

## **AVANT-GARDE/NEO-AVANT-GARDE BIBLIOGRAPHIC RESEARCH DATABASE**

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### **Research Project Summary**

The AHRC-funded research project “The European Avant-Garde: A Reassessment” was designed to undertake a comprehensive reassessment of the European avant-garde and develop a new theoretical foundation for avant-garde studies of the next decades. For 25 years Peter Bürger’s *Theory of the Avant-Garde* has shaped our understanding of the avant-garde and has provided the frame for the discussion of its artistic innovations and manifestations. It is to Bürger’s credit that an integrating platform for the study of avant-garde arts and a set of interdisciplinary categories for their analysis has been established. However, a quarter of a century on there is clearly a need to explore new approaches, approaches that might lead to replacing some of Bürger’s slightly problematic basic assumptions about the avant-garde and provide new insights into the significance of the range of new artistic techniques and new art forms that have emerged.

The recent project aimed to develop a comprehensive new theory of the avant-garde, its movements and manifestations in art and literature, theatre and film, music, dance and architecture. It also extended its investigation into neo-avant-gardist developments of the 1950s and 1960s with a view to providing a solid interpretation of the relationship between historical and neo-avant-garde movements.

The research will led to three book publications, the first concentrating on a consolidation and extension of the proposed new approach to the study of the avant-garde with first outlooks to neo-avant-garde developments, the second focusing on manifestations of the neo-avant-garde in various arts and attempting a new interpretation of the relationship between the two avant-gardes, and the third mapping out various movements in avant-garde cinema and video art.

The book publications are accompanied by a database providing bibliographic information on avant-garde and neo-avant-garde manifestations across the disciplines to encourage, facilitate and stimulate further research in the field.

### **Database Objectives**

The objective of this database is to encourage, facilitate and stimulate research across the disciplines on avant-garde and neo-avant-garde art, literature, film, music, theory, architecture and performance.

The database features a collection of 3 450 bibliographic entries on secondary literature on avant-garde and neo-avant-garde related themes and topics. The entries are searchable via various different keyword functions including the categories ‘movement’ (i.e. “Dada”, “Surrealism”, “Situationist International” etc.), ‘main topic’ (“dadaist art”, “surrealist literature”, “photomontage” etc.) and ‘main author/artist discussed’. We want scholars to be able to search precisely for literature on very specific avant-garde related topics (such as less well-known movements or individuals, or particular avant-garde techniques, or literature on specific art forms within the various movements etc.), which are often not searchable in ordinary library catalogues.

The information featured in each single entry includes: author/creator and contributors (in case of essay collections), time and place of publication, publisher, type of publication [i.e.

monograph, essay collection, exhibition catalogue, catalogue raisonné, essay, review etc], language, and ISBN or ISSN numbers.

We have attempted to cover relevant literature on major movements and individuals of the respective periods. Most works in the database are in English, though significant literature in other languages has also been included in some cases.

The database mainly features secondary literature, i.e. literature *about* the avant-garde rather than *by* the avant-garde. However, exceptions have been made in those cases where the writers and painters of the avant-garde have written theoretical assessments, analytical pieces or declarations of intentions which are relevant for the understanding of the avant-garde's endeavours. This is why certain manifestos, key essays, programmatic statements or reviews have been included. These are usually designated in the 'type' category as 'programme/manifesto/statement'.

## **Instructions for Use**

**System Requirements:** Access 2000 or a newer version. It might be necessary to download the database onto your PC in order to use it.

When opening the Access database, the user will find a green switchboard with the options "Queries", "Reports" and "Maintenance". The "Queries" form features the options "Artist/Writer", "Movements" and "Topics". These are the three main search functions of the database, and enable the user to search for key artists/writers discussed, literature on specific movements and specific topics, such as "futurist literature" or "sound poetry". Just click on the respective search query, and a window will pop up. Enter the last name of an artist/writer for query one [example: Ball], a movement name for query two [example: Cubism], or a main topic [example: dadaist art]. The "main topic" field can either be used to bring up everything "dadaist", by entering "dadaist" or "futurist" without further specification, or it can be used to bring up only literature on specific manifestations within movements, such as "dadaist performance", or, finally, information on specific techniques or genres, such as "visual poetry" or "collage".

The database will then bring up all entries on literature featuring information on these specific requests on a datasheet in tabular form. The information displayed in these entries includes creator, title, place and date of publication as well as name of publisher, ISBN or ISSN numbers, title of source and name of source creator in case of non-independent publications such as essays, as well as information on translators and the title key number.

In the second form called "reports", the user can view all the movements and keywords and names of writers/artists which feature in the database. Please note that in some cases, for instance "Cubism" and "Abstract Expressionism", we have not broken down the entries into main topics, since these movements are pure art movement, and the category "abstract expressionist art" would be tautological. There are other cases where movements only specialise in one art form, and these non-interdisciplinary movements can generally only be looked up in the movement section. We have also used "avant-garde" or "neo-avant-garde" + "art", "literature" and "film" etc only in cases where individual creators can not be attributed to a specific movement. Since everything in this database is either "avant-garde" or "neo-avant-garde", these categories are not very useful search tools, and are only used in situations when it is not possible to categorise or specify more precisely. Guillaume Apollinaire's poetry for instance is marked as "avant-garde literature", but F.T. Marinetti's poetry is marked as "futurist literature". "avant-garde literature" or "avant-garde art" will thus only bring up literature which can not be attributed to specific movements. Please have a look at the lists to check what is searchable and how to do it best.

The "maintenance" section enables the user to look up specific entries for additional information. By opening the "edit existing entries" window, the user can click through all entries in the database successively, or can look up a specific entry for additional information

by typing the title into the “find title” field at the top right hand corner and then pressing “enter”.

Furthermore, when the database has been downloaded, the user can also add his or her own research material to it, by using the “add a new entry” command and by filling out all the required fields.

Additionally, for those users who are proficient in the use of Access, the window behind the switchboard allows users to create their own queries, reports and lists, matched to their own specific requirements. By using the wizard, users can choose the bibliographical information which they find useful and want to be displayed.

## **Subject Keywords**

### **General:**

avant-garde, neo-avant-garde, literature, art, architecture, music, dance, film, performance, photography

### **Movements:**

Abstract Expressionism, Cobra, Conceptual Art, Concrete Art, Concrete Poetry, Constructivism, Creacionismo, Cubism, Cubo-Futurism, Dada, De Stijl, Estridentismo, Expressionism, Fluxus, Futurism, Gutai, Lettrisme, Merz, Minimalism, Noigandres, Oulipo, Pop Art, Productivism, Situationist International, Suprematism, Surrealism, Tabu, Ultraism, Vorticism, Wiener Aktionismus, Wiener Gruppe

### **Main Topics:**

automatic writing, avant-garde architecture, avant-garde art, avant-garde dance, avant-garde film, avant-garde literature, avant-garde music, avant-garde performance, avant-garde photography, Bauhaus architecture, cobra art, cobra literature, collage, concrete poetry, constructivist architecture, constructivist art, constructivist theatre, dadaist art, dadaist literature, dadaist performance, de stijl architecture, de stijl art, de stijl literature, digital art, digital literature, electronic music, expressionist art, expressionist film, expressionist literature, expressionist music, expressionist theatre, fluxus art, fluxus performance, futurist architecture, futurist art, futurist film, futurist literature, futurist music, futurist performance, gutai art, gutai performance, manifestos, minimalist art, minimalist music, neo-avant-garde architecture, neo-avant-garde art, neo-avant-garde dance, neo-avant-garde film, neo-avant-garde literature, neo-avant-garde music, neo-avant-garde performance, photomontage, readymade, serialism, situationist theory, sound poetry, surrealist art, surrealist film, surrealist literature, surrealist performance, surrealist photography, theory of avant-garde, theory of neo-avant-garde, visual poetry, vorticist art, vorticist literature

### **Main Artists/Writers discussed:**

We have attempted to cover the major protagonists of the historical and the neo-avant-garde in art, literature, film, architecture, music, dance, performance and photography.