feinberg (Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic)

Terrorism as One of the Fine Arts

Giorgia Maurovich, MA (University of Bologna)

The juxtaposition of terrorism and avant-garde art is not recent. Both terrorism and contemporary art studies have pointed to numerous parallels between the two phenomena, whether one examines the artistic avant-gardes of the early twentieth century or more recent events such as 9/11 or the Abu Ghraib scandal. Scholars such as Schechner have emphasized the performative and theatrical dimension of the terrorist act, performativity that has a very strong political significance, while Perniola devotes a text to the rhetorical and aesthetic analysis of terror. This paper aims to elaborate and support this thesis by showing how the reception and interpretation of a terrorist act does not differ from the reception of a text. Through the teaching of Žižek, Sklovsky, and Rancière, it is indeed possible to read art and terrorism as an act capable of making visible the invisible violence of the status quo and the social forces inherent in the system. Terrorism and the avant-garde arise and see their acceleration in conjunction with the emergence of mass society and the new media of communication, which are used to seek out and shock an ever-widening audience. Aestheticized violence serves as an antidote to the anesthetized vision of the everyday, while the destructive impulse underlying the act has the function, in terrorism as in the avant-garde, of tracing the coordinates capable of returning, in the gap between work and reception, a lucid image of social conflicts and forces at work.

Real Subsumption of Intelligence

doc. dr. Primož Krašovec (University of Ljubljana)

In the deep history of intelligence, capital is the force that equates intelligence with speed and establishes speed as the filter of intelligence, while it is computer technology that makes it possible to increase speed up to its ultimate limit (the speed of light) on the basis of a machine architecture of materialised logic. This combination, characteristic of the 20th century, on the one hand completes capitalism as an economic form and, on the other hand, represents an escalation of reason to the point of total paranoia. In the 19th century, people act as character masks (Marx) or media (Klösen) of capital as domesticated (Camatte), but nevertheless as actual intelligences that complement the mindless monsters (Leroi-Gourhan) of the industrial revolution.

They add an element of perception and cognition to the capitalist technology without its own sensory organs and brain. Subsequent early AI can be called formal subsumption of intelligence, since it is a transfer of human intelligence to machine – the form of intelligence remains unchanged, only its medium changes. Deep learning AI in the 21st century, however, represent a real subsumption of intelligence, as intelligent machines are no longer replicas of human intelligence, but are developing their own, autonomous form of intelligence.

Autonomous machine intelligence at the same time signals the end of culture as culture industry. If both avant-garde art and critical theory critiqued diminished human experience in the face of the 20th century techno-media and affirmed affect and intuition as an alternative, this, today, is no longer the case.

Serendipity: A New Perspective for Artistic Avant-Garde
dr. Francesco Scarel (International School for Advanced Studies (SISSA – MCS) in Trieste, Liminal Research)

Scientific research stands at a crossroads, capable of harming and preserving our planet. As scientific predictions become crucial tactics against climate change, society's role in guiding research direction is paramount. Post-WWII, the relationship between science and society shifted dramatically. The ivory tower crumbled, giving way to "post-academic" science, where decisions are made in partnership with various social entities.

This new era necessitates dense communication networks between scientists and non-expert audiences, and art assumes a vital role in this complex landscape. No longer a mere observer, art actively participates in the science-society dialogue, contextualising scientific advancements within broader ethical frameworks and fostering innovative communication methods.

A society equipped with cultural tools to engage with scientific discoveries is better prepared to navigate the Anthropocene's challenges. Art-science collaborations play a pivotal role in this process. Moreover, bringing artists and scientists into a shared space sparks serendipitous discoveries, a fertile ground for new questions and paradigms to emerge. In this way, art can reclaim its position at the forefront of societal progress, not just as a commentator, but as a co-creator of our future.

BEYOND THE END

Chair: prof. dr. Tatjana Petzer (University of Graz)

After All: The End or a New Beginning?

dr. Lana Zdravkovič (Peace Institute)

The paper thematizes the specific modality of the end, manifested as a pervasive sense of the constant, immediate and real threat of total destruction of the planet, global conflict and the extinction of the human species (viruses and pandemics and natural disasters, the nuclear threat, the threat of artificial intelligence). The topic is introduced by presenting the most important and up-to-date eschatological theorisations of radical political-philosophical thought, especially of the left-wing, post-Marxist province: W. Benjamin, J. Taubes, G. Agamben, S. Žižek, and A. Badiou, who derive their political theology from St. Paul. The aim of the paper is to show how, in a situation where the emancipatory potential of concepts that could offer a construction of a political continuation in the time of the end has been exhausted, the most radical political thinkers move into an ephemeral beyond-political realm, where political hope is built on theological concepts. It also offers a reflection on what political dynamics, implications and consequences such theorisations can establish and how they can help us to think through the present time of the end. In the concluding section, it argues that the end can only be avoided if we posit the political emancipatory potential theologically, that is, if we infuse it with theological notions of renunciation, self-control, and self-sacrifice. It means that in order to construct some possible continuation in the time of the end, it is crucial to find ways to exit from the economic logic that has become deeply embedded in all aspects of life.

Stuck in the Form(a): The Image of Angelus Novus in the Poetry Book *Ictus* by Bojan Vasič

Emilija Vučićević, MA (University of Nova Gorica)

The aim of this contribution is to shed light on the ways the piece *Angelus Novus* – painted by Paul Klee in 1920, and owned, interpreted and popularized by W. Benjamin – was integrated in the poetry book *Ictus* (2012), written by contemporary Serbian poet Bojan Vasič. *Ictus* was published during Vasič's involvement with the Caché group (Vasič, Šuškić, Korunović, Kotljarič, Tabasović), known for its collective creative practices and samizdat publications. By interpreting the composition of *Ictus* – structured around the image of Klee's *Angelus Novus* – as well as the ways in which the book challenges the conditions of production as a samizdat publication, with the help of Marxist theory and Benjamin's interpretation of *Angelus Novus* as presented in his *Theses on the Philosophy of History*, we will aim to show how historical avant-garde practices can be reconceptualised in contemporary poetry to create literature beyond the capitalist logic of production, while simultaneously questioning the idea of progress arising from poetic(al) revolution.

THIRD ITERATION:: 1995 – 2025 – 2045
Dragan Živadinov

We are on the brink of the third iteration of the fifty-year theatre performance *NOORDUNG:: 1995–2045*, which will take place on April 20, 2025, at 22.00.

In 1995, Dunja Zupančič and Dragan Živadinov, together with fourteen actors, premiered the theatre performance *NOORDUNG:: 1995 – 2045*. The central method of the performance, which enables its "mode of operation," is the ten-year interval between its iterations. The disappearance of the physicality of the actresses and actors allows for their techno-substitution.

In 2004, Miha Turšič joined Dunja Zupančič and Dragan Živadinov. They established themselves as post-gravitational artists. In the performance, seven actresses and seven actors play roles. If, during a ten-year interval, an actress or actor dies, they are replaced in their mise-en-scène by a remotely controlled techno-abstract. If an actress dies, her replica is replaced by a musical melody; if an actor dies, by rhythm. With each repetition, the original figurative form is substituted with techno-body-based abstraction. In the final act of the performance, Dragan Živadinov will carry fourteen techno-abstracts, artistic satellites (nbots), into equatorial orbit with a spacecraft. Each will install them at fourteen points around the planet Earth. Each umbil will contain three programme units of the actors: BIO:graphics, BIO:logic, and BIO:mechanics!

The first iteration of the performance was in 2005 at the Yuri Gagarin Space Center's hydro laboratory in Star City. The second iteration took place in 2015 at the Cultural Center of European Space Technologies (KSEVT) in Vitanje. The third iteration will be in 2025 at the Noordung Center in Vitanje.

In 2020, artist Aljoša Živadinov Zupančič, from a younger generation, joined the post-gravitational artists.

CLOSING KEYNOTE

To Be Continued.

prof. emer. dr. Tania Ørum (University of Copenhagen)

As the British philosopher Mark Fisher famously said, it is easier to imagine the end of the world than the end of capitalism. In the midst of climate crisis and innumerable wars, the end of the world seems dangerously close, as we are flooded by the apocalyptic images of popular culture, political disinformation and the simplistic "solutions" of right-wing movements.

In a less despairing sense, however, of course, do end: no author than the rising past forevers. The avant-garde movements have done their best to change the petrified structures of their societies. And artists today continue to struggle to imagine the better worlds. The earlier avant-gardes have inspired the later ones: in the 1960s, Denmark's avant-garde artists look to Benjamin for models of rebellion and tried to examine surreal as a "visual corpse" to draw lessons from, as the anarchic youth rebellion turned into the political struggles of the 1970s. The artistic networks and transnational collaborations of the avant-gardes remain an inspiration today.

I will present Danish artists who try to pick up and continue the avant-garde tradition today. Recently a group exhibition has been inspired by the counter-factual magazine *Tank*. One artist playfully imagines counterfactual scenes fusing youth culture with the labour movement to envisage a happier and more collaborative world. Yet others attempt to apply the avant-garde approaches to get closer to nature or turn words into a pharmacy.

AVANT-GARDE AND THE END OF THE WORLD ARTISTIC PROGRAMME

Constructing a Poem

**(Thursday, 10 October 2024, 11.30–13.30,
in front of Xcenter)**

The three-part constructivist workshop is mentored by Mateja Kralj, Simon Kastelic, and Rafael Vončina, with the participation of high school students from Nova Gorica and Sežana. It aims to engage the public to participate and co-create in various intermedial artistic activities and to honor the centenary of *The First Constructivist Exhibition* in the public space, on the square in front of Xcenter in Nova Gorica.

Under the guidance of Mateja Kralj, the lead of Kosovel's Room, the participants will create a construction-poem made of bricks.

Under the mentorship of academic painter Simon Kastelic, the participants will create a frottage collage work using ready-made matrix of relief surfaces in the urban environment.

Students and members of the Association Konstruktivist will read poems by Srečko Kosovel and other poets. The reading will be coordinated by academic actor Rafael Vončina and Mateja Kralj.

Evacuation of the Spirit

(Friday, 11 October 2024 at 20.00, Bevk Square)

The theatre performance *Evacuation of the Spirit* is based on the letters, poems and constructivist collages of the Karst-born poet, Srečko Kosovel. Through the text, which consists entirely of the poet's writings, we honour his time and, at the same time, we think and act in our own time. We manifest the conflicting fragments of an individual, who is not like some Leonardo da Vinci "standing like a statue of a man, unmoved by the ages." Da Vinci is a myth. But a human being is more than that, he is a dynamic being. In Kosovel, who remains hidden by a cobweb of history and a rather tactical concealment of one's private life (probably with the aim of keeping Poetry in the spotlight of historiography), we tried to recognize a human being, someone who could be our friend, comrade, brother; someone who, hundred years ago, yearned and suffered the same existential torments that we suffer now ... and not someone who was a transhistorical phenomenon, the collective story of our nation, a Myth; who not only loves, but also suffers. Through ten theatre scenes, we seek to understand Srečko Kosovel in order to understand his Myth. We are paying homage to Srečko Kosovel – the Human Being. Within the framework of the Avant-garde and the end of the World conference and the programme of the European Capital of Culture Nova Gorica – Gorizia, the actors' bodies will move through the space of Nova Gorica's Bevk Square on the solar energy of the sci-art platform xMobil.

Srečko Kosovel: Julita Kropec
Srečko Kosovel: Maks Dakskobler
Srečko Kosovel: Nika Korenjak
Srečko Kosovel: Peter Frankl
Srečko Kosovel: Jure Žavbi
Director: Aljoša Živadinov Zupančič
Scenography: Dunja Zupančič
Costumes: Claudi Sovre
Dramaturgy: Helena Šukljan
Sound design: Ana Jerina
Light design: Janez Kocjan

*The project is included in the official programme GO! 2025
European Capital of Culture Nova Gorica – Gorizia.*

Veduta Crumbles I & II

**(Thursday, 10 October 2024 at 16.00, Xcenter & Saturday,
12 October 2024 at 19.30, Mostovna)**

Through two conceptually complementary new media works, *Veduta Crumbles* narrate and explore intimate and collective localised stories of individuals facing the phenomena of ageing, the disappearances of public spaces, the fragmentation of memory, the loss of meaningful, symbolic and social sites of value, freedom and the desire to integrate into social structures. Both works are based on poetry: the first on the poem "V drevo" by the award-winning poet Ana Pepelnik, which – conceived in a circular way – thematises the continuous circular loop of personal entrapment in reflections on the increasing alienation and the impossibility of establishing or maintaining interpersonal contacts in the light of the limitations arising from words and meanings in the midst of confronting personal transience, the shrinking of social circles, the confrontation with the phenomena of prolonged ageing and the prospect of gradual decline and isolation. The second work takes as its basis the award-winning poetry collection by Blaž Božič, *Mleček, žbunje: grobovi v njem*, through the poetics of which we are confronted with images of Ljubljana that constitute a refuge for those who do not recognise and find themselves in the illuminated gentrified parts of the city and continue resisting the effects of "liquid modernity."

The Veduta Crumbles I & II are two new media interweavings of twice x three contemporary artists: Ana Pepelnik (voice), Miha Šajina – Shekuza (sound), Lina Rica (visualisations/video), Blaž Božič (voice), Aleš Hieng – Zergon (sound), and Farah Sara Kurnik – Liara T'Soni (visualisations/video).

The project Veduta Crumbles is supported by the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Slovenia and the City of Ljubljana's Department for Culture.

Sulla Lingua

(Saturday, 12 October 2024 at 21.00, Mostovna)

Riccardo La Foresta: drums/drummophone
Anthony Pateras: electronics
Stefano Pilia: baritone guitar

Sulla Lingua is the world's only Australian-Italian electro-acoustic noise rock trio, featuring Anthony Pateras (tētēma/PIVIXKI) on electronics, Stefano Pilia (Zu, Rokia Traoré, Massimo Volume) on guitar and Riccardo La Foresta on drums and his own creation, the Drummophone. Sulla Lingua in Italian means "on the tongue" or "on language," which summarises the band's high/lo aesthetics – they could be referring to Roland Barthes or saluting Gene Simmons, but they still haven't decided. Both seem fitting to their trance-y harmonics and heavy grooves mixed with psychoacoustic electronics and cinematic textures. Their debut album ON recalls the radical, contradictory first statements of music nerds' past. It proposes an invention, challenging yet weirdly catchy, as an energised salve for messed-up times. It recalls slowly moshing at a musique concrète diffusion, or perhaps being lost deep in thought at some kind of sludge rock fest. Mixed by Timothy Lewis (Thighpaulsandra, Coil, Spiritualized), mastered by James Plotkin (Scorn, Khanate, Phantomsmasher) and released on Improved Sequence, it sounds huge: thick, tight and immense.

www.anthonypateras.com/news/new-band-sulla-lingua

The concert is organized in cooperation with the SAJETA international music festival and the FOCUS project of the Association Mink Tolmin.

CREDITS

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Conference board: **Kristina Pranjic, Peter Purg, Tery Žeželj, Lev Kreft**

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LOCATIONS

The Slovene National Theatre Nova Gorica

Trg Edvarda Kardelja 5
5000 Nova Gorica

Xcenter

Delpinova 20
5000 Nova Gorica

Goriški muzej

– **Kromberk Castle**
Grajska cesta 1
5000 Nova Gorica

Bevk Square

/ **Bevkov trg**
5000 Nova Gorica

Mostovna

Cesta IX. Korpusa 99A
5250 Solkan

