Ðecolonizing the ∂vant-Garde, I:

Decolonizing the Postwar Avant-Garde in the West

The American University of Paris

June 12-13, 2024

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About

Decolonizing the Avant-Garde

This symposium is part of a larger, three-year collaborative research initiative that seeks to explore how we can decolonize the post-1945 history and idea of the avant-garde.

Both a key concept and a significant artistic formation in modern art, the avant-garde has often been characterized as a typically Western phenomenon. If the early 20th-century 'historic' avant-garde (expressionism, cubism, Dada, surrealism, constructivism, among others) operated mainly from European cities such as Paris and Berlin, the post-1945 'neo-avant-garde' (abstract expressionism, pop art, fluxus, cobra, the situationist international, etc.) further moved into New York and Northern America more generally. Often seen as the advance guard of modernism in the West and as synonymous with a white, imperialist, if not outright racist 'primitivizing' artistic undertaking that apparently held that only the West is equipped with a cultural advance guard, the avant-garde in the 1980s and 1990s got lumped on the baggage train and was sent off. If mention was still made of the avant-garde in critical debates on contemporary art, it was either in derogatory terms or to signal that the moment of the post-avant-garde had arrived.

Today, this dominant discourse on the avant-garde requires revision. For, while it is undoubtedly true that certain representatives of the so-called historic and neo-avant-garde in the West held problematic views and engaged in equally problematic practices, much more seems to have been going on right from the start of the early 20th century. Indeed, research in recent decades has amply shown that the avant-garde across the arts also asserted itself already before the Second World War in Latin America, Northern Africa, and Asia. This project seeks in part to extend this research by also looking at avant-garde practices outside the West since 1945. Moreover, and perhaps more significantly, recent decades have also witnessed the return of artists' formations that seek to extend and bend the avant-garde's multifarious collective project. We see these formations within Europe in 'peripheral' post-socialist regions (from Sots Art to Neue Slovenische Kunst, Chto delat, and beyond) and on the fringes of officially sanctioned art in Northern America (from Black Dada and Black Quantum Futurism to Critical Art Ensemble, 16 Beaver Group, and beyond). Yet we also encounter such activist formations increasingly well beyond the West (from Raqs Media Collective, INSTAR to Chimurenga and Another Roadmap network). This global resurgence of critical and experimental avant-garde initiatives not only demonstrates that the avant-garde may be far from over today. It also suggests that we must urgently start to decolonize both the avant-garde's perceived history since 1945, and the historically erroneous, West-centric view

of the avant-garde more generally. It is this dual challenge that this collaborative project takes on.

By exploring how a focus on colonizing and colonialist practices can help shed new light on the avant-garde since 1945, this of necessity *collective* project does not seek an apology for the avant-garde. Rather, this initiative seeks to foster dialogue and debate, for to decolonize the avant-garde also entails a critique of the predominantly Western (art-historical) discourse of decolonization itself. By looking at the avant-garde on a global scale critically through the prism of decolonization, then, this project aims to make a start with unearthing an alternative history of the avant-garde that has not yet been written and that can perhaps also inform contemporary practice.

I. The Paris Symposium

As the avant-garde often has been regarded as a typically Western phenomenon, it is perhaps to the West that we should turn first in an attempt to decolonize the post-1945 avant-garde. This first symposium explores the impact of colonization and colonialism within Europe's, Northern America's and Australia's geographical borders on post-1945 practices of artists related to the avant-garde across races and ethnicities.

Questions addressed include: How can we decolonize the post-1945 avant-garde within the West? What aspects of art and artists' trajectories and positionalities require special attention in this undertaking? What experimental artists or artists' formations in the West have been largely neglected and why? To what extent do creative decolonizing practices set forth by avant-garde artists from the West shed light on these issues? What, if any, alternative view(s) of 'the West' did the avant-garde give shape to and circulate? And when all is said and done, how do answers to these questions alter our understanding of 'the avant-garde'? Does it still make sense, for example, to talk about a 'Western' (neo-)avant-garde, or is a different nomination called for?

Far from aiming to be exhaustive, this symposium offers an exploratory forum for debate and exchange. That is why each paper (30') is followed by 15' of discussion, and why the symposium also closes with a plenary debate.

Future Iterations

For more information about future symposia within this project, keep an eye on the site: https://d-ag.weebly.com/.

Organization

This symposium is convened by Sascha Bru (University of Leuven), Fabrice Flahutez (Université Jean Monnet, Saint-Etienne), Iveta Slavkova (American University of Paris) and Isabel Wünsche (Constructor University, Bremen).

Program

Wednesday, June 12, 2024

Welcome + Opening Address

13:30-14:00: Iveta Slavkova (AUP) and Hannah Westley (AUP Provost) + Sascha Bru (University of Leuven) and Isabel Wünsche (Constructor University, Bremen)

Session 1: In and Around Surrealism

14:00-14:45: Effie Rentzou (Princeton University)
The Avant-Garde Contests Itself: Les Réverbères and *Le Cheval de 4*

14:45-15:30: Jonathan P. Eburne (Pennsylvania State University)
The Persistence of Amnesia

15:30-16:15: Olivier Penot-Lacassagne (Université Sorbonne Nouvelle, Paris)
Surrealism: Revolution against Whiteness

16:15-16:30: Pause

Session 2: Atlantic Crossings

16:30-17:15: Fabrice Flahutez (Université Jean Monnet, Saint-Etienne)
Roberto Matta: My House Is Not in Space but in Time

17:15-18:00: Catherine Dossin (Purdue University)
Hervé Télémaque: Decolonizing and Reconnecting the Post-War Avant-Gardes across the Atlantic

18:00-18:45: Dorota Michalska (University of Oxford)
Wladyslaw Hasior (1928-1999): A Decolonial Communism

Thursday, June 13, 2024

Session 3: Indigenous Avant-Garde / Avant-Garde Indigeneity

10:00-10:45: Jennifer Biddle (University of New South Wales)
Living-on: *Milpirri Sensorium* and the work of Central Desert art

10:45-11:30: Julia Anne Leach (University of Manitoba)
What's Right with Winnipeg?

11:30-12:15: Jacopo Galimberti (IUAV, Venice)
The Enemy Within: The Avant-garde and the Native American in 1970s Italy

12:15-13:45: Lunch Break

Session 4: Trajectories and Positionalities

13:45-14:30: Hannah Feldman (Northwestern University)
Before Guarding the Body: Huguette Caland, in War and in Love

14:30-15:15: Sara Crangle (University of Sussex)
Fierce Intimacies: Black Avant-Gardes and Gender

15:15-16:00: Tsitsi Jaji (Duke University)
On the Blackness of Blackness

16:00-16:45: Dorothy Price (The Courtauld)
Title tbd

16:45-17:15: Pause

Closing Discussion

17:15-17:45: Moderated By Sascha Bru and Isabel Wünsche

Abstracts (alphabetical)

Jennifer Biddle (University of New South Wales)

Living-on: *Milpirri Sensorium* and the work of Central Desert art

The year 2023 marked a milestone 50th anniversary of Papunya Tula Artists, when artists from the Western Desert of Australia began experimenting with acrylic on board and canvas with *Irrititja Kuwarri Tjungu (Past & Present Together): 50 Years of Papunya Tula Artists* opening the new Australian embassy in Washington, DC. In Australia, a major survey of pre-eminent Anmatyerr artist *Emily Kam Kngwarray* opened at the National Gallery of Australia in Canberra. This paper tracks a critical genealogy of this moment, and artists and art centre initiative to ensure life lived-on county, in place; a genealogy of materialities, agency and mobilising force; radical local specificity and Indigenous ways of being, as Yamatji Stephen Gilchrist (2023) models, that trouble Eurocentric trajectories of high modernism, contemporaneity and regimes of value. Against neo-liberal and market driven tendencies to commodify culture, this genealogy follows circuits of living heritage, vernacular futurities and remote art economy under settler colonial occupation and climate crisis legacies. Focusing on long-term research partnership and the development of the 2023 Darwin Festival experimental *Milpirri Sensorium* (Directed by Wanta Steve Patrick Jampijinpa, co-produced by Lajamanu Warlpiri Community and Tracks Dance), this work-in-progress explores the ambition of *Milpirri* to engage young people with tradition and (re)produce what Jampijinpa calls '*ngurra-kurlu'*, feelings of collective wellbeing, belonging and home.

Sara Crangle (University of Sussex)

Fierce Intimacies: Black Avant-Gardes and Gender

"Decolonization is always a violent phenomenon," Frantz Fanon writes in 1961, reflecting on his participation in the Algerian War of Independence (1954-62). Referring to political vanguardism, Fanon's claim extends to his critique of négritude, the aesthetic avant-garde with which he openly grapples throughout *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952). Négritude Fanon considers unduly passive, self-sacrificial, and racially essentialising, promoting a "Mother Earth bond" and "mystic, carnal marriage between man and cosmos." Decrying Sartre for treating négritude as a weak stage in racial consciousness, Fanon quotes Aimé Césaire's groundbreaking *Notebook of a Return to the Native Land* (1939) as evidence that the movement left itself open to this very assessment.

Martinican poet-politician Césaire (1913-2008) is credited with coining the phrases decolonisation and négritude. Originating in the mid-1930s, négritude revalued and asserted the foundational, global role of Black culture. Like European avant-gardes, négritude worked against presumptions of Western modernity, but

its resistance was urgently underpinned by the ongoing losses and inequalities of colonisation. An elected, outspoken representative to the French National Assembly for well over half a century, Césaire did not fail to embrace the action Fanon roundly demanded of Black activists and intellectuals. But Césaire's relationship to aggressions linguistic and political is complex: he censored his most explicit writings, and remains critically interrogated about the failure to establish French Antillean independence.

My talk aims to situate Césaire's avant-garde poetic presentations of masculinity and revolution in relation to those he influenced: Fanon, Black Power, créolité. I will then juxtapose these lineages with Fran Ross's novel *Oreo* (1974) and Michelle Wallace's *Black Macho and the Myth of the Superwoman* (1978). Wallace's theory subtends the satirical comedy of Ross's half-Jewish, half-Black, female protagonist, one who super-heroically (and hilariously) counters norms of parentage, education, gender, and race. Hyperbolically erudite, strategic, and accomplished, Oreo is a full-blown parody of Wallace's superwoman. *Black Macho* compellingly dissects the stereotypes positing Black men as emasculated by White dominance in ways that continue to unduly pressurise and blame Black women. In sum, Ross and Wallace critique the reactive, too misogynist culture of "black macho", or what Wallace considers the bitter truth that in 1970s USA, the "black man could only come to life by losing his humanity."

Asserting the place of gender politics in decolonisation, both Ross and Wallace remained relatively marginal figures in contemporaneous vanguards. Discernibly influenced by the Black Arts Movement, Ross was not actively involved in its work; by aligning herself with feminism, Wallace writes about the dismissal of activists foregrounding racial injustices. Stunningly ahead of their time, *Oreo* and *Black Macho* have only recently been reissued.

Much has been written about black masculinity, and about "black macho" as survivalist performance. Leaders of créolité dubbed Césaire a father figure and a "foundational black man", but there is more to be said about what the co-founder of négritude, Léopold Senghor, described as its requisite "feminine element". Césaire's work draws on masculinist metaphors and assertions, yet his early poetry – the writing perceived as his most "virile" – does not quite evince Fanon's resolutely fraternal call to action. Attuned to femininity, Césaire the poet identifies as a "pierced being" for whom ferocity and intimacy are inseparable, a being aiming to supersede expectations that he, a Black man, represents "the void" of lost humanity (*Solar Throat Slashed* [1948]). Consistent with Ross and Wallace's feminist politics, Césaire's poetry offers models of decolonising not only race, but gender, striving to rebirth a replete, multigendered humanity.

Catherine Dossin (Purdue University)

Hervé Télémaque: Decolonizing and Reconnecting the Post-War Avant-Gardes across the Atlantic

In 2018, MoMA acquired Hervé Télémaque's *No Title (The Ugly American;*

1962/64) and exhibited it alongside works by Lichtenstein and Warhol. More recently, the painting was presented as part of the "Divided States of America" display with artists like Faith Ringgold and Sam Gilliam. Télémaque, a Haitian artist who had been active in New York before moving to Paris and dabbled in Surrealism, Abstract Expressionism, and Figuration Narrative, has thus provided a way for MoMA and other Western museums to decolonize their presentations of canonical (Western) avant-garde movements by including the contribution of a non-Western artist and enriching the conversation with the perspective of "a black colonized man."

At the same time, Télémaque has also been featured in exhibitions such as *Haïti: Deux siècles de création artistique* (Paris, 2015) or *Caribbean and African Diasporic Artists since 1940* (Fort Worth, 2024), which aim to challenge Western art's dominance and highlight non-Western artistic trends. Caribbean scholars and critics have likewise sought to decolonize Western interpretations of Télémaque's work by replacing the usual references to international styles and Western popular imagery with interpretations rooted in Glissant's concept of *créolité*, the Caribbean, as well as Haiti's specific history and culture, including Vodou.

Therefore, Télémaque's work presents a fascinating opportunity to decolonize Western art from both the inside and the outside. Additionally, I contend that it has the potential to decolonize our comprehension of Franco-American relationships that have significantly influenced the history of Western avant-garde. By highlighting the crucial role that Haiti and the Haitian Revolution played in shaping these relationships, I believe, we can initiate a Connected History of Paris, New York, and Port-au-Prince while furthering the goals of Global Art History.

Jonathan P. Eburne (Pennsylvania State University)

The Persistence of Amnesia

This intervention proceeds from recent media attention to "forgotten" surrealists. At the opening of the 2022 Venice Biennale, a brace of art reporters showcased the life and work of Leonora Carrington, the "forgotten surrealist" whose children's tales provided the theme of the Biennale, *The Milk of Dreams*. Such an assessment is not exactly new: Carrington has been referred to as a "forgotten" or "lost" surrealist for well over twenty years, with an uptick in rediscoveries after the writer-artist's death in 2010 and again after the centenary of her birth, in 2017. The "forgotten" status has applied equally to other figures affiliated with the surrealist movement—usually visual artists, and predominantly women— particularly in the movement's post-1945 iterations. Such forgotten figures have included, whether individually or severally, artists Eileen Agar, Alice Rahon, and Ithell Colquhoun, as well as Dorothea Tanning, Bridget Bate Tichenor, Toyen, Kay Sage, Leonor Fini, Dora Maar, and Stella Snead. Writers Lise Deharme, René Crevel, and Philippe Soupault have also been referred to as "forgotten surrealists," as have artists Wolfgang Paalen, Victor Brauner, and Pierre Molinier. On occasion the "forgotten" moniker has tested the limits of my own awareness; my bibliographic

survey for this presentation yielded figures such as the Dominican painter Ivan Tovar, the Japanese poet and photographer Kansuke Yamamoto, and the Welsh photographer and scenic designer Angus McBean, about whose work I had not been previously aware.

This epidemic of forgetting is often presented as a counterpoint to the canonicity or even commodified persistence of a figure such as Salvador Dalí, who often serves as a kind of metonym for surrealism itself in the cultural imaginary of global late capitalism. What, I wonder, are the stakes of such claims to forgetting and rediscovery, and to whose capacities of remembrance or non-remembrance do they pertain?

Whereas it might be tempting to dwell on the extent to which the art-historical doctrine of discovery conflates recovery work with market value, I am more interested in examining the infrastructures of reception, distribution, and circulation such discourses begin to identify. In this light, what might surrealism have to say about the very phenomenon of cultural amnesia itself? In addressing "forgetting" as a structural condition, in other words, my presentation attends to ways in which post-1945 surrealist thinkers have confronted the sociopolitical conditions of historical exclusion, occlusion, and extermination, rather than merely succumbing to them. This presentation studies decolonial surrealist writing and thought during the long Cold War, in its reckoning with structures of imperial amnesia—from interesting structures of oppression to interventionist State practices of political destabilization and assassination—as a form of mnemonicidal "cleansing" that eradicated lives, histories, and memories alike. In the face of mnemonicide—the murder of memory—surrealist thinkers from René Ménil and Suzanne and Aimé Césaire to Carrington, Fini, and, most recently, Will Alexander seek not to *restore* memory but to set fire to the colonial scaffoldings of modern history, as critic Aditya Bahl has written, inaugurating alternative, "refractive" infrastructures and networked consciousnesses of living and thinking in the unfolding present.

Hannah Feldman (Northwestern University)

Before Guarding the Body: Huguette Caland, in War and in Love

This paper approaches the work made by the so-called "cosmopolitan," Lebanese born artist Huguette Caland (1931-2019) while she was living in France during the 1970s and 1980s. The daughter of the First post-Mandate President of Lebanon, Caland famously left her natal country to come to Paris to announce herself as an artist, professionally and personally, and to enjoy the freedoms that might let her be one in this milieu. Set up in a studio in the 11th arrondissement, Caland perfected a body of quasi-figurative and quasi-realist paintings that are now receiving major art historical and museum attention. Although her concerns were many, a primary focus during this period was on representations of the body and the land, topics that this paper explores in relation to her collaborations with local avant-gardists

(critics, poets, and artists), the ongoing Civil War in Lebanon, and the concept of love, not only as a personal experience, but an organizing rubric which pervaded the artist's approach to thinking about gender from a unique perspective that emphasized play and non-binarisms. In Caland's work, bodies and their parts, along with words and their correlates, seem to converse: they morph, fold, and sometimes collide into each other, just as her drawn lines merge and twist, colors bleed, and relationships emerge only to be torn asunder. Not only did Caland's better known "erotic" paintings partake in the 1970s global sexual awakening, they also launched the artist's fundamental concern with larger forms of collectivity and all that threatens it. In this, the paper is guided by the Moroccan writer, Abdelkébir Khatibi's reflections on language and an experimental realm of "intersemiotic" significations that he observed in Arab and Berber culture, and which offered access to non-rational sign systems in excess of the constraints of bounded discourse and rhetorical norms as understand in western semiotics and subsequent assumptions about the fixity of significatory processes.

Fabrice Flahutez (Université Jean Monnet, Saint-Etienne)
Roberto Matta: My House is Not in Space but in Time

My overarching aim will be to shed light on the crucial role played by artists who, after 1945, endeavored to reposition the avant-gardes at the heart of a North-South reassessment, one that is both decolonial and post-colonial. A striking example is Roberto Matta, who, after years of engagement with the avant-garde in Europe and the US, as early as 1946 became aware of his South American identity and, thereby, of the political or ethical role incumbent upon him, which involved challenging Western hegemony. His involvement with Cuban communities, his support for Castro, his protest against the Rosenberg trial, and his commitment alongside Henri Alleg during the Algerian War significantly redefined the geopolitical dynamics of art.

His friendship with the author of "Proposition for a Black Power Manifesto," Ted Joans, and his proximity to Edouard Glissant demonstrate a deliberate desire to situate surrealism within a decolonial geopolitical perspective. His support for the Watts riots in the United States, as well as his opposition to the Vietnam War, also serve as means to create immense works designed to immerse the observer. Lastly, Matta's unwavering support for Salvador Allende until Pinochet's coup, the assassination of Pablo Neruda, and his friendship with Octavio Paz drive him to tirelessly work for a reevaluation of the power dynamics between the United States and Latin America.

It is undeniable that Roberto Matta remains one of the artists who, in the post-war period, produced the most spectacular painted images while skillfully avoiding falling into the banality of literalness. Furthermore, the choice of his materials, such as earth for example, also sparks relevant reflection. His work transcends the conventional boundaries of art, offering a profound and multidimensional vision of the human

condition and the socio-political issues of his time.

Jacopo Galimberti (IUAV, Venice)
The Enemy Within: The Avant-garde and the Native American in 1970s Italy

Italy witnessed the rise of a significant social movement, now known as "the movement of 1977", between the summer of 1976 and the Red Brigades' abduction of Aldo Moro in March 1978. This movement encompassed various factions, including a loosely connected network of pranksters deeply influenced by Dada and Surrealism who identified themselves as "metropolitan Indians". In my presentation, I will explore the portrayal of the Native American within the Italian counterculture, and discuss the reasons behind the adoption of the label "metropolitan Indians", examining critically both the potentials and limitations of this appropriation.

Tsitsi Jaji (Duke University)
On the Blackness of Blackness

Mid-way through *Invisible Man,* Ralph Ellison takes us to church. A Black street preacher declares his radical rejection of Western rationality's core tenet, the principle of non-contradiction. His credo: "Black is…and Black ain't…Black will make you…and Black will unmake you." What is this radical conjunction upending reason, this "and"? What happens when we attempt to think the radical concatenation in relation to the avant-garde's tradition of defiance and disjuncture. I meditate on this through the work of Kahlil Joseph and Donald Harrison, both of whom range freely across "high" and popular registers.

In her 2014 exhibition, Ruffneck Constructivists (ICA, 2014), Kara Walker underscored a continuity between the muscular braggadocio of historical avant-gardists like Marinetti and an element of "thuggishness as an expression of abjection" in works by Black artists such as Arthur Jafa, Pope L, or Deanna Lawson. Two starkly contrasting music videos by Joseph were included: *Black Up* (with Seattle-based hip hop group, Shabazz Palaces) and *'Til the Quiet Comes* (with experimental musician, Flying Lotus). In its use of disjuncture, montage, and urban street scenes *Black Up*'s place in the show was obvious, but the near-mysticism of the lushly-scored '*Til the Quiet Comes* presents smoothness rather than friction. At the same time, expectations of Blackness are upended in the cutaways to verdant green landscape in *Black Up* and the ecstatic portrayal of Black L.A. projects in *Flying Lotus*. Seemingly even more removed from Walker's invitation to "return to the questions of modernism, architecture, urbanism and the resistant bodies who reshape it" is *Wildcat* (a 2013 black-and-white film not included in the exhibition). An intimate portrait of the tiny all-Black town of Grayson, Oklahoma, a third of the film is dedicated to credits, evidencing rare reverence for ancestors and community. I propose that a distinctively old-fashioned concept, apprenticeship, might offer a way to read all three films through a specifically Black vanguardist tradition which Donald Harrison, Jr. calls "quantum jazz." As a revered musician

and the Big Chief of Congo Square in New Orleans' esoteric Mardi Gras Indian tradition, Harrison's approach to innovation through "four-dimensional" relation across time and space points to the potential of immersion as a form of relativity animating what Ellison called the "Blackness of Blackness."

Julia Anne Leach (University of Manitoba)

What's Right with Winnipeg?

My talk will focus on Indigenous art in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada in the 1960s and 1970s. By examining the lives and the works of artists like Jackson Beardy, Alex Janvier and Daphne Odjig, I hope to convey an understanding of Winnipeg's role in the development of the Professional Native Indian Artists Incorporated (PNIAI) – a group of Indigenous artists who pivoted the way Indigenous art was being viewed at the time. These artists incorporated Modernism into traditional "Indian" art and created their own unique styles – Indigenous art that was being influenced by international artists, like Picasso, Matisse and Kandinsky.

My main question is: why Winnipeg? What was it about Winnipeg at this time that allowed these artists to make this work? The Winnipeg experience, for Daphne Odjig, was bountiful and her involvement with other Indigenous artists is key, I believe, in making Winnipeg a hub and a safe-space for other Indigenous artists. Winnipeg became a gathering space to share and make artwork, but also to discuss problems and issues that Indigenous artists faced. The PNIAI came into being in Winnipeg, and my goal is to understand what made it possible for this to happen.

I intend to focus on the lives and work of three PNIAI artists – Beardy, Janvier and Odjig, while also trying to understand in a broader sense what it was about the city of Winnipeg that caused this seemingly utopian and prolific period, before the PNIAI drifted apart in the later 1970s. What happened here that allowed Indigenous art to suddenly take-off, from the marginalized to the mainstream? Winnipeg is often described as a frozen city existing in the middle of nowhere, but for Indigenous artists in the late 1960s, coming in from their rural communities, it was an exciting and freeing city – it was the centre of everything.

Dorota Michalska (University of Oxford)

Wladyslaw Hasior (1928-1999): A Decolonial Communism

My contribution will focus on the works of Polish postwar artist Władysław Hasior from the late 1950s and 1960s, which offer critical insights into the rapidly changing material realities of the Polish countryside under communist modernising policies and social reforms. His sculptural investigations critically explore a Marxist vision of history by focusing on the ambiguous role played by the peasantry within the official ideology. Crucially, challenging a linear vision of social and economic development, Hasior puts forward a more complex temporal and material vision marked by experiences of asynchronicity and uneven development. Such a stance closely resonates with broader postwar geopolitical shifts, which saw the

rapprochement between the communist Eastern Bloc and a rapidly decolonizing Global South.

Building upon those historical considerations, my presentation will focus on Hasior's sculptural installation *Golgotha* from 1969, commissioned for the first edition of La Bienal de Escultura al Aire Libre (the Biennial of Outdoor Sculpture) in Montevideo, Uruguay. The Biennial included works by both Latin American and international artists; among the latter were Hasior and the Slovak Milan Dobeš, representing Eastern Europe. *Golgotha* was a monumental concrete installation which consisted of five totem-like pillars, each several meters high. The pieces were made by pouring fresh concrete into shapes dug directly into the ground. Once set, the pieces were later excavated – a technique which resembled the process of exhuming human remains and created highly dramatic sculptural effects. The emotionally affective monumentality of *Golgotha* stands in sharp contrast to the dominance of op-art and geometric abstraction at the Biennale in Montevideo and offers the chance to ask how Hasior's vision of history intersected with the local intellectual history and the emerging decolonial thought in Uruguay, and more broadly, Latin America.

My contribution will place Hasior's installation *Golgotha* in dialogue with Marxist visions of history on the one hand and decolonial theory on the other. In doing so, it will ask what are the intersections and productive affinities between the two political and intellectual formations and how those come together in Hasior's contribution to the Biennale in Montevideo. Crucially, I will argue for the need for a historically and materially contingent understanding of political categories to avoid the pitfalls of a decontextualized and depoliticized understanding of either Marxism or decoloniality in the post-war period.

Olivier Penot-Lacassagne (Université Sorbonne Nouvelle, Paris)

Surrealism: Revolution against Whiteness

From 1993 to 2005, the sixteen issues of *Race Traitor*, a magazine founded by the 'new abolitionists' John Garvey and Noël Ignatiev, deconstructed 'the white mystique', both the ideology and the 'system', of whiteness. In 1993, the editors began a collaboration with the Surrealist Chicago Group, as Garvey and Ignatiev republished the essay written in 1992, after the urban riots in Los Angeles, by Franklin Rosemont and David Roediger, 'Three Days That Shook the New World Order'—one of Franklin Rosemont's famous statements being that '[o]ur goal at all times is to attack and abolish whiteness and its institutions'. Issue 9 of *Race Traitor* reconfirmed its convergence with Surrealism. Published in 1998, this special issue focused on 'a particular group of race traitors', the surrealist one: the French Surrealist collective of 1920s and 1930s Paris, and 'its direct offshoot, the international (and multiracial) surrealist movement'. This 9th issue, entitled 'Surrealism: Revolution against Whiteness', recalled that with an unbroken continuity, the Surrealist movement had helped develop 'not only a revolutionary critique of whiteness but also new forms of revolutionary action

against it'. Being Surrealist had always been, and still was, 'one way of not being white'. Indeed, in 1998, American Surrealists once again denounced an ideology and a 'cultural meaning' which obstructed the advent of a new world.

My contribution aims to document the Surrealists' solidarity with the struggle of colonized and oppressed peoples of color from the 1920s through the 1990s.

Dorothy Price (The Courtauld)
Title tbd

Abstract pending

Effie Rentzou (Princeton University)
The Avant-Garde Contests Itself: Les Réverbères and *Le Cheval de 4*

This paper will discuss a case study, that of the neo-Dada group Les Réverbères (1937-1940) and its satellite publications *Le Cheval de 4* and *Deda L-E* (1940), as contestation of the dominant avant-garde paradigm in France during the interwar period. The group (Michel Tapié, Jean Marembert, Jacques Bureau, Noël Arnaud, Aline Gagnaire, Jean Jausion, Jean-François Chabrun, and others) and its homonymous journal, openly attacked surrealism, considering that the movement had recuperated and neutralized the explosive energy of Dada and subsequently ossified the notion of the avant-garde all-together. Against this, Les Réverbères imagined an alternative history for the avant-garde, one that would connect them to Dada directly without the deleterious intervention of surrealism. The cipher for this alternative way was the dedication of the group to American hot-jazz, both in theoretical writings connecting jazz improvisation with Dada practices, and in the organization of dancing soirees in hot-jazz clubs, featuring artists such as Django Reinhardt. Visually, the desire to rewire the history of the avant-garde was manifested in the richly illustrated pages of the *Le Cheval de 4* and *Deda L-E*, which prefigured the postwar Cobra aesthetics and the "peinture-mots" and the "logogrammes" of Christian Dotremont and Asger Jorn, or even the Art Brut.

What I will propose is that in these theoretical positions and visual tactics we see a logic and aesthetic of repetition, not as simple replication or pastiche of Dada, but as a creative re-appropriation. The groups in question constitute an early revisiting of the historical avant-garde, with a clear historiographical project aiming at surrealism and its prominent position within the French avant-garde scene, but also at "correcting" and recontextualizing Dada in the late 1930s. The group's critical engagement with Dada, including their renewed attempt to break away from "Frenchness" by turning to African-American music without, however, replicating Dada's problematic appropriation of non-Western culture, their role thus in "curating," "correcting," and producing the avant-garde for a new generation and a new historical moment, shows their own self-conscious entanglement in the process of the avant-garde, and points already in 1940 to the direction that neo-Dada will take much later. Within the frame of "Decolonizing the avant-garde" the Réverbères' liminal case, at the historiographical threshold of

the historical avant-garde (WWII), their posture as repetition, continuation, and rupture of this historical process, but also their anticipation of aesthetic trends that would take off after the end of the war, might shed some light on the pre-1945 avant-garde project as one that already was critical of itself and its insularity. What I am hoping to address as a question is whether the critique of the avant-garde project is only a characteristic feature of the “neo-avant-garde” or is it already embedded in the avant-garde project that continuously folds upon itself.

Bios

a–b

Jennifer L Biddle is Professor, Art & Design, UNSW Sydney. She is founding director of *emLAB (the Ethnographic Media Lab)* and 2023 Gough Whitlam and Malcom Fraser Chair in Australian Studies at Harvard University. Former Australian Research Council (ARC) Future Fellow, she has worked with northern Warlpiri for three decades, and more recently, in transnational collaboration on sensory new media. Her monograph *Remote Avant-Garde: Aboriginal Art under Occupation* (Duke University Press, 2016) models new and emergent desert-based aesthetics as arts of survival. She is currently co-writing a book on the Lajamanu Warlpiri festival *Milpirri*.

Sascha Bru is a Professor at the Faculty of Arts of the University of Leuven, where he teaches critical theory and avant-garde studies. He has produced over 20 books, including the monographs *Democracy, Law and the Modernist Avant-Gardes* (2009), *The European Avant-Gardes, 1905-1935* (2018), and the (co-)edited volumes *Crisis* (2022), *Realisms of the Avant-Garde* (2020), and *The Aesthetics of Matter* (2013). A founder of the European Network for Avant-Garde and Modernism Studies (EAM), his work has appeared (in translation) in English, French, German, Dutch, Icelandic, Serbo-Croatian, Polish, and Chinese.

c

Sara Crangle is Professor of Modernism and the Avant-Garde at the University of Sussex, where she researches and teaches literature and culture from 1850 onward, emphasising approaches experimental and decolonial. Her books include a two-volume *Anatomy of Mina Loy, Nethered Regions* and *Elevated Realms* (Edinburgh UP, 2024); *I'm Working Here: The Collected Poems of Anna Mendelssohn* (Shearsman Books, 2020); *On Bathos* (with Peter Nicholls, Bloomsbury, 2012); *Stories and Essays of Mina Loy* (Dalkey Archive, 2011); and *Prosaic Desires: Modernist Knowledge, Boredom, Laughter, and Anticipation* (Edinburgh UP, 2010).

d

Catherine Dossin is Associate Professor of Art History at Purdue University and serves as Chief Editor of the *Artl@s Bulletin*. She is the author of *The Rise and Fall of American Art, 1940s-1980s: A Geopolitics of Western Art Worlds* (Routledge, 2015), the co-editor with Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann and Béatrice Joyeux-Prunel of *Circulations in the Global History of Art* (Routledge, 2015), the co-author with Lynn Boland of *Louise Blair Daura: A Virginian in Paris* (University of Georgia, 2017), and the editor of *France and the Visual Arts since 1945: Remapping European Postwar and Contemporary Art* (Bloomsbury, 2018). She is currently working on a book project tentatively titled *French Images of America, 1770s-1820s: The Visual History of a Colonial Mirage*.

e

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f

Hannah Feldman is Associate Professor of Art History and core faculty in Middle Eastern and North African Studies as well as Comparative Literary Studies at Northwestern University. She is the author of *From a Nation Torn: Decolonizing Art and Representation in France* (Duke, 2014) as well as of numerous articles about contemporary art and visual culture in publications including *Artforum, Art Journal, Frieze, nka: Journal of Contemporary African Art, October*, and *Third Text*, and in exhibition catalogues published by institutions including the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, the Kunsthalle Zürich, Portikus, Museet for Samtidskunst, the Whitney Museum of American Art, and the Renaissance Society.

Fabrice Flahutez is a Professor at the Université Jean Monnet in Saint-Etienne, co-director of the ECLLA research lab and Member of the Academic Institute of France. His research focuses on the avant-garde with particular emphasis on Surrealism and artist collectives after 1945. He has published many books on a variety of subjects and has curated international exhibitions. He was a member of the advisory committee for *Surrealism Beyond Borders* at the MET in New York and the Tate Modern in London. He was co-editor of *Networking Surrealism in the United States: Artists, Agents, and the Market*, vol. I, and *Le surréalisme et l'argent*, vol. 2 (Paris: German Center for Art History, 2019 and 2021). He is also the author of the catalogue *Matta Morphology of Desire* for the exhibition in the Kunstforum Wien (February-June 2024).

g

Jacopo Galimberti is an art historian and Assistant Professor at IUAV (Venice). His articles have appeared in journals such as *Art History*, *The Art Bulletin*, *The Oxford Art Journal* and *Grey Room*. He is the author of *Images of Class: Operaismo, Autonomia and the Visual Arts (1962-1988)* (Verso, 2022); *Individuals against Individualism. Western European Art Collectives (1956-1969)* (Liverpool University Press, 2017) and of *Détournement & Kitsch. Die Postkarten von Hans Peter Zimmer/Les cartes postales de Hans Peter Zimme*r (Les Presses Universitaires de Nanterre, 2021).

h–j

Tsitsi Jaji holds the Helen S. Bevington chair in Modern Poetry at Duke University, where she is an associate professor of English and African & African American Studies. She is also currently a senior research associate at Rhodes University in South Africa. Jaji's monograph, *Africa in Stereo: Music, Modernism and Pan-African Solidarity* was awarded the First Book Prize from the African Literature Association, among other recognition. Her current research on Black classical music's relationship to poetry and her methodology sets aside the common divide between creative and critical praxis. She has eld fellowships at the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study, the National Humanities Center, Mellon Foundation, and the Schomburg Center. Also a poet, Jaji is the author of two collections, the award-winning *Mother Tongues* and *Beating the Graves*, as well as a chapbook, *Carnaval*, which appears in the first box-set of New Generation African Poetry series.

k-l

Julia Anne Leach is a multidisciplinary artist, writer and Art History graduate student from Winnipeg, Manitoba. Her artistic practice investigates the life and history of her mother's home, Sioux Valley Dakota Nation – a reserve in Western Manitoba. Her fascination with Canadian Indigenous art manifests itself in her writing and Art History studies. She is currently working on her Master's thesis at the University of Manitoba, with a focus on the Professional Native Indian Artists Incorporated and the influence that Winnipeg had on Indigenous art in the 1960s and 1970s. Julia has also studied Creative Writing at Yale University and New York University. She received her BFA Honours from the University of Manitoba in June 2016 and is expected to graduate with her MA in Art History from the University of Manitoba in June 2025.

m

Dorota Michalska is an art researcher, critic and writer based in Oxford and Warsaw. She is a graduate of the University of Warsaw and the Courtauld Institute of Art in London. In 2023, she completed her doctoral dissertation at the University of Oxford focused on modern art, coloniality and modernity in Poland. Her writing has appeared in a number of art journals, including *ARTMargins, e-flux, L'Internationale, Afterall, Notes On Art In A Global Context,* and *Kajet Journal*. She has also written essays for the Venice Biennale (2019), the Matter of Art Biennale in Prague (2022), and the Zachęta National Gallery in Warsaw (2022, 2023). She is the co-editor of the publication *Beyond Exceptionalism. Art, Race, and Coloniality in Central-Eastern Europe*, upcoming with Routledge in 2024. Between 2013 and 2015, she was a Research Assistant at the Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw.

n-p

Olivier Penot-Lacassagne, HDR Maître de conférences at Sorbonne Nouvelle University (Paris), is a specialist in the work of Antonin Artaud, the avant-gardes, countercultures and ecocriticism. His books include *(In)actualité du surréalisme 1940-2020* (ed., 2022); *Antonin Artaud, l'Incandescent perpétuel* (2022); *Beat Generation. L'inservitude volontaire* (ed., 2018); *Poésie & Performance* (co-ed with G. Théval, 2018); *Back to Baudrillard* (ed., 2015); *Contre-cultures !* (2013); and *Engagements et déchirements. Les intellectuels et la guerre d'Algérie*, co-written with Catherine Brun (2012).

Dorothy Price is Professor of Modern and Contemporary Art and Critical Race Art History at The Courtauld since September 2021. Previously, she was a professorial research lead for the Transnational Modernisms Research Cluster at the University of Bristol and a founder member and inaugural Director of the Centre for Black Humanities. Her work has a particular emphasis on modernism in Germany and post-war art in Britain and demonstrates how critical race expands readings of the visual. She is also Editor of *Art History*, the journal of the Association for Art History, and is currently working on several publications, including *Art History and its Methods*, *Framing the Critical Decade: After the Black Arts Movement* and two special issues of *Art History*. Together with artist and Britain's next Venice Biennale representative, Professor Sonia Boyce RA OBE, she is co-editing *Rethinking British Art: Black Artists and Modernism*.

r

Effie Rentzou is Professor of French Literature and Director of the Program in

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S

Iveta Slavkova is Assistant Professor of Art History at the American University of Paris. Her recent book publications include *Earth as a Desert. Ecology and Surrealism* (co-ed. with Anne-Marie Butler and Donna Roberts, 2024), *Réparer l'homme. La crise de l'humanisme et l'Homme nouveau des avant-gardes autour de la Grande Guerre (1909-1929)* (2020), and *Crisis : The Avant-Garde and Modernism in Critical Modes* (co-ed. with Sascha Bru et al.). With Julia Drost (Centre allemand d'Histoire de l'art), Fabrice Flahutez and Olivier Penot-Laccassaigne she will host the next conference of the ISSS (International Society for the Study of Surrealism) at AUP in Fall 2024.

T – W

Isabel Wünsche is Professor of Art and Art History at Constructor University Bremen. Previously, she taught at the California Institute of Technology, Pasadena; Scripps College, Claremont, and UCLA and worked on museum projects in the Los Angeles area. She received numerous research grants and international fellowships and serves as a scout for the Henriette Herz Scouting Program of the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation. Her recent book publications include *Kunst & Leben. Michail Matjuschin und die russischen Avantgarde in St. Petersburg* (2012), *Meanings of Abstract Art: Between Nature and Theory* (2012), *The Organic School of the Russian Avant-Garde: Nature's Creative Principles* (2015), *Marianne Werefkin and the Women Artists in Her Circle* (2016*), Practices of Abstract Art: Between Anarchism and Appropriation* (2016), *The Routledge Companion to Expressionism in a Transnational Context* (2018), *Bauhaus Diaspora and Beyond. Transforming Education through Art, Design and Architecture* (2019), and *100 Years On: Revisiting the First Russian Art Exhibition of* 1922 (2022).

X – Z