



REVISITING PROGRESSIVE POLITICS IN LITERARY NEO-AVANT-GARDES

Jagiellonian University, Kraków, 15-16 May 2026

FRIDAY 15 MAY 2026

Venue: Jagiellonian Library, ul. Oleandry 3

12:00-12:50 – optional presentation of “Liberatura” collection of the Jagiellonian Library, seminar room, 1st floor (for early arrivals)

13:00-17:00 – presentations, discussion, and coffee break

Chair: Kris Van Heuckelom (KU Leuven)

13:10–14:00 – Katarzyna Bazarnik (Jagiellonian University), Agnieszka Karpowicz (University of Warsaw) & Jakub Kornhauser (Jagiellonian University), presentation of [A Hundred Years of Avant-Gardes. The Literary Experiment in Poland and Beyond 1917-2017](#) (Brill 2026)

Respondent: Kris Van Heuckelom (KU Leuven)

Non-presenting participants co-authors: Katarzyna Biela (Jagiellonian University), Olga Bartosiewicz-Nikolaev (Jagiellonian University), Przemysław Koniuszy (Jagiellonian University), Piotr Bogalecki (University of Silesia, Katowice), Emiliano Ranocchi (University of Udine), Mariusz Pisarski (University of Information Technology and Management, Rzeszów/ Electronic Literature Research Center, Adam Mickiewicz University of Poznań) (tbc), Piotr Marecki (Jagiellonian University; UBU Electronic Literature Lab) (Special 25% discount flyer attached)

14:00-14:30 – coffee break

14:30-15:10 Krzysztof Hoffmann (Adam Mickiewicz University of Poznań), “Erasure Poetics and the Politics of Form”

15:10-15:50 Agnieszka Karpowicz (University of Warsaw), ‘Radical materiality, radical politics. On Jerzy Zachara's archives”

15:50-16:30 Beata Śniecikowska (Institute of Literary Studies, Polish Academy of Science, Warszawa), “Verbo-visual poetics of the page - the art of Franciszka and Stefan Themerson”

16:30-16:40 – short break

16:40-17:20 Izabela Curyłło-Klag, “John Hargrave's progressive politics in Summer Time Ends” (Jagiellonian University)

17:20-18:00 Viola Hildebrand-Schat (University of Frankfurt) Vera Khlebnikova. Fragmentation as a Subversive Practice of Writing

SATURDAY 16 MAY 2026

**Venue: Faculty of Philology, Collegium Paderevianum,
al. Mickiewicza 9a, room A2**

9:00-12:00 – presentations & discussion

Chair: Thomas Eder (Universität Wien)

9:00-9:40 Sabine Müller (Universität Wien) - Politics and the Political, Progressiveness and Populism: A Tentative Systematization

9:40-10:20 - Vincent Broqua (Université de Paris 8) - The politics of NAG 10 years on: the difference is spreading

10:20-11:00 Lukas Schmutzer (Universität Wien) “Minor Literatures Processed in Monumental Form: On the Politics of Idiosyncratic Assemblages in Marianne Fritz’s “The Fortress”” (Universität Wien)

11:20-12:00 Linde De Potter (KU Leuven), “The lyrical as the mother of the political? Poetry and politics in Dutch neo-avant-garde poetry”

12 :00 – 13 :00 lunch break

13:00 – 15:00 ENAG steering committee meeting

1. Anthology
2. OELN
3. Next meeting
4. COST application

ABSTRACTS

Linde De Potter (KU Leuven)

The lyrical as the mother of the political? Poetry and politics in Dutch neo-avant-garde poetry

In Dutch literary historiography, the Second World War is commonly regarded as a moment of radical rupture (Brems 2006). This sense of discontinuity is particularly evident in the poetry of the early 1950s, when a group of young poets—the so-called ‘Vijftigers’, closely associated with the Cobra movement—sought to revolutionize traditional poetic forms, which they perceived as inadequate for articulating postwar experience. These neo-avant-garde writers were rapidly canonized as both aesthetic innovators and pioneers of postwar cultural emancipation. However, recent biographical studies have revealed that several central figures of the ‘Vijftigers’ (including Lucebert, Claus, and Andreus) expressed sympathies for the Nazi occupying forces during their youth, to a greater extent than previously assumed. These disclosures have unsettled readers’ admiration, prompting a sense of disillusionment and raising the question of how to read their work in the light of such revelations (e.g. Bax 2019; Oegema 2024). In my paper, I want to examine the tension between literary innovation and non-progressive - even fascist - political sympathies in Dutch neo-avant-garde literature, focusing on the work of the Belgian poet Hugo Claus (1929–2008) and that of the Dutch poet Lucebert (pseudonym of Lubertus J. Swaanswijk, 1924–1994).

Viola Hildebrand-Schat (University of Frankfurt)

Vera Khlebnikova. Fragmentation as a Subversive Practice of Writing

Vera Khlebnikova, whose grandmother was the sister of the poet Velimir Chlebnikov and whose father, Pëtr Vasilevič Miturič, was part of the artistic avant-garde, is herself, however never officially a member of the second generation of the so-called Moscow Conceptualists. Her artistic practice touches the boundaries of artistic and literary work. The latter is manifested in the artist’s novel *Doro*, published in 2002. The title itself is a fragment, just as the entire novel is a sequence of fragments but finally leading to a coherent whole. However, at the end the question about the context rests open. It does not become clear if it is based on real events, or if it is a mere fiction of the author. Through her experimental approach to writing, the artist brings together avant-garde practices such as montage, fragmentation, erasure and alienation through typography (blank spaces, unknown symbols). Thus, the novel represents a typographical experiment that raises the question of its classification. At the workshop, I would like to present possible ways of reading Vera Khlebnikova’s novel *Doro* and, on this basis, contextualise the relationship between a free artistic approach and neo-avant-garde writing.

Krzysztof Hoffmann (Adam Mickiewicz University of Poznań)

Erasure Poetics and the Politics of Form

I am going to present the results of research focused on the avant-garde poetics of erasure. The main emphasis will be placed on the early books of Marcin Mokry and their irreducibly political dimension. Through the procedure of textual cut-out, Mokry recontextualizes found material and applies to it a literary knife with a critical edge.

Agnieszka Karpowicz (University of Warsaw)

Radical materiality, radical politics. On Jerzy Zachara's archives

The radical politics of Łódź-based conceptual artist Jerzy Zachara are manifested primarily through the materiality of his works. This is art created outside of art institutions, without funding, on the margins – the artist found himself there because of his psychiatric illness, which excluded him from social and artistic life. I will present these characteristics of radical poverty of materials, tools and methods of creating art as one of the political aspects of this work. For him, creation was a form of contestation of the institutionalised and capitalist market mechanisms to which art is subordinated, but also of the modes of interpersonal communication, which Zachara opposed by creating in isolation.

Sabine Müller (Vienna)

Politics and the Political, Progressiveness and Populism: A Tentative Systematization

The question of the politics of the neo-avant-gardes is a theme that has accompanied the ENAG network continuously since its first meetings, even though this was never explicitly planned. Put somewhat pointedly, it is a topic that persistently asserts itself and intervenes in numerous other lines of inquiry. My presentation engages with this phenomenon in two steps. First, I offer a retrospective on the diverse contexts in which we have been confronted with the question of the relationship between politics, the political, and progressiveness, or in which we have actively addressed this relation in response. The aim of this review is to identify and recall the central coordinates and key questions that have shaped our discussions to date, as well as the associated state of the art. The second part of the presentation takes as its starting point the observation that, over the past few years, we have witnessed a radical shift in the relationship between politics and aesthetics, as well as between “progress” and “regression,” conservatism and innovation. The political model of the democratic constitutional state is eroding worldwide, while the rise of authoritarian populism remains largely unabated. Both developments call for a profound self-reflection across all disciplines concerned with culture and society: Which aims and instruments are adequate to current challenges, and which concepts and models may have become obsolete? Does the recent „aesthetic turn“ in the social and political sciences (Kompridis 2014) point toward new and meaningful tasks for literary studies? And what is the potential of the key concept in current “aesthetics of democracy” research—the “delightful horror” of political agency (J. Frank 2021): might this not ultimately lead us back, albeit within a transformed set of coordinates, to central questions of (neo-)avant-garde research?

Lukas Schmutzer (Universität Wien)

Minor Literatures Processed in Monumental Form: On the Politics of Idiosyncratic Assemblages in Marianne Fritz's "The Fortress"

In "The Fortress", a cycle comprising almost 10,000 pages, Marianne Fritz moves backwards through the twentieth century in order to approach its violence and catastrophes by tracing the development of verbal forms and the exclusions they produce. One major work within

this cycle, "Dessen Sprache du nicht verstehst" ("Whose Language You Do Not Understand"), offers a portrayal of Austrian society on the brink of the First World War by focusing on the asylum in the capital of the monarchy, a site that functions as a fortress in which stories are locked away. Its successor, "Naturgemäß" ("Natural"), dissects the siege of Przemyśl during the First World War and connects multiple historical layers in an "eternal realm of death" that stretches across present-day Poland and Ukraine. Despite its monumental scale, "The Fortress" derives its poetic force from assembling words, or even their components, of different origins and in great detail. Following Deleuze and Guattari's concept of "minor literature", Fritz's idiosyncratic procedures make a "minor" use even of major languages. Drawing on two "minor" case studies from the cited works, this talk demonstrates how Fritz's methods – also by transgressing the conventions of literary reception – link individual or even intimate matters to politics.

Beata Śniecikowska (Institute of Literary Research, Polish Academy of Sciences)

Verbo-visual poetics of the page - the art of Franciszka and Stefan Themerson

The presentation will be devoted to the verbo-visual works of a couple of (neo)avant-garde artists, Franciszka and Stefan Themerson. Some parts of their output prove deeply progressively political although seemingly very simple and straight-forward. I will discuss books for children produced in 1930s engaging the readers-viewers in revolutionary (!) mental operations involving the sensual and the intellectual. (I will contextually refer to some aspects of the experimental films of the Themersons). The speech will also tackle some post-war verbo-visual artefacts subversively undermining deeply rooted ways of thinking.

ORGANISATION

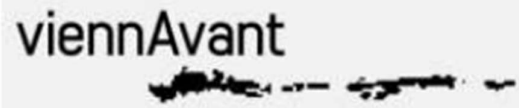
The workshop is a collaboration of the Jagiellonian University in Kraków and the research network ENAG. It is supported by a grant from the Faculty of Philology under the Strategic Programme *Excellence Initiative* at Jagiellonian University.



The workshop is also made possible by the Research Foundation – Flanders (FWO, funding number W000222N).



ENAG is an FWO-funded research network that further includes CIPA (Université de Liège), OBAwa (Jagiellonian University in Kraków), SEL (Ghent University and Vrije Universiteit Brussel), Transcrit (Université Paris 8), and ViennAvant (Universität Wien).



VENUE

Venue: Faculty of Philology, Collegium Paderevianum, al. Mickiewicza 9a, room tbc

How to get there:

From [Jagiellonian Uni Guesthouse](#): 20 min walk through the old town

From [Matejko Hotel](#): 25 min walk through the old town, or take the bus no. 197 or 304 (the bus stop is round the corner of the hotel), get off at AGH/UR stop, and cross the street at the street lights, Collegium Paderevianum is right opposite the AGH/UR bus stop; 15-18 min.

HOTEL

Jagiellonian University Guesthouse (<https://ujinn.pl/florianska/>)

Address: [ul. Floriańska 49, 31-019 Kraków](#)

Email: dguj@uj.edu.pl ; tel. +48 12 421 12 25

Matejko Hotel

Address: [Plac Matejki 8, Stare Miasto, 31-157 Kraków](#)

Email: reservations@hotelmatejko.pl or biuro@hotelmatejko.pl