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Network Diagrams in Futurist and other Avant-garde Magazines: The Creation and Self-Positioning of an Imaginary Community

Abstract: This essay explores a common feature of avant-garde periodicals after the First World War, namely magazine advertisements which functioned as 'network diagrams'. Through their morphological and visual similarities, these diagrams constructed a virtual avant-garde community and sought to provide each magazine with a unique rôle. We examine magazines which look similar at first sight but diverge substantially in their operation and intention. Our investigation focusses on the question of whether they were in fact all imagining the same community. This diachronic examination of network diagrams shows that their nodes changed quite rapidly. Despite having exerted an enormous influence throughout Europe, Futurism was gradually replaced in the second half of the 1920s by International Constructivism. Our analysis begins in 1924, when Marinetti issued his manifesto *Le Futurisme mondial*, an ambitious attempt to re-conquer Futurism's place within the international avant-garde. Our focus is not so much on the manifesto's reception history, but rather on analysing how the artists and groups mentioned in Marinetti's manifesto defined their own position in the avant-garde scene, whether in support of or in opposition to Futurism.

Keywords: Avant-garde periodicals, 'Little Magazines', International Futurism, the manifesto *Le Futurisme mondial*, avant-garde networks, *Noi*, *Ma*, *Het Overzicht*, *7 Arts*, *Merz*, *Blok*, *De Stijl*

Avant-garde networks during and after the First World War

During the First World War, most avant-garde movements, despite their international outlook, defined themselves chiefly in terms of their own national culture. Their magazines were generally written in the language of the country in which they were published and sought readers within a national framework. The end of the Great War forced avant-garde movements to reassess their rôle

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within the new socio-cultural situation. As a result, during the 1920s, avant-garde artists made use of their magazines to communicate in a virtual, supra-national space; for the most part, the editors and authors did not necessarily meet in person. Nonetheless, these individuals engaged in an intensive dialogue, in which they debated, criticized and cited each other. This dynamic, constantly changing pattern of relationships was represented in the magazines by a distinctive feature: advertisements that can be termed 'network diagrams' (see Fig. 1). Within these magazines, they constituted an "imagined community"[1] which varied according to whether they originated in a European cultural centre or in peripheral locale.[2] These advertisements also functioned differently depending on whether they appeared in government-funded magazine, were financed by a political Party or backed by a private benefactor. This essay examines several magazines that advertised each other by means of such diagrams, and suggests that they had different functions. For example, an advertisement in the Roman periodical *Noi*, published in Fascist Italy, operated differently from a Constructivist journal in Berlin or Moscow, or a periodical from a small town such as Arad in Romania[3], or a Surrealist magazine.

Within a journal published in the national language, as most were, the network diagram was a means of displaying participation within a pan-European intellectual environment. It also demonstrated which other journals it regarded as essential reference points in the network. This idiosyncratic visualization of intellectual relations conveyed the dynamic changes in relationships between the magazines in a graphic manner and served the "social construction of reality",[4]

1 In his book *Imagined Communities*, Benedict Anderson discussed the idea of the social construction of these cooperative ventures in relation to nation states and nationalism. He claims that they emerged through a common language and through discourses that spread through 'print capitalism'. In contrast, we argue that the avant-garde artists used the concept of an 'imagined community' and the infrastructure of 'print capitalism' to create their own community that rose above nations, languages and cultures.

2 For more on 'internationalism' and polycentric operating mode of avant-garde periodicals and the question of centre and periphery, see Joyeux-Prunel: *Les Avant-gardes artistiques*, pp. 29–34 ("Problème 2: Des avant-gardes toutes internationalistes et révolutionnaires?") and pp. 283–286 ("L'internationalisme: Convinction ou stratégie?"); Piotrowski: "Toward a Horizontal History of the European Avant-Garde"; Wolff: *Inventing Eastern Europe*; Van den Berg: "Mapping Old Traces of the New"; Joyeux-Prunel: "Provincializing Paris".

3 The city of Arad, located in the Principality of Transylvania (formely South-East Hungary and now Romania) saw the rise of two avant-garde magazines: *Genius: Az egyetemes kultúra folyóirata* (Genius: Review of Global Culture, 1924–25), edited by Zoltán Franyó, and *Periszkóp, A haviszemle új típusa* (Periscope: A Monthly Review of a New Type, 1925–27), founded by György Szántó.

4 See the analyses in Berger and Luckmann: *The Social Construction of Reality*.

Fig. 1: Section of a network diagram advertising various avant-garde periodicals in Eastern and Western Europe in *Noi: Rivista d'arte futurista*, second series, 1:6–9 (1924).

in other words, it generated new relationships and actively shaped cultural processes in Europe and beyond. Thus, an in-depth analysis of these magazine's political and cultural programme reveals that these network diagrams were built according to a variety of conceptions: they could reflect a hierarchical order or an horizontal approach to magazines; moreover, they could be in harmony with the magazine's programme or utterly at odds with it.

Before going into detailed case studies, we must examine two mutually illuminating phenomena that have been studied by scholars of the avant-garde in recent years: the network and the magazine (see footnotes 6 and 7). Here, we formulate the question in terms of network diagrams, which we regard as the most striking point of contact between these two areas of scholarship: network research and studies of avant-garde magazines. This preliminary discussion of historiographical issues is necessary in order to understand how historians see the phenomena and how the journals and their editors described themselves. The former frequently refer to relationships of equal ranks, whereas the latter took highly diverse views of the importance and influence of a given periodical.

In the post-war period, a number of historians have focussed on the rôle played by 'Little Magazines', which were non-commercial periodicals of limited

circulation usually dedicated to experimental art and literature. These publications were of crucial importance for the dissemination of aesthetic tenets, between the second half of the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century.[5] We have decided to use the term 'avant-garde magazine' as a subcategory of 'Little Magazines', since the former had some distinctive features, such as the aspiration to set up dense networks in order to promote a 'New Art' worldwide.[6] Since the 1970s, historians have studied the network of avant-garde magazines, and the topic seems to have come into particular focus after 2000, no doubt encouraged by the upsurge of periodical digitization, data visualization, and big data technologies.[7]

The rise of avant-garde networks was usually based on the notion of a non-hierarchical, rhizomatic and democratic system of communicative relations.[8] This paradigm may be true in broad outline and related to other systems of intellectual relations, but needs to be refined in individual case studies. In other words, network diagrams also reveal that avant-garde periodicals interacted in diverging ways, and that the construction of a specific magazine's 'internationality' could convey a variety of meanings depending on the periodical's genesis.[9] There is also a need to study the nature of the relationships between avant-garde magazines, since the fact that one avant-garde magazine referred to another does not necessarily imply that they pursued similar goals. Even more importantly, the actual relationships between journals (in terms of personal ties, reprinting of essays, circulation of visual materials, etc.) varied widely, going from simple exchanges of information to close collaboration and even rivalries.

5 Ezra Pound's seminal essay "Small Magazines" described many important features of this genre already in 1930. The first extensive study was by Hoffmann, Allen and Ulrich: *The Little Magazine*: *A History and a Bibliography (1947)*.

6 Recent studies include Brooker and Thacker: "General Introduction"; Stead and Védrine: *L'Europe des revues (1880–1920)* and *Europe des revues II (1860–1930)*; Corral, Stanton and Valender: *Laboratorios de lo Nuevo: Revistas literarias y culturales de México, España y el Río de la Plata en la década de 1920*. For the theoretical and methodological questions of this expanding field of research, see *Journal of European Periodical Studies* and *Journal of Modern Periodical Studies*.

7 See Kienle: *Visualizing Networks*; Drouin: "Close- and Distant-Reading Modernism"; Ewing: "Perspective".

8 See Van den Berg: "Mapping Old Traces of the New". The limitations of network models applied to studies of avant-garde periodicals is pointed out, for example, by Liddle: "Method in Periodical Studies"; Murphy: "Introduction"; and Gherghescu: "Grilles et arborescences".

9 Mansbach, for example, has pointed this out in his historiographical review, *Modern Art in Eastern Europe*, pp. 1–7; see also Mansbach: *Standing in the Tempest*.

In general terms, we can describe the connections between avant-garde magazines as an exchange of information, as an artistic collaboration and as the development of a trans-national, polycentric network. These aspects are particularly evident in the study of Central and Eastern European and South American periodicals. However, we also have to take into account a variety of phenomena that did not serve the free flow of information or the establishment of intellectual contacts, such as the pursuit of aesthetic interests, political resistance or the transmission of propaganda and counter-propaganda. These national or regional nuances become clear in case studies that examine the internal mechanisms of the avant-garde network and build a comprehensive picture of cultural transfers.[10]

Our approach considers the relations between avant-garde periodicals neither in terms of the old historical narratives that assume a hierarchical structure of 'radiation' and 'influence', nor as an unfettered flow of information. Rather, they functioned as a series of 'reinterpretations', especially in Central and Eastern European cultures and others traditionally deemed 'peripheral', such as South America. In many ways, periodicals published in cities outside the European cultural centres transmitted avant-garde ideas from country to country. They often extracted and re-interpreted elements from movements such as Surrealism, International Constructivism and Futurism in order to construct their own, original programmes.

Le Futurisme mondial and the self-representation of the Italian avant-garde under Fascism

The Futurist magazine *Noi: Raccolta internazionale d'arte d'avanguardia = Recueil international d'art d'avant-garde* (We: International Collection of Avant-garde Art) was a distinctive and highly influential publication that consciously exploited its participation within an international network. It was published in Rome in two series (1917–1920 and 1923–1925), and was edited by Bino Sanminiatelli, Vittorio Orazi and by the Futurist painter and set designer Enrico Prampolini. This project began after Prampolini failed to be admitted to the Futurist circle due to Umberto Boccioni and Giacomo Balla's opposition, and sought to promote his career in the wider network of European avant-garde movements.[11] Thus, the magazine allowed

10 See Espagne and Werner: "Deutsch-französischer Kulturtransfer".

11 See Carpi: "Il teatro di Prampolini nella rivista 'Noi'"; Berghaus: *Italian Futurist Theatre*, pp. 264–291 and pp. 442–469; Siligato: *Prampolini*; Nazzaro, "Noi"; Rocchetti: "Noi"; Salaris: *Artecrazia*, pp. 7–23; Adamson: "Avant-Garde Modernism and Italian Fascism".

Prampolini and his associates to use their international contacts to carve out a position within the incipient Fascist system and thereby keep ahead of rival groups, particularly Margherita Sarfatti's *Novecento*.[12] Additionally, *Noi*'s internationalist line coincided with the régime's reliance on contemporary Italian art as a way to gain legitimacy abroad, an approach that sought to distract from its totalitarian aspirations.[13] After Boccioni's death, Marinetti invited Prampolini into his movement, which led *Noi* to become the most prominent Futurist organ and to change its name to *Rivista d'arte futurista* (Futurist Art Magazine). In 1924, *Noi* published Marinetti's manifesto *Le Futurisme mondial*,[14] which mentioned a hundred and ninety-five artists he regarded as Futurists. Like Marinetti, Prampolini believed that the concept of 'Futurism' included every school that rose up against academic, conservative cultural forces. They therefore saw the Weimar Bauhaus, the Berlin Dadaists and the Kassák group in Vienna as mere variants or off-shoots of Futurism. In line with this, Prampolini proposed that other schools were merely variants of Futurism, and he published materials sent by a variety of groups in his magazines. Naturally, this stance provoked impassioned protests amongst the artists classified as "Futurists without being aware of it or declared Futurists".[15]

In addition to the diagrams, *Noi* had a short "reports" section in which it publicized news and information on contemporary avant-garde periodicals of the most diverse orientation, including several magazines from Central and Eastern Europe that were not Futurist in any sense. Interestingly, the diagrams published in the journal suggest a non-hierarchical view of the avant-garde scene, quite in contrast to the perspective adopted by Marinetti in his manifesto on world-wide Futurism (Italian Futurism as the font and source of all Modernist schools). Prampolini used a coherent visual structure but listed all international avant-garde magazines without apparent geographic order, with subtitles or slogans translated into Italian. In the spirit of mutuality, *Noi* was presented in many contemporary journals as an important player within the international avant-garde. The idea of 'worldwide Futurism', however, was principally aimed at an internal readership and did not really appeal to the international avant-garde. In fact, the Futurists

12 On the conflictual relationship between Futurism and Novecento see the essay in this volume of the Yearbook by Guicciardo Sassoli de'Bianchi Strozzi: "Margherita Sarfatti, Novecento and Futurism."

13 See Nezzo: "Fra avanguardia e ritorno all'ordine"; Bethke: *From Futurism to Neoclassicism*; Millefiorini: *Tra avanguardia e accademia*; Falasca-Zamponi: *Fascist Spectacle*; Adamson: "The Culture of Italian Fascism and the Fascist Crisis of Modernity".

14 On the reception of *Le Futurisme mondial*, see, for example, Krzywkowski: "Le Futurisme mondial", and Berghaus: "Le Futurisme mondial".

15 "Futuristes sans le savoir, ou futuristes déclarés". Marinetti: "Le Futurisme mondial", p. 2.

misrepresented, misquoted and consciously falsified the international reception of Futurism in order to promote their position in Fascist Italy and abroad.[16]

Hungarian criticism of *Le Futurisme mondial* and Marinetti's links with Fascism

Noi's editorial policies and Marinetti's notion of 'worldwide Futurism' evoked a lively response in contemporary avant-garde periodicals. Not surprisingly, in many cases the response was negative, especially in magazines printed outside the traditional centres of Western culture. Why? Editors here stressed their autonomy and distanced themselves from Futurism. However, Lajos Kassák's interest in Futurism, which had begun in the 1910s, was rekindled when he met Marinetti in 1924. As far as their interaction can be reconstructed, Kassák disagreed with Marinetti, who supported a more individualist approach to art. Additionally, Kassák and his fellow artists criticized Marinetti's closeness to the Fascist régime and pro-war stance.[17] This also involved, indirectly, a dispute about the idea of a *futurisme mondial*.

Kassák and Marinetti's meeting was also attended by Prampolini, Theo van Doesburg, Jacob Levy Moreno and Andor Németh (who interpreted for Kassák). All of them, except the Hungarian émigrés temporarily based in the Austrian capital, had come to Vienna to visit an international exhibition on theatre design organized by Friedrich Kiesler.[18] After the meeting, Marinetti ascribed the divergent views on art held by the assembled avant-garde artists to 'southern' and 'northern' temperaments.[19] He also claimed that his pro-war stance derived from his hopes of sweeping away old political and cultural structures, and he said the same about his support of the Fascist cause. Nonetheless, he admitted that he had been disappointed in both of these hopes, called himself "the greatest collector of disappointments" and declared that he had turned away from politics and lived for art alone.[20]

16 See Berghaus: "Marinetti's 'Futurisme mondial': Propaganda and Reality".

17 Szeredi: "Kassákism"; Dobó: "Imagining the War".

18 On the exhibition see the essay in this volume of the yearbook by Arturo Larcati: "The Reception of Italian Futurism in Vienna in the 1920s and 1930s." On the meeting between Marinetti and Kassák, see Kappanyos: "The Reception of Futurism", pp. 125–126; Galácz and Szeredi: "Parallel Avant-Gardes in Vienna", pp. 138–143.

19 Ermers: "Futuristenkongreß im Hotel Erzherzog Karl", p. 4.

20 "Marinetti versucht den Angriffen standzuhalten. Er habe deshalb die Kriegstrompete geblasen, weil er gehofft habe, durch eine nationale Bewegung die alten Institutionen des Königs- und Papsttums über den Haufen zu werfen. Ähnliche Hoffnungen führten ihn zur Bejahung

Kassák argued against Marinetti's bellicose ideology, Fascism, "Italianness" and "disappointments" in an article entitled "F. T. Marinetti". It appeared in German in his magazine, *Ma* (Today),[21] and in Hungarian in *Periszkóp* (Periscope).[22] According to these articles, Marinetti,

> like every pioneer, was bound to wear himself out in his fight against the past [...] He opened the floodgates, since he was no longer able to vegetate in the shadows of the bourgeois order and the postulates of aesthetic beauty, but got lost in the space he had freed up. Instead of shaping the elements of the world with his acute intelligence, it was he who, over time, was shaped by external events, by mechanization, technology and, yes, by the greatest enemy of every deliberate revolution: war.[23]

Indirectly, Kassák also reacted to *Le Futurisme mondial*:

> Thus has it been possible for Futurism to remain essentially Italian, although nominally it was also adopted in other countries. And although the name of Marinetti has become famous, even infamous, everywhere, he is still unable to develop a progressive programme. [...] He is riding on the waves he has unleashed, lets himself be carried by the current, and shouts and sings with heightened passion, often in an inarticulate manner, as only an individual can do who has no relationship with the masses and who does not embody the new law. [...] He, who represented the young energy rushing to liberate us from classical traditions and who was filled with defiance and fanatical drive, could not recognize the real cause and purpose of the war, nor the reactionary political tendencies inherent in Fascism.[24]

Mussolinis. ‚Selbstverständlich mußte ich Enttäuschung über Enttäuschung erleben, so daß ich mich heute von allem außer der Kunst abkehrt habe. Ich bin der größte Enttäuschungssammler der Welt'."

21 Kassák: "F. T. Marinetti", p. [6].

22 Kassák: "F. T. Marinetti: A futuristák római kongresszusa alkalmából", pp. 21–24.

23 "Aber wie alle Neuerer, mußte auch Marinetti im Kampfe gegen die Vergangenheit aufgerieben werden. [...] Er öffnete die Tore, weil er nicht länger im Schatten der bürgerlichen Ordnung und des ästhetischen Schönen verkümmern wollte, allein er verirrte sich im freien Raum, und anstatt die Elemente der Welt mit plastischem Bewußtsein formen zu können, war er es, der von Zeit zu Zeit von den äußeren Ereignissen der Welt, von Mechanik und Technik ja, selbst vom größten Feind jeder bewußten Revolution, vom Kriege geformt wurde." Kassák: "F. T. Marinetti", p. [6].

24 "So konnte es geschehen, daß der Futurismus, wiewohl er dem Namen nach auch von anderen Ländern übernommen wurde, im tiefsten Grunde italienisch blieb, und so berühmt, ja berüchtigt Marinettis Namen auch geworden ist, vermag er dennoch kein vorwärtsführendes Programm zu bedeuten. [...] Er setzt sich auf die bewegliche Wellen, läßt sich vom Strome tragen und schreit und singt mit gesteigerter Leidenschaft, und meist unartikuliert, wie das nur ein der Zugehörigkeit zur Masse unfähigen und das neue Gesetz noch nicht vertretendes Individuum tun kann und muß. [...] Er, die zur Befreiung von den klassischen Traditionen stürmende junge Energie, konnte bei dem Trotz und der fanatischen Tatkraft, die ihn erfüllte, den nur zu reellen Grund und Zweck des Krieges ebensowenig erkennen, als die reaktionären politischen Tendenzen, die der Faschismus birgt." Kassák: "F. T. Marinetti", p. [6].

The "greatest collector of disappointments" had not, Kassák thought, "drawn the necessary consequences". The Italian leader claimed that when his hopes of political and cultural renewal had been betrayed after the Great War, he turned his back on politics and threw himself a hundred per cent into art; yet, he still had not noticed that "art, as an end in itself, is also unrealizable and, inevitably, brings disappointment to an artist who turns his back on the realities of the world."[25]

Kassák did not object to Marinetti's support of politically committed art, but criticized his rapprochement to Fascism. Despite all of Futurism's manifold merits, he felt compelled to reject the movement, largely because it remained a nationalist phenomenon and was thus unsuited to create a truly international, universal modern art.

Ma in the international network of avant-garde journals

For most of the Central and Eastern European avant-gardes, Futurism was a major point of reference. They either worked in alliance with Marinetti, side by side with his movement, or took a decidedly critical stance towards it. Most members of the avant-garde in Hungary insisted on their autonomy and on the autochthonous nature of their activities. Thus, even when they acted under a 'Futurist' banner, they did so on their own terms.

From 1916 to 1925, Kassák's magazine *Ma* functioned as the authoritative mouthpiece of the Hungarian avant-garde. Its history is divided into two distinct periods, one based in Budapest (1916–19) and the other in Vienna (1920–25). During the magazine's first epoch, Kassák steadily expanded its activities, which included a publishing house, an art gallery and an agency for performance evenings.[26] After the fall of the short-lived Hungarian Soviet Republic, in which many avant-garde figures took part, *Ma* was banned from Hungary and lost its cultural

25 "Es erübrigt sich nur noch die Frage, ob Marinetti aus diesen ständigen Enttäuschungen die letzten Konsequenzen zog. Er tat es nicht. [...] Und kehrte er neuerdings der Politik, die ihn um seine Hoffnung betrog, den Rücken, so warf er sich dafür zu hundert Prozent der Kunst in die Arme, ohne zu merken, daß die Kunst an und für sich gleichfalls unrealisierbar ist und dem Künstler, der den Ereignissen der Welt den Rücken kehrt, von vornherein nur Enttäuschungen zu bieten hat." Kassák: "F. T. Marinetti", p. [6].

26 See Pacsika: "Purposeful Player of the New Instrument."

base. Between 1920 and 1926, Kassák lived as an exile in Vienna, where his opportunities were somewhat reduced. Despite their meagre means, Kassák and his future wife, Jolán Simon, continued to publish *Ma*, but it did not resonate much with the Hungarian émigré community in Vienna, and Kassák's main challenge during these years was to break out of his isolation.[27]

In 1921, Kassák reconsidered his relationship with Futurism and reinvented *Ma* with the objective of building an international network with the most influential movements of his time.[28] At first, Kassák and his associates wrote most contributions in Hungarian, aiming their articles at Hungarian communities at home, in exile or in the successor States of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. Reproductions of artworks aided the international flow of information. After 1921, he began to publish several special issues on international avant-garde artists such as Kurt Schwitters, Hans Richter, Alexander Archipenko, Hans Arp, El Lissitzky and Theo van Doesburg.

After 1922, Kassák became one of the key players in the European avant-garde network.[29] The back cover of *Ma* featured several diagrams showing the relationships he considered important at that moment (see Fig. 2); it included Western magazines and several from Central and Eastern Europe. The asymmetrical modular grid, designed by Kassák, gives visual representation of a dynamic, non-hierarchical avant-garde scene, instead of an order that presupposes a central, canonical perspective. Moreover, the network diagrams appearing in *Ma* in 1922, 1923 and 1924 show the rise and fall of various Modernist periodicals.[30] Although *Ma*'s diagrams always included *Noi*, Kassák did not assign a central position to the Futurists. Initially, Expressionist and Dadaist magazines occupied a leading position, such as *Der Sturm*, *Die Aktion*, *Der Dada*, or *Mécano*; but eventually Constructivist and Functionalist journals replaced them, in accordance with a shift in the artistic position and programme adopted by Kassák and his magazine. The relationships established by *Ma* survived its closure in 1925, and resurfaced when Kassák re-activated them in *Dokumentum* (Document), the magazine he launched in 1926 upon his return to Budapest.

27 See Dobó and Szeredi: "The Heart of Austria is not the Center, but the Periphery."

28 Szeredi: "Kassákism", pp. 110–122.

29 For more on this, see Van den Berg: "Lajos Kassák".

30 Network diagrams appeared on the back covers of the *Ma* issues: 8:1 (October 1922), 9:1 (September 1923) and 9:6–7 (July 1924).

Fig. 2: Network diagram on the back cover of the October 1922 issue of *Ma*.

From Flanders to the world: *Het Overzicht*

In many ways, the Belgian magazine *Het Overzicht* (The Overview) developed in ways that were similar to *Ma*. Both periodicals supported artistic programmes that were close to avant-garde movements in hegemonic cultural centres, yet also independent from them.[31] *Het Overzicht* was edited by the poet Fernant Berckelaers (alias Michel Seuphor) and the painter Jozef Peeters and was initially published in Antwerp. During its first period (1921–22), it mainly dealt

31 On *Het Overzicht* see Coppens: "Jozef Peeters en Het Overzicht"; Marneffe, "Antwerp Circles", pp. 327–330; Van de Geer, Overwate and Kollwelter: "L'Internationalisme des revues modernistes"; Dobó and Szeredi: "Redefining the Role of Art and Artist".

with local issues, but between 1922 and 1925 it became a major forum for the international avant-garde.

After Seuphor sold his private library to cover the costs of printing and distribution, the magazine survived on its own resources, giving its editors great freedom. In Dutch-language articles, they supported the left-wing aspects of the (politically heterogeneous) Flemish Movement, which sought the political, linguistic and cultural autonomy of Flanders. The magazine also organized highly influential international events in Antwerp, including the Second Congress of Modern Art in 1922, which promoted Constructivism and raised the profile of both the magazine and the city. *Het Overzicht* also established contact with periodicals such as *Ma*, *De Stijl* (The Style) in the Netherlands, *Blok* (Block) in Poland, *Contimporanul* (Contemporary) in Romania, *Der Sturm* (The Storm) in Berlin, *Das Werk* (The Work) in Switzerland and *Zenit* (Zenith) in Zagreb and Belgrade. It printed articles on Futurism, translated some of Prampolini's essays, advertised the above-mentioned periodicals, and published Dutch translations of theoretical and literary work by the leading artists of International Constructivism. This probably explains the inclusion of the magazine's editors in the manifesto *Le Futurisme mondial*.

"Het Netwerk" (The Network), a manifesto-like list published in January 1924, featured cities, countries and individuals that were actively shaping the avant-garde in Europe and the Americas (see Fig. 3a). From Italy, other than *Noi*, it featured another Roman magazine, *Cronache d'attualità* (Chronicles of Current Affairs), edited by Anton Giulio Bragaglia, whose relationship with Futurism was rather conflict-ridden. However, in a significant gesture it did not list *Het Overzicht*'s rival, *De Stijl*.[32]

Functionalism in Belgium and the magazine *7 Arts*

Also included in the Belgian section of *Le Futurisme mondial* were the editors of *7 Arts* (Seven Arts). This magazine resembled *Het Overzicht* due to the wide scope of its contributions. It arose from a different milieu and operated with a different aesthetic model. Published between 1922 and 1928 in Brussels by the Bourgeois brothers – the poet Pierre and the architect Victor – *7 Arts* distinguished itself by appearing weekly, and its format and price were similar to

32 *Het Overzicht* 20 (January 1924), p. 136. One year later, not a single Futurist periodical appeared in the diagram entitled "Revues modernistes": *Het Overzicht* 22–24 (1925), back cover.

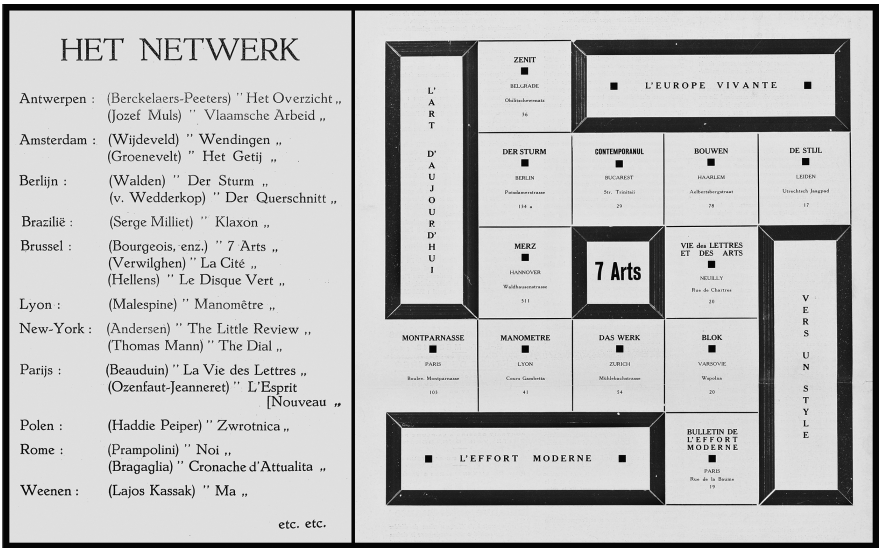

Fig. 3a: "Het Netwerk" [The Network]. *Het Overzicht* 20 (January 1924), p. 136. **Fig. 3b.** "Network diagram." *7 Arts* 3:18 (5 March 1925), back cover.

those of a daily newspaper.[33] Being a weekly publication, it could react quickly to new artistic developments. In general, it focussed on artistic life in Brussels, publishing programmes, reviews and reports of local cultural events. As its name implies, the magazine covered many forms of expression, from typography to literature and advertising, and treated contemporary phenomena without distinguishing between 'mass' and 'high' culture, or between 'applied' and 'fine' art.

After 1925, the magazine extended its subject matter and contacts into the international sphere by promoting Constructivism and Functionalism.[34] Its reviews of other magazines initially focussed on those that were published in neighbouring countries, mainly written in French, but it eventually included early Soviet art. It also featured magazines from Central Eastern Europe such as *Der Sturm*, *Ma*, *Blok*, *Contimporanul* and *Zenit*, as well as *De Stijl*. In terms of Futurism, it included *Noi*, *Der Futurismus* and *Le Futurisme*, as well as various books published by Marinetti's publishing house, the Edizioni Futuriste di

33 See Mus: "Streetscape of new districts", pp. 357–359.

34 Functionalism was an East-European, Benelux and Scandinavian equivalent to Italian Rationalism. Both promoted new principles of architectural practice, such as the radical simplification, typification and industrialization of construction, the doctrine of "form follows function" and the propagation of new forms of urban planning.

"Poesia". For the most part, *7 Arts* explored the similarities between different avant-garde movements and welcomed global cooperation.[35] It also sought to develop a coherent "International Modernism" while noting that every movement should be primarily rooted in its own national culture. The periodical's heterogenous programme was also reflected in the network diagrams in which the Bourgeois brothers presented the magazines they considered 'alive', 'topical' and 'modern' (see Fig. 3b). These functioned as visual manifestos, and their design incorporated the thick black lines and black squares which had become distinctive motifs in avant-garde art and periodicals.[36]

The supra-national Dadaist magazine *Merz*

Kurt Schwitters' magazine *Merz* was included in the network diagrams featured in nearly every avant-garde journal.[37] The magazine was launched in spring 1923, and its title referred to the editor's preferred art form, the collage, which was evoked in the publication's masthead. *Merz* belonged to Dada's post-war phase and rejected all established norms in art and literature. In line with its self-proclaimed status as "the world's stupidest magazine",[38] it was similar to previous Dada journals, but dissociated itself from French and German Dada. *Merz* started out when avant-garde periodicals were on the upswing, and Schwitters, in line with his programme, envisaged an international distribution. The back cover of the fourth issue, for example, lists the cover price in Dutch, French, British, Swedish, Danish, Norwegian, Russian, Czechoslovak, Italian, Swiss, Spanish, Portuguese, Japanese, American, German and Mexican currencies.

Schwitters linked the aesthetics of abstract art and the democratic, non-hierarchical international network of periodicals to a programme that opposed the resurgence of German nationalism, which he regarded as the main cause of the Great War. In an article published in the *Mitteilungsblätter* (information leaflets) of *Der Strum*, he argued that a particular national feeling should not be replaced by the idea of internationality, but that of "supranationality" (Übernationalität).[39] Schwitters planned the fourth issue of his magazine around the theme of

35 [Anon.]: "Vers un bloc modern??"

36 *7 Arts* 3:18 (5 March 1925) and 3:19 (12 March 1925), back cover.

37 The name was an arbitrary truncation of the German word 'Kommerz'. See Dietrich: "Hannover: 'True Art' and 'True Dada'", pp. 964–968.

38 "MERZ est le journal le plus sot de monde." Schwitters: "Banalitäten."

39 "[...] das Leben für seine Güter einzusetzen, das soll man für die Nation tun, so verlangt es das Nationalitätsgefühl. [...] Man verwechsele nicht 'das' Nationalgefühl mit Internationalität, es

'Übernationalität,' and he considered constructive-abstract art and sound poetry the most palpable expressions of this idea. It was in this spirit that he edited *Merz*, with a motto printed on the back page of the second issue: "Objectives: Dada – Merz – Style / Motif: World National Feeling".[40] During its brief life, mostly due to Schwitters' cultivation of international contacts after 1919, *Merz* found readers in nearly every avant-garde group in the world.

From the beginning, *Merz* included advertisements on its back cover and inside pages, mostly promoting Schwitters' own publications and those of his co-editor, Theo van Doesburg.[41] The fourth issue was the first to feature a list of periodicals on its back cover. Despite the subversive character of the magazine, it featured a rather conventional design (see Fig. 4a). In line with the magazine's independent spirit, Schwitters included diverse periodicals from Germany, France and the Netherlands, as well as others from the fringes of the international network, such as *Ma*, *Zenit* and *Contimporanul*. He also included migratory titles such as *Broom* (Rome, Berlin, New York, 1921–1924), *Secession* (Vienna, Berlin, Reutte and Brooklyn, New York City, 1922–1924) and the curious *S4N* ('Space for Name'), published from 1919 to 1925 in Northampton, Massachusetts, which found its way into the European avant-garde scene through Gorham Munson's efforts.[42]

Schwitters did not initially mention Futurist periodicals in *Merz* because Marinetti's patriotism did not fit into his 'supra-national' programme. In the first half of 1924, the back covers of issues 7 and 8–9 featured long lists under the heading "journals submitted", including the title of nearly every major avant-garde periodical. Amongst them were *Noi* and *L'aurora: Mensile futurista del movimento futurista giuliano* (Gorizia, 1923–24).[43] After 1924, its issues appeared irregularly and differed so much from each other that they hardly qualify as a 'magazine'.[44]

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ist Übernationalität." Schwitters: "Nationalitätsgefühl", pp. 3–4. For more on this, see Van den Berg: "'Übernationalität' der Avantgarde".

40 "Ziele: Dada – Merz – Stil / Motiv: Weltnationalgefühl." "Nummer i", *Merz* 2 (April 1923), back cover. The expression "world national feeling" (Weltnationalitätsgefühl) also featured in Theo van Doesburg's "Manifesto of Proletarian Art" (Manifest Proletkunst), co-signed by Tristan Tzara, Hans Arp, Christof Spengemann and Schwitters, published in the same issue of *Merz*.

41 "Holland Dada", *Merz* 1 (January 1923), back cover; "Nummer i", *Merz* 2 (April 1923), p. 23 and back cover.

42 "Banalitäten", *Merz* 4 (July 1923), back cover. Gorham Munson (1896–1969) was part of the Greenwich Village scene of avant-garde writers. He worked as a freelance critic and academic writer.

43 "Tapsheft", *Merz* 7 (January 1924), and "Nasci", *Merz* 8–9 (April 1924), back cover. On *L'aurora* see Carpi: "Giornali dell'avanguardismo giuliano."

44 See, for instance, issue 14/15, "Die Scheuche", or issue 8/9, the anthology "Nasci".

Fig. 4a: Back cover of the July 1923 issue of *Merz*. **Fig. 4b.** Network diagram on the back cover of the Winter 1924 issue of *Blok*.

Moreover, *Merz* did not take an active part in the subsequent formation of the international network and did not support International Constructivism.

Blok: An international journal of the Polish avant-garde

The reactions to *Le Futurisme mondial* in well-established non-Futurist periodicals were mainly negative or at best neutral. By contrast, the young Polish Constructivists, many of whom Marinetti mentioned, emulated Futurism in order to develop their visibility on the European scene.[45] Mieczysław Szczuka and Teresa Żarnower (Żarnowerówna) were Warsaw artists who launched *Blok* (1924–26), following the exhibition *Naujojo meno paroda / Wystawa nowej sztuki*

45 See Strożek: "'Marinetti is foreign to us': Polish Responses to Italian Futurism, 1917–1923."

(Exhibition of New Art), in 1923.[46] *Blok* mainly published reproductions of artworks and articles on art theory, and several of its issues also served as exhibition catalogues.

In its first year, *Blok* juxtaposed the 'pure' abstract art of Russian Suprematism with Bauhaus Functionalism. Its programme acted as a bridge between Russian and Western European conceptions of Constructivism and sought to form links with the Western European art scene.[47] This effort was evident in the magazine itself; the second issue, for example, included a greeting to the editors of the Bucharest magazine *Contimporanul*, and in the winter 1924 issue, the editors congratulated *Ma* on entering its tenth year.[48] The second issue also included a message from Marinetti which expressed fraternal feelings for Futurists in Poland: "With warm sympathies for my Futurist avant-gardist friends from *Blok*. F. T. Marinetti".[49]

Nearly all issues of *Blok* featured lists of international avant-garde journals which the editors and artists associated with. The typography of these directories frequently resembled that of traditional advertisements elsewhere in the magazine (e.g. for car dealers). The longest list contained an extensive inventory of contemporary avant-garde periodicals, some forty-four titles in all. The journals most prominently displayed were those closest to *Blok*'s Constructivist programme, although two Futurist magazines also appeared among them: Prampolini's *Noi* and *Futurist Aristocracy*, edited by Nanni Leone Castelli in New York.[50]

Blok's autumn 1924 issue appeared with the French subtitle "Revue internationale d'avant-garde" (International Journal of the Avant-garde), but its programme was written in German. A section of the magazine was devoted to articles presenting the latest trends in European art, translated into Polish. These had been written at *Blok*'s invitation by the editors and staff of the most highly esteemed periodicals. The next issue, winter 1924, gave the addresses of editorial offices in Warsaw, Krakow, Paris, Brussels and Berlin, thus underlining the magazine's international outlook and presence. A network diagram published on

46 See Liutkus: "Vytautas Kairiūkštis and the New Art Exhibition in Vilnius."

47 See Strożek: "Cracow and Warsaw: Becoming the Avant-Garde", pp. 1200–1206.

48 *Blok* 1:2 (May 1924), p. 5; *Blok* 8–9 (November-December 1924), p. 12.

49 "Przyjaciołom z 'Bloku' awangardzistom futuryzmu wyrazy mej żywej sympatji. F. T. Marinetti." *Blok* 1:2 (May 1924), p. 5. Marinetti sent very similar greetings to the Lithuanian Futurists who published *MUBA: Revue internationale* and the Czech group that issued *ReD: Revue Devětsil*. See the reproductions in *International Yearbook of Futurism Studies* 6 (2016), p. 182.

50 *Blok* 1:1 (March 1924), p. 4; 1:3–4 (June 1924), p. 11. See also Fochessati: "'Broom' and 'Futurist Aristocracy': When the Futurist Movement met the Machine Age."

the back cover of this issue (see Fig. 4b) no longer included Futurist periodicals, and it privileged leading journals of International Constructivism, such as *G: Material zur elementaren Gestaltung* (G: Materials for Elementary Design), *Mécano* (Mechanic), *De Stijl* and *Ma*.[51] The diagram thus served as an advertisement for the Constructivist network, making use of avant-garde typography and a multi-coloured design by Szczuka and Żarnower. Additionally, the world map on the cover of the spring 1925 issue proudly announced that the magazine's network of international contacts had spread far beyond Europe to cities in the Americas, China and Japan.

De Stijl and the canon of International Constructivism

In 1924, Theo van Doesburg, editor of *De Stijl*, set out – like Marinetti – to become one of the leaders of international Modernism. He was classified by Marinetti in *Le Futurisme mondial* as a Futurist, but in *De Stijl*, Van Doesburg arranged the hierarchy of the international avant-garde according to his ideas, subordinating Marinetti to his own system. Van Doesburg edited *De Stijl* in Leiden for a decade, during which it gradually moved away from the eponymous movement.[52] It initially focussed on Dutch art, but after the Great War began to incorporate the full spectrum of contemporary abstraction. In 1921, *De Stijl* proclaimed itself as "the international magazine of new art, worldview and culture". The front cover included a list of "De Stijl towns" where Van Doesburg had established contacts: Paris, Rome, Berlin, Weimar, Warsaw, Hanover and Vienna. Despite the fact that its articles were written mainly in Dutch and almost always by Van Doesburg himself (sometimes under pseudonyms), it eventually became one of the most influential journals of International Constructivism. Much like *Mécano*, Van Doesburg's other magazine, *De Stijl* was among the first efforts to establish a relationship between modern technology and avant-garde art.[53]

The international outlook of *De Stijl* was not solely due to Van Doesburg's efforts to position himself as a key player on the international scene. In 1922, he was a guest lecturer at the Bauhaus in Weimar and was one of the founders of

51 *Blok* 1:6–7 (September-October 1924), back cover; 1:8–9 (November-December 1924), back cover.

52 See Bru: "The Will to Style", pp. 296–306; Passuth: "De Stijl and the East-West Avant-Garde".

53 *Mécano* was latter edited under the pseudonym I. K. Bonset.

the Union of International Progressive Artists.[54] He also joined Tristan Tzara and organized the First International Congress of Constructivists and Dadaists, the proceedings of which – particularly the manifestoes on the social rôle of avant-garde art – were published in *De Stijl*.[55]

De Stijl advertised only journals associated with its programme, such as *Mécano*, *Merz*'s issue on Dutch Dada, and the Van Doesburg anthology that Kassák published as a special issue of *Ma*.[56] However, in 1924, Van Doesburg compiled the titles and publication details of sixty-seven periodicals. This list intended to cover the entire spectrum of avant-garde periodicals, but privileged efforts with programmes close to his own. In order to do so, he employed symbols that marked whether they were committed to Constructivism (marked with an "×") or related to *De Stijl* (marked with a "◊").[57] Hubert van den Berg suggests that Van Doesburg, despite his esteem for his avant-garde colleagues, positioned himself in a central position in the network of Modernist magazines.[58]

Futurist journals remained almost completely outside Van Doesburg's field of vision: *Noi* was absent from his list, while *L'aurora* and *La nuova Venezia* (New Venice)[59] appeared without being marked with an "especially interesting" symbol. In many ways, this was tied to his growing disappointment in the avant-garde. In spring 1925, Van Doesburg wrote an article in *De Stijl* entitled "The Death of Modernism", in which he reached the conclusion that none of the avant-garde movements of the previous fifteen years were ultimately capable of reforming art, since they merely used tradition under a new guise.[60] More importantly, he included a scathing attack on Futurism, ridiculed its *rappel à l'ordre* and declared it a thing of the past:

> Marinetti is still stuck in a position developed 15 years ago. Severini paints like "Guido Reni" and defends this way of painting, against which Futurism once campaigned, with the words: "Pourquoi? … Parce que je suis futuriste." Yet Futurism was one of the first expressions of the will to the New. […] The question, How did Futurism die? must be answered with a counter-question: How did it live?

54 See Finkeldey: *Konstruktivistische Internationale Schöpferische Arbeitsgemeinschaft, 1922–1927*.

55 See *De Stijl* 5:8 (August 1922).

56 See *De Stijl* 5:9 (September 1922), back cover.

57 Van Doesburg: "Alphabetische informatie", pp. 410–412.

58 Van den Berg: "Lajos Kassák", p. 22.

59 On *La nuova Venezia* see Bohn: *The Other Futurism: Futurist Activity in Venice, Padua, and Verona*, pp. 46–49.

60 Doorman: *Art in Progress*, p. 97; Van Kalmthout: "Futurism in the Netherlands", 193. Jane Beckett considers that Van Doesburg's text was a response to the book *Die Kunstismen* (The Isms of Art), compiled by El Lissitzky and Hans Arp, which did not include the *De Stijl* movement. See Beckett: "Discoursing on Dutch Modernism", p. 79, note 39.

Futurism was born from the heroic attempt to modernize the Latin race. It expressed this in visual forms that stood in marked contrast to classicomania, to the museum spirit and to the preservation of a romantic-lyrical form of beauty, which, lacking any spontaneity, had become an embalmed corpse, laced with the vermin of Nationalism. Using the format of the manifesto, Futurism carried out a rebellious form of journalism and demanded a substantial mental renewal applied to all walks of life. The whole world would obey the Italian message, which was equivalent to erecting an artistic dictatorship. (Heyday period:) Marinetti – Futurism; Mussolini – Fascism and 'Italia, Italia, über alles!'

Because of this, Futurism was gradually withering away. It encased visual thinking in narrow confines and thus killed itself, because the required renewal could not take place within such limits (= tradition, Colosseum, Forum Romanum). The return to Guido Reni, Mantegna, Uccello (Severini, de Chirico, Carrà, etc.) was a desperate attempt to save what was left of a tattered tradition. While the Egyptian leader (Marinetti) tries to shield himself by combining all the attempts of renewal once invented by him, his three or four remaining comrades feed on the lumps thrown to them from the North and East. Like it or not, they were driven towards a new way of thinking and seeing (e.g. Constructivism, Dadaism) but feel 'shy' and insecure and distrustful, like cripples and deaf men, invoking the scandals provoked in the past by a few protagonists such as Boccioni, whose early death prevented him from returning to ... Michelangelo.[61]

61 "Marinetti staat nog wel altijd op het standpunt – van voor 15 jaren. Severini schildert 'Guido Reni' en verdedigt deze schildermanier, waartegen het futurisme juist te velde trok, met de woorden: 'Pourquoi? ... Parce que je suis futuriste.' Toch was het Futurisme een der eerste uitdrukkingen van den wil tot het nieuwe. [...] De vraag, waaraan is het futurisme gestorven? moet met den wedervraag: waardoor heeft het geleefd? beantwoord worden. Het futurisme werd geboren uit de heroïsche poging om het latynsche ras te vernieuwen. Het gaf daaraan in beeldenden vorm uitdrukking. Domineerend daarin was het verzet tegen de classicomanie, tegen den museumgeest en het conserveeren van romantisch-lyrische vormschoonheid, welke uit gemis aan spontane impuls, een gebalsemd lijk geworden was, doorvreten van nationalistisch ongedierte. In manifest vorm voerde het futurisme een opstandige journalistiek, waarin de eisch: de mentaliteit wezenlijk te vernieuwen, voor alle gebieden geldend was. De geheele wereld zou gehoorzamen aan de Italiaansche boodschap, welke aan een kunstdictatuur gelijk stond. (bloei-periode) Marinetti – het futurisme; Mussolini – het fascisme en 'Italia, Italia, über alles!' Hierdoor werd het futurisme geleidelijk weggevreten. Het sperde het beeldend denken tusschen zijn grenzen in en zoo doodde het zichzelve, omdat de vereischte vernieuwingsconsequenties niet binnen deze grenzen (= traditie, Colosseum, Forum Romano) mogelijk waren. De terugtocht op Guido Réni, Mantegna, Uccello (Severini, Chirico, Carrà, etc.) was de wanhopige poging om nog te redden wat er van de, eertijds verscheurde traditie, over was. Terwijl de aegyptische leider (Marinetti) zich poogt te dekken door alle vernieuwspogingen op zijn uitvinding samen te trekken, voeden zich de drie of vier overgebleven kamaraden met de brokken die hun van uit het Noorden en Oosten worden toegeworpen. Nolens volens gedreven in een nieuwe aera van denken en zien (bv. constructivistiche, dadaïstiche) voelen zij zich 'schuw' en onzeker en wantrouwend als kreupelen en dooven, beroepen zich op het schandaal en een enkelen voorganger als Boccioni, welke door een vroegtijdigen dood verhinderd werd tot ... Michel Angiolo terug te keeren." Van Doesburg: "De dood der modernismen", pp. 124–126. It is worth noting that Marinetti kept a copy of this essay in his *libroni*.

Van Doesburg – like many artists during the mid-1920s – considered that the rise of new 'isms' could no longer be the way forward, and that the transformation of society could only be achieved through a new form of architecture.

Conclusion

This essay has analysed the brief period after the First World War in which avant-garde journals sought to form networks to support each other by establishing a system of contacts that would increase the international flow of ideas and information. Accordingly, our case studies have analysed magazine advertisements and network visualizations in terms of each magazine's programme. We conceived the relations between periodicals as a system of power relations that embraced rivalry, symbolic differentiation and cooperation.

Our starting point was the manifesto *Le Futurisme mondial*, a distinctive document in which Marinetti sought to establish an international position for this movement following the Fascist takeover in 1922. Designed to secure the movement's position in Italy, it irritated other contemporary avant-garde periodicals and provoked sharp reactions. These responses formed the basis for our analysis of the self-description of individual journals, especially with regard to their position within an international network. We thus chose six periodicals that were in many respects mutually divergent but which acknowledged each other as well as Futurism: *Ma*, *Het Overzicht*, *7 Arts*, *Merz*, *Blok* and *De Stijl*.

In line with the waning of Futurism and the rise of International Constructivism, the international network of avant-garde periodicals underwent many changes during the 1920s. Europe, after the turmoil of the Great War and the revolutionary events in many countries, entered a phase of economical stability, social pacification and a general political consolidation, which in the arts led to a pervasive *retour à l'ordre*. Within a short span of time, the avant-garde's utopian orientation disintegrated, and instead of publishing radical manifestos in niche avant-garde journals, artists, writers and editors of Modernist magazines engaged in the constructive task of rebuilding the cultural landscape of Europe. Consequently, many of the radical magazines seized publication and were replaced by design and architectural journals. Their editors – many of them being architects by profession – promoted the idea of building houses as a feasible way to revolutionize people's life, and thus the whole of society. At the same time, private and State investors became interested in Functionalist solutions in housing and town planning because of its potential in adapting the existing urban landscape to a standardized modern lifestyle.

A spectacular example of this transition is *Die neue Welt* (The New World), a special issue of *Das Werk: Schweizer Monatsschrift für Architektur, freie Kunst, angewandte Kunst* (The Work: Swiss Monthly for Architecture, Free Art, Applied Art) published by its guest editor Hannes Meyer in 1926. In a photomontage, Meyer displayed the Modernist periodicals he considered to be most the important ones at the time, a list which clearly dominated by magazines dedicated to architecture and design (See Fig. 5).[62]

Fig. 5: Hannes Meyer: "Einige zeitgemässe Zeitschriften" (Some Periodicals in Tune with Our Times). Collage-Diagram in *Das Werk*. Special issue on *Die neue Welt* 13:7 (1926), p. 235.

62 Hannes Meyer: "Einige zeitgemässe Zeitschriften", p. 235.

Translated by Alan Campbell

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