

ABSTRACTS FRA KONFERENCEN:

Jyrki Nummi:

Artistic Personality and Juhani Aho's novel Yksin (1890, "Alone")

Juhani Aho's short novel *Yksin* introduces an artistic (semiotic) personality into Finnish literature. The novel was written in Paris, and it tells a story of a Finnish writer spending his time in the city. The protagonist reminds the author who was a public figure in Finland at the time. In the central episode he pays a visit to a prostitute and spends a night with her.

The novel was a scandal in Finland, which was the original idea of the author who immediately published in a daily paper *Päivälehti* a double story on his artistic activities in Paris and the reception of his work in Finland. The story is a mixture of well known artistic personalities and art scandals in contemporary Finland (Gallén).

The novel (and the bonus story) plays with three early literary avant-garde ideas: (i) the idea of coherent personality, (ii) the idea of the work of art as a closed text, and (iii) the border-line between fiction and reality.

Celia Aijmer och AnnKatrin Jonsson

Cosmopolitanism and Avant-garde in Little Magazines

Paris between the wars was a lively transnational intellectual scene. Many small presses saw the light of day in this creative environment, laying the ground for the publication of little magazines such as *The Little Review*, *Gargoyle*, *This Quarter*, *The Exile*, *Boulevardier*, *Tambour*, *New Review*, *The Booster* and *transition*. Although their existence was often brief and their circulation limited, the little magazines nevertheless played a vital role in the formation of modernist culture by creating a unique forum for artistic experiments, criticism, and discussions of politics, publishing policies, new literature and art.

The little magazines were products mainly of the Anglo-American exile community, but they are of interest in a wider perspective as they attempted to create a new cosmopolitan space for art and debate that was not limited by national interests. This ambition is visible in the notable ethnic diversity of the contributors to these publications (whether writers, artists or photographers), who might have their origins in America or Europe, including Scandinavia, but also from more distant locations such as Mexico, China or India.

Another conspicuous feature of the little magazines is the amount of space they allotted to discussions of ethnicity, patriotism and exile.

In our presentation we will highlight the significance of international contributions and transnational themes in the little magazines. Our specific examples will be taken from *transition: An International Quarterly for Creative Experiment*, which was edited by Eugene Jolas in the 1920s. The presentation will particularly focus on the interconnections between transnational themes and the formation of an avant-garde. By drawing attention to the genre of the little magazine we want to contribute to the project of shifting the understanding of modernism as an established canon to seeing it as an avant-garde practice.

Nils Olsson:

Gertrude Stein's "A Novel of Thank You". Putting the work into practice

The works of Gertrude Stein often appear to be propelled by a dialectic tension between two tendencies. On the one hand a (more or less explicit) developing and consolidation of the modernist ideas of artistic autonomy (i.e. the separation and continuous development of specific art forms) and transgression (i.e. the notion of the new). On the other hand, in her very practice these categories are challenged in several ways. This tension stages the predicament of modernism that will later be the starting point for the neo-avant-garde renegotiating of the conditions of artistic practice.

Gertrude Stein's *A Novel of Thank You* (ANOTY, 1927) is no exception in this respect. ANOTY is not only a novel about the process of making a novel, but also a novel in the process of being made. ANOTY is an example of a becoming-novel in the sense that it tends to manifest itself as an event - i.e. a tendency that works against a modernist instinct of self-preservation, striving for autonomy of work and genre, as well as separation of art forms. The novel works on a level that precedes a manifest literature; it is a becoming-novel in the sense that it is not (and is) completed; it describes the conditions for a novel, and thereby also questions its own status as an (autonomous) artwork. Stein's defending of the artistic autonomy takes place within a practice that challenges this same autonomy on the level of artwork. I will attempt to investigate the further aesthetic implications of an artistic practice like ANOTY. My proposal is that Stein's work opens, or at least prepares, an area for practice where the modernist notion of autonomy is radically questioned; an area that will finally be defined with the "theatricality" of the 1960s neo-avant-garde.

Benedikt Hjartarson:

The Beginnings of the Icelandic Avant-Garde

The paper will discuss the emergence of an aesthetic avant-garde in Iceland in the early 20th century. In the early 1920s a number of critical essays on the European avant-garde are published in Icelandic journals and periodicals, in which it is condemned as symptomatic of an international and "degenerated" spirit in modern art. The critics demand a new, popular or "völkisch" Icelandic art conscious of its origins in the country's culture and history. In these critical essays one can see the emergence of a critical notion of a potential Icelandic avant-garde related to new avant-garde trends in European art and literature, which predates avant-garde practices in the Icelandic context. Although there were no avant-garde authors or groups in Iceland at this time, whose practices were related to international activities, the presumed international character of the avant-garde serves from the beginning as a basis for its condemnation. When contemporary avant-garde ideas are picked up in artistic and literary works for the first time in Iceland in the 1920s, the authors and artists only had to slip into a role which had already been formed in the literary and artistic system.

The paper will discuss the early poetry and programmatic texts of Halldór Laxness and flórbergur flórþarson, and the paintings of Finnur Jónsson, who participated in Sturm-Exhibitions in Germany before returning to Iceland to give a private exhibition in Reykjavík in 1925. The main aim of the paper is to analyze the practices of the early avant-garde in Iceland and trace their roots in European aesthetics. Of

special interest in this context is flór·arson's early "futurist" poetry. Although flór·arson had no direct relations with futurist movements abroad and claimed that he had merely heard this new "watchword" by the time he wrote the poems, his texts show interesting affinities with textual and linguistic experiments of the contemporary avant-garde in Europe, especially with Russian futurism and their ideal of a "transrational" language (zaum). In his programmatic texts flór·arson develops an individual avant-garde poetics which is marked by a fusion of spiritualist ideas, radical idealism, revolutionary politics and avant-garde aesthetics characteristic of the early European avant-garde.

Margareta Tillberg:

The Colour Theory of Mikhail Matiushin in an International Context

Mikhail Matiushin's färglära. Matiushin arbetade parallellt med Malevich i trettio år, men detta är den första boken om Matiushin. Den kommer att komma ut på ryskt förlag senare i år. Bifogar avhandlingens abstract (disputerade 2003):

Colour was of fundamental importance in modernist art. One reason the subject is has only little studied in Russian art has been the inaccessibility to the Soviet archives until the early 1990s. This study is based on extensive research in Russian archives and unpublished material.

Contemporary ideas from Bauhaus in Germany and De Stijl in Holland have received deserved attention. In the Soviet Union the avant-garde artists were silenced as enemies of the people, because they had other priorities than the class struggle. The innovating institutes had been closed by the beginning of the 1930s as a result of the centralization of all expressions of culture under the banner of Socialist Realism.

The aim of this dissertation is to present and analyse the unknown colour theory of Mikhail Matiushin (1866-1934) published in 1932.

The work is divided into five parts. The first part, Colour, considers a context of history, colour and art theory. During the 1920s a number of institutes were founded in the Soviet Union for cross-scientific research in art, design and architecture. One of them was the Institute of Artistic Culture in Leningrad - GINKhUK, where Malevich and Tatlin also worked.

To formulate a universal language was one goal, to redesign the world for the masses outside the 'dead' museums another, and to produce a new kind of human being, a third.

The activities at GINKhUK revolved around four axes: science, artistic expression, pedagogical work and practical application. The artist, musician and theoretic Mikhail Matiushin (1866-1934) supervised the Department of Organic Culture. There the geometry and machine-like effectiveness of the Moscow constructivists was modified from the object to perception.

The second part, Vision, analyses Matiushin's training programme, a variant of synaesthetical union of the senses, which included an extension of the visual angle to a complete 360° radius. The third part, Culture, compares Matiushin with the theosophist mystics Pëtr Uspenskii and C. H. Hinton, the painter Wassily Kandinsky and the philosopher Henri Bergson.

Part four, Ideology, shows a relief of contemporary voices from a perspective of the State philosophy dialectical materialism.

The last part, Synthesis, makes an excursus on what happened after the 1930s, concluding with the text of the colour theory, both its Russian original and for the first time, in an English translation. Matiushin's colour theory is believed to have never been considered after 1932.

However, the results of this study showed that Matiushin's colour handbook is still used for the colour design in St. Petersburg.

Ina Blom:

The signature strategies of Ben Vautier. Avantgarde historiography and the negotiation of artistic identity

The obsessive and apparently egomaniac signature writings of the French Fluxus-related artist Ben Vautier confront the painful question whether there is a place for his own artistic signature (his own "avantgarde future") after the series of famous signature events that make up the history of the avantgarde - from Duchamp signing ordinary objects to Yves Klein's signing emptiness. But a close reading of Vautiers particular signature strategies show how these writings consistently repeats the very signature of the avantgarde tradition itself. The effect of this repetition is to open up spaces that point beyond the historical determination of this tradition and its particular artistic identities, linked to notions of local or national schools or styles. The overarching theme of the lecture is a demonstration of how the notion of the "event" in Fluxus informs the particular brand of internationalism of this movement.

Erik Granly Jensen:

Hverdagsrytme

Med udgangspunkt i en række værker af Dick Higgins (1938-1998) og George Brecht (f. 1924) ønsker jeg at diskutere relationen mellem hverdags erfaring, menneskelig krop og fluxus. Hvor Peter Bürger og Andreas Huyssen i lignende analyser har inddraget den historiske avantgarde og det hverdagsbegreb, der knytter sig til denne, ønsker jeg at diskutere fluxus i forhold til den franske filosof Henri Lefebvres (1901-1991) „Éléments de rythmanalyse" (1992). Det er især Lefebvres begreber om rytme, tid og rum, der vil være centrale i min analyse.

Peter Borum:

Den upersonlige selvbiografi og de levende penge

Udgangspunktet er en konstatering af, at avantgardekunsten på den ene side søger et upersonligt udtryk og på den anden side gerne inddrager netop kunstnerens (forfatterens) person. Jeg havde dernæst tænkt mig at foreslå, at der måske kunne kastes lys over dette forhold vha. Pierre Klossowskis forestilling om "de levende penge" - mennesket som en tom generalækvivalent (af libidinaløkonomisk karakter, dog), der netop derfor er i stand til at stå i forbindelse med enhver forskellighed. Det personlige som upersonligt i en bliven-ting eller en gøren-sig-til-en-ting

Mogens Andersen og Agneta Mei Hytten:

Fornyelse af kompositionsmusikken inden for rammerne af nordisk samarbejde

Siden 1888 har der med vekslende regelmæssighed i komponistforeningsregi været afholdt Nordiske Musikdage på skift mellem de fem lande, hvor nye musikværker er blevet opført.

Som alternativ dertil blev der efter Anden Verdenskrig etableret et tilsvarende festivalsamarbejde Ung Nordisk Musik mellem konservatoriernes

kompositionsstuderende, der gav plads til mere eksperimenterende musik.

Et fælles dansk/norsk/svensk tidsskrift med navnet Nordisk Musikkultur udkom

1952-63. Det blev blandt andet forum for en heftig debat om svensk og dansk

indstilling til efterkrigsavantgarden med komponisterne Karl Birger Blomdahl og Per Nørgård som modpoler.

Det nordiske radiosamarbejde førte blandt andet til fælles benyttelse af

Elektronmusikstudion (EMS) i Stockholm til produktion af kompositionsbestillinger,

fra dansk side hos Per Nørgård, Bent Lorentzen, Henrik Colding-Jørgensen, Nils

Holger Petersen, Else Marie Pade m.fl.

Det nordiske fjernsynssamarbejde) omfattende seminarer om musik i tv drøftede fra

1960 udviklingen af audiovisuelle udtryksformer på grundlag af ny musik, således

som det i Danmark blev realiseret ved inddragelse af komponister i tv-eksperimenter og musikdramatiske bestillinger.

På det personlige plan opstod der samarbejde mellem eksperimenterende

komponister som for eksempel svenskeren Jan Bark og danskeren Fuzzy.

Ud fra de sparsomme historiske fremstillinger af området samt dokumentation

fremdraget i forbindelse med projektet Danmarks Radio og den ny

kompositionsmusik efter Anden Verdenskrig vil vi give eksempler på

avantgardepåvirkninger i dansk kompositionsmusik inden for rammerne af nordisk samarbejde.

Marianne Ølholm:

Contemporary Danish and American Poetry – Inspiration or Parallels

There has been a considerable interest in experimental American poetry in Denmark

in recent years, and this has led to the publication of several works by American

poets in Danish translation and a number of literary events which have brought

Danish and American poets together. The most ambitious of these was the Danish

North-American poetry festival "In the Making" which took place in Copenhagen in

the summer of 2001. In connection with the festival a selection of texts by young

American poets was published in the anthology *6 amerikanere af lave* (6 Americans out

of Joint) edited by Lars Bukdahl and Ursula Andkjær Olsen. The paper will consist of

readings of works by young Danish and American poets who participated in the

poetry festival "In the Making". The aim is to discuss similarities and differences in

the aesthetic approaches of their works. A distinctive feature of avant-garde poetics

is the emphasis on formal experiment often resulting in texts that are not

immediately comprehensible or accessible to the reader. This poses a challenge to the

hermeneutic idea of interpretation of texts and to the concept of literary analysis. In

my paper I will focus on illegibility as an aesthetic strategy in examples of Danish

and American experimental poetry.

Ilona Hongisto

Experimental Documentary and the temporal layers of the moving image

My paper deals with the question of time in the context of documentary films. I will build my analysis on the context of Experimental Documentary. Documentary films and experimental films have been connected to one another throughout the history of cinema, but nevertheless the connection has been denied more than once in order to safeguard documentaries as producers of accurate and unbiased information.

I will concentrate my analysis on one particular film – Kanerva Cederström's *Trans-Siberia* (Finland, 1999). Cederström's *Trans-Siberia* is – as the name implies – a journey along the famous railway tracks in the heart of Russia. The narrative of the story consists of texts written by two Russians, who are now both dead. Their texts form a dialogue with the images shot in the train in the present time. The texts do not explain the images, but open the presentation of time to layers that exceed a clear-cut division between the past, present and future. The intertwining layers of time suggest that *Trans-Siberia* does not represent an event that has already passed. Instead, the film presents new possible temporal dimensions.

The aim of my paper is to give a definition of what Experimental Documentary means and under what kind of logic it operates. The analysis of the temporal layers of the moving image is an attempt to trace this logic.

Hubert van den Berg

THE CASE OF CONSTRUCTIVISM AND THE TRANSNATIONALITY OF THE EUROPEAN AVANT-GARDE OF THE EARLY 20th CENTURY

As I have tried to outline in a paper at a colloquium on the avant-garde and avant-garde studies at the university of Osnabrück in 1999 (published in the volume *Blick vom Wolkenkratzer* in 2000) a basic tension can be observed between the "supranationality" (Schwitters) of the constructivist avant-garde of the late 1910s and early 1920s and the historiography of the avant-garde, which - especially as far as literature is concerned - is often marked by a national perspective. In the case of constructivism, there can be little doubt that the "supra-" or transnational character of constructivism did receive for a long time no substantial attention as a result of the conventional subdivision of literary studies in national parcels, blocking or at least impeding the comprehension of the transnationality of the constructivist avant-garde. The leading question of my present paper will be: to what extent can the case of constructivism and its historiography be regarded as a *pars pro toto* for the so-called "historical avant-garde" as a whole? As I will try to show, there are indeed many indications that a nationally parcelled research practice has blocked and is still impeding an adequate description of the early avant-garde as a fundamentally transnational phenomenon, not least in the case of the three main "isms" of the avant-garde before and during the First World War, which are generally nationalised in research as "French" cubism, "Italian" futurism and "German" expressionism.