

Introduction

The following issue of *Nordlit* has as its theme “Centre-Periphery. Avant-Garde and the Other” and is the outcome of a conference of the same name that took place in Tromsø on 23–24 November 2006. The peripheral location of this conference was evident to the many participants in the midwinter darkness of the Arctic. The theme of the Other is also deeply embedded in Tromsø, symbolized by prolific Sami Studies at the university, but it was and is thematized as well by a painting by one of the foremost Swedish avant-gardists, Gösta Adrian-Nilsson (GAN): “Indianstrid” (Indian Combat), reproduced on the conference posters and on the cover of this issue. As a homosexual from Scania in the south of Sweden, GAN was doubly excluded by the Centre, Stockholm, but he also often painted the Other: sailors, Indians and exotic creatures such as panthers. In this respect, he seemed the perfect theme for such a conference.

The conference was organized by the undersigned for the Nordic Network for Avant-Garde Studies, in co-operation with the Faculty of Humanities at the University of Tromsø. The Nordic Network of Avant-Garde Studies is financed by NordForsk as a continuance of the Danish avant-garde research network “The Return and Actuality of the Avant-Gardes” 2002–2003. The Nordic network has played a pivotal role in the establishment of a European Association of Avant-Garde and Modernism Studies (EAM), which has its inaugural conference in Ghent, Belgium in 2008.

Three keynote speakers were on the programme: Professor Arild Linneberg (Bergen) opened the conference with “The Aesthetic Avant-garde and the Sami tradition: A Speech on the inter-artistic Verbal Art of Nils-Aslak Valkeapää (Áillohaš)”; Professor Eva Forgacs (Budapest/Pasadena) spoke about “Romantic Peripheries”; and Professor Amelia Jones (Manchester) gave a presentation on “Performing the Wounded Body: A New Theory of Political Agency in the Visual Arts”.

The conference was a success, judging by the feedback from participants after the conference. It is therefore all the more pleasurable to be able to present a first collection of contributions to the conference, expanded with some additional essays and reviews, in this issue of *Nordlit* only half a year after the conference. A second collection, which focuses on the relation between avant-garde and periphery, will follow. I hope that the rich variety of articles on the themes of the conference will be of interest for scholars in all aesthetic fields. The articles are divided into three main categories. Firstly, there is a section

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containing theoretical investigations; this is followed by a section discussing the relation between different avant-gardes; finally, there is a section presenting avant-garde artists from different peripheries.

Per Bäckström

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