

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE WITH ARTISTIC PROGRAM 10-12 OCTOBER 2024, NOVA GORICA, SLOVENIA

AVANT
GARDE
KONEC
SVETA

In today's world, we bear witness to violence, devastation, and terror, conveyed through chaotic and destructive imagery that anticipates many versions of an apocalyptic event. The narrative of the apocalypse stands as one of the oldest archetypes in the Western culture, fostering diverse ideas and images about utopian or dystopian futures. However, the end of the world is a much more immediate experience – many worlds are constantly ending or have already ended through ongoing imperialisms and colonialisms.

By growing insensitive to comprehend “the end” we seem to be encountering troubles with navigating through the myriad of mutually conditioned, interwoven crises that affect our daily lives. Thus, it becomes imperative to recollect and revisit the historical initiatives, concepts and actions that sought to critically contemplate the world before its end, and more crucially – to transform it. While the 20th century was marked by numerous endings and failures, characterised by perpetual wartime instability and the nuclear threat, the avant-garde viewed the idea of an end as an opening for transformation or radical turn. Even today, the avant-garde still acts as an open and active project focused on (re)imagining a new vision of the world and articulating alternative societal structures, emphasising not only the moment of disruption, but also the significance of participatory, engaged and relational practices.

By considering aesthetic, political, intellectual, and cultural contributions of the avant-garde the conference will seek to address questions such as: What are the meanings of “the end” in the context of avant-garde? What roles can avant-garde play in facing contemporary crises? What insights can be gained from the artistic practices and collective actions of avant-garde groups from disparate corners of the world? Can avant-garde practices help in envisioning an end to the neoliberal, capitalistic world and the injustices perpetuated by its ideological, political and economic structures? How do avant-garde strategies teach us to build futures to fight for, and imaginaries to move towards?

The Avant-Garde and the End of the World conference aims to (re)ignite the will for (co)creating a radical vision of the new world by discussing the role of avant-garde art, literature, and activism in facing the present struggles. Through connecting past and contemporary artistic practices and revolutionary projects aimed at fostering “optimal projections”, we will explore the types of worlds that avant-garde seeks to preserve or envision, as well as those it endeavours to dismantle.

The international scientific conference, accompanied by an artistic program, commemorates the centenary of the first constructivist exhibition by avant-garde artist Avgust Černigoj. His work made a key contribution to the understanding of socially engaged art and overcoming the boundary between life and art in the context of the European avant-garde.



The conference is organised by the Research Center for Humanities and Faculty of Humanities at the University of Nova Gorica, within the research program “Historical Interpretation of the 20th Century” (ARIS, P6-0347). Parts of the artistic program are organised within the Go!2025 Nova Gorica – Gorizia program.