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## WHAT THE AVANT-GARDE STANDS FOR TODAY

**Abstract:** The main question of this article expresses doubts as to whether the end of the avant-garde was not in fact declared too early. Did we state too hastily that postmodernism has completely nullified the significance of the concept of the avant-garde? The resulting question that must be also asked is whether we need the avant-garde today. And if so, how do we use the methods and the theory of the avant-garde in the current context? This article assumes that the characteristics of the avant-garde continue to be recognized in contemporary art. In the beginning of my paper, I will summarize those characteristics as distinguished by Mieczysław Porębski, looking at them from the perspective of Nicolas Bourriaud's conception of relational aesthetics. Its emphasis on intersubjective relationships in their social environment and on the present moment, extends the ideas of the historical avant-garde. Here it meets the theory of encounters - icontrolology. Among the historical avant-garde artists it is Marcel Duchamp who is indicated here in a pivotal role, especially with regard to his concept of the ready-made, which was extended by Joseph Kosuth. The concept of Documenta 14 was linked to the historiography of Frank Ankersmit, based on micronarrations that function as ready-mades. The exhibition of Documenta 14 is shown here as composed of such micro-histories and at the same time, organized around key narratives. Small narratives make up a grand narrative - the story of an open and tolerant United Europe which is against racism and xenophobia and invites the presence of migrants. This is the practical lesson that we draw today from the Holocaust. This is the grand European narrative told in Documenta 14.

**Keywords:** the avant-garde, utopia, the ready-made, philosophy of dialogue, theory of encounters, icontrolology, relational aesthetics, Documenta 14

The avant-garde is the quintessence of modernism, but it has been differently defined. Stefan Morawski and Mieczysław Porębski undertook the task within the context of Polish art criticism. Porębski's definition was formulated on the grounds of art history. Thus, according to the methodological principles of this discipline, he takes a work of art as a reference point. Theory is located as close as possible to the artistic practice. Hence, it will be his approach which will serve as a point of departure for the reflections contained in this paper, and not the approach of Morawski, who considered this issue from the perspective of aesthetics.

Porębski had a special mandate to explore the issue of the avant-garde. He was associated with Grupa Krakowska [Cracow Group], from its establishment after World War II as a continuation of the first group that had operated in Cracow

before the war. The Cracow Group and its Krzysztofory Gallery in Cracow are tangible proof of the continuity of genuine avant-garde tradition, dating back to around 1918, when the first groups of avant-garde artists in Poland began to form. Cracow and the Cracow Group community is now the only place in Poland where such continuation is clearly evident (perhaps besides Łódź, where it can be seen on a smaller scale). World War II caused the decomposition and disbanding of the pre-war groups in other Polish cities, which after the war were no longer able to recover in the non-democratic conditions of the totalitarian regime. In Cracow it was possible because it was the only Polish city where the artistic tradition was particularly developed and which survived the war without ruin. During the German occupation Porębski participated in the preparation of avant-garde theatre performances staged by Tadeusz Kantor. He was a friend of the artists he wrote about, a so-called "participant critic". In his work he combined the critique of art with the knowledge of an art historian.

As a researcher, he also worked on the theory of art criticism itself. He proposed a division into "criticism by poets" and "criticism by experts". The group of poet-critics included, for example, André Salmon, Guillaume Apollinaire, and André Breton. Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler represented expert critics. Porębski, writing as a historian from the distance of time, saw this as a process: poets were replaced by experts (which became visible in the 1960s). Tomasz Gryglewicz, discussing Porębski's legacy in the article "A few comments on art criticism past and present. Dedicated to the memory of Professor Mieczysław Porębski, the last critic in old (good) style", cites some of his most important opinions, showing that Porębski's thinking about art was ahead of its time and his research results could reasonably complement contemporary research on the subject. He quotes Porębski's opinion concerning an "expert critic":

The modern expert has been able to incorporate in this new carnival-culture even the resistant, traditional disciplines of painting, graphic art, and sculpture. He has been able to turn a traditional, international biennale of art – at least for a moment – into a tourist attraction, the event of the season.<sup>1</sup>

Probably no one today doubts that this is how the curators of large, mass artistic events operate, especially in the biennial format, most widespread today. Another remark by Porębski is worth quoting together with the comment by Gryglewicz:

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<sup>1</sup> M. Porębski, *Jeszcze raz o krytyce*, in: Idem, *Pożegnanie z krytyką*, WL, Kraków-Wrocław 1983, p. 159; T. Gryglewicz, *Parę uwag na temat krytyki artystycznej dawniej i dzisiaj. Poświęcone pamięci prof. Mieczysława Porębskiego, ostatniego krytyka w dawnym (dobrym) stylu*, in: *Krytyka sztuki – filozofia, praktyka, dydaktyka*, ed. Ł. Guzek, Akademia Sztuk Pięknych w Gdańsku, Międzywydziałowy Instytut Nauk o Sztuce, Gdańsk 2013, p. 9.

Porębski observed – from the perspective of 1971 – that the change of the character of art criticism from the poetic to the expert mode ‘testifies to the growing importance and scope of visual information in all its manifestations, and in all of its sectors’ This remark should be treated as prophetic, looking from the perspective of the contemporary rapid development of the pictorial civilization based on digital technology and the Internet.<sup>2</sup>

There is thus no doubt that Porębski was prepared in many ways for the comprehensive exploration of avant-garde art. He himself was one of the experts he described; his main curatorial achievements included the permanent exhibition of Polish avant-garde art at the National Museum in Cracow, which presented this art to the Polish viewers for almost 30 years (from the 1970s to the beginning of 2000), and the exhibition at Sukiennice [Cloth Hall], a division of the National Museum, in 1975 (on the occasion of the AICA congress in Cracow), combining older and contemporary art, which in itself is very postmodern. Maria Anna Potocka, who exhibited his systematic drawings in her gallery (today they can be seen at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Krakow), managed to prove the point that he was also an artist.

By the 1980s, when Porębski published his essay entitled "Traditions and Avant-gardes"<sup>3</sup>, in which he included the aforementioned definition of the avant-garde, the question of the avant-garde seemed already closed, the object of interest of art historians (this was also the perspective taken by Porębski, who analyzed the avant-garde from the time gap as a historical phenomenon). The whole modernist era seemed definitively and irrevocably closed. The interest in artistic practice and theoretical reflection both on the artists and on the methodologies of art historians, moved to the time after modernism and after the avant-garde.

Why did we part with the project of the avant-garde? Haven't we dismissed it too quickly, considering it to be too obsolete and useless in both contemporary reflection and research into art? In this paper I offer the thesis that the notion of the avant-garde may be useful in relation to contemporary works, both in art criticism and in the study of art history. It can provide ways of understanding art and bring understanding to the world we live in. For this purpose, I will analyze the definition (a list of defining features) of the avant-garde by Porębski, and pair the features of the avant-garde singled out by him with contemporary works and their curatorial understanding, interpretation, and presentation, basing on exam-

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<sup>2</sup> M. Porębski, *Jeszcze raz o krytyce*, p. 160; T. Gryglewicz, *Parę uwag na temat krytyki artystycznej dawniej i dzisiaj*, p. 9.

<sup>3</sup> M. Porębski, *Tradycje i awangardy*, chap. XIII, in: *Sztuka a informacja*, WL, Kraków 1986, pp. 171-178.

ples from Nicolas Bourriaud's "relational theory" and Documenta 14 in Kassel in 2017.

Porębski distinguished ten features of the avant-garde, common to all phenomena of this type. Let us point out that his research is not trans-historic in nature, but refers to the art that is the result of analytical Cubism. However, agreeing with such scholars as Porębski himself and Rosalind Krauss that the art of the avant-garde is a consequence of Cubism, for a complete historical background I would complement this view by noting that it is also a consequence of Duchamp and the ready-made, as it is not only a story of painting but also of the object, understood in terms of the ready-made and not on the basis of the painterly analysis of the object in Cubism and post Cubism. Porębski abandoned art criticism in the 1960s (he wrote a book – a collection of essays – entitled *Farewell to Criticism*), when mass culture entered the art scene and artworks. Then came the 1970s and Conceptualism. As noted by Joseph Kosuth, "All art (after Duchamp) is conceptual".<sup>4</sup> All postmodern art is post-conceptual, and therefore all contemporary art. Thus, contemporary art, from the modernist avant-garde until today, is seen as a whole and can be perceived as a continuity of changes. Within this broadly understood history of contemporary art, the avant-garde comes into view and then recedes into the background again.

Let me now present the ten features of the avant-garde pointed out by Porębski in the context of contemporary art:

1. Belligerence – according to Porębski, it is a general characteristic of the avant-garde, which constitutes its *modus operandi*, and thus determines its practice. According to Peter Bürger, there is no feature (or set of features) of the avant-garde that would pertain to all of its formations. Instead, we can talk about the effects common to all avant-garde, such as shock. However, Bürger operates on the level of the aesthetic means of expression, although the catalog of these means can be extended (while preserving their connecting function) to include the formal ones. But Porębski sees belligerence as a feature bringing together the formal means of art and social assumptions, and it is belligerence that lets us perceive the avant-garde as a whole, and determines its overall style. This style – which is a consequence of the avant-garde's formal solutions, but above all of its position in the social context – enables it to continue to function – beyond its time. Another key word is "energy" as the driving force of creativity (in Polish art history, see the manifestos by Józef Robakowski and Andrzej Lachowicz).

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<sup>4</sup> „All art (after Duchamp) is conceptual (in nature) because art only exists conceptually”. J. Kosuth, *Art after Philosophy*, in: Idem, *Art After Philosophy and After. Collected Writings 1966-1990*, ed. Gabrielle Guercio, MIT Press, Cambridge, MA 2002, p. 18.

2. Intransigence – it is the *modus vivendi*, or the ethics of the avant-garde. It is visible not only in the manifestos, but also in the practice of life in which art is more important than practical matters, and artistic goals determine the goals of life. The result is a non-conformist life corresponding to the absolute postulate of artistic innovation. Today we understand it not only as a formal solution, but as the performativity of the entire modernist project – Jon McKenzie refers to it with the reverse postulate: "perform, or else...". And in this perspective, the ethics of the avant-garde is linked to the contemporary ethics of performativity.

3. Elitism – despite the formation of groups and the writing of collective manifestos, the avant-garde was not a mass movement (although it referred to the masses in the social sense). The avant-garde programs assumed elitism by definition. It was created by eminent individuals, heading the groups. These elites were a product of grassroots activity, just like any social activity. Today, when the world of art is institutionalized and media-oriented, its elite is created by the media. But the very principle of elitism in art is preserved. Large exhibitions build their longer- or shorter-lasting elites.

4. Distance towards the present – this distance was due to elitism. The avant-garde had placed itself at the forefront of change in art, and at the forefront of social change. Today that distance is called critique. Art seeks to illustrate social criticism. The large exhibitions, through the creations of invited artists, take up the big task of representing and bringing to the attention of today's global world those who are knocking on our doors in the form of migrants and those affected by religious persecution. Art helps you find your way in a changing world. The status quo is unmanageable. And this is due to the colloquial experience of each of us, as well as the readings and assumptions of performance studies and the title of Jon McKenzie's book *Perform or else*.

5. Re-valuation of tradition – Porębski points out that the avant-garde movement in fact reached back to various traditions, sometimes very distant, for example to Egyptian, African, or pre-Columbian art, Gothic art, or Classicism. Nevertheless, the connection with tradition has also served the present, as it was reworked to create modern works. The interest in anthropology and ethnography is very similar to that in contemporary trends. In the global world, the distance is shortened. Contemporary art is created everywhere and every culture is continually "discovered" for the needs of the projects created in different centers. The local and the global co-exist at large exhibitions.

6. Polycentrism – avant-garde art was created in major European cities, which were joined after World War II by New York, where a large proportion of the avant-garde elite had moved, and which took this opportunity to expand con-

temporary art. But today polycentrism is global, and biennials and museums are everywhere. Each of these local centers strives to both participate in the global discourse of the art world and to add something to it, to promote their own artists. This feature is currently increasing in importance.

7. Interdisciplinarity – although the main field of avant-garde experimentation was painting on canvas, its members also included musicians, poets, literati, dancers, filmmakers, photographers, and journalists. This is another feature that has been gaining importance. Contemporary art projects are interdisciplinary in their assumptions, and exhibitions display works representing many different media and forms of presentation. This is due to the complexity of the issues that they take up, and the overlapping of many contexts in the global world, which requires the cooperation of the artists of many disciplines, and even scientists. In order for a project to be convincing and elaborated, it must be developed on many levels of art and the humanities and requires the knowledge of many areas.

8. Programmaticity – the avant-garde artists and groups wrote manifestos, whose style was similar to that of political manifestos. They not only explained the goals of the group, but also called for specific actions. Let us remember that belligerence was the main feature of the avant-garde, so the style had to be expressive. Today we generate even more texts: artists' statements, catalogue essays, articles accompanying large exhibitions. But the style has changed. The expressiveness of the language has vanished (though it is preserved in the works) and it has been replaced by arguments, better suited to democratic debate. The conditions in which the avant-garde artists had to communicate their messages were far from today's democratic standards. Today, it is rather the opponents of art and democracy (usually they are the same people) who use outrageously expressive rhetoric. The written texts have yet another contemporary aspect – narration: building a narrative around the work and incorporating it into a network of other narratives. Today it is the narrative that makes an *explicit* work *implicit*. And the content of these narratives makes our contemporary art *implicit*. This function of narratives is the premise of contemporary projects and exhibitions, and in this sense is their general programmatic principle, regardless of the content of these narratives. Examples of such narratives in contemporary art will be discussed later on in this paper.

9. The spirit of revolt – revolt involving not only art, but also social practice. Porębski points out that avant-garde art was synonymous with social engagement. This was both an ethical and a moral choice. Today, if the reason for making art is not an aesthetic one (and we understand art as a voice in a global discourse, a constant debate about the world we live in), it implies that also the decision to engage in art is a moral and ethical choice. Today, in a democratic environment,

choices are not bipolar, dualistic and contingent. The means of art, like the means of the narrative are bold, incorporating different kinds of persuasion which we use in critical discourses. In this sense, art retains the spirit of revolt as it deals with social change.

10. Utopia – placed here at the end of the list, though Andrzej Turowski, the chief Polish researcher of the avant-garde, regards it as its main feature. The avant-garde project is romantic in nature. Revolt can be always considered unsuccessful, unfulfilled, unfinished; revolutions fail, degenerate, deny their own assumptions. However, they leave their footprint, which becomes a reference point for the subsequent developments. In Poland, the revolt against the Communist regime, initiated by Solidarity and Lech Wałęsa, seemed to have ended in defeat, as martial law was imposed to stifle this movement of freedom and destroy its achievements. But the idea survived and paved the way for the change in 1989. And today, when a democratic election has brought to power an anti-democratic and totalitarian party, the same impulse triggered protests and led people onto the streets in Poland. Utopia is not a failure, it is not a delusion or a false reality if it still brings real results. So also the historical avant-garde produced works and ideas that have survived and to which we still refer. One example is the revolt of 1968 and the flower power movement in the 1970s. In spite of the apparent failure of these allegedly utopian projects, they are still a reference point and bring real results, not only in the form of artworks, literature, films, but also political ideas that animate contemporary activities. The avant-garde utopia is still a point of reference and has consequences. So is it a utopia when it lives on amongst us? Or are we, perhaps, living in a utopia? Let me conclude this last paragraph with a quotation that will help us draw some conclusions about the nature of contemporary avant-garde:

But while I pondered all these things, and how men fight and lose the battle, and the thing that they fought for comes about in spite of their defeat, and when it comes turns out not to be what they meant, and other men have to fight for what they meant under another name – while I pondered all this, John Ball began to speak again in the same soft and dear voice with which he had left off. (*A Dream of John Ball* by William Morris, 1888).

Reading the fragment above in relation to the domain of art, we can say that the art of all times has been fighting a battle for making meanings, and it still continues today. The modernist avant-garde was nothing more than just a recent instalment of this battle. It matters to us because it has been fought so close to us in time and we still feel its effects. Its overall significance can be judged only from the distance of time. The avant-garde, with its various repertoires of visual forms and means of expression and its openness to creative individuality (in contrast to the neoclassical canon) had one goal – to give meaning to modernity, modern

man and society. Unity and diversity had one common goal – modernity as a liberating project, giving free hand to creativity. Diversity allowed for more freedom.

Is it possible today to point out any artistic project similar to the avant-garde, representing holistic understanding of reality, covering all aspects of life, up to the dissolution of art in life (as noted in his theory of the avant-garde by Peter Bürger)?

In the 1990s, such a holistic outlook was offered by relational aesthetics. Nicolas Bourriaud launched a project that yielded works of great diversity in the formal and artistic sense. Moreover, it was an open project, which could be joined by younger artists, especially those who appeared on the scene after 2000, when Bourriaud's theory gained wider circulation. What connects the works despite their diversity of forms is the building of interpersonal relationships. In the global world, where we face daily multicultural diversity with its individual visual forms, a meeting with the other is crucial. The openness of structure, participation, and interactivity are the features potentially facilitating relationships, which could happen or not. Relational aesthetics is a clear break from modernism, where the artwork remains isolated from the world, while (as in Bürger's theory of the avant-garde) the world strives to get along with life. This is the ultimate ideal of the avant-garde, attained (according to Bürger) by Dadaism, but its extension to Surrealism, Futurism, Constructivism, and to their successors Situationists – perhaps the last avant-garde before American-imposed commercialization of art – is just as legitimate.

In relational aesthetics, the meeting with the other must be as literal as possible, and the artwork is positioned in between, as something that causes this relationship. In an old dictionary of economics we can find the word “*incontro*” (or “*incontro*”, from the Italian “*encounter*”), which denotes a happy coincidence between supply and demand.<sup>5</sup> “*Incontrology*” is the term for the theory of encounters. The concept appears in the field of pedagogy and the philosophy of dialogue. In Poland, this theory is developed by Andrzej Nowicki; his philosophy of encounters is potentially an interesting tool for the interpretations of artworks. This theory, unlike Emmanuel Levinas and Martin Buber's philosophy of dialogue, does not focus merely on face-to-face encounters between people, but extends the study of such encounters to include the presence of artifacts (things).<sup>6</sup> I have used this concept in the interpretation of Piotr Wyrzykowski's performance based on generating random encounters.<sup>7</sup>

An artwork, according to Bourriaud, is thus a meeting place, as it once was (though today it is largely deprived of this role); a public space, like the antique forum. Its form goes beyond the material form of the work. “The contemporary

<sup>5</sup> See for example: *Słownik Wyrazów Obcych M. Arcta*, Wydawnictwo Michała Arcta, Warszawa 1937.

<sup>6</sup> A. Nowicki, *Spotkania w rzeczach*, Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, Warszawa 1991.

<sup>7</sup> Ł. Guzek, *Teleperformance*, <http://doc.art.pl/qq/wyfr.htm>.

artwork's form is spreading out from its material form: it is a linking element, a principle of dynamic agglutination."<sup>8</sup> Bourriaud's reference to Duchamp's famous term "art coefficient" means that we are looking for this active agent within things, a ready made, a space arrangement, a performance that we see around us. As in Bürger's theory of the avant-garde, in a creative act art and life blend in a new whole. The ready-made is not a work of art, but we see in it the art factor (coefficient). For Bourriaud it is a communicative agent, enabling both a relationship and an encounter. Duchamp's works are primarily a meeting with him; we meet his mind within them, questioning the main principles of art and the perceptions of artworks. Our present encounters with Duchamp's work are also encounters with its interpretation by numerous academics, critics, and last but not least – artists.

The idea of the ready-made has been extended to its uttermost by Joseph Kosuth and is widely used today. After Kosuth we can treat as ready-mades both grand and small narratives, or cultural discourses. Likewise, one can understand the artworks described by Bourriaud as examples of relational practices. Via Duchamp we encounter the very core of the avant-garde. When Kosuth said that "All art (after Duchamp) is conceptual", he was referring not only to the Copernican revolutionary reversal of the art-value system by shifting it away from the artifact, the surface visual form, to its meaning, but also to conceptual art as the cornerstone of contemporary art and of the practices of relational art. The counterpart to Kosuth's turn is the feminist turn, when Lynda Nead spoke about the need to deconstruct and reinterpret art as a whole, because it has been described from a patriarchal point of view. So it is not just the case of looking at some kind of art next to another kind, but an overall comprehensive change. The conceptual and feminist turns stand side by side, as it was historically in the 1970s and as it is now. So the avant-garde has been acted upon.

Duchamp turns out to be once again a link between the avant-garde and the present. If such a rich discourse has developed on Duchamp, it is because his works enable it. Each of them tells a story that can be developed by its interpreters. Thus they trigger a creative act. This is also true of relational works. Their micro-narratives feed on our imagination. According to Frank R. Ankersmit, in his metaphor they correspond to the readymade.<sup>9</sup> They are interesting in themselves, though in the context of world history they are insignificant - they have not changed the course of art, they are not so important as great historical battles. However, it is through them that one can show meaning and persuade others of it.

Let us take a look at the last example: Documenta 14 in 2017 is an artistic project in itself (curator Adam Szymczyk as an artist – a creator of meanings,

<sup>8</sup> N. Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics*, Le presses du reel, 2002, p. 21.

<sup>9</sup> F.R. Ankersmit, *Reprezentacja historyczna*, in: *Narracja, reprezentacja, doświadczenie. Studia z teorii historiografii*, ed. E. Domańska, Universitas, Kraków 2004, p. 166.

as is the curator Bourriaud). Documenta is more than a collection of works, it is a dialectical whole, where the components, the individual works, synthesize a more general meaning. This is a beautiful (and perhaps utopian, in the spirit of the avant-garde) message of solidarity in the global world, which is what Europe needs today, faced with the challenge that it is trying to meet. Not everyone, including Poland, passes this exam in maturity to become part of the modern world. These general ideas have been thoroughly described and interpreted. Here I am interested in the creation of this huge exhibition, which functions in the rhythm of a quinquennial as a meaning-making machine. Its scale makes it quite inaccessible to the individual recipient; it takes place in two cities and in many locations. So what does one find in its message?

*Documenta 14* in 2017 was organized according to histories. To be precise: micro-histories. They play the role of the ready made in the whole project. Its great narrative is told in accordance with the historiographical method of Ankersmit. The spectators were able to find many of these micronarratives in the exhibition. The key ones were properly exposed and the viewer could follow them. Even if the spectators could not take in the whole exhibition, these samples allowed them to draw their own conclusions in this act of encounter with the others. When I exchanged remarks with my friends about this show, it turned out that we had noticed the same elements in some works, obviously, but also each of us missed something, and in turn something drew only one person's attention. I believe that this was intended by the organizer. It revealed the meaning as a collective construction.

As usual, the exhibition featured many paintings, films, and artifacts. Each of them could be engaged with by the recipient, who was able to enjoy the whole exhibition by following these individual works. But collectively, the viewers were able to distinguish the key stories and capture the overall message of *Documenta 14*. They were like Ankersmit's micronarrations for the descriptions of ground-breaking events and historical processes. Overall, the exhibition presented the grand narrative of the United Europe today, open and tolerant, rejecting racism and xenophobia. It was the experience of the Holocaust that taught it to be this way. Thus, the contemporary art shown at *Documenta 14* begins exactly at the point where the historical avant-garde ended, with World War II and the Holocaust. Contrary to the postmodern views, grand narratives exist and govern modern Europe. Only in Europe and only because of this experience, an exhibition that runs up a millions-of-euros deficit is possible.<sup>10</sup> And here the *par excellence* European invention – the avant-garde – has its own vital source. Its ideological center is humanism, which today is measured by the attitude to migration. This applies to

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<sup>10</sup> <https://hyperallergic.com/400562/documenta-organizers-call-report-of-e7m-deficit-speculations-and-half-truths/>.

both governments and residents. Humanism as enlightenment was a great modernization project promoted by the avant-garde. Contemporary Europe's encounter with the other – the art shown at *Documenta 14* (individual works and the whole of the exhibition) is an instantiation of this project. Art is referring variously through the works-micronarrations – to these grand narratives. The categories singled out by Porębski, listed at the beginning of this paper, may be the features that also characterize the relational works, whose formal definition is equally difficult to arrive at. But here one can also try to generalize. If the avant-garde was originally united by Cubism, today's relational art is united by the ready-made.

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## CZYM JEST DZIŚ AWANGARDA (streszczenie)

Główne pytanie zadane w artykule wyraża wątpliwość, czy nie za wcześnie rozstaliśmy się z awangardą? Czy nie zbyt pośpiesznie stwierdziliśmy, że postmodernizm dokonał całkowitego unieważnienia znaczenia pojęcia awangarda? I wynikające stąd pytanie, czy awangarda jest dziś potrzebna? A jeżeli tak, to jak dziś na terenie sztuki wykorzystujemy metody działania i teorię awangardy?

Teza artykułu zakłada, iż cechy awangard rozpoznajemy także w sztuce współczesnej. Na początku mojego artykułu streszczam cechy awangardy wyróżnione przez Mieczysława Porębskiego. Następnie cechy te zostały zestawione z założeniami estetyki relacjonalnej Nicolasa Bourriaud. Budowanie relacji międzyludzkich zostało tu wskazane jako idea najlepiej dziś rozszerzająca cechy historycznej awangardy. I tu spotyka ona teorię spotkań - ikontrolologię. Wśród artystów historycznej awangardy to Marcel Duchamp został wskazany jako postać pośrednicząca, a szczególnie jego koncepcja ready made, rozszerzona przez Josepha Kosutha. Natomiast koncepcja Documenta 14 została powiązana z koncepcją historiograficzną Franka Ankersmita, opartą na mikronarracjach funkcjonujących tak jak ready made. Wystawa Documenta 14 została pokazana jako złożona z takich mikrohistorii, a zarazem zorganizowana wokół narracji kluczowych. Małe narracje składają się na wielką narrację - opowieść o otwartej i tolerancyjnej Zjednoczonej Europie, występującej przeciw rasizmowi i ksenofobii wobec obecności migrantów. To praktyczna lekcja jaką dziś wyciągamy z Holokaustu. To wielka narracja europejska opowiedziana w Documenta 14.

**Słowa kluczowe:** awangarda, utopia, ready made, filozofia dialogu, teoria spotkań, ikontrolologia, estetyka relacjonalna, Documenta 14.