

Invisible Republic: Music, Lettrism, Avant-Gardes (Lisbon, 25–27 Oct 17)

University of Lisbon and Museum of Art, Architecture and Technology (Maat), Oct
25–27, 2017

Deadline: May 25, 2017

Anabela Duarte

Conference organized by: Anabela Duarte (ULisbon) and Andrew Hussey (ULondon)

Keynote Speakers: Frédéric Acquaviva (FR), Kaira Cabañas (U Florida), Clinton Heylin (GB), Heitor Alvelos (U Porto), Bronac Ferran (U London), Kevin Repp (U Yale), Andrew Hussey (U London)

In *Invisible Republic: Bob Dylan's Basement Tapes* (1997), Greil Marcus charts a countercultural sound map, a kind of laboratory where a new language is being forged. This is where, Marcus argues, we can locate the true voice of the century, a new consciousness, the alchemy of an undiscovered country. From this starting-point, we propose a journey into the tangled relationship between music, the avant-gardes and counterculture.

In 1942, Isidore Isou, a Jew from Romania, created in Bucharest an artistic and cultural trend that claimed for a “new republic” of letters. He brought it to Paris in 1945, and this became “Lettrism”, one of the most inventive but also one of the most unknown movements of the post-war avant-gardes. In 1947, he published a manifesto, an introduction to a new poetry and a new music that set forth Lettrism as a general movement of creation, a poetry liberated from words and syntax, and a number of propositions that constitute a fundamental historical link between the modern and the contemporary.

Lettrism, it has been argued, was the progenitor of future upheavals and revolts, such as May '68, Punk, Situationism, Fluxus, among others. Music and sound, in this context, are powerful instruments of destruction and/or reconfiguration of language and the Arts. The connection between writing and auditory experience becomes the experience itself – back to Dylan: the lab of the basement tapes.

In diagrammatic opposition - literally on the other side of the ocean - in the 1960s, another counterculture was getting under way. From Bucharest to Paris, London to New York, Paris to Brasil, Cuba or Chile, to name just a few, the same urge for the unknown, for destruction and anti-art poetics emerged almost simultaneously in every field.

The present conference aims at exploring and bringing to the fore the “invisible republics” of culture, the ephemeral, the suppressed, the unconformity of artistic and political undercurrents. Above all, it asks how these separate geographical territories speak to each other, and how this might reshape our historical understanding of European and American modernity.

FOCUS THEMES

Decentering the Avant-Gardes

The possible significance of the fact that Tristan Tzara and other Dadaists, leading Surrealists and Isidore Isou were from Eastern Europe. What can this tell us about “Western” modernity, cultural dissonances and the Post-Colonial world.

Music/Sound/Soundscape and Literature

Bob Dylan and the Subterranean America, Sound-Art, Sound Poetry, Physical Poetry, The Aesthetics of Noise.

Politics and Aesthetics of Invisibility

Representations of the withdrawn, haunting absences, masks and camouflaging, minorisation, détournement, dissolution, discrepancy, interruption, the invisible, the repressed.

Transatlantic Avant-Gardes and Counterculture

New York Dada, Black Mountain College, Beat Generation, Language Poets, Concretism, Latin-American Authors, Modern Hurufiyya, Youth Underground, Diggers’ legacy.

Avant-Gardes Revisited

Dadaism, Surrealism, Ultra-Lettrism, Schematism, Situationism, Punk, Fluxus, Russian Ego-Futurism, Constructivism, Italian Futurism, Portuguese Avant-Gardes.

Politics and Poetics of Difference

Erotic Studies, Pedagogics of Art, Insurrectional Romanticism, Anti-psychiatry, Antonin Artaud.

New Poetic Languages, Cinema and Technology

Bio Art, Bio Poetry, Remediation, Postmodern Multimedia Avant-Garde Creativity, Lettrist Cinema, American Experimental Film.

For more information and contacts, please see the website of the conference at <https://invisiblerepublic.info/>

Reference:

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