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# Historicizing the Avant-garde

## Conference

Saturday, January 23, 2016



Avant-garde and historicity have traditionally been understood as strict opposites. The avant-garde “overcomes” the fetters of history, thus reconciling art and life in an unmediated way. Any attempt to historicize avant-garde movements of whatever kind has to be aware of the implicit contradiction that what is historicized never wanted to be history but beyond historicity altogether. That a “movement” becomes institutionalized seems to make things even worse, and history becomes almost identifiable with the institution. However, already since the early 1970s historicizing and localizing have increasingly become avant-garde ambitions in themselves. For the early 1990s these ambitions can even be considered as the crucial signifier of the period; practices refer to the historicity and locality of their own circumstances. But how can the historicizing and localizing ambitions of that avant-garde be historicized and localized again within historical distance, different locations, and institutional contexts? Any historical approach is first of all confronted with the absence of the specificity of these circumstances, which can only be reconstructed by means of information and design. Those are, however, already means of transforming an avant-garde into institutionalized forms of knowledge. In which sense then can we speak of an avant-garde or a movement in the museum? Which narratives are available to trace the history of specificities and the continuities of breaks? And how do practices relate to objects, works to research, information to display? Understood as an extension of the show *to expose, to show, to demonstrate, to inform, to offer*. *Artistic Practices around 1990* this conference will explore the museological and curatorial challenges of such questions as well as their philosophical and critical implications.

Concept by Helmut Draxler & Matthias Michalka

### Program

11:00

Introduction: Helmut Draxler

11:30

John Roberts: *History, Historicism and the Temporality of the Avant-Garde*

Break



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Alexander Aiben: *Historicizing Historization, or Making the Historical Relevant Again*

Break

17.00

### Information

Location: mumok Lounge

The conference will be held in English

### On the Show

Exhibition

**to expose, to show, to demonstrate, to inform, to offer**

Artistic Practices around 1990

**October 10, 2015 to February 14, 2016**

> Read more

„gruppe“ „parasites“: *to criticize, contextualize, organize*

17:45

Panel discussion with Eva Birkenstock, Ilse Lafer, Christian Höller, Jakob Schillinger, „gruppe“ „parasites“

Admission free

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Monday: 2 pm–7 pm, Tuesday to Sunday: 10 am–7 pm

Thursday: 10 am–9 pm



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