

differ precisely on the question of the way that the revolution, which they both believed in, could successfully be carried out.

»*An Outline* was published by the Belgrade publisher Nadrealistička izdanja (Surrealist Editions), which, at that time, was practically the only self-publishing outside France, and it is difficult to imagine that such a text could have appeared in any other discursive ideological publishing space of that time. *An Outline* was co-authored by Koča Popović, who had just returned from Paris, where he studied philosophy at the Sorbonne, and a bit older Marko Ristić, who was essentially the organizational polemical-critical mind of Belgrade Surrealism. So by someone who in Surrealism wrote the least and published with the most resistance and very quickly decided in favour of an armed revolutionary struggle, and someone who, throughout the 20th century, most consistently and most extensively wrote in and about Surrealism, engaging in theoretical and literary work. *An Outline* is one of the most exciting theoretical texts of the interwar avant-garde in general; it is a true work of non-school philosophy, philosophical in Deleuze's sense of inventing concepts and their internal structures and relations, written in a quite offensive energetic theoretical language and imaginatively, equally provoked by epistemological questions and the questions of the legitimisation of practice, so that it is still read today as quite modern theoretical prose.«

Several Panoramas for One Phenomenology of the Irrational is formed around collected archival material that follows the numerous polemics that developed around the book after its publication, but especially the discussion between the authors themselves. The protagonists of the work are various theoretical and art groups that are tried by the relation between politics and art just like the authors of *An Outline*. The participants in the project were the *Group for Conceptual Politics* (GCP), *Edicija Jugoslavija*, *Baraba Bookselling* and *Publishing Co-operative* and the writer Biljana Andonovska, who interpreted the archival material or the authors of the book themselves in line with their own aesthetical and ideological stances.

The work is realised as a performative interpretation of collected texts in places that were important for Marko Ristić and Koča Popović, such as the *Sutjeska National Park* or *Vrnjačka Banja*, *Kosmaj* and the *Museum of Contemporary Art in Belgrade*. The gallery installation is primarily intended for an in situ GPS intervention of the public in the galleries and museums of modern and contemporary art that are directly related to the project of Yugoslav modernism and thereby with the actors of the mentioned text, who importantly contributed to the project.

It is befitting and a special honour to mark the 90th anniversary of *An Outline for a Phenomenology of the Irrational* (1931), one of the crucial works of world thought and art, with Zoran Todorović's *Several Panoramas for One Phenomenology of the Irrational*, which reveals some of the locations that were important for Marko Ristić and Koča Popović, discloses part of their correspondence through postcards and letters, which they would send from their journeys or sojourns, shows a few manuscripts, drafts of texts and front pages of magazines, which Ristić and Popović cooperated on or created, and of course puts on view the original front page of the self-published *An Outline for a Phenomenology of the Irrational* and the memorial photos of the Yugoslav volunteers in the Spanish Civil War and Koča Popović on a horse. Zoran Todorović found the documentary material in the extensive archive of Marko Ristić and Koča Popović when he searched the Historical Archives of Belgrade, the Archives of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts and the Military Archive.

Webpage: 

Zoran Todorović

SEVERAL PANORAMAS FOR ONE PHENOMENOLOGY OF THE IRRATIONAL

12–30 April 2021

artKIT

An Outline for a Phenomenology of the Irrational: The 90th Anniversary of One of the Key Books of World Thought and Art

An Outline for a Phenomenology of the Irrational, which was doubtlessly one of the most important programmatic essays of Surrealism, was published in 1931 with a print run of five hundred copies. This year, we thus mark the 90th anniversary of one of the most important, unique and original publications of a reflection on art in Europe and the world. The book's authors **Marko Ristić** and **Koča Popović** dedicated the work to **Milan Dedinac** (1902–1966), a Serbian poet, the most expressive lyricist among the Surrealists and one of the thirteen that, in 1930, signed the Belgrade manifesto of Surrealism.

The uniqueness of *An Outline for a Phenomenology of the Irrational* lies in its pioneering attempt to interpret the Surrealist experiments in literature and fine arts with a terminology close to the then academic philosophy, psychoanalysis and Marxist theory of society and history. After decades of its broader unrecognisability and general public oblivion, it still seems to be one of the high points of theoretical writing on society and art and on artists and their role, not only in the territory of former Yugoslavia, but also beyond, since its power of articulation is at the international level of the avant-gardes of that time and ours.

The first half of the 20th century was seething with ideas of a new human being, a new world, a new society, revolution and evolution, scientific findings and technological inventions, automobility and new modes of presence, photography, film, gramophone and radio, electrification, industrialisation and revolution, the disintegration of imperia and the rearrangement of the world, social transformations, the creation of new states and wars, which, together with the economic crisis, raged for almost fifty years. People were building a new world and a new human being, they were establishing the collective and psychoanalysing the individual, while the sites of struggle originated in ideologies and spread among people through accessible media.

It began in 1909, when **Filippo Tommaso Marinetti** published the *Manifesto of Futurism* in *La gazzetta dell'Emilia* in Italy and then also in *Le Figaro* in France. Almost at the same time, two other movements emerged: *Constructivism*, which emerged in 1914 in Russia as an art and architectural movement under the influences of technical development and flourished after the October Revolution, and *Dada – Dadaism*, an art movement with centres in Zürich, Switzerland, the *Cabaret Voltaire* club in New York (1915) and, after 1920, also Paris and elsewhere. In 1919, **Walter Gropius** founded the **Bauhaus** art school in Weimar. It was based on the idea of a *Gesamtkunstwerk* (a total work of art), which was supposed to combine all arts.

While *Futurism* radically denied tradition, advocated power, speed, movement, violence, war, industrialised civilisation and technology and connected with Fascism, *Dada*, which developed as a response to World War One, rejected logic, reason and the aestheticism of modern capitalist society, instead expressing nonsense, irrationality, and anti-bourgeois protest in its works. In *Constructivism*, the abstract and austere constructivist art reflected modern industrial society and urban space, rejected decorative stylization and placed art in social roles related to socialism and the Russian avant-garde. The term »construction art« was first used by **Kazimir Severinovich Malevich** to describe the work of **Alexander Rodchenko** in 1917, while, in 1920, **Naum Gabo** presented it in *Realistic Manifesto*.

In this period, the Yugoslav historical avant-garde was born. At the end of World War One, on 1 December 1918, the *Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes* was founded. In 1919, **Anton Podbevšek** wrote his collection of poems *Človek z bombami* (Man with Bombs), which he published himself in 1925, after *Jugoslovanska knjigarna* had rejected his poems in 1921. Beginning with an exhibition that opened on 26 September 1920, the Novo Mesto Spring, a cultural and art manifestation, took place. It was supposed to not only regenerate Slovenian art, but also bring art closer to the people and at the same time emphasise the (Novo Mesto) art regeneration as a reflection of the contemporaneous seething in society.

In 1921, *Zenit – International Magazine for Art and Culture* began to be published in Zagreb. Its editor-in-chief was **Ljubomir Micić**, who was the driving force behind *Zenithism*, an eclectic avant-garde movement of broader social and political activity based on the tendency to change the regional status of national culture, construct one's own cultural system on the basis of new art and enter the European plan. Due to political disagreements in 1923, *Zenit's* editorial board had to move to Belgrade, where it remained until December 1926, when »Zenithism through the Prism of Marxism« was published in the magazine's 43rd issue; the authorities banned the magazine's publication, which was followed by a lawsuit against Micić, who then fled from Belgrade to Paris. Thus, the Zenithist activity ended.

In his manifesto, Micić introduces the term »barbarogenia«, so the Balkans, barbarians and uncivilised people, with an exclusively positive connotation, seeing it as the main bearer of the social and artistic changes and reforms in Europe. The movement was based on the dichotomy between barbarity and civilisation. Micić emphasises the dichotomy between dynamically paired, but conflicting concepts: the new Balkans oppose the old Europe; the primal, unconscious and naïve barbarian art against the refined, conscious and deformed civilisational art.

The term »surrealism« was supposedly floated by **Guillaume Apollinaire** already in 1917 even though the Surrealist movement was officially established only on 15 October 1924, when the French poet and critic **André Breton** published the *Manifesto of Surrealism* in Paris. In the 1920s, the movement spread from the centre of Paris across the world and had an impact on the visual arts, literature, cinema and music of numerous countries and languages and on political thought and practice, philosophy and social theory.

Marko Ristić began his correspondence with Breton in 1923, which led to the publication of Breton's first manifesto of Surrealism in *Svedočanstvo*. In addition to the translation of the manifesto, the first issue of *Svedočanstvo* also included the news about the foundation of the *Bureau of Surrealist Research*, which was published in Belgrade ten days before it was officially announced in *La Révolution surréaliste*. In 1926 and 1927, Ristić visited Paris, where he spent time with Breton and the Surrealist circle and saw their works at Breton's apartment. After spending a few months in Paris, Ristić wrote his novel *Bez mere*. At the beginning of the 1930s, he founded the Belgrade Surrealist group and was the editor of the Surrealist almanac *Nemoguće – L'Impossible*. With **Dušan Matić**, he wrote *The Position of Surrealism*, a declaration that was signed by eleven local Surrealists (Vane Bor, Aleksandar Vučo, Koča Popović, Milan Dedinac, Radojica Živanović Noe, Oskar Davičo, Đorđe Kostić, Risto Ratković, Mladen Dimitrijević, Djordje Jovanović, Petar Popović) and later banned.

In 1926, Koča Popović graduated from high school in Belgrade and then did his military service. In 1927, he graduated from the Sarajevo training school for reserve artillery officers of the Royal Yugoslav Army

and was promoted to artillery lieutenant in the same year. In 1929, he moved to Paris, where he studied law and philosophy. He became an active Surrealist, both in the French and the Serbian Surrealist group.

In the period between the two World Wars, Dadaist artists expressed their dissatisfaction with violence, war and nationalism. Later, Bauhaus became one of the most influential currents of modern design, modernist architecture and art, design and architectural education, including artists such as **Paul Klee**, **Wassily Kandinsky**, **László Moholy-Nagy**, **Oskar Schlemmer** and **Avgust Černigoj**. The art of the movement encompassed visual, literary and sound media, including collages, sound poetry, cut-out writing and sculpture. Italian Futurism introduced a few formal novelties (freed word, broken syntax), but did not create important literary works.

In August 1924, Avgust Černigoj, who was born in Trieste, mounted the 1st Constructivist Exhibition in the gym of the Technical High School in Ljubljana, but, at the time, he still experimented with anthropomorphic shapes and had not yet broken with composition and moved to construction. At the same time, Slovenian Constructivism was also built by **Srečko Kosovel**, one of the first Constructivist poets, **Ferdo Delak**, a theatre reformer and creator of the *Novi oder* magazine, and the Serbo-Croatian Zenithists **Branko Ve Poljanski** and Ljubomir Micić with the magazine *Svetokret*. In 1925, Černigoj invited two Futurists from Trieste, the poet **Emilio Mario Dolfi** and the artist **Giorgio Carmelich**, to cooperate with him. We should also add the artists Eduard Stepančič and Josip Vlah, who, with Carmelich and Černigoj, placed their art works in space at the exhibition mounted in the autumn of 1927 at the pavilion of the People's (Tommasini's) Garden in Trieste. That is how the *Trieste Constructivist Cabinet* was created.

In the spring of 1926, the group transformed into the **Trieste Constructivist Group** (Gruppo costruttivista di Trieste), which in the autumn of the same year began publishing the avant-garde magazine *Tank* under the leadership of Černigoj and Delak. In this case, an expressly internationally oriented activity emerged as a rare open attempt of Slovenian art to be put on the world map. In 1929, **Herwarth Walden**, the editor of *Der Sturm*, one of the main magazines for art criticism in Europe, dedicated a whole thematic issue of the eminent magazine to young Slovenian Art (*Junge slovenische Kunst*) also due to the endeavours of *Tank*.

Rare and precious are books that establish new language games and introduce us to a language that is close to the ordinary one, but has been changed just enough to describe and translate into the world of life those cultural contents that evade intuitive understanding and certain simple comprehensions. That is why *An Outline for a Phenomenology of the Irrational*, written in 1931 by **Marko Ristić** and **Koča Popović**, is so important not only for our, but also the entire European space and the world's art and society. It emancipated the Yugoslav avant-garde with an authorial, innovative and critical contribution significant for Surrealism and its establishment in the territory of former Yugoslavia.

Surrealist works are characterised by elements of surprise, unexpected concurrencies and paradoxes – *non sequiturs* (*non sequitur* is Latin for *it does not follow* – it is a literary device of creating nonsense that confuses and comes across as humorous). Numerous Surrealist artists and writers consider their works first and foremost as an expression of a philosophical movement (in the first manifesto of Surrealism, Breton wrote about »pure psychical automatism«), with the works themselves being secondary, that is, artefacts of Surrealist experimenting. The leader Breton expressly stated that Surrealism is above all a revolutionary movement, which at the time was related to communism and anarchism.

It was the time between the two World Wars, the global economic crisis and the rise of Fascism in Italy and Spain and Nazism in Germany. The Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, which was established in 1918, upon the disintegration of Austria-Hungary after World War One, was internationally recognised on 13 July 1922 in Paris at the Conference of Ambassadors of the Principal Allied and Associated Powers, which was an inter-allied organisation of the Entente after World War One. On 3 October 1929, it was renamed the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. The world was built anew and *An Outline for a Phenomenology of the Irrational* magnificently contributed to it. We can also follow it through the life stories of its authors, who