

Description for the general public

The project aims to capture one of the most important features of avant-garde art: its performative potential that manifests itself in rejecting the traditional definition of a work of art as materially existing artifact and replacing it with the idea of "manifestations". Experimental art of the beginning of the century should not be studied only as an aesthetic laboratory or a battleground for new topics or means of artistic expression. With this proposal we would like to draw attention to the artistic potential of public events (poetry-concerts, futuristic evenings, readings, lectures, polemics) and to a very strong need to create a specific image, both in theoretical considerations on the avant-garde as a brand (W. Strzemiński) and the practices of life of individual artists (Witkacy, Bruno Jasiński, Tadeusz Peiper).

Project's formula refers to the famous book *Style zachowań romantycznych* edited by Maria Janion and Marta Zielinska. Just like the volume's contributors, we would like to read the avant-garde as a social phenomenon, which has managed to develop its own artistic mythology and re-evaluate the relationship between the creator and the audience. The starting point for our project is then searching for romantic roots of avant-garde's revolutionary ideas concerning artist's obligations. By joining a potent in recent years orientation which interprets romanticism as a beginning of modernity, we will show the problematic relationship between avant-garde's and romantic anthropological projects. Then we will create a theoretical model in which we shall present three most important avant-garde styles of behavior: the apostle, the builder and the provocateur. They all form a kind of framework for specific diagnoses on the social and artistic roles, strategies of self-presentation (and self-creation) and biographical myths adopted by the creators and preserved by their followers.

While defining the avant-garde figure of the apostle we refer primarily to the expressionistic (and derived from the romanticism) messianic-revelatory attitude. We seek its representatives among the members of "Zdrój". This attitude can be also combined with demiurgic aspirations of Polish constructivists (especially in first Julian Przyboś's volumes) or the phenomenon of artist as a madman (e.g. Yeży Yankowski).

During the examination of the constructor-figure we would trace its development from the idea of "builder of words" present in the twenties to the myth of a collective consciousness organizer and a revolutionary ideologue. Constructing does not refer only to the postulates of functionalism, but it can also be traced in the attempts of forming an intellectual biography (A. Wat, B. Jasiński), as well as designing your own life as a work of art (Witkacy).

The last of the analyzed figures in our project – the provocateur – seems to be strongly rooted in Western Dadaism and Russian cubo- and egofuturism. We would like to pay attention to its revolutionary and rebellious aspects. The provocateur thus becomes a quintessence of avant-garde's project: he manifests his discord to the world and embodies the idea of continual progress.

In our project we would like to research the socio-cultural heritage of the avant-gardes for several reasons. First of all, it allows us to exceed a still powerful paradigm of studying the avant-garde aesthetics. The project therefore aims to restore microhistories of avant-garde groups and their influence on the transformation of the literary audience's sensibility.

Aesthetic shock, caused by a shift towards *Lebenspraxis* and performative art, that moved art from the domain of letters into the world of the living word, gesture, often iconoclastic show, turned out to be because one of the main components of art in the twentieth century. Avant-garde thus becomes not so much a historical concept, identified with the dead phenomenon in the history of culture, but as a theoretical category that allows to study art as the domain of artistic events and performances, and not material artifacts. It reveals its transhistorical nature and the possibility of continuous rebirth: in neo-avant-garde *action art*, happenings, total actions, postfuturism or the new political art.

An in-depth examination of avant-garde's strategies of actions in public spaces and anthropological projects of the "new artist" will undoubtedly help to understand the following changes in the definition of the artist's role nowadays. It will also give an answer to the question about the possibility of the continuation of avant-garde experiments. Our project, which seeks historical continuity in modern conceptualization of creator and creativity (from Romanticism to the experimental art), has given a way to think about the experiment as a permanent characteristic of modern culture, which nineteenth-century origins are subject to constant re-evaluation and reinterpretation.