Beyond Tzara:

Dada, Constructivism, and Cubism in the Romanian Avant-Garde Magazines

by

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ABSTRACT

The dissertation focuses on several Romanian avant-garde magazines, such as *Contimporanul*, *Integral*, and *75HP*, that Romanian artists and writers created in Romania in the 1920s, after Romanian Dadaists Tristan Tzara and Marcel Iancu disbanded from Zurich Dada in the 1910s. The Romanian avant-garde magazines launched the Romanian avant-garde movement—the most intense period of artistic production in the country. The Romanian avant-gardists established Integralism in an attempt to differentiate themselves from other European avant-garde groups and to capture the intense and innovative creative spirit of their modern era by uniting and condensing avant-garde and modern styles on the pages of their magazines. However, I argue that instead of Integralism, what the Romanian avant-garde magazines put forth were Romanian avant-garde versions of Constructivism and Cubism conveyed in the magazines' constructivist prints and reproductions of cubist paintings. The originality of the Romanian avant-garde magazines, thus, is concentrated in their appropriation and reinterpretation of Constructivism and Cubism rather than in their Integralism. Moreover, in their rebellion and resistance to Romania's social, political, and artistic status quo, the Romanian avant-garde magazines functioned as an instrument with which the Romanian avant-gardists expressed their complex relationship with their Jewish identity. The magazines were not on the periphery of artistic production, as art history discourse on modern and avant-garde art has situated them, but were an important player in the global network of avant-garde magazines that traversed across eastern and western Europe, South America, the United States, and Japan.

DEDICATION

To my parents Felicia and Gavril, to my big brother Radu, and to my partner Marco for taking care of me throughout this mighty journey.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure Page

Figure Page

Figure Page

Figure Page

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The Romanians Tristan Tzara and Marcel Iancu represented the Romanian avant-garde during the beginning of Dada in Zurich. These two artists continued and expanded Dada in Romania where Romanian avant-garde magazines in the 1920s possessed distinct local elements. The magazines were published in Bucharest, Romania's capital city in the magazines' predominant Romanian language (though some text is in French and some in German). And the magazines featured numerous contributions from Romanian avant-garde artists and writers. The avant-gardists bridged the local, geographically bound Bucharest, with the international as they sought to establish themselves on par with their western European counterparts.

In this dissertation, I argue for the importance of the Romanian avant-garde magazines in developing the Romanian avant-garde as a tendency in the network of European avant-gardes of the early twentieth century. Through their content of experimental art, poetry, prose, and design, the Romanian avant-garde magazines evinced that they were fully part of the wider community of dadaist and constructivist magazines launched in cities across Europe, such as Berlin, Paris, Zagreb, and Hungary. Wanting to stand out from these magazines, the Romanian avant-gardists fashioned their magazines around the concept of Integralism, which meant to synthesize all avant-garde and modern styles. Among these styles, the most ubiquitous were Constructivism and Cubism in the magazines. Marcel Iancu and M.H. Maxy painted cubist paintings that the Romanian

avant-garde magazine *Contimporanul* reproduced in its issue numbers. Along with Victor Brauner, the two artists also created constructivist prints too for *Contimporanul* and other Romanian avant-garde magazines. Romanian avant-gardists did not synthesize the cubist and constructivist styles but rather appropriated and manipulated them to create their own versions.

I also argue for the significance of the Jewish identity of the magazines' creators and contributors such as Tristan Tzara, Marcel Iancu, Benjamin Fondane, Victor Brauner, Ilarie Voronca, and M. H. Maxy. These artists responded to their distinct conditions in 1920s Romania: exile, discrimination, and modernization. The Romanian avant-garde magazines stemmed from the notion that the newly formed Greater Romania, with its newly acquired territories as a result of World War I, required a new, modern identity inclusive of cosmopolitan dissenters, Jewish minorities, and those seeking to transgress borders. Furthermore, I evaluate the Romanian avant-garde not as an isolated tendency in Romania but as a tendency that developed out of current and historical conditions specific to Romania and aimed to make an artistic mark on both Romanian and European culture.

My objective is to close a gap in modern and avant-garde art scholarship. In recent years, while Romanian scholars have written on the Romanian magazines, it has primarily been from a literary point of view, overlooking the importance of the magazines' Integralist philosophy and their compelling constructivist and cubist artworks. The Romanian avant-garde tendency has remained on the periphery of modern and avant-garde studies and exhibitions, overshadowed by the artistic hubs of Paris,

Berlin, Moscow, and New York City. For example, the 2020 exhibition "Engineer, Agitator, Constructor: The Artist Reinvented" at the Museum of Modern Art in New York presents avant-garde art and design of the early twentieth century driven by new technologies of production, mass media, and social action. Next to photomontages and paintings, the exhibition includes many avant-garde magazines, such as the Hungarian magazine *Ma* and the Polish magazine *Blok*, but none of the Romanian avant-garde magazines.[1]

Scholars of the Romanian avant-garde consider *Contimporanul* (The Contemporary) the most important because of its longevity, its editorial team led by Marcel Iancu and Ion Vinea, and its 1924 "First International Exhibition"—the first grand-scale avant-garde exhibition in Romania. As the other magazines came and went throughout the decade, *Contimporanul* was the stronghold of the avant-garde. *75HP* magazine appeared in only one issue, but its format and content are more audacious than *Contimporanul* magazine. The editors of *75HP*, Ilarie Voronca, Stéphane Roll, and Victor Brauner, designated themselves as "the only avant-garde group in Romania," thus placing themselves in competition with the *Contimporanul* group.[2] *75HP* is closer to Dada in its anti-art stance and experimental typography. In contrast, *Punct* (Point), edited by Scarlat Callimachi, declared on its front page that it is the "Magazine for International Constructivist Art."[3]

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[1]Jodi Hauptman and Adrian Sudhalter, eds., *Engineer, Agitator, Constructor: The Artist Reinvented, 1918-1939—The Merrill C. Berman Collection* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 2020).

[2] *75HP* no. 1 (October 1924).

[3] *Punct* no. 1 (November 15, 1924).

Integral (Whole) adhered to *Contimporanul* in the overlap of contributors and the kind of art and text it featured, though with slightly more illustrations and images than *Contimporanul* and *Punct* and more pages per issue number. The magazine's notion of Integralism and its large editorial team make *Integral* a lofty contender to *Contimporanul* for the most significant Romanian avant-garde magazine. Its editorial team split between Bucharest and Paris. Filip Brunea-Fox, Ion Călugăru, M. H. Maxy, and Ilarie Voronca edited the magazines from Bucharest, while Mattis Teutsch and Benjamin Fondane added their editorial feedback from Paris.

Unu (One) magazine, edited by Saşa Pană and Stéphane Roll, is *Integral*'s successor. The magazine highlights Victor Brauner's surrealist drawings—a departure from Iancu and Maxy's figurative art constructivist and cubist images. It is the first Romanian avant-garde magazine that devoted ample attention to Surrealism. Because I do not talk about Surrealism at length here, *Unu* is of lesser importance to my dissertation. Lastly, the Zionist magazine *Puntea de Fildeş* is not a typical avant-garde magazine. It was released to commemorate the opening of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem and it only has two issue numbers. However, because of its substantial art and text by Romanian avant-gardists, I deem it an avant-garde magazine. These six magazines connected through an avant-garde circle of editors and contributors in Bucharest.

The Problem of Integralism and the Center-Periphery Model

What was Integralism, and did the Romanian avant-garde magazines subscribed to it? The editors of *Integral* magazine, notably Maxy and Voronca, laid out the

theoretical foundation for Integralism as a concept that defines the Romanian avant-garde. Just as the Zurich Dadaists, for instance, initiated Dada, so the Romanian avant-gardists initiated Integralism, the Romanian avant-garde's contribution to modern and avant-garde art—or at least this was the intention of the *Integral* editors. In an *Integral* article in the issue number, Voronca describes Integralism as "synthetic order, essential constructive order, classic, integral[…]"—"in rhythm with the times."[4] It joins together "poetry, architecture, painting, and dance" and "begins the style of the 20th century."[5] The concept of Integralism signified a synthesis of all the "isms" or directions of the European avant-garde—Expressionism, Cubism, Dadaism, Constructivism, and Surrealism—that the Romanian avant-gardists incorporated in their artistic and literary practice at one point or another. As a concept of synthesis, Integralism is more effective in how the Romanian avant-garde magazines combine text and images and how they invigorate the Romanian cultural landscape with the dissemination of art and literature through a mass media platform. Integralism is less effective in its intended function as a descriptive term that was to make the Romanian avant-garde tendency distinct among the European avant-gardes.

Integralism does not define the Romanian avant-garde because the concept rings hollow. *Integral* magazine does not present how Integralism is manifested in the magazines and whether it does so in integralist art, beyond entertaining readers with a vague notion of unifying all styles and all arts into one concentrated movement. Other

[4] Ilarie Voronca, "Surrealism and Integralism," *Integral*, no. 1 (March 1925): 5.

[5] Ibid.

than *Integral*, the Romanian avant-garde magazine articles do not touch on Integralism, except Ion Vinea's "Manifest Activist Catre Tinerime" (Activist Manifesto for the Youth) in *Contimporanul* no. 46, May 1924. Vinea mentions "integralist art," but it is unclear what constitutes it aside from representing a new modern art.[6] The Romanian avant-gardists did not have a uniform attitude toward Integralism that an art tendency ought to have. An art tendency expands in reputation and exposure through exhibitions of artists who introduce a new style or manifestos that announce a common cause. None of these avant-gardists organized exhibitions to introduce their new Integralism. Like the magazines' art, the exhibitions focused on a single artist or three or four artists at most and presented an artist's individual style without an overarching theme. For example, when the editors of *Contimporanul* launched the "First International Exhibition," their chosen theme was internationalism. Nowhere in the exhibition's catalogue does it mention Integralism. Therefore, the Romanian avant-gardists were in fact not very committed to Integralism other than introducing an appealing term that could attract the interest of the public and their avant-garde peers outside Romania.

I argue that Integralism was a strategy and a pretense for the Romanian avant-gardists to convince themselves and their Romanian and European readers of the originality of the Romanian avant-garde tendency. This pretense rested on the Romanian avant-gardists' belief that what they were doing in the magazines was just as important and original as what the Russian Constructivists and the French Cubists achieved with their new, modern and avant-garde art. In their magazines, the Romanian avant-gardists

[6] Ion Vinea, "Manifest Activist Catre Tinerime" (Activist Manifesto for the Youth), *Contimporanul* no. 46 (May 1924).

bought into the prevailing idea of the early twentieth century that the modern was new and authentic. This prevailing idea assumed that modern art could not have any ties to the past or to artistic practices undertaken by other artist groups. With the invention of Integralism, the Romanian avant-garde artists sought to hide or gloss over how, rather than creating their own from scratch, they were appropriating stylistic conventions from other artists and tendencies. The modern had no room for any kind of ambiguity that arose when artists like Marcel Iancu and M.H. Maxy engaged with the center—as in the western European art centers of Paris and Berlin—by borrowing the center's cubist and constructivist art forms through a kind of proto-postmodern method of appropriation. Artists employing the postmodern method of appropriation borrow freely and may go as far as copying single or multiple art sources to produce new artwork that closely or wholly resembles the copied source while claiming authorship over the newly produced artwork.

That is not to say that the cubist and constructivist art of Iancu and Maxy—and the constructivist art of Victor Brauner—has no merit on its own, as though it was merely a copy of the Russian and French predecessors. Instead of neatly categorizing the art in the Romanian avant-garde magazines as integralist art unique to the Romanian avant-garde, the appropriation method exposes the ambiguity and tension in the Romanian avant-gardists' creative process and the impact of this process on the pages of the magazines.

For Iancu and Maxy, Cubism was a return to figuration after their encounter with Constructivism. One sees constructivist traces in Iancu's cubist painting *Lyrical Composition*, in a geometric form derived from Iancu's abstract reliefs, and in the

coupling of Maxy's cubist painting *The Boatman* with a constructivist design on the cover of *Integral* magazine. These two instances lay bare how the two artists' worked through the cubist influences they absorbed from Pablo Picasso and Georges Braque and reformulated them to fit their creative needs. Cubism, then, became a transitional style in the Romanian avant-garde, bridging the divide between figuration and abstraction, which Constructivism caused in the Romanian avant-gardists' art and in the Romanian avant-garde magazines. In his article about Maxy for *Integral* issue no. 11, Ion Călugăru states that Maxy is done with Constructivism and is on to Integralism.[7] In an interview with Maxy in *Integral*, Gheorghe Dinu tells Maxy: "You are no longer constructivist. You are no longer abstract. A new face is covering you: an integralism with itself. You paint subjects. Here a few cubist sides, wonderful surrealist inventions and indigenous landscapes."[8] Scholar Petre Oprea writes that Maxy's Integralism dealt with "subjects inspired by the lives of the lower class."[9] His subjects were "ethnically speaking, cubist, without giving up color."[10] Călugăru, Dinu, and even Oprea use Integralism as a stand-in for Cubism because Maxy was painting not integralist canvases—whatever that means—but cubist canvases.

The fact that Iancu and Maxy both switched from Constructivism to Cubism in their art around the same time and that their magazines began publishing less

[7] Ion Călugăru, "Simplă notiță pentru expozitia lui Maxy" "(Simple note about the exhibition of Maxy"), *Integral* no. 11 (February-March 1927): 4.

[8] Gheorghe Dinu, "Initiale pentru Expozitie: Devorba cu M.H. Maxy," *Integral*, no. 11 (February-March 1927): 5-7.

[9] Petre Oprea, *M.H. Maxy* (Bucharest: Editura Meridiane, 1974), 21.

[10] Ibid.

constructivist and more cubist art signifies a methodical approach to Cubism. In other words, one artist was not deciding on a whim to try Cubism again (Iancu and Maxy painted in the cubist style before the start of the magazines). As a group, the Romanian avant-garde decided that Cubism was the best style with which to investigate pictorial means that could convey subject matter that was local and recognizable. Post-Cubism, Iancu began painting landscapes, and Maxy continued his cubist paintings of peasants and workers, which gradually became more naturalistic. Although the appropriation of Cubism is evident in their paintings, it was no appropriation for the sake of appropriation in the sense that they were not painting cubist works only for the sake of showing off that they could paint like Picasso and Braque. Certainly, *Contimporanul* and *Integral* magazines relished in their ability to present cubist art by Romanian avant-garde artists—the first Romanian artists to do cubist art—alongside the French Cubists. The Romanian avant-gardists could not do so through gallery exhibitions.

More importantly, as a means to an end, the Romanian avant-gardists' appropriation of Cubism facilitated and refocused their creative process, resulting in art that was less avant-garde and more modern. The naturalistic subject matter that they employed in their cubist art and their art of the late 1920s and early 1930s is one cause of the waning of the Romanian avant-garde magazines. Cubist and figurative works eclipsed the daring experimentation with Constructivism and, even though the *Integral* editors applied exhilarant constructivist design in their magazine, the magazines lost some of their novelty. The Romanian avant-gardists evidently grew wary of novelty as they searched for other ways to develop their art for the long term. Cubism was one way to do so, given its formidable reputation and its familiarity. But they could not admit that they

needed Cubism to develop their art because that would mean admit that they were appropriating it. Hence, *Integral* pushed Integralism to the fore, as though what Maxy and Iancu painted was different from cubist art—that it was integralist art, and as innovative as their previous constructivist art.

The constructivist prints that *Contimporanul*, *75HP*, and *Punct* published between 1923 and 1925 are among the most original artworks of the Romanian avant-garde. The magazines label these prints constructivist art and not integralist art, unlike with the cubist paintings. Perhaps the Romanian avant-gardists were fine with recognizing a style that did not originate with them because the constructivist prints contained a distinct appearance from European and Russian counterparts. Having jumped on the Constructivism wave taking hold of avant-garde groups across Europe, Maxy, Iancu, and Brauner centered their practice on constructivist investigations of form that resulted in a Romanian version of Constructivism. Far more than the reproductions of cubist paintings, the Romanian avant-garde magazines featured many constructivist prints that advanced the notion that—along with the Russian avant-garde and the German avant-garde—the Romanian avant-garde was wholeheartedly dedicated to the new style.

Maxy and Iancu appropriated less of Constructivism than Cubism, thereby complicating their relationship with these styles proliferated in western Europe. To add further to the complicated relationship, Iancu created geometric, abstract art in 1918 simultaneously as Hans Richter during their participation in Zurich Dada. The Romanian avant-gardists and Richter deemed Iancu and Richter's art to be constructivist, without any Russian constructivist influence. Did Iancu, Maxy, and Victor Brauner—the leading Romanian artists of Constructivism in Romania—appropriate Iancu's abstract Dada art,

western European constructivist art, or Russian constructivist art? The Romanian constructivist art in the Romanian avant-garde magazines fuses these constructivist sources so smoothly that it is impossible to tell what specific constructivist works come from which Russian or western European Constructivists. There is no apparent appropriation in Romanian constructivist prints as there is, for instance, in Iancu's guitar paintings painted after Picasso and Braque. Romanian constructivist prints branch off from other European and Russian constructivist works in their looser lines, amorphous forms and retention of enough geometric clarity to render them constructivist.

Within the discourse on the Romanian avant-garde, Constructivism is often synonymous with Integralism. In his book on Ilarie Voronca, Dauphin Christophe calls Integralism "the most important variant of Romanian Constructivism."[11] For Gabriela Duda, Integralism is "an autochthonous variant of European Constructivism as a result of the assimilation of some Dadaist and Futurist aspects."[12] However, what I see in the magazines is that Integralism differs from Constructivism. Integralism, as Maxy and Voronca theorized, describes all the styles in which Romanian artists worked and is not precisely representative of Constructivism. If it were the same, *Integral* would have more constructivist art in its issue numbers, but it does not. By renaming Constructivism as Integralism, these scholars remove the Romanian avant-garde from the history of Constructivism in Europe as though Romanian constructivist art does not belong there. They are also reaffirming the idea of Integralism as applied to Cubism, and the idea that

[11] Christophe Dauphin, *Ilarie Voronca: le poète intégral* (Cordes-sur-Ciel: Rafael de Surtis; Paris: Editinter, 2011), 54.

[12] Gabriela Duda, *Literatura românească de avangardă* (Bucureşti: Humanitas Educaţional, 2004), 14.

the Romanian avant-gardists were not appropriating cubist art but producing integralist art. This idea does not hold for Romanian cubist art, just as it does not hold for Romanian constructivist art. The Romanian avant-garde magazines produced a body of work to add to the European constructivist tendency. They were not producing integralist art.

The Romanian artists' appropriation of artistic styles from western Europe and Russia begs the question about the power dynamics of the center-periphery model. Western Europe's power pulled the Romanian avant-gardists into its orbit and away from the Romanian avant-garde's peripheral position in the network of European avant-gardes. Piotrowski proposes a "horizontal art historical narrative," in lieu of the standard "vertical" narrative wherein cities like Paris and Berlin are the center of modern and avant-garde art. In eastern Europe, every other city is on the periphery and must model itself after these centers.[13] I conceptualize the Romanian avant-garde along Piotrowski's horizontal axis, situating it on the same historical axis as all European avant-gardes. On this horizontal axis, the Romanian avant-garde does not occupy a peripheral role that is separate from and inferior to the West.

In the history of the European avant-garde and in the time of the Romanian avant-garde magazines, the center regarded the Romanian avant-garde as existing on the periphery. The peripheral location of the Romanian avant-garde was mainly due to

[13] Piotr Piotrowski, "Toward a Horizontal History of the European Avant-Garde," *Europa! Europa?: The Avant-Garde, Modernism, and The Fate of A Continent*, Sascha Bru, ed. (New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2009), 51.
Partha Mitter blames art history's western paradigm for creating this division of the center and the periphery. According to Partha Mitter, while Paris, London, and New York became important centers, "other modernisms were silenced as derivative and suffering from a time lag because of their geographic locations." In the history of modern art, not only Asia, Africa, and Latin America have been pushed to the periphery but also Eastern Europe, except for Russia. Partha Mitter, "Decentering Modernism: Art History and Avant-Garde Art from the Periphery," *The Art Bulletin* 90, no. 4 (December 2008): 540.

Romania's eastern geography, on the edge of the Black Sea and separated from Germany and France by several central European countries. The Romanian avant-gardists wanted to be part of the western European avant-garde and, thus, they partook in Cubism and Constructivism. They harnessed these styles to develop their art and prove that they deserved to be included in the center's orbit and to transgress their peripheral geography.

The Romanian avant-garde's relationship with the center is exemplified by their relation with the French avant-garde. Romanians admired the French and felt a strong kinship, facilitated by the Romanians' Latin language—the only Latin language in eastern Europe. They felt closer to the French than they did to the Russians. Several important figures in the French avant-garde came from Romania: Constantin Brâncuși, Tristan Tzara, Victor Brauner, and Benjamin Fondane. *Integral* magazine even had a Paris branch led by Fondane. If Romanian artists and writers desired fame outside Romania, they had to move to Paris. Fame in Romania did not traverse borders, which reenforced Romania's periphery on the international cultural stage. Similar to Romania's first modern artist Nicolae Grigorescu acquiring the impressionist style in France in the mid-nineteenth century, Maxy and Iancu employed the cubist style from the French Cubists to begin a new stage in their art. In Petre Răileanu's opinion, during the time of the Romanian avant-garde, "a geographical and cultural Europe…no longer operated with the concept of a 'center' and a 'periphery,' because the center of the continent resided—simultaneously—in each of its capitals."[14] I believe that the Romanian avant-garde's relationship with the French avant-garde contradicts Răileanu's claim that the

[14] Petre Răileanu, "The Avant-Garde as Spontaneous Contagion: The Case of Bucharest," *Dada/Surrealism* 20 (2015).

center-periphery was of no consequence. The center still held great power. The Romanian avant-garde magazines featured Tristan Tzara's poetry because he was friends with the editors and because he made it as a Romanian writer in Paris; they wanted to show him off to readers.

With that said, Răileanu's conclusion that the center was in each of the capitals, meaning that it was in Bucharest too and not only in Paris, holds some credence. Edward Kanterian, writing on Romanian intellectuals' predicament with resisting the West and its modernity, notes that "accepting the West as a model of imitation" went against "the value of the autonomy of the self" that "leads to the emancipation of the very periphery and the belief that one's own country has an original culture and that it does not need the West."[15] Romanian intellectuals opposed the West "by claiming equality with it, i.e., modernity in certain respects (namely regarding the sphere of culture)."[16]

What did equality with the West entail in regards to the Romanian avant-garde? It entailed the production of avant-garde magazines, the engagement with Constructivism and Cubism, and to a lesser degree, with Dada, Futurism, and Surrealism. It also entailed branding their engagement with these styles with the label of Integralism. Unlike some Romanian intellectuals, the Romanian avant-gardists did not oppose the West, but they attempted to attain a level of autonomy and emancipation from the West, as in creating art that was synonymous with the Romanian avant-garde but not with French Cubism or western European Constructivism. They wanted the center to be Bucharest, and I think

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[15] Edward Kanterian, "The Malaise of Modernity: The Case of Romanian Intellectuals," *Romania and Europe: Modernization as Temptation, Modernization as threat*, edited by Bogdan Murgescu (Timisoara, Romania: Edition Korber-Stiftung, 2000), 96.

[16] Ibid.

they succeeded in the sense that their magazines flattened the horizontal axis of the center-periphery through the intense production and dissemination of multiple magazines that contained the latest artistic experimentation that was truly on par with the West. The Romanian avant-gardists did not realize that they did not need to conceptualize their stylistic appropriation into Integralism since they outpaced the French avant-garde in their avant-garde magazine production. Taking advantage of these avant-garde and modern styles, the Romanian avant-garde generated a considerable body of work for their magazines, which rendered Bucharest a European center of avant-garde magazine production.

Integralism failed as a stylistic concept that could describe the art in the magazines. Yet, Integralism helps describe the diversity of art styles, poetry, prose, plays, architecture, and cinema and theater criticism united in the magazines in an interdisciplinary constellation that constructs and reflects modernity at the turn of the century. The Romanian magazines are not unique in their interdisciplinary content. Avant-garde and non-avant-garde magazines of the nineteenth and early twentieth century, such as the German magazine *Jugend* (1896-1940) and the Austrian magazine *Ver Sacrum* (1898-1903), popularized the presentation of art and literature in the visually appealing print format of the magazine.[17] Nonetheless, the Romanian avant-garde magazines were unique in Romania for being among the first Romanian magazines to prioritize the coupling of word and image as part of their interdisciplinary objective to

[17] For a bigger discussion on the two magazines, see "Chapter One: The Old Vanguard: The Power of the New Press," in Steven Heller's *Merz to Émigré and Beyond: Avant-Garde Magazine Design of the Twentieth Century* (London; New York: Phaidon Press, 2003), 12-31.

unite the arts. Integralism resonates in the flexible manner with which magazine editors arranged images with text on each magazine page. The flexibility is true of *Contimporanul* as it is of the rest of the magazines.

At first, one may misconstrue the editors' random placement of images and text as a lack of calculation and experience in tackling the job of designing a magazine. I postulate that the random placement is intentional. It underscores the integralist philosophy that hinges not only on the inclusivity of different art styles but also the conglomeration of images that proliferate in modernity's mass culture. The randomness of text and images displaces and constructs new meaning, which is not far off from how the process of dadaist photomontages operates. Dadaist photomontage appropriated photography and technical processes, which correlated with a cinematic montage technique that split the image into fragments. This fragmentation of representation and erasure of the artworks' aura and the artist's hand replaced "contemplative modes of aesthetic experience" with "communicative and collective perception."[18] According to Walter Benjamin, "it might be stated as a general formula that the technology of reproduction detaches the reproduced object from the sphere of tradition. By replicating the work many times over, it substitutes a mass existence for a unique existence."[19] Benjamin conceives of an artwork's aura as that which bestows originality on a particular

[18] Benjamin Buchloh, "The Social History of Art: Models and Concepts," *Art Since 1900: Modernism, Antimodernism, Postmodernism*, edited by Hal Foster, Rosalind E Krauss, Yve-Alain Bois, Benjamin Buchloh, and David Joselit (London: Thames & Hudson, 2016), 27.

[19] Walter Benjamin, *The Work of Art in the Age of its Technological Reproducibility and Other Writings on Media*, edited by Michael W. Jennings, Brigid Doherty, and Thomas Y. Levin, translated by Edmund Jephcott, Rodney Livingstone, and Howard Eiland (Cambridge, MA; London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2008), 22.

painting or sculpture. With the new technology of reproduction, the artwork's originality is undermined and so is the entire tradition of high art's originality and inaccessibility.

While the Romanian avant-gardists reproduced artworks in hundreds of copies of each magazine issue number and juxtaposed unrelated text and images on the same page, they stopped short of undertaking the radical dadaist process of photomontage and thereby eliminating the aura of the artwork. There is a vital paradox of Integralism and the Romanian avant-garde magazines. On the one hand, Integralism attempted to dissolve the notion that one artistic style was inferior to another and that the discipline of fine art was inferior to theater or cinema, for instance. As mass media products, the magazines put forth artworks into "mass existence" by circulating them to audiences who did not have the means or time to foster an individual encounter with an artwork in a museum or gallery.[20] The artworks joined the plethora of images, like those found in advertisements, that dominated the mass culture of interwar Romania during a period in which the country's capital Bucharest enjoyed the spending power of the newly developed middle class. The artworks in the magazines are yet more images for the readers to consume.

On the other hand, there are few photographs in the magazines, let alone photomontages, with prints and reproduced paintings being the predominant images. The prints and reproduced paintings are juxtaposed side-by-side with poetry, prose, and articles. However, it is evident by how the magazines' editors placed these images—with ample black space around the edges of the images and in-between the images and the text columns—that the images retain a high artistic value akin to artworks displayed on the

[20] Ibid.

walls of a gallery or museum. Art was always their top priority as they also participated in mass culture's circulation of mundane, entertaining, and provocative images. Integralism, a paradoxical state, signifies the Romanian avant-garde's wavering position as an avant-garde and modern tendency.

The Romanian Avant-Garde: Avant-Garde, Modern, or Militant?

Is the Romanian avant-garde militant, modern, or not avant-garde at all? The dissertation addresses this critical question that determines whether the Romanian avant-garde belongs to the network of European avant-gardes or whether it is too modern and less radical to belong in it. I conclude that the Romanian avant-garde resides in the middle of the historical avant-garde and modernism. It leaned towards modernism in its Cubism, but it was also avant-garde, albeit not militantly avant-garde, within the context of its manifestoes and reactions against Romanian art and literature of the past. If judged by the standards of Berlin Dada, Zurich Dada, and Russian Constructivism, the Romanian avant-garde seems like a tame tendency that does not prescribe to revolutionary politics nor to the anti-art tenet of unsettling artistic and social spheres. In devising their Integralism, the Romanian avant-gardists had no intention to unsettle the modern world. They synthesized modern and avant-garde tendencies, thereby embodying the fine line—or what Ástráður Eysteinsson calls the "fluid difference" of "reciprocity" and "dialogue"—separating the twentieth-century avant-garde and modernism.[21] Often,

[21] Ástráður Eysteinsson, "'What's the Difference?' Revisiting the Concepts of Modernism and the Avant-Garde," *Europa! Europa?: The Avant-Garde, Modernism, and The Fate of A Continent* (New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2009), 33.

the avant-garde and modernism are interchangeable. Renato Poggioli, in his 1981 book *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, uses the term avant-garde as a synonym for modernism.[22] The avant-garde is disruptive, working towards "the shock of the new," "making tradition problematic," and championing "negativity/anti-rationality."[23] Though there is an overlap of modernism with the avant-garde, I will analyze the Romanian avant-garde from the standpoint that the two entities—the avant-garde and modernism—are distinct and that the Romanian avant-garde synthesized a little of both.

Contimporanul is considered the least avant-garde of the Romanian avant-garde magazines. It featured many modern, mainstream Romanian writers and modern artists (Pablo Picasso and Constantin Brâncuși being the most high-profile artists), and traditional design and typography. Editor of *Unu* magazine, Saşa Pană, who published the first anthology of avant-garde literature in Romania, assesses that *Contimporanul* "inclined towards modernism than the avant-garde."[24] Emilia Drogoreanu refers to *Contimporanul*'s modernism as "modernismul moderat" (moderate modernism).[25] Gabriela Duda names it "un modernism eclectic" (an eclectic modernism).[26] Romanian art historian Erwin Kessler criticizes *Contimporanul*'s transition from "a fervently anti-liberal political mouth-piece into an outpost for modernism," becoming "a cultural

[22] Renato Poggioli, *The Theory of the Avant-Garde* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2011), 149.

[23] Eysteinsson, 33.

[24] Saşa Pană, *Antologia Literaturii române de avangardă: şi cîteva desene din epocă* (Bucureşti: Editura pentruliteratură, 1969), 24.

[25] Emilia Drogoreanu, *Infleunte ale futurismului Italian asupra avangardei romanesti, sincornie si specificitate* (Pitesti; Bucuresti, Romania: Editura Paralela, 2004), 13.

[26] Gabriela Duda, *Literatura românească de avangardă* (Bucureşti: Humanitas Educaţional, 2004), 13.

reflection of the avant-garde rather than a real protagonist of it."[27] These are all valid points about the modernism of *Contimporanul* but what is also equally valid is that the rest of the Romanian avant-garde magazines were no more insurgent in terms of contributors, art, design, and typography that their editors employed.

Steven Mansbach expands his critique of the Romanian avant-garde to all the magazines, stating that "the avant-garde in Romania focused almost exclusively on artistic matters and on addressing one another. The result was aesthetic hermeticism."[28] By "aesthetic hermeticism," Mansbach means that the Romanian avant-garde was too inward and, therefore, failed to have a lasting impact on Romanian art history or modern art history. According to him, they were too preoccupied with competing with each other to engage with Romania's political and social climate of the time or with other European avant-gardes. Literary scholar Paul Cernat makes a similar critique of the Romanian avant-garde. He thinks that the Romanian avant-garde's leftist political beliefs did not "translate into a political art but into the cultivation of artistic novelty."[29] The Romanian avant-garde's apoliticality may have been a reason why Romanian avant-garde magazines were not included in the *"Engineer, Agitator, Constructor: The Artist Reinvented" exhibition, which shines the brightest light on Soviet art.* The extent of the Romanian avant-garde artists and writers' political commitment, as evoked in their

[27] Erwin Kessler, "What Do Manifestos Manifest*?" Textimage : Perspectives on the History and Aesthetics of Avant-Garde Publications*, edited by Erwin Kessler (București: Institutul Cultural Român, 2008), 34.

[28] Steven Mansbach, "The "Foreignness" of Classical Modern Art in Romania," *The Art Bulletin* 80. (September, 1998): 551.

[29] Paul Cernat, *Avangarda Românească și Complexul Periferiei* (Bucharest: Cartea Românească, 2007), 229.

manifestos, is indeed negligible. And this lack of political commitment goes against their identity as avant-garde when compared to the Soviet avant-garde, but one must keep in mind that Zurich Dada was also apolitical in their manifestos.

There were not many manifestos in Romanian avant-garde magazines—not to the extent of Zurich Dada manifestos—but a couple of manifestos exemplify the preoccupation with new art dethroning the bourgeoisie and installing a proletarian society. In *Punct*'s first manifesto, Scarlat Callimachi writes, "we must destroy, at the risk of violence and exaggerations inherent to a revolution—be it even in art—all sub-mediocre creations in painting, literature, sculpture, and music."[30] *Punct*'s manifesto has revolutionary references, but Callimachi conveys the Romanian avant-garde's primary goal of demolishing the continuity between new art and traditional art and enacting Romania's "own original art." The manifesto's last paragraph sums up this goal: "We want new art in a new and free country."[31] In "Manifest activist către tinerime" (Activist Manifesto to the Youth)—the first Romanian avant-garde manifesto—Ion Vinea cries out that "Romania is being constructed today…Let us kill our dead!"[32] Vinea incorporates multiple formulations of the avant-garde in this manifesto: shocking the audience through the hyperbole of a violent act; the destruction of the old; and constructing a new Romania and new, non-sentimental art. In wanting to "banish individualism," as he asserts in the manifesto, Vinea seeks a collective endeavor towards construction and reconstruction.

[30] Scarlat Callimachi, "Revista 'Punct'" (The magazine 'Punct'), *Punct* no. 4 (December 13, 1924).

[31] Ibid.

[32] Ion Vinea, "Manifest activist către tinerime" (Activist Manifesto to the Youth), *Contimporanul* no. 46 (May 1924).

This endeavor recalls the proletarian class struggle, though he does not mention Marxist revolution in his manifesto.[33] Callimachi and Vinea's manifestos prove that the Romanian avant-garde evoked the negation of tradition—a negation which the historical avant-garde bolstered in manifestos, new art forms, and revolutionary politics.

The "Activist Manifesto to the Youth" has constructivist and futuristic undertones of abstract art strengthening an industrially advanced Romania. The manifesto's utopian vision did not live up to Romania's economic reality when industrialism was growing, but the agricultural industry still prevailed. However, by the late 1930s, automobile, textile, and railroad industries, as well as the industrial architecture that these industries required, were flourishing in Bucharest.[34] Due to the avant-gardists' production of mass media in the form of magazines, technological development is a prominent factor that substantiates the Romanian avant-garde as avant-garde. In response to Peter Bürger's theory of the avant-garde as being a revolt against the institution of art, Dietrich Scheunemann makes the argument that it was technological advancement and not revolt that changed the avant-garde's notion of art. Andrew Herscher views the avant-garde as "a media phenomenon, a technology of word and image processing in which mass media were not only 'used' by the avant-garde but were essential to its very constitution."[35] The magazines as a "media phenomenon" forged communication channels between the avant-

[33] Ibid.

[34] See Chapter "Muncă și Voe Bună (Work and Joy)" in Luminita Machedon and Ernie Scoffham, *Romanian Modernism: The Architecture of Bucharest, 1920-1940* (Cambridge, MA; London, UK: The MIT Press, 1999), 284-309.

[35] Andrew Herscher, "The Media(tion) of Building: Manifesto Architecture in the Czech Avant-Garde," *Oxford Art Journal* 27, no. 2 (2004): 195.

gardists and the public and between avant-gardists in and internationally outside of Romania. Without the media, the Romanian avant-gardists would have failed to transmit their artistic experimentation to an audience other than Bucharest's avant-garde circle, and they would have failed to demonstrate to Romania's culture elites that the avant-garde was a force with which to reckon. The Romanian avant-garde, as a new tendency in Romanian art and literature, would not have made such a stunning and long-lasting impression on Romanian culture without the advantage of the media.

The magazines benefited from the technologies of mass media and enhanced mass media in Romania. However, their circulation was relatively small and their production betrayed their precarious standing in Romanian culture. Physically, the magazines are made of cheap materials, printed on low quality newspaper and with mainly cheap, black ink. In terms of the material quality, the Romanian magazines are much worse than, say, *Dada* magazine or the Hungarian magazine *Ma*. Of all the Romanian avant-garde magazines, *75HP* is a marvel in its thick application of red and black ink on thicker, better quality paper, and with a glossy cover. These material upgrades must have been too costly to maintain because the magazine's editors discontinued the magazine after one issue number. *75HP* and *Contimporanul* shared the same publisher Editura Institutul de Arte Grafice "Eminescu," which is listed on each magazines' back pages. Editura Institutul de Arte Grafice "Eminescu" was not a publisher of exclusively avant-garde books and magazines. It was more known for its array of literature and history books. *Contimporanul*, as with other Romanian magazines, switched publishers multiple times throughout its ten-year run. One of the publishers, Institut de Arte Grafice "Universala," published an array of books on topics that included military history and scientific inquiry.

I bring up these publishers to make my point that, for the avant-gardists, putting forth their magazines was a diligent enterprise. As any other magazine in the publishing industry, it required business acumen, such as finding willing publishers and selling enough magazine copies to stay afloat. Sașa Pană recalls in his diary how he himself carried copies of *Unu* to give to kiosks around Bucharest every Sunday of the month. Slowly, the magazine's sales grew from several dozens to several hundred per month, but there was always a budget deficit because of the paper and printer expenses, more so when an issue number contained many images.[36] The avant-gardists operated in opposition to mainstream media and culture in the type of literature and art they offered, but they relied on the processes of the publishing industry to sustain their avant-garde enterprise. The need to retain the small number of readers they had is one possibility why avant-gardists' hesitated to take a more incendiary, avant-garde route by involving their magazines in revolutionary politics and pushing the boundaries of what the public found acceptable. Nevertheless, the magazines' powerful role in the formation of the Romanian avant-garde must be recognized as a hallmark avant-garde characteristic.

Although the Romanian avant-garde has avant-garde characteristics, was it "militant"? Romanian scholars are prone to use the term militant to describe Romanian avant-garde literature and art. Amelia Pavel calls the avant-garde in Romania "the militant movement of the Romanian avant-garde."[37] For Nicolae Bârna, "militancy,"

[36] Sașa Pană, *Născut în '02. Memorii, file de jurnal, evocări* (București, Romania: Minerva, 1973), 261.

[37] Amelia Pavel, *Victor Brauner* (Bucharest, Romania: Editura ARC 2000, 1999), 11.

"nihilism," and "the absurd" define the literary avant-garde.[38] Furthermore, according to Ion Pop, "the militant avant-garde" practiced "invention and spontaneity."[39] Possibly, Romanian scholars took the term "militant," "militarism," or "militancy" from Matei Călinescu. His influential 1977 book *Faces of Modernity: Avant-Garde, Decadence, Kitsch* contributed to establishing the complicated concept of the modernist avant-garde.[40] He writes: "the avant-garde is indebted to the broader consciousness of modernity—sharp sense of militancy, the praise of nonconformism, courageous precursory exploration, confidence in the final victory of time and immanence over traditions...."[41] Thus, Calinescu conceptualizes the avant-garde as a historical movement developed within the context of late nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century modernity, which went on a separate course than modernism. It is different from modernism in that it "exaggerates" these modern qualities, like its refusal to conform to traditional norms and ideas.[42]

To clarify the term militant avant-garde, Romanian scholars seemed to bestow the "militancy" that Călinescu recognized in modernity and the avant-garde to the entire avant-garde. The term militant avant-garde is somewhat redundant because it implies an extreme form of the avant-garde committed to radical anti-art and anti-traditionalist ideas,

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[38] Nicolae Bârna, *Avangardismul literar românesc: studiu şi antologie* (Bucureşti, Romania: Editura Gramar, 2003), 6.

[39] Ion Pop, *A scrie şi a fi: Ilarie Voronca şi metamorfozele poeziei* (Bucureşti, Romania: Cartea Românească, 2007), 26.

[40] Călinescu wrote the book in English and in it he omits the Romanian avant-garde.

[41] Matei Călinescu, *Five Faces of Modernity: Modernism, Avant-garde, Decadence, Kitsch, Postmodernism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006), 95.

[42] Ibid., 96.

which the avant-garde already encompasses. And the Romanian avant-garde was not avant-garde to the point that it warrants the extreme description as the militant avant-garde. After all, the avant-gardists exhibited their avant-garde art alongside traditional and modern art in Romania's Official Salon during the 1920s and into the 1930s, as they were also exhibiting in their own avant-garde exhibitions.[43] They were not so militant such that they refused all official participation and recognition. Therefore, I see no reason to employ this descriptive term in the dissertation, given that the Romanian avant-garde magazines and avant-garde art are not entirely avant-garde nor modern but represented the avant-gardists' integralist path within a crowded network of European avant-gardes.

Jewish Identity

The marginalization that the Romanian avant-garde faced in the discourse on modernism and the avant-garde was not only due to geography. The Romanian avant-gardists' Jewish identity may have been partly responsible for their peripheral dislocation, which, in turn, caused their reluctance to explore their Jewish identity in the Romanian avant-garde magazines profoundly. Romanian avant-gardists like Marcel Iancu, M.H. Maxy, and Benjamin Fondane had a conflicted relationship with their Jewish identity. They sometimes embraced their Jewish identity, and sometimes they highlighted their international avant-garde identity above all else. Maxy designed constructivist

[43] Gheorghe Vida, "Mattis-Teutsch and the Romanian Avant-Garde," *Culorile Avangardei:arta in Romania 1910-1950, Exhibition Catalogue*, edited by Erwin Kessler, (București: Institutul Cultural Român; Sibiu: Muzeul Național Brukenthal, 2007), 67.
Unu no. 25, May 1930 notes that "The Art Ministry awarded the sculptor Milița Petrașcu 25,000 lei and retained a painting by painter M.H. Maxy (from the Official Salon 1930).

costumes and set designs for the Yiddish theater, while Fondane searched for his Jewish identity in the theme of exile that dictates his poetry.

Nevertheless, the fact that they changed their Jewish names to western sounding names points to the Romanian avant-gardists' motivation to be included in the avant-garde and modern wave that swept the arts in the early twentieth century. This wave erased all identities for the sake of conforming to a universal identity forged by a new and rebellious universal creative language.[44] Choosing a new name meant relinquishing their past and any feature that would identify them with a specific ethnic or cultural group. Samuel Rosenstock became Tristan Tzara when he joined the Dada group in Zurich, where, like in Paris, he needed to appear less of a foreigner and less Jewish to gain full acceptance into the Parisian avant-garde circle.[45]

In altering their Jewish names, the avant-gardists contributed to the erasure of their Jewish identity and the adoption of universally acknowledged, western identities that made up the majority of European modernism and the avant-garde. The Romanian avant-gardists were not the only ones who deemphasized their Jewish identity in this manner. For instance, American avant-garde artist Man Ray was born Emmanuel Radnitzky into an immigrant Russian Jewish family in Pennsylvania. One seldom

[44] Iancu went by Janco during his Zurich Dada days and Maxy shortened his name from Max Hermann Maxy. The name Fundoianu morphed into Fondane when he moved permanently to Paris, but Fundoianu was not his original name. Fondane's primary school certificate from June 1909 misspells his name as Veseler J. Benjamin and lists his nationality as "Israelite" and not Romanian—the same as Tristan Tzara's birth certificate. Fondane corrected the mistake by signing on the certificate his actual name Wechsler J. Benjamin. From Benjamin Fondane Papers, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

[45] Samuel Rosenstock's transformation to Tzara was complete when, in one of his mother's letters to him from 1927, she no longer refers to him as "Samica," as she did in her previous letters, but as "dear Tristan." From Fonds Tzara, Bibliothèque littéraire Jacques-Doucet.

encounters in art history discourse any kind of examination, whether brief or in-depth, of Man Ray's relationship with his Jewish identity as he gained fame through his work and affiliation with the Parisian avant-garde.[46] The same applies to Abstract Expressionists Lee Krasner or Lena Krasner, the daughter of Russian Jewish immigrants. Moreover, Marcus Rothkowitz, i.e., Mark Rothko, was a second-generation Russian Jew who "sublimated his Jewish identity in order to secure for himself an identity as a modem, American artist."[47]

Rothko pursued his Jewish identity in figurative works during World War II that indirectly addressed the trauma of the Holocaust. Andrea Pappas notes that by the time of his color-field paintings of the 1950s and 60s Rothko had shed all Jewish references from his work during his rise to fame as a heavyweight modern American artist. Rothko's shift of his Jewish identity in his work—from overt to chiefly absent—somewhat parallels Marcel Iancu's oeuvre, though in the opposite direction. Iancu's oeuvre went from no depictions of Jewish subject matter, besides in his architectural work, in the 1920s and 30s, to reflective depictions of the Jewish experience in present and biblical times after he left Romania for Palestine. Iancu became more open with his Jewish identity later in his later career, already established as a successful avant-garde artist, while Rothko withheld himself from inserting his Jewish identity in his art as he worked towards artistic success.

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[46] The exhibition catalogue *Alias Man Ray: The Art of Reinvention* for the 2009-2010 Man Ray exhibition at the Jewish Museum in New York is one of the first to dedicate significant coverage to his Jewish identity. See *Alias Man Ray: The Art of Reinvention for a Man Ray*, edited by Mason Klein (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press 2010).

[47] Andrea Pappas, "Mark Rothko and the Politics of Jewish Identity, 1939-1945," Ph.D. Dissertation (Los Angeles: University of Southern California, 1997), 187.

In both instances, whether Jewish American or Jewish Romanian, the artist felt compelled to distance himself from his Jewish identity. Either temporarily or permanently, he did so to advance his artistic practice in a country where national identity excluded or minimized Jewishness and within an art world that subscribed to national identities regardless of modernism's universalizing claim.

The Jewish populations, among them artists, in Romania and the United States faced anti-Semitism during the early to mid-twentieth century when artists rushed to traverse national borders and national identities to join the international avant-garde network. Yet, Abstract Expressionism ended up embodying the American, heroic male painter whose freedom of expression was meant to inspire democracy across the world. In Romania, the avant-gardists stood no chance at acting as representatives of Romanian art at the time they published their magazines due to their Jewish identity and their outcast status. By the 1960s, however, the Romanian avant-garde emerged in Romanian art history as the movement that elevated Romanian art on the international stage. It became a source of national pride but without any forthright acknowledgment of the avant-gardists' Jewish background. The issue of Jewish identity, or lack thereof, in modernism and the avant-garde requires a more extensive conversation outside the dissertation's scope. This issue exposes the need to talk about an artist's Jewish identity. I intend to do so by analyzing how the Romanian avant-gardists' Jewish identity manifests itself in their magazines and their work. Ultimately, though, the lack of substantial content related to Jewish identity in the Romanian avant-garde magazines resulted from the Romanian avant-gardists' caution to engage with their Jewish identity and risk greater marginalization in Romanian society and within the avant-garde network. Their

geographical location in eastern Europe was the leading cause of the absence of the Romanian avant-garde in modern and avant-garde art history. But, one must entertain the notion that their Jewish identity may have played a role in their omission. The Jewish Romanian avant-gardists were not as fortunate as the Jewish American artists because the Jewish Romanian avant-gardists faced double marginalization in art history due to their Romanian and Jewish identities. They ended up on the periphery, which they tried with their magazines to avoid.

Literature Review

Various Romanian and non-Romanian scholars have written on the Romanian avant-garde and European avant-garde magazines. I situate my dissertation within this discourse while contributing new scholarship on specific images circulated in the magazines as part of the 1920s network of European avant-gardes and the myriad of art styles emerging at that time. Paul Cernat, in his book on the Romanian avant-garde and his other book on *Contimporanul*, analyzes the Romanian magazines from a literary standpoint.[48] Cernat's 2007 books are the most comprehensive and most recent scholarly studies of the Romanian avant-garde and its magazines. Cernat's main subject is *Contimporanul*. This is the essential magazine of his study, while the rest of the Romanian magazines are there to support *Contimporanul*'s and the Romanian avant-

[48] Paul Cernat, *Avangarda Românească și Complexul Periferiei* (Bucuresti, Romania: Cartea Românească, 2007).
Paul Cernat, *Contimporanul: istoria unei reviste de avangardă* (Bucuresti, Romania: Institutul Cultural Român, 2007).

garde's historical narrative. One would expect Cernat to provide a comprehensive avant-garde history in *The Romanian Avant-Garde and the Periphery Complex* and to a certain extent he does. Spanning from Romanian Aestheticism and Symbolism, and Futurism in Romania, to Tzara's and Iancu's Dada, and from avant-garde theatre to cinema, the book is a coherent, overarching survey of how the avant-garde evolved from the later nineteenth-century to the modern period of the 1920s and 1930s. But in cramming all of the avant-garde, including the pre-avant-garde and the post avant-garde in one book, Cernat does not communicate the individuality of each magazine but rather merely presents the magazines' relationship with *Contimporanul*.

Steven Mansbach's 1998 article "The 'Foreignness' of Classical Modern Art in Romania" has been widely cited in the studies of Romanian art history.[49] Mansbach was one of the first non-Romanian scholars to attend to the Romanian magazines and to write on Jewish avant-garde artists within the context of the formation of Greater Romania in 1918, and within the rise of modernity and anti-Semitism. Mansbach's article is a significant starting point for my dissertation, as is Tom Sandqvist's book *Dada East: The Romanians of Cabaret Voltaire*, which focuses on the three Romanians—Tzara, Iancu, and Arthur Segal—of Zurich Dada. Sandqvist describes Zurich Dada as an "intermediate stage in the history of Romanian modern art" since Tzara founded the magazines *Simbolul* (*The Symbol*) and *Chemarea* (*The Call*) with Ion Vinea in Bucharest before

[49] Mansbach.

moving to Zurich.[50] The avant-garde then initiated the Romanian magazines several years after Dada Zurich's end.

Since Mansbach and Sandqvist, other scholars have written on the Romanian avant-garde and its magazines. Adriana Copaciu, in her article "How to be Transnational? Identity Trajectories of the Romanian Avant Garde Magazines," argues for the "hybrid aspect of the Romanian cultural ideology."[51] This hybridity, as evident in the avant-garde magazines, conveys the Romanian avant-garde's "diversity and its capacity to engender functionally and artistically meaningful peripheral avatars."[52] Copaciu describes the Romanian magazines as "an interpersonal network" through which artists "moved back and forth from the decorum of a mellow modernism towards the avant-garde" as they explored Expressionism and Dada and "progressively switched from Constructivist to Surrealist pleas."[53] Because artists worked in these international, hybrid styles, Copaciu believes that they represented "the dissonant voice of the periphery."[54]

Petre Răileanu, in his 2015 article "The Avant-Garde as Spontaneous Contagion: The Case of Bucharest," argues for the multiplicity of the Romanian avant-garde of the 1920s, whereby multiple art movements occurred simultaneously, and long after the original movements of Futurism and Dada had ended. Instead of mimicking the Dadaists

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[50] Tom Sandqvist, *DADA East: The Romanians of Cabaret Voltaire* (Cambridge, MA; London, UK: The MIT Press, 2006), 2.

[51] Adriana Copaciu, "How to be transnational? Identity Trajectories of the Romanian Avant Garde Magazines," *Editura Arhipelag* XXI (2013): 1226.

[52] Ibid., 1225.

[53] Ibid., 1226.

[54] Ibid., 1230.

in Paris or Zurich, the avant-garde spread throughout the European continent through what Răileanu calls a "spontaneous contagion" that caused artists to develop their own versions of the avant-garde in their own cities.[55]

Additionally, Irina Livezeanu sets out to distinguish the Romanian avant-garde from the western European avant-garde by emphasizing how the Romanian avant-garde magazines developed from Romania's growing modernity at the *fin de siècle*. In her article "Romania: 'Romania Toward the West': New Forms and 'The Poetry of True Life,'" she writes: "Romanian modernism was part and parcel of the country's attempt to 'catch up' to a modernity that was perceived as Western."[56] The avant-garde magazines were at the forefront of this modernism. Livezeanu provides insightful analysis on each magazine's graphic design, literary output, and international connections with other European avant-garde magazines such as the German magazine *Der Sturm* that dedicated an issue to the magazine *Unu* in 1930.[57]

Specific studies have laid the foundation for how to write about avant-garde magazines. One of the most important ones is Dawn Ades's 1978 exhibition catalogue *Dada and Surrealism Reviewed*, which is a model for how to describe and analyze the avant-garde magazine as an artistic strategy.[58] Though she only concentrates on the western European magazines, Ades' analysis is a valuable example of how to understand

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[55] Răileanu.

[56] Irina Livezeanu, "Romania: 'Romania Toward the West': New Forms and 'The Poetry of True Life,'" *Modernist Magazines: A Critical and Cultural History Vol. 3: Europe 1880-1940*, edited by Peter Brooker, Sascha Bru, Andrew Thacker, and Christian Weikop, (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2013), 1157.

[57] Ibid., 1181.

[58] Dawn Ades, *Dada and Surrealism Reviewed* (London: Arts Council of Great Britain, 1978).

a magazines' text and image relationship within the context of the magazine's overall design and development. For instance, she focuses on specific examples but places these examples within *Dada* magazine's continual transformation throughout its various issued numbers. Ann Gibson's 1984 dissertation "Theory Undeclared: Avant-Garde Magazines as Guide to Abstract Expressionist Images and Ideas," is also a beneficial point of reference of how to take into consideration the myriad of artists and writers involved with a group of magazines—in her dissertation's case the mid-century New York magazines—while maintaining focus on the magazines themselves.[59]

Chapters Overview

In Chapter One, "Tzara's Dada Network and the Romanian Avant-Garde," I situate the Romanian avant-garde within the global Dada network that Dadaist and Romanian avant-gardist Tristan Tzara spearheaded. The chapter lays out why the Romanian avant-garde should have a central place in the Dada network rather than on the periphery. Tzara, alongside Marcel Iancu and Ion Vinea, began his avant-garde practice in Bucharest. The three collaborated on two of Romania's first avant-garde magazines: the magazine *Simbolul* in 1912 (The Symbol) and *Chemarea* (The Call) in 1915. Afterward, having gained the experience of publishing collaborative projects, Tzara and Iancu helped establish an intense, influential moment of avant-garde experimentation—called Dada—in Zurich in 1916. As in the Romanian avant-garde, magazines were a substantial endeavor in Dada, linking multiple Dada centers from New York, Berlin, and

[59] Ann Eden Gibson, "Theory Undeclared: Avant-Garde Magazines as Guide to Abstract Expressionist Images and Ideas," PhD dissertation (University of Delaware, 1984).

Paris to Budapest, Zagreb, and Bucharest. The Romanian avant-garde magazine *75HP* is a dadaist magazine, with futurist and constructivist elements, that evokes Dada's humor and shock, as well its text and image design, through the magazine's outrageous manifestos, absurdist poems, and pictopoetry—a uniquely Romanian avant-garde invention by Victor Brauner and Ilarie Voronca. We see the international spirit, which Tzara championed while building the Dada network, carried on in *75HP* and the rest of the Romanian avant-garde magazines in their international collaborations and multilingualism.

Moving from Dada to Constructivism, another significant avant-garde tendency in the Romanian avant-garde magazines, I argue in Chapter Two, "A Romanian Type of Constructivism: Constructivist Prints, 1923-1925," for a need for formal analysis of the magazines' constructivist prints formally. With this analysis, I seek to highlight the stylistic differences between the Romanian avant-gardists' Constructivism from Russian Constructivism and the Constructivism of western Europe. The differences between them establish the Romanian avant-garde as more modern than avant-garde. Although Düsseldorf Congress and the International Dada-Constructivist Congress of 1922 officially kickstarted Constructivism in western Europe, Marcel Iancu was already creating abstract, geometric art during his Zurich Dada period, in his reliefs and woodcut prints. In *Contimporanul* and *Punct*, Iancu continued his abstract art, but his prints were now immersed in Constructivism. M.H. Maxy and Victor Brauner created additional constructivist prints for the two magazines. These prints blend geometric forms with loose, organic forms that deviate from Constructivism's stylistic rigidity, appearing

almost decorative, thereby attesting to a distinct kind of Constructivism in the Romanian avant-garde.

Chapter Three, "Re-Envisioning Cubism in Romanian Avant-Garde Magazines," rectifies what little has been written art history and literary discourse about Cubism in Romanian avant-garde magazines. In the chapter, I analyze the photographic reproductions of cubist paintings and theoretical texts about Cubism in *Contimporanul* and *Integral*. The considerable amount of cubist artworks in *Contimporanul* and *Integral* point to a serious engagement with Cubism on behalf of Romanian avant-garde artists. Marcel Iancu of *Contimporanul* and M.H. Maxy of *Integral* exalted Cubism's prominence in the formal development of avant-garde art while producing cubist still lifes and portraits, akin to the cubist paintings of Pablo Picasso and Georges Braque. Their unusual turn to Cubism at the stage of the movement when critics and artists began to see Cubism as out-of-date signifies the stylistic hybridity of the Romanian avant-gardists and their willingness to traverse the space between avant-garde and modern art tendencies as they strove to conceptualize their art. Moreover, the preoccupation with African art, as seen in the magazines'articles and Iancu and Maxy's art, is another component that the avant-gardists shared with the French Cubists.

As a departure from the stylistic analysis of Romanian avant-garde art in the magazines, Chapter Four, "The Jewish Identity of the Romanian Avant-Gardists," dissects how the Romanian avant-garde artists and writers addressed their Jewish identity and whether this identity informed their artistic work. Half of the editors of the Romanian avant-garde magazines were Jewish, which is consequential, given that they were working during the interwar period in Romania when they had to contend with anti-

Semitic discrimination, student riots, and a rising, dangerous, far-right fascism. In addition to their artistic merit, the magazines are sites of resistance against these anti-Semitic, virulent forces, for they testify to the intensity of Jewish Romanian avant-gardists' creative output and their denouncement of anti-Semitism. They expressed their Jewish identity in multiple ways. For example, M.H. Maxy, Marcel Iancu, and Benjamin Fondane published their art and writings in the avant-garde magazine *Puntea de Fildeş* and featured articles in *Contimporanul* about Jewish culture and anti-Semitism.

I have chosen to research seven magazines—*Contimporanul* (*The Contemporary*); *75HP*; *Punct* (*Point*); *Integral* (*Whole*); *Puntea de Fildeş* (*The Ivory Bridge*); *Urmuz*; *Unu* (*One*)—because they were produced in the 1920s during a hectic, pivotal period for politics, society, and the arts in Romania. Through these magazines, the Romanian avant-garde developed. With their ability to reach an audience beyond the physical confines of galleries and museums and beyond national borders, the Romanian avant-garde magazines functioned as an apparatus of reconstruction for life and art, one that would sustain a newly modernized, multi-ethnic, and cosmopolitan Romania.

CHAPTER 2

TZARA'S DADA NETWORK AND THE ROMANIAN AVANT-GARDE

"Dada is American, Dada is Russian, Dada is Spanish, Dada is Swiss…All those who live without formula, who don't like museums, only the parquet floors are Dada."[1]

The American art collectors Louise and Walter Arensberg collected an impressive number of artworks by leading modern and avant-garde trailblazers, most notably Constantin Brâncuși and Marcel Duchamp, which they donated to the Philadelphia Art Museum. Concurrently, they formed a circle of artists and writers from Europe and the United States—Francis Naumann calls them the "Arensberg group"—during World War I in New York.[2] Several Dadaists, Marcel Duchamp, Francis Picabia, Beatrice Wood, Man Ray, and Elsa Hildegard Baroness von Freytag-Loringhoven, were in the Arensberg group. Their dadaist activities at their "salon" in Arenbergs' apartment led Walter Arensberg to deem Dada not only American but a global tendency in 1920. In New York, the press took diverging positions on this controversial new mode of artmaking that was either a public threat or an exciting development from across the Atlantic. An anonymous writer, whom Agnes Smith of *New York Sunday* interviewed, bluntly gives his take on Dada: "Dada is a cult…a great many minds are in league to promote Dada."[3] A *New York Times* article decries the Swiss public's resistance to Dada and applauds the Dadaists'

[1] Walter Arensberg, "Dada est Américain" (Dada is American), *Litterature* no.13 (May 1920).

[2] Francis M. Naumann, "Walter Conrad Arensberg: Poet, Patron, and Participant in the New York Avant-garde," *Philadelphia Museum of Art Bulletin* xxvi.328 (1980): 17-18.

[3] Agnes Smith, "Introducing dada," *New York Sunday* vol. 97, no. 121 (May 1, 1921).

"fine art of advertising their genius."[4] In Northern Ireland, *Belfast Evening Telegraph* disparages the "pictures from those hateful Dadaists and Futurists that are the craze of the moment! You start off hopeful but there is nothing to make you want to see them again."[5] Only three years after its creation in 1916, news of Dada, good and bad, spread to multiple regions and news outlets and, poignantly, to the general public in these regions, as the three articles testify.

In Romania, Dada manifested itself in the avant-garde group of writers and artists and their avant-garde magazines. Zurich, Berlin, Paris, and New York constitute the main cities with a large number of Dada events and Dadaists but if we are to think of Dada as a global network, as Tzara aimed it to be, then we need to open the Dada network to other cities, particularly in East-Central Europe. In cities such as Zagreb, Prague, Budapest, Warsaw, and Bucharest, avant-garde groups of the 1920s forged their own distinct Dada paths as they subsumed dadaist tendencies with other avant-garde tendencies. For this chapter, however, I will focus almost exclusively on Bucharest because it is the place where Tzara began his avant-garde career, while examining the question: how does the Romanian avant-garde fit into Tzara's Dada network?

Arguably, Romania could be considered the site of origin of Dada, given that Romania was Tzara's and Marcel Iancu's birthplace and the site of their first foray into magazine publishing. The Romanian avant-gardists created this notion of the Romanian avant-garde originating Dada by publishing the early poems of Tzara—the most

[4] *New York Times,* "Intolerance at Zurich," (June 8, 1919).

[5] "Paris in the Looking Glass," *Belfast Evening Telegraph* (July 21, 1921).

established Romanian avant-gardist outside Romania. Moreover, the 1924 magazine *75HP* champions Dada's anti-art, absurdist tactics of confronting audiences with belligerent, humorous manifestos and experimental page layout and typography, which stem from *Dada* magazine. Due to this substantial use of Dada tactics and their link to Dada through two of the founders of Dada, I argue that the Romanian avant-garde magazines have a significant, central place in Tzara's Dada network. In this chapter, I analyze the Romanian avant-garde magazines establishing themselves as dadaist through Tzara and the ways in which *75HP*, the most dadaist of all the Romanian avant-garde magazines, merged Dada with Constructivism and Futurism in its content and design. With international collaborations facilitated through the magazines, the Romanian avant-gardists endorsed the internationalism of the Dada network. They hoped that these international collaborations would propel them from the periphery—in which they saw themselves—to the center of the European avant-gardes.

In using the term "network" to describe the collaboration and exchange of Dada ideas and magazines, I follow the recent discourse on the historical avant-gardes. In the catalogue for the 2016 exhibition "The Power of the Avant-Garde: Now and Then," curator Ulrich Bischoff describes the relationships among avant-garde "centers of energy" as an "international network."[6] Éva Forgács and Timothy Benson interpret the Central-European avant-gardes as a "network of cosmopolitan cities" that link cities like Bucharest, Budapest, and Zagreb to the western avant-gardes of Paris, Berlin, and

[6] Ulrich Bischoff, "The Thundering Collision and the Chocolate Grinder," *The Power of the Avant-Garde: Now and Then, Exhibition Catalogue*, edited by Ulrich Bischoff and Jurgen Müller (Warnsveld, Neatherlands: Uitgeverij Terra; Lannoo, 2016), 13.

Amsterdam.[7] The aim of these formulations of the network is to de-center the historical avant-garde and to implement in its place an overarching network of multiple avant-gardes. Within the network of the avant-gardes, Dada is a network in itself—a "network that crisscrosses national borders" constructed through Dada's "print culture," according to Martin Puchner.[8] Tom Sandqvist writes about Tzara's ambitious goal to implement a "global network" of Dada.[9] Lastly, at the local level, Adriana Copaciu argues that Romanian magazines formed an "interpersonal network" with which the Romanian avant-gardists could cultivate their local and international avant-garde connections.[10] I expand this discourse on the avant-garde and dada networks by foregrounding the Romanian avant-garde in Bucharest as an overlooked Dada satellite.

The Romanian avant-garde magazines network lies within the Dada network, which lies within the network of avant-gardes. Drawing upon how the term network has come to define the historical avant-gardes, I analyze the Dada network as a kind of intermediary between the Romanian avant-garde magazines network and the wider avant-gardes network. This intermediary connects the Romanian avant-garde with the rest of the avant-gardes. The Romanian avant-gardists looked to Tzara and *Dada* magazine to

[7] Éva Forgács and Timothy O. Benson, "Introduction," *Central European Avant-gardes: Exchange and Transformation, 1910-1930, Exhibition Catalogue* (Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum of Art; Cambridge; London: MIT Press, 2002), 13.

[8] Martin Puchner, *Poetry of the Revolution: Marx, Manifestos, and the Avant-Gardes* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), 136.

[9] Tom Sandqvist, *DADA East: The Romanians of Cabaret Voltaire* (Cambridge, MA; London, UK: The MIT Press, 2006), 94.

[10] Adriana Copaciu, "How to be transnational? Identity Trajectories of the Romanian Avant Garde Magazines." *Editura Arhipelag* XXI (2013): 1226.

create their avant-garde magazines and gain recognition among the avant-gardists outside of Romania. The network framework, rather than the movement framework, allows greater flexibility in deciding which artist or artwork is dadaist. It is not bound to a prescribed set of guidelines that governs a particular art movement, not that Dada had such guidelines, to begin with. The Dada framework also allows one to track Dada's advancement across regions and countries, at different points in time, as Dada garnered supporters and collaborators in these places. In lieu of a Dada movement in Zurich or one in Berlin or New York, we instead have multiple contact points between multiple avant-garde groups of artists assimilating dadaist tendencies in their avant-garde work. Therefore, the network framework decentralizes Dada, just as it decentralizes the historical avant-garde and builds an inclusive community of Dadaists, in which international, national, and regional identities and histories play out in different art practices without pushing these practices to the periphery.

In the inclusive Dada network, the Romanian avant-gardists in Bucharest and avant-gardists in countries such as Hungary, Croatia, and Czechia, are no longer East-Central Europeans on the periphery of the Dada movement or outside the movement altogether. Before the last three decades, scholars ignored the contributions of East-Central European avant-gardists to Dada. For example, Dawn Ades limits her excellent analysis of Dada magazines to western Europe in her 1978 book *Dada and Surrealism Reviewed.* Robert Motherwell does so too in his classic 1951 anthology *The Dada Painters and Poets*. It is more accurate and productive for the avant-garde and Dada discourses to install each avant-garde as one Dada point on a decentralized network that, though initially stemming from Zurich, reaches widely to multiple points without one

designated, western orbit. Among these avant-gardes, however, the Romanian avant-garde stands out because two of the Dada founders come from Romania. Therefore, the Romanian avant-garde is in fact closer to Zurich in the Dada network than many of the other avant-gardes.

Tzara's Dada Network

Tristan Tzara spearheaded a Dada advertising campaign of expanding Dada's notoriety throughout Europe and the United States. Tzara used the services of Argus Suisse de la Presse in Geneva and Le Courrier de la Presse in Paris to track of Dada's media coverage. These companies sent Tzara every article that mentioned him as a Dada representative or mentioned Dada as a movement. For instance, in one of the articles, *Grecia*, the avant-garde literary magazine and a platform for the Ultraism movement in Spain, acknowledges Dada's "global expression and its "independent, free, and autonomous state."[11] Tzara's Archive at the Bibliothèque Littéraire Jacques-Doucet in Paris has boxes of such articles. Tzara's precise documentation of Dada demonstrates how much he cared about his image and that of Dada in the press and avant-garde circles. Regardless of whether this image was negative or positive, Tzara must have been satisfied as long as the media talked about Dada.

[11] Press Clippings, Fonds Tzara, Bibliothèque littéraire Jacques-Doucet.
R.L. de la V, *Grecia* (September 1 1920).
Grecia was followed by the magazine *Ultra* in 1921, which synthesized avant-garde tendencies, including Dada, in its Ultraism movement. For further details on *Grecia* and *Ultra*, see Lori Cole, "Madrid: Questioning the Avant-Garde," *The Oxford Critical and Cultural History of Modernist Magazines*, Vol. 3 Part 1, edited by Peter Brooker, Sasha Bru, Andrew Thacker, and Christian Weikop (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 369-391.

Dada may not have been a cult, but through Tzara's efforts, prominent and emerging artists and writers gained gradual awareness of this little group of Dadaists. Some became Dada disciples. In 1921, Tzara attempted to document Dada's expansion with 10,000 copies of *Dadaglobe,* an anthology of dadaist images and text by fifty international contributors he solicited through letters. For example, one of Argentina's most celebrated writers, Jorge Luis Borges, who was living in Spain in 1921, replied to Tzara with his opinion that Dada is "careless and clownish"—in a good way.[12] Unfortunately, Tzara was unable to publish *Dadaglobe* due to financial problems.[13] Despite this setback, under Tzara's direction, Dada gained a global audience. In addition to meeting in Arensbergs' apartment, the Dadaists of New York published a magazine named *New York Dada* in April 1921 under Katherine Dreier, Man Ray, and Duchamp's editorship. In the first and only issue of *New York Dada*, they printed Tzara's letter in which Tzara, addressing *New York Dada* readers, writes, "You ask for authorization to name your periodical Dada. But Dada belongs to everybody…there are dadas everywhere all over and in every individual. Like God and the toothbrush (an excellent invention, by the way)."[14] Ever the promoter—"publicity and business are also poetic elements," he says in "Dada Manifesto 1918"—Tzara spends the latter half of his letter encouraging readers to buy his *Dadaglobe*.[15]

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[12] Fonds Tzara, Bibliothèque littéraire Jacques-Doucet.

[13] Adrian Sudhalter, "Tristan Tzara's 'International of the Mind:' Dadaglobe (1920-1921)," *Virgin Microbe: Essays on Dada*, edited by David Hopkins and Michael White (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2014), 41.

[14] Tristan Tzara, "Eye-Cover, Art-Cover, Corset-Cover Authorization," *New York Dada* no. 1 (April 1921).

[15] Tristan Tzara, Seven Dada Manifestos and Lampisteries, translated by Barbara Wright (London, UK: Alma Classics, 2011), 8.

Thus, according to Tzara, everyone has Dada in them, and, according to Arensberg, everyone who despises museums is dadaist. Going by this creed then, it does not matter that New York Dada was short-lived, ending with Duchamp and Man Ray's relocation to Paris in 1921, because to Tzara, Dada is not one single art movement in a specific time or place. Dada is more akin to God and the toothbrush, as Tzara cleverly jokes. In *Integral* issue no. 6-7, Mihail Cosma fittingly defines Dada as a "state of mind."[16] Dada can signify both the spiritualism of a higher order or the banality of daily life, one toothbrush at a time. Alternatively, Tzara insinuates that both God and the toothbrush are human inventions, just like Dada; the invention is available to each individual based on her or his needs. Dada is intrinsically nonsensical and nihilistic, as Tzara demonstrated in his manifestos: "Dada does not mean anything."[17]

If Dada has no meaning and is not a movement but a state of mind or a way of thinking, belonging to everyone, with nonconformist principles of "living without formula," then how can one pinpoint an underlying, shared network of Dada, and especially an international one, among different centers of the avant-garde? It is essential to recognize that, although Tzara philosophized otherwise—and we must not take his words at face value—he had an agenda of spreading the word about Dada and bringing Dada to multiple avant-garde centers through magazines. This type of media, in the form of magazines, gave Dada an artistic direction and, in turn, gave artists and writers

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[16] Mihail Cosma, "De la futurism la integralism" ("From Futurism to Integralism"), *Integral* no. 6-7 (October 1925), 9.

[17] Tzara, *Seven Dada Manifestos and Lampisteries*, 4.

opportunities to connect with like-minded avant-gardists outside their geographical location. Hugo Ball initiated Cabaret Voltaire in Zurich on February 5, 1916. However, Dada truly flourished once the Dadaists began publishing *Dada* magazine, which Tzara sent to his connections in Italy, France, Germany, and New York. Without the magazine, Dada could very well have been a short-lived, local phenomenon. Through the magazine exchange of sending *Dada* and, in return, receiving avant-garde magazines from multiple places, Tzara established a Dada network across avant-garde centers.

Tzara in Romania

Before bringing attention to the Romanian magazines, one needs to understand how Tzara lay the ground for Dada and the avant-garde magazines to flourish in Romania and how he continued to participate in the Romanian avant-garde after his permanent relocation to Paris. With Marcel Iancu and Ion Vinea, Tzara edited two magazines during his teenage years: *Simbolul* (*The Symbol*) in 1912 and *Chemarea* (*The Call*) in 1915. *Simbolul* has a traditional magazine layout of columns of poetry and prose with a few images by Iancu and other contributors. The text and images complement each other in their evocation of symbolist metaphors and motifs regarding lost or obsessive love, melancholy, and death as encountered in Tzara's poems and images of nude women, some with the skeleton of death. The content of *Simbolul* drew on French Symbolism and, Tom Sandqvist argues, challenged the Romanian bourgeois literary field of the time.[18] In the literary and aesthetic French Symbolism movement of the mid-nineteenth-

[18] Sandqvist, 77-78.

century to the start of the twentieth century, the most well-known French poets Charles Baudelaire and Stéphane Mallarmé reacted against Realism with poetry that captured the nuances of human experience and its range of manifestations, from trauma to joy. Romanian writers picked up the movement, but it was not the only symbolist magazine in Romania nor the most important. One of the harbingers of Symbolism in Romania, Ion Minulescu, edited the symbolist magazines *Revista celor l'alti* (The Magazine of the Other) in 1908 and *Insula* (The Island) in 1912.[19]

Despite having contributors like Claudia Millian and Adrian Maniu, who would later become prominent figures in Romanian literature, the magazine's issue no. 3 singles out Tzara, in the "Note" ("Notes") section, with the mention that "Mr. S. Samyro," i.e., the sixteen-year-old Tzara, "is the only one in charge of the editorial part of our magazine."[20] In a format that anticipates the list of magazines at the end of *75HP* or the Notes section of *Integral*, "Notes" announces the publication of the book *Cubism* by Jean Metzinger and Albert Gleizes about "the new movement." In 1912, Tzara—or rather Samuel Rosenstock, which is his original name—had not yet chosen a permanent pseudonym under which to publish his work. He was not yet the Dadaist Tzara. His symbolist poetry does not show signs of his future dadaist brilliance, at least not to one of Romania's most significant literary critics Ovid S. Crohmălniceanu. The critic bluntly remarks that Tzara's poems in *Simbolul* are "bad" but that his poems gain sophistication

[19] Irina Livezeanu, "Romania: 'Romania Toward the West': New Forms and 'The Poetry of True Life,'" *Modernist Magazines: A Critical and Cultural History Vol. 3: Europe 1880-1940,* edited by Peter Brooker, Sascha Bru, Andrew Thacker, and Christian Weikop (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2013) 1162-1163.

[20] "Note" ("Notes"), *Simbolul* no. 3 (December 1912).

in *Chemarea*.[21] Petre Răileanu, however, believes that Tzara's early poems show "a certain freedom from poetic convention, a replacement of lyricism with humor, irony, anti-lyricism, and anti-sentimentality."[22] Moreover, Tzara's name change from Rosenstock to S. Samyro and his editorial leadership of *Simbolul* demonstrate Tzara's early ambition to make a name for himself in print.

For *Chemarea*, Tzara replaced the pseudonym S. Samyro with Tristan Tzara. Eugene Iovanaki likewise introduced his pseudonym Ion Vinea in *Chemarea* for the first time. As Tzara's biographer Marius Hentea elucidates, although Tzara is listed as an editor, Vinea was the primary editor of *Chemarea*, which had much more of an antagonistic stance about politics than *Simbolul*, with a rallying call to abandon all beliefs and for "bourgeois homes to be bombed."[23] The two editors only published one issue of *Chemarea* in October 1915. Vinea published another issue of *Chemarea* in 1918, this time explicitly rebranding it as "a radical socialist newspaper." Romania was still undecided about whether or not to join the war in 1915. Irina Livezenau points out that *Chemarea* lingered between a nationalist wish for Romania to enter the war and acquire Transylvania from the Austro-Hungarian Empire and a critique the war. [24] Tzara's anti-war sentiment, which he would later build on in Dada, comes across in his poems

[21] Ovid S. Crohmălniceanu, *Literatura romana intre cele doua razboaie mondiale, II* (Bucuresti: Universalia, 2003), 207.

[22] Petre *Răileanu*, "The Avant-Garde as Spontaneous Contagion: The Case of Bucharest," *Dada/Surrealism* 20 (2015). n. pag. Web.

[23] Marius Hentea, *TaTa Dada: The Real Life and Celestial Adventures of Tristan Tzara* (Cambridge, MA; London, UK: The MIT Press, 2014), 51.

[24] Livezeanu, 1164-1165.

"Furtuna" (Storm) and "Cântecul dezertorului" (The Song of the Deserter) that he published in *Chemarea*.

Tzara published another anti-war poem, "Cântec de război" (Song of War) from 1915, in *Contimporanul* issue no. 27 of January 1923. In the poem, Tzara dwells on the fear of a young man awaiting his call to join the army; "Mother/And I am scared," the soldier confesses as he then heads to war where "the earth is burned with pain for home."[25] The young Tzara was worried about how the war would affect him, which might explain why, possibly to avoid being drafted, he relinquished his studies at the University of Bucharest and left to join Iancu in Zurich in Autumn 1915 before Romania entered the war in August 1916. Germany occupied Bucharest from 1916 to 1918 but, fortunately, Tzara and Iancu were able to stay in Zurich throughout the war. The honest and serious representation of war in "Song of War" is unusual for the future Dadaist. His poems "How to Make a Dadaist Poem" and "The Admiral Searches for a House to Rent" dissect words through chance (cutting words from a newspaper and picking them randomly from a hat to make a dadaist poem) and through a simultaneous recitation by multiple speakers. [26] With these methods, he deciphers the meaninglessness of words.

But the themes of dread and longing in "Song of War" are found again in Tzara's poetry that he wrote during World War II and in his 1931 poem "Approximate Man," in which Tzara searches not for an end to war or a justification for it but for a coherent identity that he lacks as an approximate man. Although it contained political undertones

[25] Tristan Tzara, "Cântec de război" (Song of War), *Contimporanul*, no. 27 (January 1923).

[26] Tristan Tzara, "How to Make a Dadaist Poem," *Seven Dada Manifestos and Lampisteries*, 39.

that were mainly missing in Dada manifestos, the combative tone of *Chemarea* may have sparked Tzara's dadaist practice or at least his courage to take more risk in his writing. Tzara's experience with *Simbolul* and *Chemarea* prior to *Dada* magazine was irreplaceable. This experience taught him how to lead the production of a print media venture, from communications with a publishing house to collaborations with other like-minded writers and artists and choosing the appropriate content that fits with the magazine's intentions.

Ion Pop claims that Dada could not have happened in Bucharest in 1916.[27] Bucharest was not yet ready for an avant-garde movement. The Romanian literary landscape was embroiled in French Symbolism until the start of *Contimporanul*, despite the Romanian translation and publication of F. T. Marinetti's futurist manifesto two weeks after its publication in the Parisian newspaper *Le Figaro* in 1909. Even in 1924, when *Contimporanul* was two years old, a Romanian writer in the Romanian magazine *Hiena* complained that Romanian literature is a copy of foreign literature that lacks life.[28] *Simbolul* and *Chemarea* did not win many readers because of their low amount of issue numbers and their relatively unknown contributors. Regardless, with their progressive agenda of anti-mainstream art and literature, these two magazines lay the groundwork for the rise of avant-garde magazines in Romania.

It is not unusual for the magazine reader to encounter Tzara's pre-Dada poems, written in Romanian, and his Dada poems, written in French, in *Contimporanul*, as with

[27] Ion Pop, "Ilarie Voronca and the Romanian Literary Avant-Garde," *Dada/Surrealism* 20 (2015): n. pag. Web.

[28] Ioan Darie, "Literatura cea noua" (The New Literature), *Hiena* (October 1924).

Marcel Iancu's art from his Dada period. Tzara and Dada were big names in 1923 when the magazine included "Song of War" on its front page. Tzara's poem functioned as a support for the magazine's critical commentary on the post-war Romanian government. The poem's inclusion is also an undeniable pursuit to link the magazine with Dada. Tzara's poems completed between 1912 and 1915 derive from Romania—geographically, culturally, and linguistically—and usher the arrival of Dada through Tzara's development as a writer in those years. At the risk of oversimplifying, for the Romanian avant-gardists, Tzara represented Dada. Hence, the 1912-1915 poems are dadaist, too, despite their stylistic differences, because Tzara wrote them.

When Sașa Pană wanted to publish Tzara's early poems as an anthology, Tzara remarked that he liked Pană's title *Primele Poeme ale lui Tristan Tzara* (*The First Poems of Tristan Tzara*) but not the title *Poeme dinainte de Dada* (Poems before Dada) because, in Pană's words, the latter "would give the assumption of a rupture in his poetic persona."[29] The anthology's title and Pană's essay towards the end of the anthology, "Insurecția dela Zürich" (The Insurrection from Zurich, substantiates the continuity between his pre-Dada and Dada poetry that Tzara wanted to maintain. In addition to recounting how "anti-war refugees" and "pacifists" developed Dada in Zurich and how they loved primitive art, Pană emphasizes the tremendous impact that Dada had on literature, affirming that "there exists one literature before Dada and another after Dada."[30] Suppose Dada caused a shockwave through literature, upending movements

[29] Sașa Pană, *Născut în '02. Memorii, file de jurnal, evocări* (București: Minerva, 1973), 250.

[30] Sașa Pană, *Primele poeme / ale lui Tristan Tzara. Urmate de, Insurecția dela Zürich / prezentată de Sașa Pană* (București: Editura Unu, 1934), 35-37.

such as Symbolism and changing the literary field into a pre and a post-Dada; if so, one could argue that Tzara's early poetry is not Dada. However, the coupling of Tzara's early poems with an essay on Dada in the anthology and Tzara's insistence on continuity in his poetry situates his early poems on the other side of the rift, on the path to Dada, and as forerunners of Dada. Tzara did not refrain from publishing his poem "Il fait soir" (It is Evening), from 1913, translated from Romanian into French, in the first dadaist magazine *Cabaret Voltaire* in 1916. The poem is still part of his symbolist phase as it romantically describes lovers kissing at the city's fountain and fishermen returning with "the stars of the water."[31]

The inclusion of "It is Evening" in *Cabaret Voltaire* is significant, for it recontextualizes Tzara's early poetry as dadaist. It is this recontextualization that bestows relevance to Tzara's career in Romania before Zurich. Rather than dismissing the early poetry as inconsequential to Dada and the Romanian avant-garde, I hope that I have shown that his early poems, along with *Simbolul* and *Chemarea*, aided the Romanian avant-garde in joining Tzara's Dada network. *Contimporanul*, for instance, featured several more of Tzara's early poems in its issue numbers and, by doing so, the magazine was publishing dadaist poetry because of the connotation of the early poems with Tzara in his role as one of the founders of Dada. Tzara's early poems show that Dada partly began in Romania with Tzara's poetry, even though the poetry and the magazines he published were primarily symbolist in form and content. Thus, the early poems and the magazines give credence to the argument that the Romanian avant-garde had a central

[31] Tristan Tzara, "Il fait soir" (It is Evening), *Cabaret Voltaire* (June 1916): 16.

role in the Dada network. *Integral* did not publish these poems, but it did feature several texts and poems by Tzara: his essay about his "ironic tragedy" play "Mouchoir de Nuages" (Handkerchief of Clouds) that he staged in Paris in 1924 and a fragment from his poem "Approximate Man."[32] Pană's magazine *Unu* has several of Tzara's poems as well but, because they are undated and his early poems typically include a date, these poems must have been written in the 1920s. There are none in *Punct* magazine. The Romanian avant-garde magazines are far from unique in carrying Tzara's work. Theo van Doesburg's *Mécano* magazine also carried his poetry in its issue nos. 2 and 3 from 1922, as did Kurt Schwitters's *Merz* magazine in issue no. 4 from July 1923, among many other magazines in Italy and elsewhere in Europe.[33]

At least in the case of *Contimporanul*, what differentiates these magazines from the Romanian ones in their collaboration with Tzara is the publication of his early poetry. The magazine *Cabaret Voltaire* was the only other magazine to feature his early poetry, to the best of my knowledge. Another point of difference is Tzara's own relationship to Romania, as his birthplace and the place where he began to cultivate his poetic skills and literary ambitions. Tzara's work in the Romanian magazines conveys a sort of homecoming, if not in the physical sense—he only visited Romania a few times after he permanently moved to Paris. In the symbolic sense, his early poetry returns Tzara to the

[32] Tristan Tzara, "Le Secret de Mouchoir de Nuages" (The Secret of the Handkerchief of Clouds), *Integral* no. 12 (April 1925).
Tristan Tzara, "L'homme aproximatif" (Approximate Man), *Integral* no. 13-14 (June-July 1927).

[33] Tristan Tzara, "Enfermé" (Confined), *Mécano*, no. 2 (July 1922).
Tristan Tzara, "Dada Pour Tous, l'optimisme dévoile" (Dada for all, optimism unveils), *Mécano*, no. 3 (October 1922).
Tristan Tzara, "Je sors de mon appartement somptueux" (I go out of my sumptuous apartment), *Merz*, no. 4 (July 1923).

early days of his career in Romania and his language of origin. In contrast, his later poetry and other works sustain his ambiguous, somewhat detached relationship with his home country and with the Romanian avant-garde.

The Romanian avant-gardists revered Tzara as one of their circle, but also one who was wiser and more renowned (in and outside of Romania) than they. Such an attitude towards Tzara is evident in their correspondence with him. One of *Integral* editors, Ilarie Voronca, took on a formal tone in one of his letters to Tzara, addressing him as "Domnule Tzara" (Mr. Tzara).[34] Another *Integral* editor, Benjamin Fondane, in his letters to Tzara, addresses him as "cher monsieur Tzara" (dear Mr. Tzara).[35] In Romanian culture, it is the custom to formally address another who is older or has more authority, with greater formality than one would with one's peers. Tzara was seven years older than Voronca and only two years older than Fondane. Yet, both writers addressed him as Mr. Tzara out of cordiality and respect. With his move to Paris and his initiation of Dada there, he had become successful in the French culture that Romanian intellectuals highly revered. Voronca and Fondane hoped to achieve the same success when they settled in Paris—Voronca in 1933 and Fondane in 1923.

The correspondence between the two editors of *Integral* and Tzara takes the shape of junior writers asking a senior writer, and their mentor, for his help, participation, and approval in their magazine endeavors. In one letter, Voronca apologizes to Tzara for bothering him again about a possible collaboration between *Integral* magazine and the

[34] Fonds Tzara, Bibliothèque littéraire Jacques-Doucet.

[35] Ibid.

Dadaist-turned Surrealist Georges Ribemont-Dessaignes, a collaboration that Tzara supposedly promised he would set up.[36] Voronca began to replace Dada elements in his writings for surrealist one. In the same letter, the novice surrealist asks Tzara if he could send him work by French Surrealists Louis Aragon and Paul Éluard and adds that he is eager to show him the surrealist work featured in *Integral*. During a visit to Paris, Voronca, now writing to Tzara in French instead of Romanian (maybe to show off his French writing skills or because Tzara preferred to correspond in French), asks to meet with Tzara but tells him that he cannot get a hold of him.[37] Meanwhile, Fondane, writing to Tzara in French on *Integral* letterhead, informs him that his poem will appear in *Integral* issue no. 12, which would arrive to Tzara in Paris soon, and requests more poems from Tzara for the magazine.[38] *Integral* issue no. 12 from April 1927 does not have Tzara's poem. Most likely, Fondane confused the issue numbers.

Integral issue no. 12, a special issue about the Italian Futurists, does have an article about Tzara written by none other than Voronca in French. The article begins with Voronca and Fondane arriving at Tzara's newly built house on Avenue Juno in Montmartre, a house that the architect Adolf Loos, a proponent of unadorned, modernist architecture, designed for Tzara and his wife, the Swedish artist Greta Knutson, in 1926.[39] Upon walking through a studio of African sculptures and masks, and paintings by

[36] Ibid.

[37] Ibid.

[38] Ibid.

[39] The unassuming house, a narrow building of terraces and small windows, split with a white façade on its upper floors and brown stones on its lower floors, still stands at the same address today, on a quiet residential street among rustling trees. The only indication of its history is a plaque on the wall of the house, with the inscription: "Maison construite en 1926 par l'architecte autrichien ADOLF LOOS, 1870-

Picasso, Max Ernst, Francis Picabia, and Joan Miro, they meet "the prophet poet" Tzara in his room. In response to the question of why he does not appear in public as much as he used to, Tzara says he no longer "breaks the windows of this mediocre publicity" but has "locked myself in loneliness."[40] Tzara is calling out the mediocre publicity of Surrealism, a movement which he denounces for its "hypocritical concealment of thought" that "gives an impression of discipline and unanimity."[41] Tzara insists that he "voluntarily" ended Dada, whose "behavior was sincerity to anarchy," because it lost its freedom due to too many people having a say in it, notably Tzara's former friend and former Dadaist André Breton who created Dada events with Tzara in Paris from 1919 to 1921 but subsequently turned against Dada's farcical view and treatment of art.

Tzara's break with Breton and the French Surrealists, along with Surrealism's usurpation of Dada, caused him to work by himself. However, as the correspondence and the article in *Integral* and the myriad of texts he published testify, Tzara kept in touch with the Romanian avant-gardists—even welcoming them into his home—in Romania and other European countries, albeit in a less collaborative, more of a one-way manner than in his Dada days. He would send his work or permit publication of his work in avant-garde magazines but worked alone. His work preference changed from his previous collaborations in Dada events or on *Dadaglobe,* where Tzara was actively trying to grow

1933, pour l'ecrivan Tristan Tzara" (House built in 1926 by Austrian architect ADOLF LOOS, 1870-1933, for writer Tristan Tzara). For details on the interior of the house, see Hentea's *TaTa Dada: The Real Life and Celestial Adventures of Tristan Tzara*, 209-213.

[40] Ilarie Voronca, "Marchez au pas: Tristan Tzara parle à Integral (Walking in Step: Tristan Tzara talks to Integral), *Integral* no 12 (April 1927): 5-6.

[41] Ibid.

the Dada network by gathering Dadaists together and supporting their Dada pursuits. Yet, as passively and indiscernible as it sometimes was, Tzara's literary presence in the Romanian avant-garde magazines signifies a Dada presence, one that ebbs and flows through the magazines' content and design. It signifies a continuation of the Dada network after Tzara ended it in 1921.

Dada v. Surrealism and Futurism

Although the Romanian avant-gardists drew from Futurism and Surrealism in their work, they also incorporated Dada in their poetry, manifestos, and design. Ilarie Voronca initially defended Dada against Surrealism in *Integral* issue no.1, March 1925. Surrealism is indebted to Tzara, he says there. Additionally, Surrealism is "inferior to Dada;" it is "feminine expression" that does "not respond to the rhythm of the time," as opposed to the virility of Dada and the progressiveness of Integralism, "the most advanced style of the twentieth century."[42] Romanian avant-gardists gradually warmed up Surrealism and some even embraced surrealist art and poetry, like Victor Brauner's surrealist paintings and Voronca's surrealist poetry in *Unu*. They then reframed the split between the two avant-garde tendencies as no longer a split but, as Pană states in Tzara's anthology, "a continuity and interpenetration (not a weak continuity but of sometimes violent and decisive swings)."[43]

[42] Ilarie Voronca, "Suprarealism si Integralism (Surrealism and Integralism), *Integral* no. 1 (March 1925): 5.

[43] Pană, *Primele poeme / ale lui Tristan Tzara. Urmate de, Insurecția dela Zürich / prezentată de Saşa Pană*, 47.

The Romanian avant-gardists' relationship somewhat parallels or, more appropriately, follows Tzara's relationship with Surrealism. Tzara initially refused Breton's Surrealism and his sturdy, pedantic leadership in a battle of artistic egos but then joined the Surrealists by 1930, only to split again from the Surrealists in 1935 on account of political differences.[44] Having allied with Dada, the Romanian avant-gardists—perhaps due to their insecurities about their masculinity one would presume—could not accept Surrealism, the more "feminine" and inferior tendency. But just as Tzara came around to Surrealism, so did the Romanian avant-gardists in *Unu* and *Integral* by the late 1920s, to the point that Voronca asked Tzara for the work of the Surrealists, as mentioned in their correspondence. Nonetheless, Surrealism was still a marginal phenomenon in the Romanian avant-garde until 1940, when a younger generation of avant-gardists formed the Romanian Surrealist group named Infra Noir.[45]

In comparison with Surrealism, Futurism was more embedded in the Romanian avant-garde magazines, but the Romanian avant-gardists, like Voronca in *75HP*, mixed Futurism with dadaist and constructivist features to the extent that it lost its influence on the Romanian avant-gardists. Christophe Dauphin identifies what futurist features the poets of *Integral* and *Punct* possessed: "their taste for provocation, their frenetic imagination and their advertising style."[46] However, these are also identifiable features of

[44] In 1935, Breton expelled Tzara from the group because Tzara, now engrossed in Communist ideology, wanted Surrealism to be more political. For more details on Tzara's hesitant participation in the Surrealist group, see Hentea's chapter "Approximate Surrealism: 1929-1935," 221-239.

[45] For more on Infra Noise, see Catherine Hansen's dissertation "Blacker in Black: The Romanian Surrealist Group and Postwar Surrealism" (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University, 2015).

[46] Christophe Dauphin, *Ilarie Voronca: le poète intégral* (Cordes-sur-Ciel: Rafael de Surtis; Paris: Editinter, 2011), 58.

dadaist poetry. I would argue that the poetry and manifestos of the Romanian avant-gardists employ paradox, play, and irony that is more characteristic of dadaist texts. Emilia Drogoreanu makes a compelling argument for the inclusion of Futurism as one of the tendencies of the Romanian avant-garde. She notes, the Romanian avant-gardists were "experimental and iconoclastic," were attracted to Futurism's "sensitivity, essentially modern, urban, polemical, multiform."[47] Futurism, she argues, is most evident in *75HP*, *Punct* and *Integral* magazines, specifically in the pictopoetry, which I will discuss shortly below, and in their futurist-constructivist rebellion against antiquated modes of living and artmaking, with a zeal for boisterous technological progress. Yet, I would add, the poetry in Romanian magazines lacked a futurist glorification of war.

Indeed, one cannot ignore the fact that the Italian Futurists had a presence in the Romanian magazines and the Romanian avant-gardists sought to enrich their relationship with them, or rather more accurately, their relationship with Marinetti, whom they esteemed. For instance, the already mentioned futurist edition of *Integral* issue no. 12 presents the Italian Futurists on the cover in a group photograph. In the same issue, Stéphane Roll—in his poem alongside a photograph of a sculpture of Marinetti raising his staunch fist—and Ernest Cosma—who lived in Milan for a time and was the main intermediary between the Futurists and the Romanian avant-gardists—both extoll Marinetti.[48] Cosma views Marinetti as a "speaker like a machine gun; traveling

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[47] Emilia Drogoreanu, *Infleunte ale futurismului Italian asupra avangardei romanesti, sincornie si specificitate* (Pitesti; Bucuresti: Editura Paralela, 2004), 12.

[48] Stéphane Roll, "F.T. Marinetti," *Integral* no. 12 (April 1927): 3.
Ernest Cosma, "F.T. Marinetti," *Integral* no. 12 (April 1927): 5.

commissioner of Futurism; propagandist lecturer around the globe; prophet of a metaphysics for the use of times yet proclaimed, dynamic politician like a turbine; volunteer soldier in war." Furthermore, Marinetti's poem in the form of parole in libertà (words in freedom) appears at the end of the issue number, not in the usual futurist, graphic layout of parole in libertà but in two standard columns.[49] The Romanian avant-gardists were so enamored with Marinetti that in 1930 when Marinetti accepted the Italian-Romanian Cultural Association's invitation to come to Bucharest, M.H. Maxy, Marcel Iancu, and Ion Vinea organized lectures and exhibitions for him.[50]

The Italian Futurist leader enjoyed the emulation that the Romanian avant-gardists likewise bestowed on Tzara—similarly to Cosma's hyperbolic description of Marinetti, Filip Brunea describes Tzara in Integral issue no. 1 as "the healer" who discovered Dada, which "was the genius and providence of the inventor."[51] The emulation for Marinetti, however, was distinct from that for Tzara. For the Romanian avant-gardists, Marinetti's foreignness was important. Tzara was one of them, even if he had risen to greater fame in Paris. For the Romanian avant-gardist, Marinetti, as a pioneer of the avant-garde and an international, Italian figure, was the main appeal of Futurism and not so much the movement itself. This would explain why there is barely any futurist poetry and prose in the Romanian avant-garde magazines (purely futurist, not mixed with dada elements), other than by Marinetti, and less so futurist art.

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[49] F.T. Marinetti, "Températures du corps d'un nageur (Poésie thermometric—mots en liberté)" (A swimmer's body temperature (Thermometric Poetry: Words in Freedom), *Integral* no. 12 (April 1927): 12.

[50] Petre Oprea, *M.H. Maxy* (Bucharest: Editura Meridiane, 1974), 22.

[51] Filip Brunea, "Sept Manifestes Dada," *Integral* no. 1 (March 1925).

Beyond Romania, Marinetti and Futurism were in the Dada network's sphere of influence. The Futurists contributed to Tzara's *Dada* magazine and Tzara contributed to their magazines. Marinetti corresponded with Tzara, at one time, sending him futurist poetry for Tzara's *Dadaglobe* anthology.[52] Additionally, when it comes to Tzara's manifestos and dadaist manifestos in general, what cannot be overlooked, as Martin Puchner underscores in his study on avant-garde manifestos, is the major impact of Marinetti's "Manifesto of Futurism" on Dada. Marinetti disseminated the manifesto in magazines and newspapers throughout Europe. Along with the countless futurist manifestos that came after 1909, Marinetti's manifesto led to the proliferation of Dada manifestos as an art form in and of itself.[53] One wonders if Dada would have existed without its futurist predecessor, but Tzara insisted that when he came up with the word "dada" for the magazine in 1916, the Dadaists "had nothing in common with the Futurists."[54] The Romanian avant-gardists are not as bold as Tzara to make such a defense of Dada, nor would it be truthful if they did because there is no denying that Futurism was part of their avant-garde practice. However, it is debatable to what extent, as I have argued. After all, Mihail Cosma recognized Futurism in his article "De la futurism la integralism" (From Futurism to Integralism) in *Integral* no. 6-7, as an artistic

[52] Fonds Tzara. Bibliothèque littéraire Jacques-Doucet.

[53] Puchner, 150.

[54] As quoted in Emily Hage, "The Magazine as Strategy: Tristan Tzara's Dada and the Seminal Role of Dada Art Journals in the Dada Movement," *The Journal of Modern Periodical Studies* 2 (2011): 49.

tradition, along with Dada and Cubism, that forged the Romanian avant-gardists' Integralism.[55]

Pictopoetry

75HP, edited by Ilarie Voronca and Stéphane Roll, is a marvel in design and originality and one of the most impressive European avant-garde magazines of the 1920s. Arguably, *75HP* is the most dadaist of all the Romanian avant-garde magazines. It provides the most robust evidence that the Romanian avant-garde should be part of the Dada network in terms of its dadaist content. For these reasons, in the rest of the chapter, I discuss *75HP* and how it reimagines dadaist, futurist, and constructivist poetic and artistic forms. Pană states that "The single volume of 75HP remains the only Romania publication where a dada revolt is found, yet on the cover, it presents a construction."[56]

Upon viewing the colorful constructivist cover art and its first page, for which readers must tilt their heads or tilt the magazine in multiple directions to read the text, it becomes evident that the magazine is quite different from anything that came before it (Figs. 2.1 and 2.2). The red color alone, through the entire magazine, is distinct as a vital design feature, for none of the other Romanian avant-garde magazines devote so much care to color. From its cover to its last page, the entire magazine is a work of advertising that presents the Romanian avant-gardists and their ambitions to the world. The bolded text, upper case letters, and an overall eye-catching design of text and image pairing are

[55] Cosma, "De la futurism la integralism" ("From Futurism to Integralism"), 8-9.

[56] Pană, *Născut în '02. Memorii, file de jurnal, evocări*, 172.

what one finds in a magazine ad or poster—it beckons one to look and then look again. Tactfully, in their magazine Roll and Voronca wed the high art of the avant-garde, or the abstract prints and photographic reproductions of paintings, with aggressive slogans—"Invent, Invent" and "Reader disinfect your brain"—aimed at affecting the reader's actions.

These two slogans, the first inserted within the text while the second runs alongside the edge of the page from top to bottom, are part of Voronca's manifesto for *75HP*, facetiously titled "Aviograma (in loc de manifest)" (Aviograma (instead of a manifesto)" (Figs. 2.3 and 2.4). According to Steven Mansbach, the manifesto "is quite close in substance also to the Dadaism developed by Tzara, Iancu, and other Romanians a decade before."[57] Voronca evokes Dada in the manifesto through its subversive stance on the artist's duty. The artist "does not imitate" but creates new forms and colors that encapsulates the modern world of transatlantic travels facilitated by airplanes (the word "Avio" and the circle with the thick horizontal line next to the title symbolize the airplane) telegraphs, trains, and a "mechanical piano that serves coffee with milk" (a very dadaist image!) while awaiting the "concert of the century to begin." [58] Voronca's manifesto introduces *75HP*'s agenda of promoting the Romanian avant-garde as a group of artists and writers at the forefront of the avant-garde tendencies driving the modern world. The editors announce on the magazine's first page that "our group includes among

[57] Steven Mansbach, "The "Foreignness" of Classical Modern Art in Romania," *The Art Bulletin* 80 (September, 1998): 542.

[58] Ilarie Voronca, "Aviograma (in loc de manifest)" (Aviograma (instead of a manifesto), *75HP* (October 1924).

its collaborators"—who are actually all Romanian—"the best writers and artists of the modernist movement of all the world."[59] *75HP*'s agenda is also to showcase the group's innovative art, poetry, and design, legitimizing its status as an avant-garde group deserving of serious consideration, especially Voronca and Brauner's pictopoetry.

Pictopoetry is one specific instance in *75HP*, and overall in the Romanian avant-garde, in which the collision of Futurism with Dada is most perceptible. According to Drogoreanu, the format of pictopoetry, with "its technological vocabulary of modernity," and the dominance of the visual over syntax is closer to Futurism than to Dada on account of the Dadaists' interest in the performative, and not the visual, aspect of poetry.[60] However, pictopoetry is the product of *75HP*, a magazine that is also dadaist and constructivist. Petre Răileanu thinks pictopoetry is "one of the most important contributions of the Romanian avant-garde," but, to Erwin Kessler, pictopoetry is "nothing more than a manifesto-form, a manifesto-brand, a short-lived manifesto trend."[61] What exactly is pictopoetry, and what are some of its features that we can identify as dadaist? Writing under the pseudonym Alex Cernat in his article "1924," Voronca proclaims that "The world needs to be reinvented. Always new. Because of this, pictopoetry, the invention of Mr. Brauner and Mr. Voronca, appears as the answer to an immediate need. Pictopoezia is the synthesis of new art and could be the only

[59] "75HP," *75HP* no. 1 (October 1924).

[60] Drogoreanu, 187, 204.

[61] Răileanu, n. pag. Web.
Erwin Kessler, "What Do Manifestos Manifest?" *Textimage: Perspectives on the History and Aesthetics of Avant-Garde Publications*, edited by Erwin Kessler (București: Institutul Cultural Român, 2008), 36.

justification of group 75HP."[62] It is doubtful whether pictopoetry could fulfill the world's need for reinvention, but the invention of pictopoetry was the answer to *75HP*'s persistent message to invent.

Brauner and Voronca assert in their pictopoetry slogan that "pictopoetry is not painting/ pictopoetry is not poetry/ pictopoetry is pictopoetry."[63] In a large, black typeface, the first two lines of the slogan elicit immediate attention while the last line in red reiterates the bold red heading "Pictopoezie" at the top of the page. Between the red heading and the slogan, Brauner and Voronca inserted *Pictopoezia no. 5721* in which words travel horizontally, vertically, diagonally, and upside down in between multi-colored geometric forms that pulsate on the page in the vein of Robert and Sonia Delaunay's Orphism (Fig.2.5). With its alternating and contrasting red, green, and yellow colors that are interrupted by touches of black, *Pictopoezia no. 5721* bears a slight resemblance to Sonia Delaunay's painting *Prismes electriques* (*Electric Prisms*) from 1914 but without the colors beaming forward in space as rays of light. Rather than striving to create harmony from the dynamism of contrasting colors as in Orphism, Brauner and Voronca prioritize individual words over flat colors and geometric forms in a composition that is quite static. The composition is particularly so when compared with Brauner's *Constructie* (Construction) on the cover of *75HP*, wherein two geometric, black forms unevenly frame an animated pairing of red and yellow. Nevertheless, both *Construction* and *Pictopoezia No. 5721* exemplify the Romanian avant-gardists' penchant for abstract, constructivist forms around 1923 and 1924.

[62] Alex Cernat, "1924," *75HP* no. 1 (October 1924).

[63] Victor Brauner and Ilarie Voronca, "Pictopoezie" (Pictopoetry), *75HP* no. 1 (October 1924).

The formal aspects of pictopoetry—onomatopoeias, text and image synthesis, play-on-words, mechanical and medical terms—reveal Brauner and Voronca's preoccupation with Dada and Futurism through their appropriation of futurist and dadaist aspects that simultaneously communicate hope and doubt in the modern world. Voronca and Brauner emphasize the modern, mechanical environment of *Pictopoezia No. 5721* not only in the simplified, geometric forms but also in the word "Autocamion" (Truck) and "Filtrea" (Filters) and the word fragment "Aero" (as in an airplane). This mechanical environment harks back to the yellow, mechanical environment of Fernand Léger's cubist painting *Le poêle* (*The Stove*) from 1918, particularly the active focal point in the center of an otherwise static composition. The pictopoem shares the theme of technology with futurist poetry as well, in addition to a visual layout of words to represent the motion of the signified object: "Aerop" falls to the ground like an airplane. "Cablecardqique" (Cardiac cable) has the bending pose of a bending cable, in this case, one that functions for the heart. However, the following, flippant references to games, travel, and other nonsensical subjects are certainly dadaist: "Golf" in the lower right quadrant with "Perdea" (To Lose) in the upper left quadrant, and "Honolululîn Do Diez" (possibly a mixture of Romanian and Spanish, translating to "Honolulu in two days") running vertically below the camera company "Kodak," and "Maxilar" (as in the maxillary sinus) written in a bold, black typeface at the top.

The only active forms are the two diagonals meeting under an arch in the composition center in the composition. They beckon the eye to the word "Nevaplus" that takes the form of one of the intersecting diagonals. "Nevaplus" could be a reference to the game of roulette, as in "rien ne va plus," meaning no further bets allowed once the

roulette wheel is rolling. “Nevaplus” is a dadaist manifestation of a fondness for games and chance—for instance, Tzara’s “How to Make a Dadaist “Poem” and Hans Arp’s use of chance in his collages. Likewise, in “Bilan” (Balance Sheet) in *Dada* no. 4-5, Tzara concocts a menagerie of sentences, in multiple typefaces, that, although not visual, possess a similar fragmentary style and obtuse meaning as in the pictopoetry. For example, “pretty twilight drum/auto gray cataract autopsy/ prophylactic necrologues of entr'actes antarctic regions” foreshadows the peripatetic, anatomically conscious body in *Pictopoezia No. 5721*.[64]

The serial number 5721 is also a nod to the many dadaist manifestos. It implies that there are many pictopoems beforehand, even though this is the first pictopoem published in a magazine. Only one more appears in *75HP*, titled *Pictopoezia No. 384*, on the page immediately following *Pictopoezia No. 5721* (Fig.2.6). On both sides of the black and white *Pictopoezia No. 384*, Brauner and Voronca introduce the concepts for which presumably their pictopoetry stands: “Simultaneity,” “Synthesis,” “Harmony,” “Abstract,” “Interstitial” (once again, the two bring up an anatomical term that means the areas between organs or cells), “Mechanism,” and so forth. The consistent reference to the body in the pictopoetry and Tzara’s text signifies a dadaist predilection for the mechanized body, in a tongue-in-cheek manner, as in the artworks of fellow Dadaist Francis Picabia. But, in the Romanian magazines this predilection does not extend to the art but is concentrated in their manifestos and poetry.

[64] Tristan Tzara, “Bilan” (Balance Sheet), *Dada, Anthologie Dada* no.4-5 (May 1919).

Hence, Brauner and Voronca blend futurist, cubist, constructivist, and dadaist elements in their pictopoetry invention. The full-length page ad in *75HP* for Brauner's exhibition at Maison d'Art states precisely this: "PICTOPOETRY finally realizes the true synthesis of futurisms dadaisms contructivisms."[65] Kessler was right to say that their pictopoetry period was brief. *75HP* was the only magazine, in or outside of Romania, to print pictopoetry in its one single issue. However, as Răileanu argues, Brauner and Voronca's invention was original in how it merged the visual with the textual, not through the futurist and dadaist method of manipulating typefaces and page layouts, but through the incorporation of text in the image itself. Plenty of modernists have worked with text in their art, most notably Picasso and Braque, but what is pertinent to Brauner and Voronca's pictopoetry is their refusal to discriminate between image and text. The words in the image are not supplemental features that fill the composition. They do not derive their poetic meaning from the image but from the relationship between each other and with the text that runs outside, alongside the image. However, the words depend on their arrangement within the composition and the abstract forms for their visual effect.

Pictopoetry is indicative of *75HP* as a whole because of how the magazine effortlessly merges art with poetry and manifestos in a synthesis that gives primacy to both text and image. The invention attempts to evoke an optimistic belief in technology's potential to improve all facets of daily life and establish more creative possibilities. However, Brauner and Voronca's application of generic technological and medical terms brings into question whether their pictopoetry seriously conjures the machine and modern technology. In *Punct* no. 14 from February 1925, Ion Vinea parodies futurist poetry with

[65] "Tout Le Monde," *75HP* no. 1 (October 1924).

his parody poem "Vorbe goale" ("Lip service").[66] In a few short lines, switching between French and Romanian, Vinea lists stereotypical words of Futurism: "nickel, express, radium, telephone, T. F. F ., cable, elevator, thermometer, bitumen, integral calculation, vermouth, speed, passport, radiator." Moreover, he quips, it is necessary for one to use a "vocabulary of a factory foreman, by way of paroles en liberte" and to succumb to the "lexicon revolution"—"a concept of a self-taught hairdresser"—in order for one to become a modern poet. In a farcical tone befitting of a Dadaist, Vinea suggests that Futurism's poetic formula is too narrow and immutable, for it entraps a modern poet with its constricting formula of mechanical-related words and its subversion of a language's lexicon.

Dada, on the other hand, is all about change, as Tzara describes in his "Dada Manifesto on Feeble Love and Bitter Love:"

> Dada has 391 different attitudes and colours according to the sex of the president. It changes—affirms—says the opposite at the same time—no importance—shouts—goes fishing. Dada is the chameleon of rapid and self-interested change. Dada is against the future. Dada is dead. Dada is absurd. Long live Dada. Dada is not a literary school. Long live Dada, howl.[67]

Tzara's manifesto lays out Dada's differentiation from Futurism. In addition to the obvious assertion, "Dada is against the future," Tzara envisions Dada as multifarious and unpredictable, as it continually changes according to the whims of its president—the writer of the manifesto. Although he uses the futurist device of onomatopoeia—the "howl" sound at the end is the Dada equivalent of the onomatopoeias in Marinetti's book

[66] Ion Vinea, "Vorbe Goale" ("Lip Service"), *Punct* no. 14 (February 1925).

[67] Tzara, *Seven Dada Manifestos and Lampisteries*, 45.

Zang Tumb Tumb: Adrianopoli Ottobre 1912: Parole in Libertà—the device takes on an amusing aspect.[68] The howling of Dada summons a nonthreatening wolf or dog's image while the Marinetti's "Zang Tumb Tumb" summons the intense sounds of modern technological warfare. And the format of Tzara's onomatopoeia is not the same as Marinetti's. Tzara repeats the "howl" multiple times on the page, but the word's font and size remain the same throughout the entire repetition. Marinetti manipulates the words by tilting them at an angle or decreasing the size to simulate the fading of sound in the distance. Moreover, as to the onomatopoeias' function, Marinetti's are integral to the book's narrative of his First Balkan War experience. The repetitive, waggish howl in Tzara's manifesto is superfluous and acts as a final exclamation mark that ends his defiant manifesto.

Though *Pictopoezia no. 5721* does not contain any onomatopoeias, the poem in *75HP* titled "aaaa aa aaaaa aaaa e eeeeee eeeee ee" announces its sound (a scream of defiance or a cry of exasperation) right from the beginning.[69] The poem is situated in-between Futurism and Dada, expressing its dadaist words strung illogically together, like "The incognito grid violinist inkwell passes/ in the test tube timer wearing favorites" and its futurist imagery of a "fervent locomotive" that "wiped its tires on the rug." Ovidiu Morar sees in *75HP* how "the preponderance of neologisms, the playful, the parodic, the absurd reveal certain futuristic and Dadaist influences" and in Voronca's poetry "the same disconcerting associations, which follow (as in Tzara's poems) the derisory descent

[68] F.T. Marinetti, *Zang Tumb Tumb: Adrianopoli Ottobre 1912: Parole in Libertà* (Edizioni Futuriste di "Poesia:" Milan, 1914).

[69] "aaaa aa aaaaa aaaa e eeeeee eeeee ee," 75HP no. 1 (October 1924).

of serious, sublime realities."[70] The onomatopoeia device is a device with which the creators of *75HP* substantiate their assimilation of the dadaist features that Morar mentions. This unsettling device heightens the performative aspect of Dada as any semblance of language degenerates into bewildering sounds. The Romanian avant-gardists did not perform on stage as the Dadaists did, but by using this device, they hark back to one of the Dadaists' most crucial medium through which they expressed their art—performance. The magazines, both the dadaist ones and the Romanian ones, cannot possibly capture the absurdity of the costumes, the music, the sounds, and the audience's energy that makes a dadaist performance so invigorating.

The closest that *75HP* comes to performance is in their announcement, on the front of page: "The group 75HP organizes a grand theatre anti-theatrical with lightning representations, asphalts hepatic diathermy carbonic acid SPECTATORS MUST COME IN SPECIAL PROVIDED TOILETS of boxing gloves of shoes of potatoes of horns trumpets preferable browning revolver signals wigs of asbestos. bbb bbb bbb bb b."[71] The announcement presages the similar anatomical, mechanical, disjointed vocabulary of *Pictopoezia no. 5721*. The other Romanian avant-garde magazines were not as audacious as *75HP* in their creative presentation of words. For most of the published articles and poetry, the magazine preserved the traditional look and orientation of text columns wherein they are neatly aligned next to one another on the page as in mainstream magazines and newspapers.

[70] Ovidiu Morar, *Scriitori Evrei din Romania* (Bucureşti: Hasefer, 2014), 218.

[71] "Le Groupe 75HP," *75HP* no. 1 (October 1975).

Four years after *75HP*'s debut, however, the creator of *Unu* magazine, Saşa Pană, chose to do something more original. His "Manifest" (Manifesto) in *Unu* issue no. 1, April 1928, is an homage to Dada, Futurism, and Surrealism, and to *75HP* (Fig.2.7). Pană begins his manifesto, in the form of a list, with the slogan from *75HP*, "readers, disinfect your brains," and includes the names Tzara, Marinetti, and Breton and the words "television" and "airplane."[72] He takes the manifesto to its ultimate conclusion, to the peak of "manifestoization," to use Puchner's term.[73] His manifesto is composed of a list of words and proper names (Theo van Doesburg is on the list too) that are familiar to everyone and synonymous with the most influential avant-garde tendencies, which, with the exception of Surrealism, had reached their expiration date by 1928. The onomatopoeia "ùraaaa ùraaaaaa ùraaaaaaaa" on the list is Pană's final hurrah for these avant-garde giants and the movements they created.

Multilingualism in Tzara's Cosmopolitan Network

Tzara's Dada network thrived on the cosmopolitanism of its participants, whose facility with multiple languages connected them with each other and widened Dada's influence across different geographical region, despite the Dadaists' drive to dismantle and reconfigure language. Therefore, the role of language, as a marker of cosmopolitanism, is crucial in Dada and the Romanian magazines. In addition, the languages in the Romanian magazines are culturally specific. The Romanian avant-

[72] Saşa Pană, "Manifest" (Manifesto), *Unu* no.1 (April 1928).

[73] Puchner, 155.

gardists' choice of specific languages informs us of a magazine's intended audience and the avant-gardists' international, cosmopolitan identity, as in citizens of the world, that they forged for themselves. The Romanian avant-gardists departed from the text and image design in *Dada* magazine but they followed the multilingualism on display in *Dada* magazine. Edited by Hugo Ball, *Cabaret Voltaire*, 1916, was the first Dada magazine, before the Cabaret Voltaire group came up with the term "dada." It only lasted one issue, and its design is rather tame and standard for its time. Following *Cabaret Voltaire*, the Dadaists (Ball, Tzara, Iancu, Hans Arp, Jean Taeuber, and Richard Huelsenbeck) introduced *Dada* magazine in 1917, with Tzara as its editor, and the term "Dada" to label their new magazine. Tzara envisioned *Dada* magazine as a "product" that would promote the group's activities, in German and French, to an international audience.[74]

The Romanian magazines did not produce issues in separate languages like *Dada* magazine, which had separate issues in German and French, but they were multilingual in the sense that articles and poems in Romanian and French, and sometimes German, were placed on the same page. Contributors for *Contimporanul*, for example, features entire articles and poems in Frintegraisench. *75HP* takes the multilingualism further with sentences in one text alternating between Romanian, French, German, and Spanish, as in the poem "Unt cu Pâine" (Butter with Bread) by one of the magazine's contributors Miguel Donville. The poem mixes the four languages: In Spanish, "Selecta difusion de autores del bajo apartado" (Select diffusion of authors of the low section); in French,

[74] Hentea, 97.

"L'amour venal est une escroquerie" (Venal love is a scam); in German, "Patsschhanditzam, Patsschhanditzam was wird die mamma bringen" (what will the mom bring); and the rest of the poem in Romanian.[75]

By publishing in multiple languages, the Romanian avant-gardists' shared Tzara's commitment to cosmopolitanism. Voronca explicitly invokes this commitment in "Aviograma (instead of a manifesto)." He places the city names Berlin, Paris, London, and New York boldly under the red heading TSF, which refers to Télégraphie Sans Fil, the wireless telegraph service that connects the artists and writers in different avant-garde cities.[76] By default, the Zurich Dadaists were cosmopolitan because they came from different countries to meet in a cosmopolitan Swiss city full of war exiles. They did not have to show their cosmopolitanism as much in their magazine, though it helped that Tzara was exchanging the magazine with his friends and acquaintances across Europe. The Romanian avant-garde magazines multilingualism contrasts with, for example, the Hungarian magazine *Ma*, edited by Lajos Kassák, whose issue numbers are almost entirely in Hungarian, apart from a few German texts.[77] Upon the magazine's exile to Vienna in 1919 due to the failed socialist Hungarian Soviet Republic, the number of German texts increased, but it still did not possess the language diversity of the Romanian magazines or those of Zurich Dada. *Ma* was not necessarily less international

[75] Miguel Donville, "Unt cu Pâine" (Butter with Bread), *75HP* (October 1924).

[76] Voronca, "Aviograma (instead of a manifesto)."

[77] See *Ma* magazine, 1916-1925, and Laszlo Beke, "Language Problems in the International Avant-Garde," *Textimage: Perspectives on the History and Aesthetics of Avant-Garde Publications*, edited by Erwin Kessler (București: Institutul Cultural Român, 2008),17-22.

than the Romanian magazines. Kassák and Bauhaus artist and *Ma* contributor László Moholy-Nagy were proponents of International Constructivism; they embraced in the magazine the theoretical texts and art of artists like Hans Richter, Theo van Doesburg, and Kurt Schwitters. The Hungarian avant-gardists forged a relationship with the Romanian avant-gardists too. *Ma*'s issue no. 6-7, 1924, includes a poem by Ion Vinea and an article about *Contimporanul*, both in Hungarian, and a constructivist print by Iancu.[78] The Romanian magazines, thus, were not unique in their internationalism (one can find plenty of examples of avant-garde magazines that sought international collaborations and international viewers).[79]

It is not my intention to exaggerate the fluidity of different languages in the Romanian magazines because the primary language in these magazines is Romanian. With that said, the Romanian magazines occupied the cultural space between France and Germany, two countries that exerted their cultural influence on Romanian society and culture. Most Romanian artists went to study or emigrate in the two countries.[80] Cosmopolitanism means more than having a global communications network and multicultural audiences. According to Kwame Anthony Appiah, "cosmopolitanism

[78] *Ma*, vol. 9, no. 6-7 (1924). For more analysis on the Romanian magazines' interaction with other European avant-garde magazines, including Ma, see Chapter "Periferii Avangardiste Europene" in Paul Cernat, Avangarda Românească și Complexul Periferiei (Bucharest: Cartea Românească, 2007).

[79] Choosing among East-Central European avant-garde magazines, the majority of text in *Dada Tank* (1922) from Zagreb, *Blok* (1924-1926) from Warsaw, and *Disk* (1923-1925) from Prague are in their respective languages.

[80] For example, M.H. Maxy studied in Berlin, Dadaist Arthur Segal lived in Berlin, and Maxy's teacher Iosif Iser studied in Munich. And many more artists and writers moved to Paris, most obviously Tzara, but also Ilarie Voronca. Moreover, in the twentieth-century, Romania had a considerable number of ethnic Germans.

begins with the simple idea that in the human community, as in national communities, we need to develop habits of coexistence: conversation in its older meaning, of living together, association."[81] In other words, becoming a cosmopolitan individual means going beyond the superficialities of experiencing another culture for a short time and instead frequently partaking in deliberate conversations with other individuals across cultures to recognize and embrace cultural differences as means of peaceful coexistence.

Perhaps the Romanian avant-gardists had this lofty, cosmopolitan goal in mind as they sought with their Integralism to "synthesize the will of life always everywhere and the efforts of all modern experiences."[82] However, the modern experiences that they wished to unite were limited to the arts, as it was for Tzara. This begs the question of whether one can be entirely cosmopolitan if her/his cosmopolitanism is limited to a circle of intellectuals, regardless of from however many cultures they originate, in a network of avant-garde magazines that panders to a small niche audience of modern and avant-garde art and literature lovers. It is a limited network in which one has cross-cultural conversations with only likeminded individuals from the same intellectual class. For this reason, Kessler dismisses the *75HP*'s multilingualism as "snobbish" and its cosmopolitanism as "showy."[83] Indeed, the magazine's inclusion of the German language is probably not to satisfy its German readers, which were few in numbers even if there were a sizable German-speaking population in Romania. The use of German, and French

[81] Kwame Anthony Appiah, *Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers (Issues of Our Time)*, (W.W. Norton & Company, 2010), xix.

[82] "Integral," *Integral* no. 1 (March 1925).

[83] Kessler, "What Do Manifestos Manifest?" 35.

too, conveyed the editors' aptitude of these languages to their avant-garde contacts abroad and gave them language accessibility (Romanian is only spoken in Romania, Moldova, and their diaspora) to the magazines as they exchanged magazines with each other. Similarly, Tzara printed the magazine in German to satisfy the local Swiss audience and in French to make connections with the likes of André Breton and Guillaume Apollinaire in Paris.

Nevertheless, one point that is crucial to make in this analysis of language in the magazines is that the avant-gardists faced anti-Semitic persecution because of their cosmopolitan identity that others labeled onto them and that they cultivated. Language is at the root of the conflict between cosmopolitanism and nationalism, which is intertwined with anti-Semitism, as Romanian Jewish writer Mihail Sebastian shows in his *Journal 1935-1944*. In a conversation with a Romanian theater actress named Marietta, whom he wants for his play but decides that she has become too anti-Semitic, Sebastian arrives at the topic of whether Romanians should dub foreign films playing in Romanian movie theaters. Marietta exclaims, "We are in Romania, and they should speak Romanian." To which Sebastian replies, "Marietta, my dear, you are in the most disturbing phase of nationalism."[84] The avant-gardists' cosmopolitanism may have been narrow in scope, but, in addition to their Jewish identity, their multilingualism reinforced the racial stereotypes that the Romanian public and nationalists like Marietta had of Jewish intellectuals. The avant-gardists were not entirely without nationalist sentiment, as I will expound in Chapter Four. However, one way that they battled against anti-Semitism is by

[84] Mihail Sebastian, *Journal: 1935-1944*, translated by Patrick Camiller (London, UK: William Heinemann, 200), 95.

intensifying the very cosmopolitanism for which they were attacked, through an insistence on their international connection with other European avant-gardes and on their multilingualism, as we have seen in *75HP*—the same way that the Zurich Dadaists fought WWI nationalist fervor, like in their poem "The Admiral Searches for a House to Rent."

Coupling Dada with Constructivist Design

In design as in language, the Romanian avant-gardists expressed their internationalism by utilizing the international constructivist design style that dominated European avant-garde magazines in the 1920s, with *75HP* taking the style to new heights. *75HP* has a dadaist layout of image and text pairings and unconventional typography seen in Tzara's poems and manifestos. However, the magazine's constructivist graphic design attests to the Romanian avant-gardists' motivation to not become fully enveloped in Tzara's Dada network as their concocted their distinctive look for the magazines. The constructivist graphic design comprises of a simplified red and black color palette and thick lines that divide various sections of a page. These lines and the most important words in a text are bolded in red or black. I call it a constructivist graphic design because we see the same geometric, simplified forms and color palette in Hans Richter's constructivist magazine *G* that appeared around the same time as *75HP*, from 1923 to 1925. Steven Heller identifies in the avant-garde magazines what Jan Tschichold coined in 1928 as the "New Typography," wherein the avant-gardists opposed "the central-axis type composition and ornamental design" in favor of "geometric grids, asymmetrical

arrangements, sans-serif typefaces, bold horizontal and vertical bars, pervasive color red, and geometric shapes."[85]

These design elements are ubiquitous in *75HP*. The thick black lines, or bars as Heller calls them, are especially pervasive on the magazine's penultimate page, "Bitte Zu Lesen." The thick lines partition the list of magazines from the announcements below that refer to Brauner's upcoming exhibition and the upcoming releases of "L'Éditeur 75HP," among them Brauner and Voronca's 150-page volume of pictopoetry.[86] Maria Gough credits Russian Constructivist El Lissitsky, who designed *G* magazine's issue no. 1, July 1923, for the "thick black line" that configures "the entire visual field as a matrix of squat rectangular sections, thereby counteracting the otherwise vertical 'columnization' of almost all its text."[87] The first page of *75HP* has these rectangular sections as well, but the heavily red outlined, tilted square in the center of the page interrupts the semblance of organization that the lines convey. Furthermore, Voronca and Roll implemented lines not to counteract the text columns, for there are few standard text columns in *75HP*, but to enforce the partition of sections of text and create an organized, easy to read, and visually appealing page.

The lines are necessary to combat the readers' disorientation due to how the text switches from right to left, from down to up, and so forth. For instance, on the page with

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[85] Steven Heller, *Merz to Émigré and Beyond: Avant-Garde Magazine Design of the Twentieth Century* (London; New York: Phaidon Press, 2003), 112.

[86] The magazine's editors had plans for creating a publishing press, L'Éditeur 75HP, alongside the magazine but these plans never materialized.

[87] Maria Gough, "Contains Graphic Material: El Lissitzky and the Topography of G," *G: An Avant-Garde Journal of Art, Architecture, Design and Film, 1923-1926*, edited by Detlef Mertins and Michael William Jennings (Los Angeles : Getty Research Institute, 2010), 35.

an article by Voronca about Brauner's paintings, the text of the article is in a standard column format, taking half the page. The typeface and the text's orientation change for the bottom half of the page (Fig.2.8). The poem "Construcţie" (Construction) by S. Marinelli, about a character named Mr. Antropo who is having an existential crisis, is rotated clockwise once so that the poem appears horizontally between a red line and a black line. These lines act as borders that establish the poem as a section of unusual text.[88] Under the black line, Miguel Donville shouts, in upper case letters, the outrageous phrase: "ART IS A CUCUMBER ALL ARTISTS CASTRATED."

On the "Bitte Zu Lesen" magazine list, each magazine listing has a small black square—a nod to the geometric abstraction of Constructivism and perhaps to Kazimir Malevich's 1915 painting *Black Square*, which lay the foundation for Constructivism, though on some pages the square in *75HP* transforms into red. The black square makes another appearance in the constructivist design of *Integral*'s cover page for issue no. 5, July 1925 (Fig.2.9). The square contributes to the cover design's asymmetrical composition and calls attention to the small text below the square, stating that *Integral* is "the magazine of modern synthesis, the organ of modern movements in the country and abroad." *G* and Kurt Schwitter's *Merz* magazine likewise have the square; in *G* the square is empty while in *Merz* it is both black and empty. The square, an emblem of constructivist design, is either a bullet point, a punctuation mark, or a design element that alerts the readers' eyes to a significant page section. *G* issue not. 1, however, is not entirely constructivist, for it has the pointing hand icon that Tzara first used in his poem

[88] S. Marinelli, "Constructie" (Construction), *75HP* no. 1 (October 1924).

"Boxe" (Boxing) that appeared in the French magazine *SIC* in 1919.[89] Schwitters adopted the pointing gesture for *Merz* and Theo van Doesburg for his *Mecano* magazine.[90] The icon is quintessentially dadaist and its absence in *75HP* is palpable. In *75HP*, the square replaces the pointing hand and has a similar function.

However, despite the lack of the pointing hand icon, in *75HP*, Brauner and Voronca share with Tzara and his *Dada* magazine an enthusiasm for experimentation with text and image placements and typography. *Dada* changed significantly from its first two issues to issue nos. 3 to 7. In her comparison of the first two issues of *Dada* with its third issue, Dawn Ades specifies: "while the typeface in *Dada* nos. 1 and 2 was still well-behaved and classical…in *Dada* 3 suddenly each contribution, poem, text, or advertisement, is set in a different type, varying each page as much as possible."[91] The typeface changes in size and weight from one word to the next, or one sentence or a poem is positioned vertically or at an angle against another poem. Tzara's "Bulletin" in *Dada* no. 3 exemplifies such a typeface design. In this manner, the "hierarchy of the contents was upset."[92] When editing the magazine, Tzara did not privilege either poetry, prose, or image but presented them together, often on the same page. The contrast between the classical typeface and layout and the modern, dynamic typeface and layout is evident in the Romanian magazines as well. *Contimporanul* has a standard magazine layout and conventional typefaces reminiscent of *Dada* nos. 1 and 2, while *75HP* has a more

[89] Tristan Tzara, "Boxe" (Boxing), *SIC* no. 42-41 (March-April 1919).

[90] Gough, 36.

[91] Dawn Ades, *Dada and Surrealism Reviewed* (London: Arts Council of Great Britain, 1978), 60.

[92] Ibid.

compelling typography, with words vibrating on the page in large, bold typefaces and multiple directions, such as in Voronca's "Aviograma (instead of a manifesto)" and Cernat's "1924." *75HP*'s typography recalls *Dada* no. 3 and subsequent *Dada* numbers.

In *Dada*, text and image dance with each other, alternating from image to text and back to image again. For instance, in *Dada* no. 3, December 1918, on a page with Pierre Reverdy's poetry, the poetic text on the top left is paired with a Hans Arp drawing on the right; below, the poetic text on the bottom right is paired with an Arthur Segal drawing on the left. This pairing of text and image on the page is interrupted by the slanted text publicizing Reverdy's publications. The effortless integration of images with the page's typography is apparent in *75HP*, and to a lesser extent in *Punct*, *Integral*, and *Contimporanul*. Yet, in these latter magazines, the image is more of a standalone element representing an artist's artwork and does not add much to the overall typography of a page in a rather conservative typeface, such as, for example, on page five of *Contimporanul* issue no. 60, October 1926. The page has regularly structured columns of poetry in the same font and a reproduction of Belgian artist Victor Servranckx's painting in the upper left corner (Fig.2.10).

The editors of *75HP* did not fill a page with more than one image like Tzara did in *Dada* but instead spotlighted on one large image on half-page, with text below. This type of untraditional placement of text and image designates greater prominence to the image. The majority of the images in *75HP* are black and white, abstract linocuts by M.H. Maxy and Victor Brauner. These abstract linocuts complement the magazine's bold typefaces and cause the typefaces' redness to stand out even more, as on the page with Cernat's "1924" text (Fig.2.11). In *Dada* issue no. 4, May 1919, a page with one of

Kandinsky's paintings has a similar placement as the *75HP* page, with an image at the top of the page, a section of text below, and a second section of text tilted clockwise to the right of the image. However, like with typography, so with the page layout, Brauner and Voronca make sure that the image, Brauner's linocut, fits in with the magazine's overall constructivist aesthetic. Meanwhile, Tzara tries to create a dynamic page layout, particularly in the clockwise tilted text that differentiates it from a conventional-looking column text with an image. But, the Kandinsky reproduction is too grey and faded to compete with the visually stimulating typeface of the poem below. In these two examples of page layout, Voronca and Brauner's much more exuberant, modern typography and design testify to their creativity and experience in putting such an innovative magazine together.

Conclusion

For a month, beginning on November 30, 1924, Marcel Iancu, M.H. Maxy, and Ion Vinea organized *Contimporanul*'s "First International Exhibition" at Bucharest's Sala Sala Sindicatului Artelor Frumoase (The Union Gallery of Fine Art). The exhibition was the "first international exhibition of modern art in Romania" and a culmination of the Romanian avant-gardists' international, dadaist and constructivist program.[93]The exhibition's catalogue, *Contimporanul* issue no. 50-51, December 1924, offers a list of participating artists: fifteen artists from Poland, Hungary, Belgium, Flanders,

[93] Pană, *Născut în '02. Memorii, file de jurnal, evocări,* 174.

Czechoslovakia, Germany, Sweden, and seven artists from Romania.[94] Several Zurich Dadaists were in the exhibition: Hans Richter, Hans Arp, Arthur Segal, Viking Eggeling, and of course, Marcel Iancu, who exhibited and worked with these Dadaists during his Zurich days. The catalogue's constructivist design of red and black typefaces around a black circle with the magazine's title *Contimpornaul* strewn across diagonally is reminiscent of the red and black constructivist design of *75HP* and the cover of *Integral* (Fig.2.12). The diagonal title mimics a postage stamp that the postal service adds to shipped packages.

This allusion to travel once again signifies the Romanian avant-gardists' desire to appear as an international group that can put together such a list of reputable artists from beyond the borders of Romania through the relationships and magazine exchanges that Iancu, Maxy, and Vinea forged with these artists. Vinea reiterates this desire in the catalogue's introductory essay. He stresses the existence of an "international intellectualism" and a cohort of "avant-garde publications, in the entire world, creating above borders an atmosphere of reciprocal emulation and exhortation, a change of directive and inspirations which will bring us to the final discovery of the sought-after style of the era and the united planet."[95] The lists of avant-garde magazines in the Romanian magazines is one manner with which Romanian avant-gardists facilitated the "reciprocal emulation and exhortation" of avant-garde magazines. *Integral* issue no. 6-7, October 1925, for instance, listed the Japanese avant-garde magazine *Mavo*, 1924-1925,

[94] "Catalogul Expozitiei 'Contimporanul'" (Exhibition Catalogue 'Contimporanul'), *Contimporanul* no. 50-51 (December 1924).

[95] Ion Vinea, "Promisiuni" (Promises), *Contimporanul* no.50-51 (December 1924).

created by the Mavo group of artists who, like the *75HP* group, merged futurist, dadaist, and constructivist tendencies. M.H. Maxy, one of *Integral*'s editors, may have crossed paths with the Mavo group leader Murayama Tomoyoshi at Herwarth Walden's Galerie der Sturm in Berlin when Tomoyoshi visited the gallery in the same year that Maxy exhibited there, in 1923. [96]

The exhibition reiterates the Romanian avant-garde's centrality in the Dada network, as *75HP* had done beforehand, by exhibiting the works of the former Zurich Dada artists and, in the catalogue, by featuring one of Tzara's poems from 1915 and a reproduction of Iancu's painting titled *Cabaret Voltaire* from his Zurich Dada period.[97] For the exhibition, the organizers arranged an evening of "literary, musical, and artistic" events, including readings and recitals from the works of Marinetti, Breton, Philippe Soupault, Schwitters, and Erik Satie.[98] These events are in the same spirit as the Zurich Dada soirées and the lectures at Zurich Dadaists' Galerie Dada. They are also reminiscent of the soirées that Tzara and Breton held in Paris and the soirées Tzara and Theo van Doesburg organized in Weimar, Jena, and Hanover to celebrate the founding of the International Faction of Constructivists at the International Congress of Progressive

[96] *Integral* no. 6-7 (October 1925).
Der Strum Exhibition Catalogue, April 1923, M.H. Maxy Archive at the National Museum of Art of Romania.
Gennifer Weisenfeld, "Mavo's Conscious Constructivism: Art, Individualism, and Daily Life in Interwar Japan," *Art Journal*, vol. 55, no. 3, *Japan 1868-1945: Art, Architecture, and National Identity* (Autumn, 1996): 64.

[97] Tristan Tzara, "Duminecă" (Sunday), *Contimporanul* no.50-51 (December 1924).

[98] "Sala Sindicatului Artelor: Duminica 14 Decembrie orele 5" (The Union Gallery of Art: Sunday 14 December at 5 o'clock), *Contimporanul* no.50-51 (December 1924).

Artists.[99] The Romanian avant-garde was a Dada satellite in the Dada network. However, as demonstrated in the pictopoetry, the futurist aspects, and constructivist design, the Romanian avant-garde also acted independently of Tzara's Dada network. The Romanian avant-gardists did not simply imitate Dada but repurposed it to suit their Integralism. Dada was a starting point from which they formulated the content and design in their magazines. And, the Romanian avant-gardists took advantage of Tzara's Dada network to cultivate their internationalism on a global stage. In *New York Dada* magazine, Tzara proclaimed that Dada belongs to everybody, just as it belongs to the Constructivists, and to the Romanian avant-gardists too, who, starting with Iancu's work with abstraction during Zurich Dada, explored the possibilities of constructivist art in their magazines.

[99] Craig Eliason, "The Dialectic of Dada and Constructivism: Theo Van Doesburg and the Dadaists, 1920-1930," Ph.D. Dissertation (Rutgers, NJ: The State University of New Jersey, January 2002), 374.

CHAPTER 3

A ROMANIAN TYPE OF CONSTRUCTIVISM:

CONSTRUCTIVIST PRINTS, 1923-1925

For this chapter, I will focus on the constructivist woodcut and linocut prints that Marcel Iancu, M.H. Maxy and Victor Brauner created explicitly for the magazines. The prints are important because they, more so than the graphic design and writing content, represent the Romanian avant-garde's version of their Constructivism. This Romanian Constructivism weds the geometric objectivity, architectonic abstraction, and calculated order of the Constructivism tendency from the Soviet Union and western and central Europe with characteristics that are unique to Romanian avant-garde prints: expressionist features of subjectivity, stark black and white contrast, lyricism, and free-flowing lines and movement. Situated within the tradition of relief printing in art and within dadaist abstraction, the prints signify the Romanian avant-gardists' concern with keeping up with formal trends in constructivist art and with developing their own practice through Constructivism, rather than a concern for the Soviet revolutionary politics of Constructivism.

The Romanian avant-garde's constructivist art reframes the Soviet Union and western and central Europe dichotomy that prevails in the art historical account of Constructivism. Rather than reenforcing the partition of Constructivism into two sole strands—which share a similar style regardless of geography and politics—Romanian constructivist art, as a third strand, gives way to a more inclusive approach to what defines Constructivism. In its divergence from the type of constructivist art found in

places like Germany, Poland, and Hungary, Romanian constructivist art provides stylistic nuances to Constructivism, reconstituting it as a versatile movement whose abstract style could be molded to meet individual and regional artistic needs.

To make a distinction between the Constructionism of the Romanian prints and the Constructionism of the Soviet Union and western and central Europe while maintaining an affiliation between all three, we must unravel the classifying terms for Constructivism in art historical discourse. Constructivism, originating in Revolutionary Russia in the late 1910s, is an umbrella term, or as Christina Lodder calls it, "a catch-all stylistic label," for the influx of geometric, abstract art in Europe during the 1920s.[1] As early as 1924, Constructivists El Lissitsky and Hans Richter complained that many artists were using the Constructivism label because it was à la mode.[2] Although Lissitzky and Richter did not describe their Constructivism as International Constructivism, Lodder uses the term to designate the constructivist art in western Europe, as separate from the constructivist art, in the service of the Soviet state, of the 1920s.

That is not to say, however, that one constructivist tendency was political and one was not. According to Lodder, the Constructivism label for the Constructivists' geometric art "served as an emphatically ideological instrument, geared toward fostering a revolutionary consciousness in the capitalist West."[3] Thus, while their art may not have been politically leftist, the western Constructivists' appropriation of the Constructivism

[1]Christina Lodder, "El Lissitzky and the Export of Constructivism," *Situating El Lissitzky: Vitebsk, Berlin, Moscow*, edited by Nancy Perloff and Brian Reed (Los Angeles: The Getty Research Institute, 2003), 37.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Ibid., 36.

label rendered them and their art political. Furthermore, Lissitzky retained his loyalty to the communist ideology as he continued his constructivist practice in Germany. Perhaps due to this prevailing association with revolutionary leftist politics in its western adaptation, Lodder chooses the term International Constructivism, rather than simply Constructivism. International Constructivism conjures an association with the Communist International and its purpose to spread its ideology throughout the world. Shona Kallestrup, on the other hand, employs the more neutral term "Western Constructivism" to describe the constructivist practice outside of the Soviet Union," relinquishing the communist tone of International Constructivism.[4] Another probable source for the International Constructivism term is the name International Faction of Constructivists that constructivist artists first used in announcing their new practice in 1922, on which I will expound in the next section. Though working independently of any state apparatus and ambiguous in its politics, the International Faction of Constructivists endorsed a universal, collective art production that, in principle, if not in execution, was not far off from the intentions of the Constructivists in the Soviet Union. International Constructivism, therefore, represents western and central Europe and Russian Constructivism Russia/the Soviet Union, with El Lissitzky partaking in both.[5] Neither

[4] Shona Kallestrup, *Art and Design in Romania 1866-1927: Local and International Aspects of the Search for National Expression* (Boulder, Colorado: East European Monographs, 2006), 196.

[5] The terminology debate extends to the difference in meaning of Russian Constructivism versus Soviet Constructivism, wherein the former term retains a Cold War westernization of Constructivism, free of Soviet politics. According to Alfred Barr, Constructivism began prior to the Russian revolution and, therefore, in 1936, he termed it "Russian Constructivism" instead of Soviet Constructivism. See Alfred H. Barr, *Cubism and Abstract Art, exhibition catalogue* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1936), 132. Dawn Ades also used the Russian Constructivism term in her essay 1984 "Dada-Constructivism" and Maria Gough as well in her 2005 book *The Artist as Producer: Russian Constructivism in Revolution.* In keeping with this scholarship, I will use the term Russian Constructivism, as this terminology debate goes beyond the focus of my study and requires considerable reevaluation.

term is representative of Constructivism in Romania. Henceforth, in this chapter, I will use the term International Constructivism only when referring to the constructivist art of the International Faction of Constructivists and not when analyzing Romanian constructivist art. Constructivism of the Romanian avant-gardists deviates from International Constructivism and even more from Russian Constructivism.

Between 1923 and 1925, the Romanian avant-garde magazines were the main outlet through which artists disseminated their constructivist prints. Aside from Maxy's 1923 exhibition that included his constructivist art, the avant-gardists mounted no other exhibition of constructivist works. Moreover, they did not release their constructivist art in standalone limited-edition prints or albums of prints. There was no need to do so since the magazines were readily available for them to publish woodcuts and linocuts in consecutive issue numbers. *Contimporanul* printed its first constructivist artwork in issue no. 42 from June 1923 (cubist art had begun to appear in the magazine in issue no.41), and its last constructivist artworks by Iancu and Maxy in issue no. 51-51 from December 1924. Of all the magazines, and under its subtitle, "a magazine of international constructivist art," *Punct* devotes the most space to constructivist art in its pages. It features constructivist prints in all sixteen issue numbers, from November 1924 to March 1925. The magazine *75HP* is more constructivist in its graphic design than in its art, but it does contain Brauner and Maxy's constructivist works. Except for a few constructivist prints, *Integral* features mainly figurative and cubist art. Therefore, I use *Integral*'s first issue numbers to set the end date of Constructivism in the Romanian avant-garde to 1925.

International Constructivism and the Constructivist Congresses

In its western European adaptation, International Constructivism was more varied than Russian Constructivism, for—as evident with the Constructivists at the Düsseldorf Congress and the International Dada-Constructivist Congress, both in 1922—it absorbed Dadaist and De Stijl artists and their tendencies there.[6] El Lissitzky played a prominent role as a harbinger of Constructivism in International Constructivism. Lissitzky was active in both constructivist congresses and exhibited his constructivist art in the "Erste Russische Kunstausstellung" "(First Russian Art Exhibition") in Berlin in October 1922.

In addition to the "Fist Russian Art Exhibition" and the constructivist magazines of Lissitsky's, *Veshch/Gegenstand*, and Hans Richter's, *G*, International Constructivism further developed in 1922 at the constructivist congresses. These congresses are significant for Constructivism in Romania and the Romanian avant-garde magazines for two reasons. First, the two congresses sped up momentum for constructivist art in Romania as the Constructivists convened a few months before the Romanian magazines began printing constructivist art in their issues in 1923. Although Constructivism in the Romanian avant-garde magazines diverged from the International Constructivism, which the Constructivists at the two congresses put forth, these events lay the first foundation,

[6] In the Constructivism timeline, Kazimir Malevich and Vladimir Tatlin figure as Russian constructivist precursors in the 1910s. Tatlin used the word "constructivism" for the first time in 1913 to refer to the counter-reliefs he attached to walls.[6] Malevich exhibited his groundbreaking suprematist painting *Black Square* in 1915. Tatlin's counter-reliefs and Malevich's suprematist paintings heralded the non-objective, geometric art that was to take hold of Russian avant-garde practice, in the OBMOKhU and Unovis artist groups, by the end of the 1910s. Tatlin and OBMOKhU eventually diverged from Malevich and Unovis over disagreements about the role of art in post-revolutionary Russia. While Malevich wanted to keep art in its sphere of influence, the others aimed to install a type of revolutionary art—constructivist art—that would construct the new nation through technological, utilitarian means. For more on this history of Constructivism, see George Rickey, *Constructivism: Origins and Evolution* (New York: George Braziller, 1995).

under the constructivist name, on which the Romanian avant-gardists personalized their Constructivism. Second, the congresses situated the Romanian avant-garde at Constructivism's early beginnings in western Europe. Tristan Tzara participated in the International Dada-Constructivist Congress. Most importantly, Marcel Iancu had a formidable presence at the International Congress of Progressive Artists through his artistic collaboration with Hans Richter during their work with abstract art in Switzerland.

For two days, from May 29 to May 31, 1922, the International Congress of Progressive Artists convened in Düsseldorf, Germany. Taking advantage of the large congregation of modern and avant-garde artists at the Congress, Theo van Doesburg gathered his friends into the International Faction of Constructivists and proclaimed their break with the Congress in the name of collective art production. Van Doesburg's scheme for this break is a Dadaist tactic: making a loud public gesture of revolt for the sake of riling the audience's outrage. Not only did he announce the formation of the International Faction of Constructivists, but he read aloud the Constructivists' "Erklärung" ("Statement") and his "Schöpferische Forderungen von 'De Stijl'" ("Creative Demands of De Stijl"). In the "Statement" that they signed as the leading representatives of the International Faction of Constructivists, van Doesburg, El Lissitzky, and Hans Richter decried the Congress' tentative agenda and its establishment of art exhibitions for only commercial profit. They explained in the end that the Congress was incapable of organizing an "international progressive solidarity" because it favors "an individual

attitude" towards art production.[7] Among the five demands of the Dutch group De Stijl, van Doesburg called for a halt to the "separation of art and life" and for the implementation of "an international exchange of ideas."[8]

His presentation was a performative gesture of the kind that Tristan Tzara contrived in the readings of his Dada manifestos. Just as Tzara's Dadaism fed off the audience's antagonism that his manifestos provoked, the inception of International Constructivism required the resistance of the Congress members for the Constructivists to know that they were on the right path with their groundbreaking vision of art. In her study of Dada as "a crucial precedent to the objectives of International Constructivism," Dawn Ades argues that the Constructivists benefited from the Dadaists' penchant for anti-art and destruction as they attempted to "re-create form from scratch."[9] Although Ades does not discuss the performative gesture of the recitation of manifestos, this Dadaist gesture is a meeting point of Constructivism and Dadaism—two avant-garde tendencies that coalesced during the International Dada-Constructivist Congress that followed on September 25, 1922, in Weimar, Germany. Dadaists Tzara, Hans Richter, Hans Arp, Kurt Schwitters, and Raoul Haussmann were in attendance in Weimar with van Doesburg (whose Dada pseudonym was I.K. Bonset) and the Constructivists El Lissitzky and László Moholy-Nagy, among many others. The Congress group scheduled

[7] Theo van Doesburg, El Lissitzky and Hans Richter, "Erklärung" (Statement), *De Stijl* vol. 5, no.4 (April 1922): 63-64.

[8] Theo van Doesburg, "Schöpferische forderungen von "De Stijl"" (Creative Demands of De Stijl), *De Stijl* vol. 5, no.4 (April 1922): 62.

[9] Dawn Ades, "Dada-Constructivism," *Dada-Constructivism: The Janus Face of the Twenties* (London: Annely Juda Fine Art, 1984), 35.

several Dada soirées around the Constructivist Congress or, as Craig Eliason calls them, "Dadaist performances for constructivist audiences."[10] It is no wonder then that Ilarie Voronca astutely observed how those who took part in Dada—the Dadaists listed above—"now construct."[11]

None of the Romanian avant-gardists participated in the Düsseldorf Congress, but Richter represented them in his "Erklärung" ("Statement") that he presented to the audience and that was printed in *De Stijl* in the April 1922 issue as well. Richter dedicated his "Statement" to the "constructivist groups of Romania, Switzerland, Scandinavia, and Germany" and for "Baumann, Viking Eggeling, Janco."[12] Bernd Finkeldey identifies "Marcel Janco" in a photograph of Constructivists at the Düsseldorf Congress, posing with the group under the sign "To the Trade Fair for Urban Sanitation and Waste Disposal"—a Dadaist, comedic insult that equates the International Congress of Progressive Artists with trash and human waste.[13] Upon close inspection of the photograph, I conclude that Iancu, whose tall stature would be noticeable, is not in the photograph and, therefore, he did not attend the Düsseldorf Congress. By May 1922, Iancu was back in Bucharest, ready to begin his tenure at *Contimporanul*, which Ion

[10] Craig Eliason, "The Dialectic of Dada and Constructivism: Theo Van Doesburg and the Dadaists, 1920-1930," Ph.D. Dissertation (Rutgers, NJ: The State University of New Jersey, January 2002), 143. At one of the soirées, Tzara confronted Constructivism with his defense of individualism and subjectivity.

[11] Ilarie Voronca, "Arhitectura" (Architecture), *Punct* no. 9 (January 1925).

[12] Hans Richter, "Erklärung" (Statement) *De Stijl* vol. 5, no.4 (April 1922): 59.

[13] Bernd Finkeldey, "Hans Richter and the Constructivist International," *Hans Richter: Activism, Modernism, and the Avant-garde*, translated by Carol Scherer, edited by Stephen C. Foster (Cambridge, MA; London, UK: MIT Press, 1998), 103.

Vinea launched on June 3, 1922.[14] However, two years passed before Iancu wrote about the Düsseldorf Congress in the magazine. Far from signifying a lack of interest on his and the magazine's part, the delay was likely due to the magazine's unsettled identity in its first two-year run, as it gradually shifted to exclusively arts-driven content.

Iancu and Ion Vinea published Richter's article "Constructivismul (pictura neo-cubista)" ("Constructivism (neo-cubist painting)") in *Contimporanul* issue no. 37-38 from April 1923. By attaching the parentheses in the title, Richter concocts a cubist lineage from which constructivist painting or "neo-cubist painting" springs. Defining constructivist painting in this manner is unusual for Richter, a founding member of the Constructivist International in Weimar. It is also unusual for the Romanian avant-gardists because they did not shy away from calling their art constructivist though they wrote about and practiced Cubism. Instead of expounding on what the term means, Richter reiterates his "Statement" at the Düsseldorf Congress. He delves into Constructivism, which, Richter says, deals objectively with "the problem of creation" in "all life's actions," not only in art, thanks to the modern era's scientific methods.[15] Constructivists desire "an elemental creation on the basis of knowledge" and "spiritual order," not on subjective, personal sentiment. Richter weaves an international web of Constructivism: "the sense of responsibility for the problems of creation has been born in different countries, in different individuals, independent, simultaneous." Richter's international

[14] *Contimporanul* no. 3 (June 17, 1922) lists Iancu's name for the first time in its masthead "Editor: I. Vinea, Drawings: Marcel Iancu."

[15] Hans Richter, "Constructivismul (pictura neo-cubista)" ("Constructivism (neo-cubist painting)"), *Contimporanul* no. 37-38 (April 1923).

web and cry for objectivity and order in art set the stage for Constructivism in Romania to take off by the end of 1923 with the introduction of constructivist prints in *Contimporanul* and with M.H. Maxy's exhibition of constructivist art. The magazine's reader could have easily overlooked the small article, printed in one thin column on the magazine's last page, but, regardless, it must have made a lofty impression on young Romanian artists ready for an artistic change.

In Iancu's article "Constructivism şi Arhitectură" ("Constructivism and Architecture") in *Contimporanul* issue no. 53-54, February 1925, Iancu inserts the following quote from Richter's "Statement" at the Düsseldorf Congress: "I have arrived at the reality of an objective problem of art, passing over the individual problem…We want reality. We want to agree and really construct, to build, and to lay the groundwork of our new school."[16] His "Statement" is a prominent moment in Iancu's history of Constructivism that Iancu summarizes for the reader. In this history, Constructivism originated in Russia and Poland with suprematist artists who concentrated on the materials of artmaking. Then architecture was "reborn" through abstract wall reliefs and El Lissitzky's *Proun*. Next, artists created "pure constructions" in wood, metal, and stone.[17] In Iancu's article, these events lead to the Düsseldorf Congress and Richter's "Statement."

Iancu could be referring to Tatlin's reliefs and the abstract reliefs of his Dada period that led Iancu to join the *Bund Radikaler Künstler* (Association of Radical Artists).

[16] Marcel Iancu, "Constructivism şi Arhitectură" ("Constructivism and Architecture"), *Contimporanul* no. 53-54 (February 1925).

[17] Ibid.

Richter founded the Association in 1919 in Zurich, where they formulated their beliefs about the social power of abstract art to convey humanity's freedom.[18] Iancu echoes this sentiment in his fictitious dialogue entitled "T.S.F. Dialogue entre le bourgeois mort et l'apotre de la vie nouvelle" ("T.S.F. Dialogue between the dead bourgeois and the apostle of the new life"). He wrote this facetious dialogue in 1918 but published it in *Punct* issue no. 11, January 1925. In it, an apostle preaches to a dead bourgeois about abstract art, that which possesses "the absolute in art," and its ability to free "the soul" from "slavery" and summon "a new era of civilization." By making the bourgeois dead, Iancu indicates, from a Marxist standpoint, that the bourgeoisie class and its sociopolitical world must perish for a new, post-bourgeoisie world to take shape, in which abstract art triumphs.

Though not in such a utopian fashion, Iancu would carry on extolling abstract art in his later articles. An exhibition review of *Contimporanul*'s 1924 "International Exhibition" adds that Iancu was "one of the creators of the first constructivist art group" in 1918, along with Richter, Viking Eggeling, and Hans Arp.[19] Because the exhibition review does not mention a name, the group is either the Association of Radical Artists or *Das Neue Leben* (The New Life), which held exhibitions in major Swiss cities in 1918 and 1919. Iancu, Richter, and Eggeling were part of The New Life; however, the group was not strictly committed to abstract art but welcomed a diversity of artistic practices.[20]

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[18] Timothy O. Benson, "Abstraction, Autonomy, and Contradiction in the Politicization of the Art of Hans Richter," *Hans Richter: Activism, Modernism, and the Avant-Garde*, edited by Stephen C. Foster (Cambridge, MA; London, UK: MIT Press, 1998), 20.

[19] "L'exposition Internationale du Contimporanul" ("The International Exhibition of Contimporanul"), *Contimporanul* no. 52 (January 1925).

[20] Francis Naumann, "Janco/Dada: Entretien Avec Marcel Janco," *Dada, Circuit Total*, edited by Henri Béhar and Catherine Dufour (Paris, France; Lausanne, Switzerland: Éditions L'Age d'Homme, 2005), 173.

The fact that the magazine presents Iancu as "one of the creators of the first constructivist art group" is important because it associates the magazine itself, via the magazine's representative Iancu, with the early beginning of Constructivism, and, consequently, locates Constructivism in the Romanian avant-garde.

The Association of Radical Artists disbanded before 1922, but Richter revitalizes it in the dedication of his "Statement" to the Association's members Fritz Baumann, Eggeling, and Iancu. The Association's beliefs in abstract art morphed into the Constructivism that Richter espouses in his "Statement." Iancu brings them both together in his pronouncement that "Constructivism is abstract art, which grew from life's optimism, being the most violent expression of a longing for construction in our lifetime."[21] Rather than quoting the Constructivists' general "Statement," Iancu quotes Richter's because it not only conveys the Constructivists' intention succinctly—to "really construct, to build, and to lay the groundwork" for Constructivism—but also acts to link between Constructivism and Iancu's abstract work.

Contimporanul issue no. 55-56, March 1925, is a special issue on avant-garde theater and cinema. For the issue, Iancu wrote the article "Filmul" ("Film"), in which he chronicles the journey Hans Richter and Viking Eggeling took to arrive at their abstract films. According to Iancu, they painted "moving paintings" once they found "elementary principles of construction" through the "attraction and repression of form and "through the relations of contrast and analogies."[22] As evidence, two images accompany the

[21] Iancu, "Constructivism and Architecture."

[22] Marcel Iancu, "Filmul" ("Film"), *Contimporanul* no. 55-56 (March 1925).

article: one by Eggeling titled *orchstrație orizontal-verticala* (*Horizontal-Vertical Orchestration*) and one by Richter titled *demonstrație de tablou in timp* (*Demonstration of Painting in Time*) (Figs. 3.1 and 3.2).

The first image looks like Eggeling's printed preparation for the painted scrolls that Eggeling and Richter experimented with in 1919. In the scrolls, forms, painted on long sheets of paper, gradually gain momentum, with the addition of lines in each manifestation, as the viewer moves from left to right. The forms are no longer static but change based on the viewer's movement.[23] A preoccupation with how forms move in time eventually led Eggeling and Richter to produce their first abstract films, which are among the first abstract films ever produced. The second image shows a film strip, most likely from Richter's film *Rhythmus 21,* begun in 1921. The "contrasts and analogies" that Iancu notices are more apparent in Richter's film strip than in Eggeling's print. The constructivist black square (or rather the suprematist black square of Malevich's) stands firm as small rectangles of various tones appear and disappear until the square, growing larger, inhabits the entire frame. Richter coordinates a dynamic relationship between forms by contrasting their sizes and the lightness and darkness of tones in the constructivist, geometric language of objective representation. Richter insists that the harmony and tension between them would not be possible without "a rhythmical movement regulated by itself in which the variations and pulsations form part of the artistic design."[24]

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[23] Patrick de Haas, "Cinema: The Manipulation of Materials," *Dada-Constructivism: The Janus Face of the Twenties* (London: Annely Juda Fine Art, 1984), 60.

[24] Ibid., 66.

In *Punct* issue no. 11, January 1925, Iancu adapts Eggeling and Richter's continuous scroll or film strip, wherein forms link together, in his print *Alfabet formal* (*Formal Alphabet*) (Fig. 3.3). Iancu does not seem interested in depicting rhythmical movement or even a relationship between forms. With a combination of slender lines borrowed from Eggeling's print and solid square forms from Richter's film strip—a combination that appears again and again in the Romanian constructivist prints—Iancu isolates forms, as one would isolate letters in an alphabet. Though the solid rectangle and the circle gain momentum at the end (if we turn the magazine page clockwise and read the print from left to right), the forms change too much for a continuity to exist in each manifestation.

Both artworks share a similar spontaneity or what Patrick de Haas calls "spontaneous provocation."[25] There is no way of predicting which way forms will move in the absence of an underlying choreography in Richter's film strip. Iancu's placement of forms in his *Formal Alphabet* is spontaneous, for there does not seem to be an underlying rule governing their placement. This spontaneity reveals the Dadaist background of the former Dadaists, who now turned their attention to Constructivism. They could not relinquish the ability to surprise and provoke the viewer with the unexpected even as they explored their new constructivist, ordered language of forms that had little room for non-constructivist digressions. The experiments of Eggeling and Richter were indispensable to the development of the International Constructivism. *Contimporanul* featured their art in 1925, but the Romanian avant-gardists must have been aware of them earlier, through Iancu and the German avant-gardists. Along with

[25] Ibid., 59.

Iancu's reliefs, their experimentation influenced the more spontaneous constructivist Romanian prints.

Constructivist Beginnings: Marcel Iancu's Abstract Art

From 1916 to 1919, Iancu worked on a series of reliefs, comprised of works such as *Relief A7* from 1917 that appeared in *Dada* issue no.1 and *Punct* issue no. 5 and the relief *Lock* from 1918.[26] While the latter, consisting of paint on plaster, did not appear in any of the magazines, Marcel Mendelson's 1962 book about Iancu's art and life contains a colored reproduction of it.[27] *Lock*'s red and black colors are consistent with the restrained color palette of constructivist art, as seen in El Lissitzky's *Proun Composition* from 1922. The two artworks are vastly different, however, in their materials and their depictions of abstract forms. *Proun Composition* is mechanical in its execution: the linework is so precise and clean that it erases the artist's brushwork. *Lock,* on the other hand, is rugged on account of the textured plaster. The maze-like grid in the center of the composition has a painterly quality (Iancu applied the red and black paint unevenly) that betrays any attempt at simulating mechanical production.

In the printed reproduction of *Lock,* the three-dimensional relief appears flat because the raised surface gives no cast shadows on the blank, white space in-between

[26] *Contimporanul* no. 74 (March 1927) features another one of Iancu's paintings on plaster. It has no date but it is likely from his Dada period because, according to the its caption, painting was already in the Gatenou Collection, a private collection.

[27] Remarkably, books about Iancu are few in number and less so in English. Mendelson's book *Marcel Janco*, published in English and in Hebrew in Tel Aviv, 1962, contains important color plates of Iancu's reliefs that, since then, have either been lost or scattered in private and public collections throughout Europe and Israel.

the grid and its outskirts. While Iancu tried to build real depth with the application of plaster, Lissitzky built apparent depth with the application of perspective in the receding triangles. Speaking of *Proun*, Iancu states that Lissitzky sought "a pure aesthetic body in order to clarify relations of volume and matter."[28] Lissitzky defined his *Proun* paintings as the "interchange from painting to architecture."[29] For the Russian Constructivists to approve of his *Proun* paintings, Lissitzky needed to convince them that his *Proun* was utilitarian because of its materiality and structural potential.[30] He devised the *Proun* paintings as painted structures capable of existing in real space, as materialized in his *Proun Room*.

Iancu's constructivist prints and paintings share the architectonic quality of *Proun*, but, as in *Lock*, their utilitarian function is missing in terms of materiality and structural potential. For example, Iancu's linocut in *Contimporanul* issue no. 49, November 1924, does not explore the "relations of volume and matter" that Iancu saw in Lissitzky's *Proun* (Fig. 3.4). There is no volume to speak of in his linocut: round and angular forms intersect and overlap each other on the same plane. The contrasts between the red and blue colors and the blank white and black areas convey some depth, as the colors push the zigzag triangles, half-circles, and cylinders forward in space. But, altogether, the forms result in a flat, two-dimensional object—many of which Iancu published in his linocut prints in *Contimporanul* and *Punct*, like his *Compoziţie*

[28] Iancu, "Constructivism and Architecture."

[29] Eva Forgacs, "Definitive Space: The Many Utopias of El Lissitzky's Proun Room," *Situating El Lissitzky: Vitebsk, Berlin, Moscow*, edited by Nancy Perloff and Brian Reed (Los Angeles: The Getty Research Institute, 2003), 50.

[30] Ibid.,57.

(*Composition*) and *Construcţie* (*Construction*). In *Proun*, one can imagine oneself walking into its vast space and encountering the geometric objects residing in space like three-dimensional architectural structures. This experience is impossible to imagine in Iancu's compositions and constructions that obstruct the viewer's presence: the viewer perceives the object as a whole, from a distance, unable to imagine it materially in real space.

Iancu's *Construction* on the cover of *Punct* issue no. 13, February 1925, is composed of a white pattern of swirls, dots, and textured diagonals in a black space that contorts to the shape of the pattern (Fig. 3.5). This abstract composition embodies Iancu's preoccupation with conjoining disparate compositional parts of different textures and sizes to create a cohesive object. *Construction*'s negative space becomes part of the object and not just the backdrop of the page. In *Composition,* the negative, white space is the same negative, white space of the magazine's page (Fig. 3.6). Hence, *Composition*'s architectonic object resides on an expansive background, like a standing building against a skyscape. Iancu even added a thick, black line at the bottom to differentiate the object from the background and to give it a straight foundation. Yet, due to the two, flat ovals at the bottom and the diagonal arrow cutting through the top triangle, the object stops short of eliciting a three-dimensional, architectural structure as in El Lissitzky's constructivist art. *Composition* discloses the contrast between Iancu and El Lissitzky in how they applied constructivist forms in their art, with the former artist fascinated more with Constructivism's formal potential to express relations between abstract forms than to express a form's relation to space.

Relief Printing

As evidenced in the exhibition "Gravura in relief: artistii din Romania, 1900-1950" ("Print in Relief: Artists in Romania, 1900-1950") at the National Museum of Art of Romania organized by Elena Ede and Mariana Vida, printmaking was central to the history of twentieth-century Romanian art.[31] It is no wonder then that the reader finds so many prints in the Romanian avant-garde magazines, which elevated the visual print culture with their highly original and experimental prints. Due to the considerable amount of constructivist prints in the magazines, it is necessary to briefly address the avant-gardists' printing methods and the reasons for such methods. Though their captions do not specify the medium, Iancu's prints *Construction* and *Composition* are either linocut prints or woodcut prints. The linocut printing and woodcut printing methods require carving into a linoleum plate or a woodblock, respectively, and then inking the plate or block to acquire the desired image.

Iancu worked predominantly with this type of printing, termed relief printing, beginning with his Dada period and his 1920s period of magazine publications. The fact that Iancu remained devoted to linocut printing constitutes a continuation from his early abstract explorations to his constructivist endeavors. While he employed abstraction in his plaster reliefs as well, the linocut prints are a greater link to his subsequent

[31] "Gravura in relief: artistii din Romania, 1900-1950" ("Print in Relief: Artists in Romania, 1900-1950") showcased the excellence of Romanian woodcut and linocut printing, from religious art to that of the avant-garde in the first half of the twentieth-century. Ede and Vida sought to prove the artistic, "autonomous" value and contribution of printmaking to the history of Romanian art.[31] In their exhibition catalogue, they demonstrate that the avant-gardists, whom Ede and Vida include in their exhibition overview, were not the only Romanian artists who actively pursued printmaking in their art. Their contemporaries, too, built a visual print culture with exhibitions on graphic arts. Artists—among them Iancu and his Dada prints—gained new abilities and inspirations while living in France, Germany, and Switzerland to produce modern prints in the styles of the Munich Successionists, the German Expressionists, the French Impressionists, etc.

Constructivism, signifying his fondness and dexterity for designing linocut prints. Thanks to his linocut prints, one observes a stylistic transformation in Iancu's art, from unfettered compositions in his Dada prints to compact compositions in prints published in the Romanian magazines, for instance. Some of the linocut prints include a linocut that Iancu completed in 1915 but published in *Punct* issue no. 6-7, January 1925, as well as his 1916 print in *Punct* issue no. 10 (Figs. 3.7 and 3.8). The image captioned "linoleum" in *Punct* issue no. 9 is almost identical to *Construction* in *Punct* no. 13, except for the black square that constrains the diagonal construction (Fig. 3.9). Upon observing their similarities, it is safe to assume that *Construction* is a linocut print as well. The previous number, *Punct* issue no. 8, displayed another one of his linocuts on its cover, this time in a horizontal composition (Fig. 3.10).

Vinea and Iancu were silent about the publishing process of their magazine, but Saşa Pană's recollections about his own magazine *Unu* provide some insight on how the avant-gardists went about realizing their artistic vision in print media. Pană, who financed his magazine throughout its run, recalled that while working with a publishing house owned by writer Isac Ludo in Bucharest, the staff was annoyed that he requested modifications to the magazine number's design and layout. The staff had arranged the lines, spaces, and spelling incorrectly.[32] From this incident, we can ascertain that the magazine editors had a conflicting relationship with publishing houses, explaining why they kept changing publishers. It must have been a challenge to get the publishing house

[32] Saşa Pană, *Născut în '02. Memorii, file de jurnal, evocări* (Bucureşti: Minerva, 1973), 248.

to print each copy of the magazine number in the precise manner that the magazine editors wanted and according to their detailed instructions.

For the artists, designing a linocut or woodcut for a publishing house to print was faster than completing several paintings. The photographs of the artworks show up in the magazines through the offset lithography method, in low-resolution, due to either the publishing house's problems with the method or the magazine's use of cheap paper. In comparison, the better-funded German magazine *Der Sturm* has linocut and woodcut prints, some in color (like Moholy-Nagy's *Schwarz-Orange-Gelb*), and photographic reproductions of paintings in excellent resolution on glossy paper or cardstock paper.

Vinea and Iancu attempted to print *Contimporanul* issue no.49 in color, with the impressive red and blue linocut by Maxy on the cover, Iancu's linocut that I analyzed earlier, and the majestically orange *Cocosul* (*The Rooster*) linocut by János Mattis-Teutsch. The publishing house named "Universala" Institut de Arte Grafice, which Vinea and Iancu employed for no.49, printed the colors in Maxy and Teutsch's linocuts well but printed the colors in Iancu's linocut unregistered in one of the number's copies. This glaring mistake on the publisher's part reveals a disparity between the magazine editors' aspirations and the publisher's capacity to execute such aspirations with a limited budget and possible pressure from the editors. *Contimporanul* issue no.49 is one of the only issue numbers to carry colored images. The colorless linocut and woodcut prints in the Romanian magazines derive from a long European tradition of black and white relief printing. And it is highly likely that the omission of color proved more cost-effective and efficient for both the publishers and the magazine editors.

In *Contimporanul*, Iancu used *xilogravură* or xylography (i.e., woodcut printing) for his friends' portraits and the magazine's contributors. He switched to linocut printing for his constructivist work that appeared in *Contimporanul* and *Punct*. Perhaps he thought it easier and quicker to achieve sinuous lines and intricate relationships of forms on the softer and smoother linoleum plate because he did not have to work against the grain as with woodblock printing.[33] However, the most critical factor for the financially strained avant-gardists in choosing linocut printing over woodcut printing must have been linoleum's relatively affordable cost. Linoleum, which Frederick Walton invented in 1860 as a wall and floor covering, is strong enough to endure the printing rollers' pressure as much as wood. It can withstand as many as 3,000 printing runs, which is convenient for magazine publishing. Andrea Tietze points out that German artists shunned or felt ashamed of using linoleum because amateurs and schoolkids used the synthetic material in their craft projects.[34] Gabriele Münter went as far as to change her linocuts' description to woodcuts after she made them.[35]

The Romanian avant-gardists had no such qualms about linocut printing. Notwithstanding the fact that the prints that have no captions, the Romanian magazines have enough prints with "linoleum" captions to validate the avant-gardists' preference for linocut printing. Why did they not view linoleum as an inferior material? By the 1920s,

[33] Andrea Tietze, "The Linocut in History and in the Art of the Modern Age," *Linoleum: History, Design, Architecture: 1882-2000*, edited by Gerhard Kaldewei (Ostfildern-Ruit: Hatje Cantz, 2000), 70-71.

[34] Ibid., 68.

[35] Ibid., 74.

the trend of linocut printing spread to many European avant-garde centers.[36] Artists did not hesitate to include their linocuts in avant-garde magazines like *Zenit, Blok, Tank, Ma,* and *Der Sturm*. Because they adopted the linocut, linoleum became an avant-garde, fine art material and shed its single identification with the field of craft, which made a resurgence in the 1920s with the Bauhaus and in Romania with the Academy of Decorative Arts. Romanian avant-gardists then felt liberated to use the material without any negative connotations.

Ironically, the avant-gardists applied centuries-old technology in the modern medium of magazines, produced by twentieth-century mechanical presses. Linoleum was a newer material, but Europeans had been using the technology of relief printing to print books in the fifteenth-century prior to Johannes Gutenberg's movable type printing. Artists and publishers continued to use relief printing to print images. At the start of the twentieth-century, linocut printing grew in popularity with artists in Europe and the United States. The German Expressionists of *Der Blaue Reiter* and *Die Brücke* groups revitalized the potential of relief printing to express the unrestrained, inner emotion, and struggle of the modern subject. The additional irony of avant-gardists using relief printing for their constructivist art derives from the promising modernity and technological future that constructivist art epitomizes. *Die Brücke* artists, meanwhile, saw relief printing as a

[36] While not considered avant-garde, British artists at the Grosvenor School of Modern Art in London taught classes, starting in 1925, on linocut printing to the general public and pioneered the application of color in linocut prints. In the 1930s, American artists in the Works Progress Administration program represented the plight of the working class through linocut prints. For an overview of linocut prints in twentieth-century art, see Dianne Drayse Alonso, "The Linocut: One-Hundred-Year History and Redemption of a Marginalized Medium," Master's Thesis (Carson: California State University Dominguez Hills, 2005).

return to their German medieval roots and an expression of their desire to retreat to "primitive" nature from an alienating modern life.

Marcel Iancu: From *Dada* to Constructivist Prints

In the next three sections, I will undertake a meticulous, formal analysis of several constructivist prints by Iancu, Maxy, and Brauner that appear in the Romanian avant-garde magazines. In the discourse on Romanian avant-garde magazines, scholars have paid little attention to these prints. And Romanian avant-gardists did not write many theoretical texts on their work with Constructivism and what Constructivism means to them. Hence, it is up to the prints to reveal the formal qualities that identify what is and what is not a constructivist work of art in the Romania avant-garde context. The formal qualities of Romanian constructivist prints are important because they affirm the stylistic idiosyncrasies that the Romanian avant-garde's constructivist art bears in comparison to the methodical geometric abstraction in the constructivist art of other European avant-gardes. The Romanian avant-garde artists tiptoed the fine line that separates abstract, constructivist art from abstract, non-constructivist art as they retained stylistic influence from Dada and Expressionism.

Iancu's woodcut prints in *Dada* issue no. 1 from July 1917 and on the cover of *Dada* issue no. 3, December 1918, lie between abstraction and representation. The two woodcuts represent the German Expressionists' retreat to "primitive" nature through what seems to be jagged cracks in the Earth, devoid of any human or societal presence. Iancu exploited the chiaroscuro effect of light and dark by leaving areas of the woodblock almost untouched, except for a few hatched lines that give them definition, so that they

result in white rock formations emerging from the dark void. The chiaroscuro effect reoccurs in Iancu's, and M.H. Maxy and Victor Brauner's, constructivist prints, along with a predilection for organic, non-geometric forms. The woodcuts were described at the time as "violent and balanced volcanic visions."[37]

Shona Kallestrup argues that the Romanian avant-gardists' "rejection of the universal language of International Constructivism in favor of a more lyrical graphic vocabulary" characterizes the "Romanian Constructivist-Dadaist duality" in their art.[38] Kallestrup makes a discerning observation about the lyricism that differentiates their art from the art of the Hungarian artists whose constructivist art, with its rigid, stark geometry and spatial analysis, resides more in the Russian sphere of influence. According to the *Contimporanul* exhibition review of its 1924 exhibition, Eggeling, Richter, Arp, and Iancu realized "a high lyricism of pure form and color of what we have been looking for since cubism."[39] The exhibition describes lyricism as a direct, abstract—because it is referring to the artists' abstract art— expression of form and color, and correlates with what Kallestrup calls the "lyrical graphic vocabulary" of constructivist art in the Romanian magazines. Iancu transferred the Dadaists' lyricism to his prints in the Romanian magazines, and, in turn, enacted the "Romanian Constructivist-Dadaist duality." The relief prints that Brauner and Maxy created for the magazines stem from the tradition of relief printing that Iancu first undertook during his Dada period. His abstract

[37] L'exposition Internationale du Contimporanul" ("The International Exhibition of Contimporanul"), *Contimporanul* no. 52 (January 1925).

[38] Kallestrup, 197.

[39] "L'exposition Internationale du Contimporanul."

woodcuts and linocuts influenced the less rigid style of constructivist prints of the Romanian avant-gardists and also influenced the pervasiveness of these prints in the Romanian magazines. The prints, through the more organic forms and whimsical compositions, exhibit a lyrical, expressionist peculiarity. Nevertheless, the majority of the prints have a structure and order to them that defines them as constructivist.

One of Iancu's small prints embellishes an otherwise imageless, red cover of *Dada* issue no. 1 from July 1917. The image has no caption, but it is undoubtedly a Iancu print, either a linocut or woodcut. The print demonstrates Iancu's typical style of a small, black, and white object whose elements Iancu joins together in an enclosed composition. In contrast, the drawing *Réveil Matin* (Alarm Clock) by Francis Picabia on the cover of *Dada* issue no. 4-5 has a composition with multiple, separated lines that enable the page's blankness to flow in between the open spaces of the composition. Despite their transformation into more geometric forms and structurally ordered compositions, Iancu's prints in *Contimporanul* and *Punct* carry the same enclosed composition of his prints in the *Dada* magazines. Given the proliferation of these kinds of prints in *Dada* magazine and the Romanian magazines, it is reasonable to conclude that Constructivism in the Romanian magazines developed through prints mainly because of the printing precedent that Iancu had set forth in *Dada* magazine. Taking after Iancu, Maxy and Brauner also utilized relief printing in their constructivist images for the avant-garde magazines but, aside from some hatching, crosshatching, and small assorted lines, most of their linocut prints do not have the rough, exuberant marks of Iancu's woodcuts. Some prints exhibit the machine aesthetic of smooth textured geometric forms encountered in Lissitzky's *Proun* and Moholy-Nagy's prints (also published in the Romanian magazines). However,

other prints retain expressionist elements from Iancu's dadaist prints. With good reason, Miliţa Petraşcu named Iancu's work "the most eloquent of Cubism and Expressionism here, in painting and architecture."[40]

The 1915 linocut by Iancu, with its two architectural objects that appear to be circus tents, is less abstract than the 1916 linocut; however, the nondescript lines in the background foreshadow the sinuous lines of the 1916 linocut that spring forth into an abstract tree with intersecting, disarrayed branches. Though no longer erratic and disorganized, the enigmatic linework in Iancu's linocuts of the 1920s harks back to the free-forming, organic abstraction and expressionist playfulness that characterizes his early linocuts. These characteristics belie the rigid geometry and scrupulous organization of form that are ubiquitous in constructivist art. Even Iancu's *Composition*, whose upright, architectonic object summons the rigid geometry of conventional constructivist art, has an expressionist remnant in the form of two misshapen ovals that infringe on the object's methodical form.

M.H. Maxy's Constructivist Prints: Subjectivity and Figuration

Maxy was heralded as the first Romanian artist to hold "a constructivist exhibition" in Romania—in 1923 at Maison d'Art in Bucharest—and published constructivist art in the Romanian magazines that exemplify his interest in and exploration of Constructivism.[41] The 1923 exhibition was a departure for Maxy and his

[40] Victor Crăciun, *Miliţa Petraşcu - statuia nefăcută: convorbiri şi eseuri* (Cluj-Napoca: Dacia, 1988), 131.

[41]Călugăru, 4.

art; five years previously, in 1918, he exhibited paintings of soldiers and peasants in Iași, Romania.[42] Although he exhibited these kinds of figurative paintings in the 1923 exhibition, Maxy deserves the accolade of holding the first constructivist exhibition in Romania. According to a timeline of Iancu's bibliography, from the exhibition catalogue of the 2012 exhibition "Un visionnarie de l'art moderne" in Bucharest, Iancu exhibited at Maison d'Art in 1922. It is unknown whether he exhibited any constructivist artworks.[43] I conjecture that his abstract plaster reliefs and semi-cubist paintings of his Dada period constituted the majority of the exhibited artworks. Maxy's *Constructie (Construction)* painting is the first constructivist artwork to grace the pages of *Contimporanul*, in issue no. 42, June 1923. Iancu's constructivist prints appeared in *Contimporanul*'s consecutive issue numbers. Lastly, Brauner did not exhibit constructivist art until *Contimporanul*'s "First International Exhibition" in 1924, nor did he publish his constructivist art in *Contimporanul* and *Punct* until 1924. Mattis-Teutsch held an exhibition at Maison d'Art in 1920. Gheorghe Vida thinks Teutsch's "involvement in the Romanian avant-garde led to the influence of constructivism on his art." Though radically abstract for Romanian art

Maxy's involvement with Constructivism did not stop at art. He also created constructivist costumes and stage designs for the Yiddish-speaking Vilna Troupe, which performed in Bucharest from 1924 to 1925. Petre Oprea, M.H. Maxy (Bucharest: Editura Meridiane, 1974), 87.
For more analysis on Maxy's involvement with the Vilna Troupe and experimental theater in Bucharest, see Aldexandra Chiriac, "Ephemeral Modernisms, Transnational Lives. Reconstructing Avant-Garde Performance in Bucharest," *Journal of Romanian Studies* vol. 2 no. 1 (2020): 9-34.

[42] Erwin Kessler, "Retro-garde*," Culorile Avangardei: arta in Romania 1910-1950, Exhibition Catalogue*, edited by Erwin Kessler (București: Institutul Cultural Român; Sibiu: Muzeul Național Brukenthal, 2007), 8.

[43] "Un visionnaire de l'art modern" (Bucharest: Colors Art Gallery, 2012), 112.

at the time, his art is chiefly expressionist and abstract without any geometrical forms, as is the case in his linocut print in *Punct* issue no. 9 (Fig. 3.11).[44]

Based on the exhibition dates, it is justifiable to surmise that Iancu and Brauner followed Maxy's lead in steering their art towards a constructivist practice. Iancu set the foundation for abstract art in Romania and Maxy capitalized on this foundation by going one step further in introducing a more constructivist aesthetic to painting and prints. In the 1923 exhibition, Maxy exhibited sixteen paintings under the section "Construction." The paintings bear a resemblance to Iancu's prints in the magazines, in terms of an enclosed composition and a demonstration of formal relations.[45] Sometimes it is hard to tell their art apart. For example, for the *Contimporanul* cover of issue no. 49, Maxy designed a red, blue, and black *Construcţie grafică* (*Graphic Construction*) that assimilates the month and issue number into its concoction of color patches and splintered forms (Fig. 3.12).[46] Iancu's linocut, with the same exact red, blue, and black palette and the concoction of irregular geometric forms, is also in that magazine number (Fig. 3.4). It is highly probable that, because no.49 was a special issue with colored prints, Iancu and Maxy coordinated their two artworks to sync with the theme of the magazine number. As a preview, Maxy's linocut raised the reader's anticipation for the new number's content; Iancu delivered on this anticipation with his linocut that functioned as an extension of the number's cover art.

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[44] Gheorghe Vida, "Hans Mattis-Teutsch and the European Dialogue of Forms," *Bucharest in the 1920s-1940s: Between Avant-garde and Modernism, Exhibition Catalogue*, edited by Magda Cârneci (Bucharest: Ed. Simetria; Uniunea arhitecţilor din România, 1994), 95. Teutsch, like Maxy, exhibited with Der Strum group in Berlin.

[45] *Maxy Exhibition Catalogue* (Bucharest: Tiparul F/. Gobl Fii, 1923).

[46] *Contimporanul* no. 49 (November 1924).

At the outset, the reader may mistakenly assume that the number introduces Constructivism to the Romanian public via its striking constructivist cover art. But the number features no articles on Constructivism, and Maxy and Iancu's linocut prints are the only ones in the constructivist style. The other two prints, one by Milița Petrașcu and one by Mattis-Teutsch, are titled *Fruct nou* (New Fruit) and *Cocosul* (The Rooster) (Figs. 3.13 and 3.14). The titles convey a naturalistic subject matter with stylized forms that almost morph into an abstract image, particularly in *New Fruit,* wherein Petrașcu divides a round fruit into six individual components, which the bending line, as the stem, holds together. The gap between the more organic abstraction of Petrașcu and Teutsch and the more geometric abstraction of Maxy, Iancu, and Brauner is not very wide because the latter artists accommodated organic forms in their constructivist artworks. Nonetheless, regardless of their propensity to deviate from Constructivism in their multifaceted prints, *Contimporanul*'s issue no. 49 substantiates Maxy and Iancu's constructivist aesthetic.

None of the magazines include Maxy's purely constructivist paintings, except for his painting *Construction* (Fig. 3.15). However, Maxy published numerous constructivist linocut and woodcut prints in *Contimporanul*, *Punct*, and *Integral*. In *Contimporanul*, Călugăru articulates Maxy's relationship with Constructivism as a painful ordeal, in a symbolical sense, speculating that "Constructivism burned his skin with scars. He undressed. Since then, he paints. Simple, without formula, anything… Intuitive—without wanting to."[47] Călugăru insinuates that Integralism set Maxy free from the shackles of Constructivism. Rather than following the rigorous formula of Constructivism, which

[47] Călugăru, 4.

dictates a simplification and precision of color and geometric forms in a carefully planned space, Maxy painted intuitively in a manner that resulted in his cubist paintings. Călugăru portrays Maxy's experience with Constructivism as so damaging that there can be no doubt as to why Maxy relinquished Constructivism after 1924. Yet, was his constructivist practice so scarring and restraining for Maxy? Though he wrote little about Constructivism in the magazines, his constructivist art communicates a good deal about his constructivist practice, which gave Maxy a chance to experiment with an expressionist, constructivist art that is lively and unfettered rather than scarring and creatively restraining.

Maxy's woodcut print in *Contimporanul* issue no. 44 from July 1923 epitomizes his constructivist practice and his oscillation between Constructivism and Expressionism (Fig. 3.16). The extensive textures in the woodcut recall Iancu's woodcuts in *Dada* magazine. In contrast, the long, vertical orientation of the composition (which is a distinct feature that sets his prints apart from Iancu's) recalls Maxy's expressionist woodcut print *Construcție Senzuala* (*Sensual Construction*) in *75HP* magazine from 1924 and his linocut print *Forma* (*The Form*) in *Punct* issue no. 3 from December 1924 (Figs. 3.17 and 3.18). In the woodcut, several forms, among them a large, straight rectangle, a tilted rectangle, and a pentagon, visually pulsate compactly, on account of Maxy's ardent texture marks. Maxy fixed these forms around a main focal point—a circular, atom-like form with intertwining loops moving around a central, white dot. Of his constructivist art, Maxy wished to create, as he states, "a massive construction, a geometric distinction, and a mathematical clarity."[48] It is not farfetched to gather that Maxy aimed to demonstrate

[48] Ibid., 13.

mathematical clarity in the equilibrium of converging forms and the depiction of nuclear physics. His atom-like form attracts the surrounding forms to its black void where the worlds of the macro, as in the rustic marks that signify an organic material like wood, and the micro, as in the small particles unseen with the human eye, collide. With these macro and micro signifying elements, Maxy infuses his woodcut print with an intuitive expression of his own interpretation regarding constructivist art.

Either Maxy transferred the image from the woodcut print in *Contimporanul* no. 44 to his painting *Construcție Diagonală* (*Diagonal Construction*), or from the painting to the woodcut because he made both in 1923. He replaced the rustic texture and atom-like form (now turned into a bright flower) with an ornamental, Art Deco design. The painting no longer retains the "geometric distinction" and "mathematical clarity," nor the endearing, non-constructivist textures of his woodcut print. *Diagonal Construction* exemplifies Maxy's facile and confident command of constructivist and expressionist forms as he switched from an expressionist artwork to a constructivist artwork and vice versa without pledging allegiance to either style.

Maxy's woodcut print's vertical composition is a feature that reoccurs in the print *Sensual Construction*, whose medium is unspecified. Maxy exhibited both *Diagonal Construction* and *Sensual Construction* in *Contimporanul*'s 1924 exhibition.[49] Shona Kallestrup argues that Maxy's linocuts, like (*Sensual Construction*), "reveal a degree of subjectivity and an almost musical arrangement of form that were incompatible with the

[49] "Catalogul Expozitiei 'Contimporanul,'" *Contimporanul* no. 50-51 (December 1924).

rigid abstraction of Soviet or Western Constructivism".[50] *Sensual Construction* is an extreme example because, apart from the vertical composition, its appearance diverges from Maxy's woodcut print in *Contimporanul* issue no. 44. As Kallestrup perceptively points out, the print's stylized "subjectivity" belies other European artists' constructivist art and, I would argue, Maxy's other constructivist prints too. I do not see "the musical arrangement of form" that Kallestrup sees in the print, for there is no pattern of repetitive and contrasting forms that intermingle seamlessly in an implied rhythmic movement. Nevertheless, the copious stylistic, subjective rendering that Maxy undertakes in the print is evident in how he juxtaposes the stripes, short marks, and white areas into an elaborate pattern set on a black ground. More so than in his other prints, Maxy does not abstain from imbuing the print with these decorative patterns that transform into a feast for the eyes, as its title *Sensuous Construction* suggests.

Additionally, figurative elements are evident. The black oval in the upper half of the composition and the narrow, diagonal form in the lower half materialize into a female body, which Maxy further conveys with the striped and white from that curves alongside the body and makes the body whole, from the lower to the upper portion. These figurative elements in Maxy's art, of abstract forms morphing into body parts, challenges Constructivism. Next to *Sensuous Construction*, the poem "Noi infuzam atomului dinamica" ("We Infuse the Atom with Dynamics") by Stephane Roll fills the entire page of *75HP*. The poem's title pairs better with Maxy's linocut from *Contimporanul* issue no. 44, in which the form of the atom takes center stage. Roll begins with the lines

[50] Kallestrup, 196.

"constructivist elastics/the lungs of the city" and goes on to describe, in Dadaist fashion, disassociated images of violent domination of nature with science and technology.[51]

Maxy's *Sensuous Construction* is a constructivist print and a transitional print, as he transitioned from abstract, non-objectivity to Cubism and figuration. In 1924, the year he published *Sensuous Construction,* he was still publishing constructivist art that was a bit more abstract. In his linocut print *The Form,* an audacious black line curves upwards and to the left of the composition in the manner of the curving form in *Sensuous Constructio*n. However, the less stylized, minimalist design of *The Form* versus the busy design of *Sensuous Construction* reveals the disparity between the two prints. The two have in common the elongated, vertical composition, which grants Maxy's prints an unflappable elegance that is missing in Iancu's prints, as demonstrated in his *Construction* print on the same page as *The Forma.*

In a 1925 article about his former art teacher Arthur Segal, Maxy complains that Constructivism is now "solidified completely in architecture" and "only presents to us a system of construction (compositionally specific to the spirit of the time) for future transformations."[52] Fortunately, Segal's artistic practice heralds, in the words of Maxy, "the very tendency of our preoccupations: INTEGRALISM."[53] Maxy's dismissal of Constructivism as a bygone tendency implies a separation from Constructivism. Though Maxy left Constructivism behind, Integralism ironically benefited from Constructivism's

[51] Stéphane Roll, "Noi infuzam atomului dinamica" ("We infuse the atom with dynamics"), *75HP* (1924).

[52] M.H. Maxy, "Arthur Segal," *Integral* no. 5 (July 1925): 13.

[53] Ibid.

"system of construction," as Maxy indicates. Surprisingly, Maxy crafts a thread between Segal's art and integralist art. This thread extends to Maxy's constructivist prints and Segal's woodcut prints. In his article, Maxy is essentially describing Segal's theory of equivalence formulated in his paintings and prints from 1918 onwards. In his art, Segal divides the image into "almost equal squares" and into an "equal rapport of shadow and light."[54] Segal's woodcut print *Landschaft* (*Landscape*) from 1918, which Maxy does not mention, illustrates his theory of equivalence.

This landscape scene of two houses amidst trees, clouds, and a body of water broken into sixteen squares spiritually symbolizes the equality of all things, specifically the weak and inconsequential, in God's eyes.[55] Maxy created a print, *Peisagiu cu sonde* (*Landscape with Oil Wells*), that he then published in *75HP*. The non-constructivist print is in Segal's style, with separate fragments representing different views of a landscape, but neither the style nor the spiritual theory that it symbolizes is of relevance to the constructivist prints. Yet, in addition to the close bond between Maxy and Segal (Segal dedicated a woodcut print to Maxy), Maxy's constructivist prints retain remnants of Segal's dramatic juxtaposition of light and dark and Segal's structured yet organically flowing, non-geometric lines, which Maxy would later use in his integralist paintings.

Maxy'*Construction* is an aberration in not only Maxy's constructivist oeuvre but also in that of the Romanian avant-gardists'. This aberration is due to the simulation of volume in the rendering of three-dimensional forms, as though they are machine parts,

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[54] Ibid.

[55] Tom Sandqvist, *DADA East: The Romanians of Cabaret Voltaire* (Cambridge, MA; London, UK: The MIT Press, 2006), 192.

both transparent and opaque, joining and overlapping each other, as they freely traverse a hollow space. Iancu included a similar painting titled *Construcție Centrală* (*Central Construction*) in *Contimporanul* issue no.50-51, of multiple geometric elements, with forms of machine components functioning around a circular center (Fig. 3.19). Unfortunately, the photograph's resolution is too poor to ascertain what exactly is happening in the painting.

Maxy's abstract representation of spatial depth pushes his painting closer to Moholy-Nagy's constructivist linocut print in the May 1925 *Contimporanul* issue no.59 (Fig. 3.20). The black square, acting as the backdrop for the arrangement of the squares and rectangles, is present in the constructivist linocut prints of Iancu and Brauner as well. Moholy-Nagy's linocut print differs from their linocut prints in the forms' openness and strategic movement across the picture plane, creating a sense of spatial depth. The horizontal rectangle and its vertical counterpart simultaneously receive and repulse the background space through their thin, white stripes, which push the rectangles forward in space without leaving them completely flat. The rectangles preserve their volume because of the contrast of light and shadow: the whiteness of the stripes stands out as light and the black as cast shadows retreating in space. Moholy-Nagy couples the contrast of light and shadow with two squares of different proportions: a large, dotted square overlapping a smaller white square, both of which sit behind two stripped rectangles. This composition enables a spatial depth that is missing in Iancu and Brauner's constructivist art. The forms are either entirely opaque, too disparate from each other, or so tightly packed together that they become decorative. The latter two qualities apply to Iancu's linocut print in *Punct* issue no.9, for example.

The white lines in Moholy-Nagy's linocut print that take the form of thread or wire are reminiscent of the constructivist sculptures of Russian Constructivist Naum Gabo, such as the sculpture *Construction in Space (Crystal)*. The elegant, mathematical forms in his sculptures acquire spatial depth through their open and transparent materials. In his "Realistic Manifesto" written with his brother Antoine Pevsner in the Soviet Union in 1920, Gabo rallied for artists to "construct," for their post-revolution country, art grounded in the laws of "space and time" wherein depth, not mass, is "the one form of space."[56] Moholy-Nagy attempted to accomplish the same notion of depth on a two-dimensional surface. Brauner disregarded depth altogether when he utilized the stripes motif in his linocut print *Echilibru* (*Equilibrium*) from *Punct* issue no.6-7 (Fig. 3.21). As the focal point of the composition, the thick, black stripes glide across a tilted square that could also be a diamond form, with a small rectangle in the upper left corner. The stripes hold their dominion against the imposing black square and its additive components.

Notably, the linocut print on the cover of *Contimporanul* issue no. 47, produced by Moholy-Nagy's avant-garde colleague Lajos Kassák, likewise has the stripes motif in a composition that conveys an economy of form: two bare rectangles frame two black squares and one rectangle, of different proportions, in a slanted composition that, as with the slanted composition in Brauner's linocut, conjures the passing view of a landscape and its buildings flashing in the windows of a speeding train or car (Fig. 3.22). Kassák facilitates this conjuring of architectural objects that the viewer could associate with real

[56] Naum Gabo and Antoine Pevsner, "Realistic Manifesto (1920)," *The Tradition of Constructivism*, edited by Stephen Bann (New York, NY: The Viking Press, 1974), 9-10.

objects in his environment by orchestrating the small rectangles inside the taller ones and a striped rectangle in front of them for the sake of attaining depth.

Victor Brauner and the Decorative

The distinct flatness of forms and of pictorial space that Brauner wields in his non-objective linocut is an element that is not omnipresent in his constructivist art (e.g., Brauner simulates depth by overlapping forms in his linocut in *Punct* issue no.10), but it is significant (Fig. 3.23). His linocut prints in *Punct* issue no. 8 and in *Punct* issue no. 6-7 represent his preference for flatness, which does not stem from Iancu's expressionist woodcut prints because, in them, Iancu layers and contrasts forms to obtain the effect of depth (Figs. 3.24 and 3.25). Instead, Brauner, as with Maxy, must have turned to Iancu's flat, abstract forms in his linocut prints (and possibly to Hans Arp's flat, biomorphic forms).

Brauner's flat forms are abstract and decorative—a pervasive combination in the prints of the Romanian magazines. Flatness has been a central attribute of modern art since Édouard Manet. It gained force in the paintings of Paul Cézanne and Cubist paintings; then, it reached its apex in abstract art and the writings of its advocate Clement Greenberg. The critic believed flatness signified painting and the two-dimensional arts' materiality.[57] Consequently, flatness itself does not disqualify Brauner's art from carrying

[57] T.J. Clark argues that flatness has social meaning, that in impressionist painting it expressed modernity, the association of painting with manual labor, and a confrontation with the viewer. "Flatness was construed as a barrier put up against the viewer's normal wish to enter a picture and dream, to have it be a space apart from life in which the mind would be free to make its own connections," he writes. T.J. Clark, *The Painting of Modern Life: Painting in the Art of Manet and his Followers* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1984), 13.

the constructivist label given that flatness is an inherent attribute in modern and avant-garde art, particularly abstract art. Additionally, a flat pictorial space and flat forms exist in Malevich's suprematist paintings and Suprematism's descendants, i.e., the geometric images of constructivist graphic and textile design.

In Greenberg's writings, Elissa Auther traces the meaning and criticism of the decorative, as a separate crafts category from fine art and as an aesthetic attribute in fine art. For Greenberg, decorative art was low art, a lesser art than high fine art, and the decorative in fine art a mere imitator of modernist abstraction.[58] However, he appreciated how modern artists used "the decorative against itself" in paintings such as those of Paul Klee, in which a grid of rectangles or misshapen forms "uniformly" comprise the entire composition while "avoiding the static quality of decoration."[59] Of Henri Matisse, Greenberg says that he integrated the decorative in his paintings by "flattening and generalizing his motifs for the sake of a more abstract, purer…effect."[60] Therefore, Greenberg equates the decorative in painting with a type of uniformity and flatness that is extensive, for instance, in interior design and costume design.[61] Modern artists may take advantage of the decorative in their art as long as forms are "sufficiently differentiated and kept in dramatic imbalance."[62] Greenberg deems Gabo's constructivist sculptures

[58] Elissa Auther, "The Decorative, Abstraction, and the Hierarchy of Art and Craft in the Art Criticism of Clement Greenberg," *Oxford Art Journal*, vol. 27, no. 3 (2004): 342.

[59] Ibid., 342.

[60] Ibid.

[61] Critics and scholars discriminated against decorative arts and crafts because of their association with femininity. E.g. Greenberg's objection to Georgia O'Keeffe's manner of painting. Ibid., 352-353.

[62] Ibid., 347.

decorative because of their "mechanical" and "automatic" quality and its "repetitious arabesque" form.[63]

If one follows Greenberg's interpretation, the Romanian magazines' prints are not decorative because they do not exhibit these qualities, of "precision and neatness," that stand out in Gabo's sculptures.[64] Even in Victor Brauner's linocuts, which are among the most constructivist in the International Constructivism style of all the Romanian abstract prints—due to their acute geometry—have imprecise lines and markings that demystify any mechanical perfectionism. Although the magazines' prints contain non-geometric, free-flowing lines and forms, they are not arabesque, not to the point that they repeat themselves throughout the artwork. Also, the Romanian prints lack the kind of uniformity of forms that characterize Klee's paintings. Then, most germane to the prints is Greenberg's assessment of how Matisse manipulates the decorative to realize "a more abstract, purer…effect." Brauner and the avant-gardists likewise flattened forms in their prints to emphasize the new, abstract style in which they were now working. However, the absence of color in their prints contradicts the decorative attribute that Matisse succeeded in expressing with his vibrating color palette. To sum up, most of the Romanian avant-garde prints possess one of the four characteristics of the decorative: flatness but no color, uniformity, or precision. One characteristic is not enough to warrant characterization as decorative. For the most part, the prints are not decorative, but

[63] Ibid., 352. Greenberg stated that "Gabo's objects, small in format and excessively limited by the notion of neatness entailed by the constructive aesthetic, exhaust themselves too often in the point they make of symmetry; and their lightness, fragility, and transparency tend to be mechanical rather than felt out, the automatic results of an aesthetic code that precipitates itself in repetitious arabesques akin to those of penmanship exercises. These weaknesses, the weaknesses of decoration, are made very evident in some small paintings by Gabo shown here."

[64] Ibid.

sometimes, as in Brauner's linocut in *Punct* issue no. 8, the flatness is so pronounced and the abstract forms so close to uniformity that one may rightly call the print decorative.

Brauner appropriates an expressionist playfulness in his linocut titled *Linoleum* in *Punct* issue no. 8 (Fig. 3.24). The linocut appears quite decorative in its transformation of negative and positive space into black and white shapes that look like Matisse's paper cut-outs. The harmonious composition revolves around the heart shape —the only round shape in the composition. The identifiable sign of the heart may hinder the linocut from becoming wholly abstract. However, it does not necessarily strip away the linocut's constructivist label, nor does it do so in Maxy's *Sensuous Construction* print. After all, recognizable images pervade Russian constructivist collages, such as in Gustav Klutsis's 1924 collage *Oppressed Peoples of the Whole World (...)* and Alexander Rodchenko's 1924 *Books (Please)! In All Branches of Knowledge*. But when compared to Brauner's linocut in *Punct* issue no. 10, his *Punct* no. 8 linocut and its lack of constructivist elements becomes apparent.

Brauner's *Punct* no. 10 linocut is a conventional constructivist artwork because of its geometric forms and because it has a sense of order that is missing from the other linocut (Fig. 3.25). Rather than being disjointed, the forms in a constructivist artwork relate to each other in some manner, either by complementing or repelling each other. Constructivist forms bind together in a stable yet dynamic union dependent on an ordered arrangement through the forms' repetition, distance, size, or position. In Brauner's *Punct* no. 8 linocut, the forms, though they do relate to each other, seem unstable to the point that they would break apart at any moment. What is the cause of this instability? While repetition occurs through the zigzag lines and the thick, black edges on both sides of the

composition, the black square on the right is tilted and the black edge, on the right side too, is shorter than the left side edge. An asymmetrical balance would have been fine had there been a large circle counterbalance non-mirroring right side, though I doubt it would solve the imbalance. Alternatively, in the *Punct* no. 10 linocut, Brauner realizes a successful asymmetrical balance and an ordered arrangement by repeating the three rectangles moving towards a circle that marks the apogee. When it comes to Romanian constructivist art, one should not disregard an artwork's constructivist identification because of its non-geometric forms. Iancu composed his *Construction* linocut with more organic, non-geometric lines and forms. And, yet, the linocut still retains a sense of order and stability, mainly because of the black space that constricts the elements, which I believe is what renders it constructivist. Some of Brauner's prints are more constructivist than others, as his *Punct* no. 8 linocut demonstrates. But, when he achieves, like in his *Punct* no. 10 linocut, the balance and order that I think are so imperative to constructivist art, then his constructivist prints are among the most outstanding and refined constructivist art that graces the pages of the Romanian avant-garde magazines.

The (Non)Politics of Romanian Constructivist Art: Text and Image, and Architecture

The inclusion of text within an image is quite rare in Romanian avant-garde artworks. One instance of text within an image is Victor Brauner and Ilarie Voronca's pictopoetry and another instance is Iancu's 1924 print *Composition* (Fig. 3.6). In *Composition*, one diagonal line meets with a dark triangle to form an almost three-dimensional object in which we see its top as though the object is tilted forward in space.

The undecipherable letters, except for a "B," "i," and "o," that Iancu nudged into two ovals at the bottom of the object lessens the object's architectonic quality. Although Lissitzky inserted text in his constructivist art, the text's look and purpose in Lissitzky's art compared to Iancu's inclusion of text are drastically different. Iancu manipulates the letters, hiding and distorting them in a Cubist manner that is somewhat reminiscent of the "word-fragments" in Cubist collages and paintings.[65] However, rather than acting as a pun or a sign representing a name through the name's absence, the letters in *Composition* act as decorative elements that soften the object's architectonic display. The letters together are not a word-fragment, like "JOU" in Picasso's *Still Life with Chair Canning*, that would give some semblance of meaning, but each letter stands independently, filling the emptiness of the ovals.

El Lissitzky had paired text with suprematist-constructivist compositions to propagate the Soviet Revolution. In the poster *Beat the Whites with the Red Wedge*, he inserts the aggressive command "Beat the Whites" alongside an imposing red triangle that stabs a white circle in a violent move that represents the Red Army's victory over the White Armed Forces.[66] Despite the Romanian avant-gardists' inclination towards socialism, Iancu remained non-political in his art and theoretical writings. His constructivist compositions and constructions are a far cry from Lissitzky's propaganda posters. In an interview, Jacques Costin, writer and Iancu's brother-in-law, asks Iancu

[65] Rosalind Krauss, "In the Name of Picasso," *October* vol. 16 *Art World Follies* (Spring 1981): 31.

[66] Olga Sokolova, "The Semiotics of Advertising in Italian and Russian Futurism," *International Yearbook of Futurism Studies*, vol. 9, edited by Günter Berghaus (Berlin; Boston: Walter de Gruyter GmbH, 2019), 203.

what he paints. Iancu answers, "Nothing…Only and only the play of form in light, the deformation of color in an equilibrium. Only the integration of light and geometry in composition, only minor and major chords of color in rhythm."[67] The interview is from 1925 when Iancu's constructivist phase began to dwindle, but, regardless, the answer he gave communicates Iancu's artistic credo. What mattered most to him in 1925 is the conception of standalone formal principles—light, color, geometry—that become the artwork.

Although both engage with abstraction, Iancu does not transmit a metaphysical message that is inherent in Kazimir Malevich's suprematist art wherein ideal, geometric forms embody a spiritualism that transcends the physical, perceived world. The matter-of-fact response from Iancu about his intention to not paint anything when he paints abstractly indicates a change in what art means to him. In the same interview with Costin, he defines his conception of art as "a human construction that needs to be grounded on a line of order."[68] This conception deviates from his idealistic belief of 1918 about abstract art having a liberating power to influence humankind beyond the realm of art. Abstract art now is "a formula of pure painting, of painting for painting."[69]

Additionally, Iancu distanced himself from his belief in the transformative power of technology. When Iancu spoke with Francis Naumann in 1984, he titled one of his reliefs not as it was captioned in *Dada* issue no. 1 and in *Punct* issue no. 5, as *Relief A7*,

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[67] Jacques Costin, "Initiere in misterele unei expozitii: Senzationalele declaratii ale Militei Petrascu si ale lui Marcel Iancu" (Initiations into the mysteries of an exhibition: the sensational declarations of Milița Petrașcu and Marcel Iancu), *Contimporanul* no.65 (March 1926): 3.

[68] Ibid.

[69] Marcel Iancu, "Note de Pictura" (Notes on Painting), *Contimporanu*l no. 4 (June 24, 1922): 13.

but as *Architectur*e and added that the relief was "influenced by the machine."[70] But in his article "Stil Nou: Arhitectura" ("New Style: Architecture") in *Contimporanul* issue no. 48 from October 1924, Iancu warns against the blind worship of the machine and the engineer in architecture. Iancu writes, "The new style is in us and not in the materials, however new they may be." The architect must employ and "defeat" modern technologies and materials with art that "dematerializes the material" through "pure abstractions: volume, color, number, surface, weight, line, etc."[71] As an increasingly ardent proponent of pure abstraction, Iancu departs from Düsseldorf Congress, where Richter lectured about the Constructivists' collective power to change the world.[72]

From 1926 onwards, Iancu, with help from his brother Jules, pioneered modern architecture in Romania. His architecture entailed clean lines, minimalist facades, and functional living spaces, of the likes of Walter Gropius' modernist buildings. Iancu integrated these design features in buildings across Bucharest and surrounding towns.[73] Iancu's modernist style is seen in one of his architectural drawings on the cover of *Contimporanul* issue dedicated to modern architecture no. 53-54 from February 1925 (Fig. 3.26). The drawing's caption specifies that Iancu designed the building as a countryside studio for Vinea. With a compact form held in place by intersecting,

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[70] Naumann, 160.

[71] Marcel Iancu, "Stil Nou: Arhitectura" ("New Style: Architecture"), *Contimporanul* no. 48 (October 1924).

[72] Richter, "Statement," 59.

[73] In 2008, E-cart.ro Association, which published a magazine on contemporary Romanian art, released a Bucharest city map that guides the city's residents and visitors to Iancu's eighteen buildings that still exist, some in quite decrepit conditions. See, *Marcel Iancu (Janco) - the beginnings of modern architecture in Bucharest, Urban Itinerary* (S.C. COLOR DATA (2008).

asymmetrical verticals and horizontals, the studio reminds me of one of Iancu's constructivist objects in his prints. More so, it gives the impression that Iancu's architecture was more in line with a typical constructivist aesthetic, but this is not entirely true. Anca Bocanet recognizes "a sort of eclecticism" in his integration of decorative balconies, bow windows, and stained-glass windows "in abstract, cubist, or figurative-naturalistic style."[74] By the late '20s, Iancu could afford to customize each architectural project to his and his clients' demands and tastes. The buildings he designed ranged from private residences of upper-class clients to apartment buildings for middle-class city dwellers.

It is doubtful whether Iancu had the proletarian in mind when he designed his buildings. He was undoubtedly not approaching modern architecture as that with which to change the structure of society. The closest he comes to proletarian architecture is when he writes about his belief that modern architecture must serve as a comfortable and functional space for the dweller.[75] Hence, Iancu's architecture is not a conducive counterpart to his constructivist prints, in that his architecture abides more to the ideological agenda of Constructivism. But the prints and the architecture fit within the broader context of the Romanian avant-gardists' love affair with the urban environment and all that comes with it—a persistent theme in this dissertation.

[74] Anca Bocanet, "Marcel Janco-The Architect," *Marcel Janco in Interwar Romania: Architect, Fine Artist, Theorist* (Bucharest, Romania: Simetria Publishing House; Union of Romanian Architects; Meridiane Publishing House, 1996), 43.

[75] Marcel Iancu, "Estetica Noua" ("The New Aesthetic"), *Contimporanul* no. 63 (November 1925).

At first sight, Iancu's constructivist prints, as with Maxy and Brauner's, reside outside the realm of politics. The avant-gardists may have been ideologically tied to the left, but they did not transfer their printed images to propaganda posters or attach their political views to their prints in the magazines, like the Berlin Dadaists did, for example. One of Maxy's statements about Constructivism could be regarded as political: his statement that Constructivism is "the aesthetics of the new builder."[76] Maxy here expresses the redundant idea of Constructivism—the idea of the Russian Constructivists that the post-WWI, industrially advanced environment requires new, abstract art—that Ion Vinea expresses in the manifesto "Manifest Activist Catre Tinerime" ("Activist Manifesto for the Youth") for *Contimporanul*. In this manifesto and in the avant-gardists' thoughts about modern architecture, we gain a better picture of why, aside from its formalist innovations, they found Constructivism so appealing, even if they did not fully translate its appeal in their prints.

As with the rest of their theoretical and artistic output, the manifesto and their writings on architecture are not overtly political and not especially so after reading Moholy-Nagy's essay "Constructivism and the Proletariat," which he published in *MA* magazine in May 1922. For Moholy-Nagy, Constructivism is not in itself political, "neither proletarian nor capitalist." The proletariat needs constructivist art
to teach her or him of the community's benefits, of collective living and labor.[77]
Constructivism is "the socialism of vision—the common property of all men," implanted

[76] M.H. Maxy, "Notite," ("Notes"), *Integral* no. 9 (December 1926): 14.

[77] Moholy-Nagy, *An Anthology*, edited by Richard Kostelanetz (New York: Da Capo Press, 1970), 185.

in "industrial design, into houses, objects, forms."[78] Moholy-Nagy's essay is not that far removed from Iancu's "New Style: Architecture," given that both artists envision technology as a tool of art rather than the pinnacle towards which art should strive. Nevertheless, whereas Iancu believes art must ultimately discard technology as soon as it is no longer useful, Moholy-Nagy believes technology is a driving force for the betterment of the proletarian. Vinea's "Activist Manifesto for the Youth" celebrates Constructivism's alliance with technology and, yet, the manifesto stops short of promoting a political message.

Iancu placed his linocut print *Composition* on *Contimporanul*'s front cover of issue no. 46. The number's first page contains *Contimporanul*'s first manifesto "Activist Manifesto for the Youth." For Ion Pop, the manifesto is unique because it "marked the full agreement of a Romanian avant-garde group, under constructivist auspices."[79] In the manifesto, Vinea declares that "Romania is being constructed today" with "our cities, roads, bridges, the plants that will be built, the spirit, rhythm, and style that will shape up."[80] Upon disclosing the manifesto's aim of eliminating individualism and establishing "integralist art," he concludes that "anachronism" must no longer determine art and technology. Iancu follows in Vinea's footsteps, almost a year later, when he writes that "Constructivism is abstract art, which grew from life's optimism, being the most violent

[78] Ibid., 186.

[79] Ion Pop, *A scrie şi a fi: Ilarie Voronca şi metamorfozele poeziei* (Bucureşti: Cartea Românească, 2007), 13.

[80] Ion Vinea, "Manifest Activist Catre Tinerime" (Activist Manifesto for the Youth), *Contimporanul* no. 46 (May 1924).

expression of a longing for construction in our lifetime."[81] Voronca also shares Vinea's sentiment, viewing the modern, urban environment hand in hand with Constructivism in a mutually beneficial relationship. Voronca states that "Constructivism needs streets, cities…The contemporary soul requires a newly constructed city"; through architecture, Constructivism becomes "the style of the epoch, the expression of the century."[82] What transpires in all three texts is a jubilant optimism for Constructivism. This tendency is an instigator of a new artistic style and a newly built urban environment, which has to do with the socioeconomic and political conditions of the post-World War I era in Romania. We know from these texts that in their magazines the Romanian avant-gardists sought a change that would propel the country, through urban planning, into the future so that that it would aptly represent modernity, i.e., "the contemporary soul."

In terms of Constructivism, the Romanian avant-garde does not concretely outline, other than the use of the word "construct," how Constructivism—a revolutionary tendency stemming from the Soviet Union—will bring about those changes, from the standpoint of the Russian avant-gardists' revolutionary Constructivism, in the situation outside of art. Perhaps the best way to implementation was through architecture, as Voronca claims, but, for Iancu, Romania's leading modern architect in the 1920s, architecture was more than its utilitarian, material function and proletarian concerns.

[81] Iancu, "Constructivism and Architecture."

[82] Voronca. "Architecture."

Conclusion

Other than Lissitzky's art (the mention of it, not its reproduction), a reproduction of an artwork by Alexander Rodchenko and a discussion on Soviet experimental theater these are the few close encounters that the Romanian magazines have with the Russian Constructivists. *Contimporanul* issue no. 59 features one of Rodchenko's constructivist sculptures titled *Construcţie (Construction)*. It is on the same page as the article "Alexei Tairoff şi Vsevolod Meyerhold" (Alexei Tairoff and Vsevolod Meyerhold) by Sandu Eliad, who laments about how challenging it is to obtain information on what is happening with the arts in the Soviet Union due to the country's impenetrable "Chinese walls."[83] Meanwhile, the Yugoslav avant-garde magazine *Zenit* hosted El Lissitzky and his Constructivist friend Ilya Ehrenburg as guest editors for its issue no. 19-18, October-November 1922, and counted Alexandre Rodchenko among the magazine's collaborators.[84]

I bring up Russian Constructivism and its absence in the Romanian magazines to make the argument that the Romanian avant-gardists Iancu, Maxy, and Brauner, rather than following the Russian Constructivists, forged their own path of Constructivism. Given *Zenit*'s collaboration with the Russian constructivists, it is unlikely that Russian constructivist art, as well as the theater and other arts, could and did not reach Romania, as Eliad insinuates in his article. As part of the network of European avant-gardes, the

[83] Sandu Eliad, "Alexei Tairoff şi Vsevolod Meyerhold" (Alexei Tairoff and Vsevolod Meyerhold), *Contimporanul* no. 59 (May 1925). Meyerhold was one of the pioneers of experimental theater but Eliad favors Tairoff whom he credits for the "dynamic and constructive theater."

[84] Irina Subotić and Ann Vasić, "'Zenit' and Zenitism," *The Journal of Decorative and Propaganda Arts*, vol. 17, Yugoslavian Theme Issue (Autumn, 1990): 20.

Romanian avant-gardists surely could have reached El Lissitzky by way of Richter or van Doesburg. Nevertheless, the absence of Russian constructivist points to the Romanian avant-gardists' disinterest in the Russian Constructivists, preferring to devise their type of Constructivism based on their artistic values and their own devised constructivist lineage rather than seek the prevalent Russian influence.

These artistic values include an affinity for combining and playing with organic and geometric forms to produce an amenable abstract art that opposed the geometric stringency of Russian Constructivism or International Constructivism. The Romanian avant-gardists' constructivist lineage runs back to the Düsseldorf Congress and Iancu's abstract reliefs and prints that he made during his Dada period. The Romanian magazines included art and articles from the International Constructivists, such as Richter, Moholy-Nagy, and Kassak. Despite this, the Constructivism of Iancu, Maxy, and Brauner differs from these other artists' constructivist art in how much they proliferated Constructivism through prints—the leading carrier of their Romanian constructivist forms—and how little political meaning they attached to their constructivist prints.

One could argue that in Romania, Iancu, Maxy, and Brauner engaged in universal, collective art production, which the Constructivists espoused at the Düsseldorf Congress. They created their prints over two years, from 1923 to 1925, and published them in the same magazines. The Romanian avant-gardists treated their magazines as a collective endeavor, along with their print production but only up to a point. Even though there is an overlap in styles, they each created their prints on their own, not in a communal workshop. The prints may not have a political agenda, but their act of creating constructivist art, against the taste of mainstream culture, is a political act in and of itself

because it contributed to their avant-garde identity as rebels and foreigners on the margins of society. The transgressiveness of their Constructivism comes to the fore in a small note on the last page of *Punct* issue no.6-7. Under the pseudonym Ubu Roi—from the 1886 theatrical parody by Alfred Jarry—a *Punct* contributor responds to Romanian writers criticizing Constructivism, advising them to stop or else they will receive "supra-realist" hands.[85] The anonymous *Punct* contributor uses play on words to mock critics who did not understand the new constructivist style. "Supra-realist" refers to Surrealism (the Romanian word for Surrealism is *suprarealismul*) and to very real physical punches. Far from threatening physical harm to critics, the writer's joke exposes how aware the Romanian avant-gardists were of criticism against their constructivist art and how unfazed they were by it, choosing to joke about it and continue with their transgressive artistic practice.

[85] Ubu Roi, "Etuva," *Punct* no. 6-7 (January 1925).

CHAPTER 4

RE-ENVISIONIG CUBISM IN ROMANIAN AVANT-GARDE MAGAZINES

In the article "Cronometraj-pictural" ("Pictorial Timekeeping"), published in the avant-garde Romanian magazine *Contimporanul*, one of the significant Romanian avant-garde artists M.H. Maxy outlines the critical characteristics of Cubism, Dadaism, and Constructivism. He describes Dadaism as "Cubism saved," perhaps meaning that Dadaism allowed Cubism to continue its maturation during and after World War I.[1] To call it an article is inaccurate. It is more of a visual poem or a visual history of art movements. Maxy wrote each section with different vertical and horizontal positions of words and phrases, for example, like he did with the bolded letters of the word "Reviziure" (Revision), which run vertically one by one in a column form in the Cubism section. This position of the word "Revision" is set against the horizontal positions of the words "light, color, and form" as though to emphasize that Cubism revised these design elements.

Cubism has a significant position in this visual history, following the "genesis of sentimentalism."[2] The history begins with sentimentalism and ends with Constructivism. Maxy insinuates that Cubism was the first movement to break from the "individualism" and "romanticism" of sentimentalism and to open art to the radical possibilities of Dadaism and Constructivism. Cubism's characteristics are described as: "conception of

[1] M.H. Maxy, "Cronometraj-pictural" (Pictorial Timekeeping), *Contimporanul*, no. 50-51 (December 1924).

[2] Ibid.

painting, composition, equilibrium, structure, economy, measure, synthesis."[3] To the right of this column of cubist characteristics, Maxy adds under "Revision": "light, color, form."[4] With a concern for composition and synthesis, Cubism revised "light, color, and form" as these design elements no longer served the "plastic representation" and "illusion" of sentimentalism. Instead, Cubism led to Dadaism's "open road towards abstraction" and Constructivism's "death of painting."[5]

Maxy's "Pictorial Timekeeping" is one prominent example of how admiration for Cubism grew in Romanian avant-garde art and bolstered its reputation, by means of the cubist artworks and articles, which reference Cubism, that were published in the avant-garde magazines. In this paper, I argue that in the 1920s the Romanian avant-garde artists, particularly M.H. Maxy and Marcel Iancu, engaged with Cubism and took advantage of Cubism, as an avant-garde catalyst and a modern movement. The Romanian avant-garde magazines, in which Maxy and Iancu published their cubist art, also featured art by several French Cubists, most notably Pablo Picasso and Georges Braque, and article and art that conveyed an interest in Primitivism and African art. A clear timeline of the impact of Cubism and successive avant-garde movements does not exist in Romanian avant-garde art. And contrary to Maxy's linear history, they all intersect together. To determine the extent of the Romanian avant-garde artists' interaction with Cubism, I will primarily focus on the magazines *Contimporanul* and *Integral*. Of all the

[3] Ibid.

[4] Ibid.

[5] Ibid.

Romanian avant-garde magazines that I am examining, these two magazines published the majority of Romanian and thus were among Cubism's strongest proponents in Romania in the 1920s.

A definition of what Cubism is or what constitutes Cubism has changed over the past ninety years or so. In 1936, Alfred H. Barr Jr. divided Cubism into Analytic Cubism and Synthetic Cubism based on the artworks that Georges Braque and Pablo Picasso completed between 1908 and 1914. As Christopher Green describes, the Analytic Cubism of Braque and Picasso dismantled the painted image "through a part-by-part analysis, involving the shifting of viewpoints." In Synthetic Cubism, the two artists built up images in their collages and *papier collés* "from schematic conceptual signs."[6] Green contends that the way in which Barr interpreted Cubism, and which art historians afterwards adopted, shifted by the 1970s when William Rubin argued for Cubism's "capacity to suggest depth while keeping a strong sense of the actual flatness of the picture surface" through the device of "passage" wherein parts of a painting's composition slide into each other.[7] Rubin's formalist approach to defining Cubism according to the primacy of perception over conception differs from not only Barr's approach but also to those of Guillaume Apollinaire, André Salmon, and the Salon Cubists.[8] They valued Cubism's conceptual, scientific knowledge in overcoming "the

[6] Christopher Green, *Art in France* (Yale University Press, 2000), 25.

[7] Ibid., 24.

[8] See Guillaume Apollinaire's 1913 book *The Cubist Painters, Aesthetic Meditation;* André Salmon's 1912 essay "Anecdotal History of Cubism"; Jean Metzinger and Albert Gleizes's 1912 essay "On Cubism."

handicap of the eye" while depicting the fourth dimension through multiple spatial views.[9]

I believe the Romanian avant-garde artists were more concerned with the formal aspects of Cubism, of its internal relationships between objects—the "autonomy and internal logic of the picture object" that to cubist art dealer Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler defined cubist art—and its flattening of the picture plane.[10] Hence, I will not discuss the scientific interpretation nor, more importantly, the semiotic interpretation of Cubism that has been central to our most recent understanding of Cubism, particularly of cubist collages and *papier collés*, which are missing from Romanian cubist art. Additionally, Cubism continued once Synthetic Cubism ended but art historical discourse has little to say on this long period of late Cubism that lingered during the war and well into the 1920s. The editors of *Art Since 1900* assigned this period only a few pages that cover the classicism of Cubism, as evidenced in Picasso and Gris's structurally rigid paintings that they created in postwar France and its "rappel a l'ordre" (return to order) environment.[11] Green calls this postwar period a "late distilled form" of Cubism in which Picasso abstracted "from an already synthetic, if far more variegated, starting-point," and used "simple combinations of shapes which could act as signs for figures and objects."[12]

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[9] Hal Foster, Rosalind Krauss, Yve-Alain Bois, and Benjamin H.D. Buchloh, eds., *Art Since 1900: 1900-1944*, Second Edition, Vol. 1 (Thames & Hudson: New York, 2011), 107.

[10] Ibid., 109.

[11] Ibid., 166-171.

[12] Christopher Green, *Cubism and its Enemies: Modern Art Movements and Reaction in French Art, 1916-1928* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1987), 16.

Ultimately, as Green rightly points out, there is not an "essential Cubism" but different kinds of Cubism, as in the case of the Romanian version of Cubism.[13]

Romania's version of Cubism takes shape in Maxy's "Pictorial Timekeeping," which not only exemplifies the Romanian avant-garde artists' continuous reference and appropriation of Cubism but also the association of Cubism with Constructivism. At the end of his Constructivism list, Maxy asks: "the titanic struggle to clarify constructive cubism?"[14] It is unclear what "constructive cubism" is. Maxy does not mention it again in his later articles, nor does the term appear again in *Contimporanul*. In his preface to the catalogue of his 1923 exhibition at Maison d'Art in Bucharest, Maxy describes Constructivism as "the extreme left of Cubism" because of its "abstract representation."[15] The Romanian avant-garde magazines published as much Constructivist art as they did cubist art and even more so when the magazines' constructivist-influenced woodcut and linocut prints, graphic design, and architectural theories are taken into account. In addition to synthesizing constructivist elements in their cubist art (Maxy may have thought of this synthesis when coming up with his "constructive cubism" term), Maxy and Iancu created constructivist art and, thereby, added to the integralist notion of actively embracing multiple styles.

[13] Green, *Art in France*, 25.

[14] Ibid.

[15] M.H. Maxy, "Preface," *Maxy Exhibition Catalogue* (Bucharest: Tiparul F/. Gobl Fii, 1923).

Cubism in Zurich Dada

The *Dada* magazine of Zurich Dada did not have cubist art among its pages, but this does not mean that the Zurich Dadaists did not engage with Cubism. The exhibition catalogue *Pablo Picasso: A Retrospective* notes that Picasso contributed "four etchings and one drawing" to the Zurich Dadaists' first magazine *Cabaret Voltaire* of 1916, which preceded their *Dada* magazine.[16] However, as seen in *Cabaret Voltaire*, Picasso only contributed a line drawing of a cubist figure.[17] The black and white drawing, printed on the entire length of the magazine page, stands alone, surrounded by the blank margins of the page, with no text other than the caption at the bottom "Pablo Picasso: Dessin." Picasso's drawing is not the first cubist artwork to appear in the magazine. Max Oppenheimer's cubist still life enlivens the eighth page of the magazine but is not placed on a full page. The still life rests below the German text "Das Carousselpferd Johann" ("The Carrousel Horse Johann"). The placement of Picasso's art in the magazine is meaningful, for it establishes a relationship between Cubism and Dada right from Dada's inception. Picasso's full-page spread is not unique to the magazine—artworks by Modigliani, Arp, and Iancu also take up full pages individually. Nevertheless, what is striking about Picasso's contribution to the magazine is the Zurich Dadaists' subsequent omission of Picasso in their *Dada* magazine. In the beginning, they not only featured

[16] *Pablo Picasso: A Retrospective*, edited by William Rubin (New York: The Museum of Modern art, 1980), 196.

[17] *Cabaret Voltaire*, no. 1 (June 1916).

Picasso in their magazine but also allegedly exhibited his art at their famous Cabaret Voltaire, among other modern artists.[18]

Similar to *Cabaret Voltaire*, *Dada* magazine reproduced modernist and avant-garde artworks. Robert Delaunay's painting *La fenetre sur la ville* and Chirico's painting *Le mauvais genie d'un roi* appear in the same number. The caption of the latter painting notes that it is from Paul Guillaume's collection. Given Tzara's abundant networking with modernist and avant-garde proponents across Europe and New York and the inclusion of cubist art in *Cabaret Voltaire* magazine, it is hard to imagine that he struggled to acquire reproductions of cubist art for his magazine. After all, he managed to acquire the artworks of Kandinsky, Delaunay, and Chirico—three distinguished figures in the modern art movement. One may conclude that Tzara intentionally left out cubist art for the sake of Dada's endorsement of abstract art. He states in his "Dada Manifesto 1918" that "Dada is the mark of abstraction."[19] For the exhibitions at Galerie Dada, the Dadaists welcomed various modernist styles and artists, such as Paul Klee, Modigliani, and Italian futurist Prampolini—similar to the broad aesthetic presentations of *Dada* magazine. However, during his exhibition talks at the gallery, Tzara emphasized the importance of abstraction and spiritualism.[20]

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[18] Tom Sandqvist, *DADA East: The Romanians of Cabaret Voltaire* (Cambridge, MA; London, UK: The MIT Press, 2006), 84.

[19] Tzara Tristan, *Seven Dada Manifestos and Lampisteries*, translated by Barbara Wright (London, UK: Alma Classics, 2011) 8.

[20] Marius Hentea, *TaTa Dada: The Real Life and Celestial Adventures of Tristan Tzara* (Cambridge, MA; London, UK: The MIT Press, 2014), 84.

Iancu felt strongly about Cubism during his Dada days. As Tom Sandqvist describes, Iancu, in his lecture at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Zurich, praised Cubism for its ability to "bring order to emotional expression."[21] In a *Contimporanul* essay written by Jacques Costin in 1926, Iancu discusses Cubism's legacy: "Cubism produced at face value a disorientation but what has been gained with cubism is such powerful meaning for art that for the moment one cannot fully understand it."[22] In other words, what I believe Iancu is saying is that the viewing public still does not understand Cubism because its reinvention of painting is so radical. It takes years for the public to appreciate Cubism and, maybe because of this, Iancu could publish his cubist painting *Cabaret Voltaire* from his Dada period in *Contimporanul*'s 1924 exhibition 1924 without seeming regressive to viewers.[23]

What Iancu sees as Cubism's liberation of art's formal elements, no longer trapped in representing nature accurately but leading to abstraction, Tzara discards with disdain, proclaiming, "We've had enough of the cubist and futurist academies: laboratories of formal ideas."[24] In Tzara's vision of Dada, Dada was "born out of a need for independence, out of a mistrust for the community." The Dadaists "don't accept any

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[21] Sandqvist, 80.

[22] Jacques Costin, "Initiere in Misterele unei expozitii senzationalelel declarati ale Militei Petrascu si ale lui Marcel Iancu" ("Initiation in the mysteries of a sensational exhibition's statements by Militia Petrascu and Marcel Iancu"), *Contimporanul* no. 65 (March 1926).

[23] The painting, as with several Iancu's artworks of the Zurich Dada period, is now lost. Jean Arp described the painting's representation of Cabaret Voltaire and its Dadaist performers in "Dadaland" in *Dadas on Art: Tzara, Arp, Duchamp, and Others*, edited by in Lucy R. Lippard (New York: Dover Publications, 1971), 23-27.

[24] Tristan Tzara, "Dada Manifesto 1918," *Seven Dada Manifestos and Lampisteries*, translated by Barbara Wright (London, UK: Alma Classics, 2011), 5.

theories."[25] Nevertheless, Galerie Dada and *Dada* magazine both featured the futurist art of Prampolini and the not so abstract art of de Chirico. Perhaps Tzara wanted the magazine to bestow more attention to the art of his fellow Dadaists, Iancu, Jean Arp, and Sophie Taeuber. And because Iancu spoke in support of Cubism, it may be inaccurate to claim that the Dadaists disliked Cubism. Tzara contradicted himself regularly in his manifestos and public talks for the sake of Dada's nihilist drive to disrupt all rational meaning. He rallied for abstraction when in actuality, Dada accepted diverse modernist and avant-garde art that conveyed the experimental drive that Dada championed. As exiled artists and writers in a neutral country far from the centers of modern art, the Dadaists could not afford only to show art within their Zurich art circle. They needed to exhibit and publish famous artists from France, Germany, and Italy in order to expand Dada's audience beyond Zurich. In a similar spirit, the Romanian avant-garde artists and writers did not discriminate in their art choices for their magazines. However, they accepted various art styles without espousing a singular "ism."

***Contimporanul*: Marcel Iancu's Cubist Guitar Paintings**

Despite the figurative elements in their art, Romanian avant-garde artists viewed abstraction as the most advanced development of modern art. According to the article "Note de Pictura" ("Notes on Painting") from *Contimporanul* issue no. 4, abstraction—"named cubism by those who mistake it"—is "the painting's liberty, of life aspects and outside signs" and "a formula of pure painting, of painting for painting."[26]

[25] Ibid.

[26] "Note de Pictura" (Notes on Painting), *Contimporanul*, no.4 (June 24, 1922): 13.

Contimporanul's articles like "Notes on Painting" espouse a modernist agenda of unyielding abstraction. At the same time, its artwork is a mix of abstract, cubist, and expressionist artworks, particularly in its early numbers from 1922 to 1924. For instance, Marcel Iancu created many woodcut prints for *Contimporanul* of portraits representing his fellow avant-garde friends, including Tzara and Arp, and woodcuts in the form of political caricatures satirizing current political figures or situations. One portrait that particularly stands out from the rest is Iancu's large woodcut of writer Ion Minulescu, which he rendered in uneven, dashing black lines that mimic heavy brushstrokes (Fig.4.1).[27]

I believe German Expressionism greatly influenced these portraits, and the rest of Iancu's woodcuts, due to the interplay of flat, black and white forms enclosed in a shallow space and the intense emotional effect these forms capture in their stark juxtaposition. Iancu's black and white woodcuts are a continuation from his Zurich Dada period. Most likely, he learned about German Expressionism before Zurich Dada from his teacher Iosif Isner.[28] Although it may seem that I am veering off topic with German Expressionism and abstraction, I aim to demonstrate that Iancu practiced both styles, Expressionism and Cubism, switching effortlessly between them. Ioana Vlasiu points out that Iancu's paintings owed much—"in equal measure"—to Expressionism and Cubism. Iancu is "on the other side of abstraction," meaning his art is not wholly abstract because,

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[27] *Contimporanul*, no. 35 (March 1923).

[28] A renowned Romanian artist of expressionist art in the first half of the twentieth century, Isner, who taught both Iancu and Maxy, studied at the Munich Academy of Art and published portraits and caricatures in Romanian newspapers and magazines. See *Pictori evrei din România: 1848-1948*, edited by Amelia Pavel and translated by Vivian Prager, (București: Editura Hasefer, 1996), 26.

for him, "the rigors of geometry remain for him more of a theoretical aspiration." [29] Iancu's theoretical text "Note de Pictura" (Notes on Painting) attempts to convince the magazine's readers that abstraction is the most advanced development to which artists should aspire, and that it differs from Cubism in its purity of form. However, when looking at the artworks in the magazine, it becomes apparent why readers might "mistake" abstraction for Cubism because the artworks are not entirely without figures and objects.

Take, for instance, Iancu's *Compoziţie lirică* (*Lyrical Composition*) in *Contimporanul* issue no.60, September 1925: a black and white photographic reproduction of one of Iancu's guitar paintings (Fig.4.2). *Contimporanul* issues no.61 and no. 63 likewise have reproductions of two more guitar paintings by Iancu. These paintings signify Cubism's impact on Iancu, particularly Picasso and Braque's cubist renderings of the guitar form. They are, however, more similar to Braque's still lifes of that period, such as *Guitar and Glass: Socrate* from 1921 and *The Mantelpiece* from 1922. Braque's still lifes are less decorative than Picasso's *Still Life with Mandolin* from1924, which exhibits clear cut, patterned forms marked by thick lines and bright, flat colors. Moreover, Braque's still lifes, as in Iancu's, retain some modeling through tonal variations and painterly brushstrokes that add a layer of depth to the objects. I venture to ascertain that Iancu was studying closely Braque's depictions of still lifes when Iancu embarked on his cubist paintings. Rather than working at a distance from the French

[29] Ioana Vlasiu. "Idei constructiviste in arta romana a anilor '20: integralismul," *Bucharest in the 1920s-1940s: Between Avant-garde and Modernism, exhibition catalogue*, edited by Magda Cârneci (Bucharest: Ed. Simetria; Uniunea arhitecţilor din România, 1994), 41.

cubist founders, Iancu looked to the cubist master for techniques with which to perfect his particular rendition of the cubist still life.

The magazine numbers are not special numbers on Cubism, nor do they contain special features on Cubism or Picasso, other than a reproduction by Juan Gris's painting *Natura moartă* in issue no. 61. In these numbers, Iancu's paintings are placed next to random poetry and prose. In issue no. 60, the large image of *Lyrical Composition* is on the cover page alongside a poem by Ion Barbu. The poem is about the fictional utopian place "Isarlâk." Iancu's *Studiu de suprafaţă* (*Surface Study*) resides on the upper right of a "Piano" poem and an "Erik Satie" article (Fig. 4.3).[30] Indeed, the text is about music, but about piano music, not guitar. It is as if the editors of *Contimporanul*, Iancu and Ion Vinea, struggled to find an artwork of a piano. The cover page of issue no. 63 has Iancu's *Decompoziţie* (*Decomposition*) on the top right, next to the Barbu's poem "Uvedenrode" (Fig. 4.4). The poem takes place at a fictional ravine called Uvedenrode where "many gastropods" are "super sexual/super musical" while a girl keeps slipping on the rocks until "you," i.e., the reader, wraps her in "light creeks." [31] Its end rhymes "Gasteropozi!/Mult limpezi rapsozi/Moduri de ode/Ceruri eşarfă/Antene în harfă," in which the first two lines rhyme with each other and the last two lines do the same, elicit the sound of musical gastropods singing odes under an open winter sky.[32] However, it is

[30] *Contimporanul*, no. 61 (October 1925).

[31] Ion Barbu, "Uvedenrode," *Contimporanul*, no. 63 (November 1925).

[32] The lines roughly translate to, "Gastropods!/Very clear rhapsodists/Modes of Ode/ Skies scarf/Harp antennas."

a bit of a stretch to assert that the editors deliberated profusely on the placement of the image.

Instead, Iancu and Vinea detached the word and image, suggesting one did not need to rely on the other to complete each of their separate meaning; they exist independently of each other. How are we to interpret these images then, if the text and image placement barely offer any indication as to why the image appears on a particular page, in a particular magazine number? Iancu's cubist guitar paintings are not the only images that Vinea and Iancu place in this manner. The rest of the images in *Contimporanul*'s numbers, like in the other Romanian avant-garde magazines, exhibit the same detachment between word and image, except when an article features an artist and her or his art, or when Iancu's portraits illustrate a writer of a featured poem or story. Considering this consistency that pervades the magazine's numbers, why should we pay extra attention to how Iancu's cubist paintings are reproduced in the magazine? I will argue that the separation of the image from the text enhances the significance and meaning of the image in question. The image can then be more prominent on the page because it is not tied to any particular arrangement of text, whether to confirm the text's meaning or to decorate it.

With Iancu's cubist paintings as independent images, *Contimporanul* establishes the significance of Cubism in Romania through the cubist practice of one of the most talented and prolific Romanian avant-garde artists. Iancu thought highly of Cubism. He writes that Cubism is "the last stage in the evolution of painting from four centuries and onwards."[33] According to him, Cubism engages with "the problem of plastic

[33] Marcel Iancu, "Cubism," *Contimporanul*, no. 71 (December 1926): 4.

construction" and "only in this moment the acknowledgment of plastic elements has been sought."[34] He goes on to describe the superiority and beauty of "plastic reality," that which the artist summons in art, over physical reality via the plastic elements of "line, color, and volume" but especially color.[35] It is difficult to grasp the brilliance of this plastic reality in the magazine's black and white reproductions. Iancu superimposed two guitar forms in *Lyrical Composition* on an abstract background. The white areas surrounding the guitars imbue them with volume. Although the composition in the reproduction is decipherable, it loses the subtlety of shades and tints, of color variations, and of texture. The triangles at the top of the composition hint at Iancu's preoccupation with Constructivism and abstraction, as in his *Relief A7* published in *Dada* issue no.1 from 1917 and in *Punct* issue no. 5 from 1924 with the title *Construcţie de: Marcu (sic) Iancu* (Fig. 4.5). Iancu constructed an abstract plastic reality out of wooden geometric parts that, when assembled, create depth on a flat surface through cast shadows.

In addition to the geometric forms, *Lyrical Composition* shares with *Relief A7* a vertical composition and the build-up of depth, albeit with oil paint on canvas. In the absence of the original painting's color palette, the black and white reproduction evokes a discernable affinity with Iancu's older relief, which begs the question: why did Iancu choose to paint in the cubist manner rather than paint more abstractly? Perhaps Iancu veered towards Cubism because through Cubism he could study "the problem of plastic

[34] Ibid.

[35] Ibid.

construction"—that which Cubism explored, according to his "Cubism" article.[36] He stopped making the type of reliefs of his Zurich Dada period after his return to Romania. In an interview from 1982, Iancu reminisces about his Zurich Dada period, stating that afterward, he "continued the idea of abstract art, intuitive and instinctive."[37] He, therefore, did not stop with abstraction upon his return to Romania. On the contrary, he experimented with constructivist architecture. His interior constructions "directly into the walls" stemmed from his Dada reliefs.[38] His cubist paintings are a continuation of abstract art, in a more "intuitive and instinctive" manner than his abstract reliefs. *Surface of Study*, for example, repeats the guitar motif but its outlines are better defined than in *Lyrical Composition*. However, this may be due to the fact that the reproduction of the former is of a higher resolution than the latter. Nonetheless, Iancu's confidence seems to have grown in manipulating looser brushstrokes, building tension between overlapping forms, and moving the background forward in space.

Surface of Study exemplifies a constructivist composition, but it retains referents to real objects, like Iancu's *Decomposition* painting. Mariana Vida describes the "evolution" of Iancu's art in phases, from the "violent expressionism toward tamed constructivism of the abstract forms, followed by a figurative formula, hinting at the new objectivity."[39] But the phases are not as clear cut as Vida assesses. As I mentioned earlier,

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[36] Ibid.

[37] Naumann, Francis M., "Janco/Dada: Entretien Avec Marcel Janco." *Dada, Circuit Total*, edited by Henri Béhar and Catherine Dufour (Paris, France; Lausanne, Switzerland: Éditions L'Age d'Homme, 2005), 174.

[38] Ibid., 169.

[39] Mariana Vida, "Marcel Janco's Graphic Art and the Metamorphoses of the Avant-Garde Language in Fine Arts," *Marcel Janco in Interwar Romania: Architect, Fine Artist, Theorist*, (Bucharest, Romania: Simetria Publishing House; Union of Romanian Architects; Meridiane Publishing House, 1996), 178.

Iancu published expressionist portraits throughout *Contimporanul*'s run. Additionally, his constructivist woodcuts appeared in *Contimporanul* close in time to his cubist paintings, of which Vida does not take into account. Iancu's oeuvre indeed culminates in figurative, less abstract, work by the 1930s but I argue that his work in *Contimporanul, Punct,* and *Integral* magazines does not represent a linear evolution.

Issue no. 49 of *Contimporanul* from 1924 is one of the last numbers to feature a constructivist linocut by Iancu: a diagonal composition in a machine aesthetic and red and blue colors, which are registered incorrectly in the scanned copy of the online library of the Digital Library of Bucharest (Fig. 4.6).[40] The special issue no.50-51 of *Contimporanul* acts as an exhibition catalogue for *Contimporanul*'s "First International Exhibition." The catalogue includes another linocut by Iancu and his *Cabaret Voltaire* painting that he completed in Zurich, among other works of his. As the issue numbers of the magazines increase, the amount of Iancu's constructivist artworks decreases, and, thus, justify the hypothesis of an evolution of his work from abstraction to figuration. Yet, the abstract work is not "followed by a figurative formula" but by cubist work, which I classify as existing between figurative and abstract. *Contimporanul*'s issue no. 60 is the first time in which we encounter Iancu's work that conveys a significant cubist influence. *Decomposition* appeared in issue no. 63, very soon after the guitar paintings in issues no.60 and 61 and just before Picasso's *Compoziţie* (*Composition*) which appeared in issue no.64 of *Contimporanul*.

[40] The online magazine archive is accessible at www.digibuc.ro. The colors are registered correctly in a copy of the issue number at the Getty Library.

Integral: M.H. Maxy's Cubist Portraits

Integral endorsed Maxy's idea of Integralism as well as his cubist art. The magazine's subtitle states: "a magazine of modern synthesis; an organ of the modern movement in the country and abroad."[41] Speaking primarily on the magazine's literary output, Nicolae Bârna is of the opinion that the editors of *Integral* "did not arrive at radical innovation that they promoted in their theoretical texts" due to their inclusion of modernist writers who enjoyed critical acclaim in the mainstream media.[42] The same can be said of the magazine's artistic output. In his painting *Construcţie Umană* (*Human Construction*), Maxy represents two peasant women, monumental in size, wearing traditional folk outfits and carrying baskets on their heads while striding forward (Fig. 4.7). Maxy's peasant women are comparable to Braque's monumental nude woman in his classical painting *Nude Woman with Basket of Fruit* from 1926 that is part of his Canephorae series.[43] *Human Construction* is also from 1926, though the magazine does not mention its date. In both paintings, the figures occupy an undetermined space. The horizontal line marking the ground in *Human Construction* and the dark foreground in Braque's painting are the single elements that convey depth in the enclosed compositions. It is possible that Maxy knew of Braque's work with classicism. However, Maxy's figures contain the cubist aspect of two dimensional, geometric forms, in the appearance of the massive, draping skirts and blouses. As is more evident in the color version, the

[41] *Integral*, no. 1 (March 1925).

[42] Nicolae Bârna, *Avangardismul literar românesc: studiu şi antologie* (Bucharest, Romania: Editura Gramar, 2003), 16.

[43] Karen Wilkin, *Georges Braque* (Abbeville Press: New York; London; Paris, 1991), 67.

women do not recede into the darkly lit background as in Braque's painting but emerge heroically, heavily modeled with cast shadows as though they are sculpted heroines epitomizing every Romanian peasant woman. Maxy represents the peasant icon, as representative of Romanian identity, and, hence, merges the cubist style with the Romanian nationalist style. The heroic and monumental peasant subject of *Human Construction* is ubiquitous in Romanian nationalist paintings of the first half of the twentieth century, in the paintings of artists such as Camil Ressu and Francisc Şirato.

The National Theater in Bucharest hosted the exhibition "Bucharest in the 1920s-1940s: Between Avant-garde and Modernism" in 1993. The exhibition catalogue's editor Magda Cârneci explains that the exhibition necessitated the insertion of modernism in its title because the Romanian avant-garde, as a movement, "oscillates between avant-garde and modernism."[44] The Romanian avant-garde does not completely meet the standard definition of the avant-garde. It is solely aesthetic, with no political involvement, and inconsistent with the revolutionary Russian avant-garde.[45] Poignantly, in the words of Cârneci, "its moderate utopianism aims at best at rapid modernization, not at total transformation of the world. Its nihilism is juvenile, its anarchism is regenerative."[46] Within the context of Cârneci's critique of the Romanian avant-garde, the Romanian avant-gardists Integralism concept is a modernist endeavor, for it complements the avant-garde's lackluster, "moderate utopianism" in the sense that Integralism was not meant to

[44] Magda Cârneci, "An Exhibition on the Romanian Avant-Garde," Bucharest in the 1920s-1940s: between Avant-Garde and Modernism, exhibition catalogue, edited by Magda Cârneci (Bucharest: Ed. Simetria; Uniunea arhitecţilor din România, 1994), 16.

[45] Ibid., 15.

[46] Ibid., 16.

radicalize and reinvent art like constructivist art. But I think this is what makes the Romanian avant-garde unique—its desire to join diverse art styles together without the need to denounce one, such as the cubist style, as inferior because it was supposedly out of fashion. As Picasso scholar Simonetta Fraquelli has shown, Picasso's simultaneous practice in both the classical style and the cubist style was "a passionate declaration of his freedom of expression and a desire to embrace a stylistic pluralism that defied all forms of dogmatism" and a tenacious stance against those who found Cubism "obsolete."[47]

Iancu and Maxy, and their avant-garde magazines defied the avant-garde call for a break with the past in favor of a continued dialogue with earlier avant-garde experimentation, such as that of Cubism. They looked back to Cubism in order to create new art that defined the Romanian avant-garde as a distinct, rather than forgotten or redundant, tendency among the European avant-gardes. Maxy conceived of *Integral* and its "modernism" not as "the adaptation of movement x or y but an integral manifestation of the same European spirit throughout all its spread spiritually-geographically."[48] With his concept of Integralism, Maxy stressed the Romanian avant-garde movement's originality and distinction while at the same time clarifying that it lies in "the same modernist nuclei" that is present across Europe and in Romania too.[49] Integralism is, therefore, for him a means to absorb modernist European art styles.

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[47] Simonetta Franquelli, "Double Play—Cubism and Neoclassicism in Picasso's Art 1914-1924," *Picasso: The Great War, Experimentation, and Change*, edited by Mariah Keller (New York, NY: Scala Arts Publishers, 2016), 17.

[48] M.H. Maxy, "Politica Plastica," *Integral*, no.9 (December 1926): 3.

[49] Ibid.

Like Iancu's, Maxy's artistic career began with Expressionism, followed by Constructivism (*Punct* and *Integral* included his constructivist works) and gradually became cubist and figurative, though these stylistic categories often overlap in his art. On the cover of *Integral* no. 11, from February-March 1927, Maxy juxtaposes the constructivist black and white design of the typeface with his painting *Lopătar* (*Boatman*) fitted neatly in the lower right surrounded by white space (Fig. 4.8). The figure of the boatman, like the peasant women in Maxy's *Human Construction,* is monumental in size, confined in an ambiguous space with fragments of a water wheel and shimmering water. The flat background mimics the boatman's flat, distorted body.

This shift in Maxy's art, from constructivist to cubist, from generalized subjects to socio-politically minded ones, is apparent in the difference between his 1924 painting *Construcţie Umană* (*Human Construction*) and the same-titled painting finished in 1926, which is now at the National Museum of Romania in Bucharest. The two paintings do not have much in common except for their shared title. In the 1924 painting, Maxy painted a reclining female figure who does not signify the labor of the lower class or the peasantry. Her abstracted body of multiple spheres becomes another geometric form among the rest.

Within the span of *Integral'*s three-year run, 1925 to 1928, Maxy's art transitioned from the constructivist, abstract composition of *Construcţie Integrală* (*Integralist Construction*) in *Integral* issue no. 1 to cubist portraits. In his 1922 *Cetatea Modernă* (The Modern Citadel), published in *Integral* no. 12, April 1927, Maxy tries hard to emulate Picasso and Braque's Analytic Cubism with fragmented planes of monochromatic colors (at least in the reproduction) that fractures the city landscape into abstract forms (Fig. 4.9). Maxy's analytic cubist phase is also on display in his 1922

painting *Nud cu văl* (*Nude with Veil*), which was not printed in *Integral* but can be seen at the National Museum of Art of Romania. The difference between *Boatman* and *The Modern Citadel* is stark. Maxy probably detected no conflict in including both paintings in the magazine because they signified his exploration of Cubism—an essential aspect of his integralist style. Once *Integral* ended its run in 1928, Socialist Realism consumed Maxy's career throughout and post-World War II.

The Modern and Avant-Garde Status of Cubism

An important question for this study is whether the Romanian avant-garde artists and their magazines should or should not be thought of as avant-garde because of their adoption of cubist art. At the root of this question lies the debate on Cubism's position in the historical avant-garde. If Cubism is not an avant-garde movement, then the Romanian artists' identity as avant-garde needs to be reconsidered in light of their substantial engagement with Cubism. If Cubism, despite its superstar status in the canon of modern art, can be reevaluated with the concept of the avant-garde in mind, then the Romanian artists' cubist art is not so incompatible with the dadaist and cubist content in the avant-garde magazines.

Within the context of Marcel Duchamp's painting period of 1911-1913, Thierry de Duve makes a case for Cubism's "monopoly of the avant-garde," led by Picasso and Braque in 1911.[50] De Duve links the avant-garde with the "need to innovate," to disregard the "current taste" of art institutions because "pictorial innovation is significant

[50] Thierry de Duve, *Pictorial Nominalism: On Marcel Duchamp's Passage from Painting to the Readymade*, translated by Dana Polan (University of Minnesota Press, 2005), 21.

only if it finds itself rejected, at least a bit, by those institutions that dictate taste."[51] Cubism became an avant-garde movement because official art institutions rejected it. Meanwhile, the Salon embraced "the cubist avant-garde," composed of the salon cubists Albert Gleizes, Jean Metzinger, and Henri Le Fauconnier who manifested the "contemporary history of art" at the Indépendants in opposition to Pablo Picasso, Georges Braque, Juan Gris, and Fernand Léger who exhibited exclusively at the Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler's gallery.[52] Hence, the Indépendants' rejection of Duchamp's *Nude Descending a Staircase no.2* was also the "cubist establishment's" rejection of his painting.[53] What I believe de Duve means by the cubists' manifestation of this history is that the cubists had a mighty hand in leading and dictating contemporary art at the Indépendants—already demonstrating the movement's indispensability, only a few years after its inception.

The institutionalization of Cubism was definitive with the 1936 exhibition "Cubism and Abstract Art" at the Museum of Modern art in New York. The exhibition's curator Alfred H. Barr Jr. presented Cubism's history in a chart: from its Analytic to its Synthetic periods, and previous art movements and artists, like Cézanne's Neo-Impressionism, to the art movements that sprang from Cubism, like Futurism and Constructivism. The chart solidified the Museum of Modern Art's vital role as the creator

[51] Ibid., 26.

[52] Ibid, 25.

[53] Ibid.

and carrier of the history of modern art. It also solidified Cubism as the foremost modern art movement in history.

In de Duve's interpretation of the concept of the avant-garde, Cubism's pictorial innovation in painting granted it its distinction as an avant-garde, regardless of Cubism's institutionalization. Yet, this distinction only applies to Cubism's 1911-1913 period, or so de Duve implies, for it is his single focus. Going along, then, with de Duve's interpretation of Cubism, it is worth arguing that Cubism was an avant-garde in the beginning, due to its shocking, radical overturn of perspective and optical illusion, and its dissection and interrogation of the picture as a faithful representation of known reality. Its reinvention of the picture created a ripple effect throughout the art world.

Although the aftermath of Cubism's formal radicalism affected Romanian art well into the 1920s, Cubism's avant-garde status plummeted once its analytic and synthetic Cubism periods ended. Picasso and Braque began their separate cubist explorations while abstract art began its ascent. Patricia Leighten, in her assessment of Cubism's historiography, identifies the shift in Cubism's history from a movement tied to the specific setting of modernity and modern subjects to a strictly formalist movement. Picasso reconstructed Cubism's history post-World War I. Art historians and critics went along with his "reductive view—art as a merely formal game—that has further distorted an understanding of the historical and intellectual milieu in which prewar cubist art developed."[54] That said, the Dadaists attached political and philosophical connotations to Cubism because of Cubism's renunciation of painting's bourgeois morality and the its

[54] Patricia Leighten, "Revising Cubism," *Art Journal*, vol. 47, no. 4, (Winter, 1988): 270.

insistence of the banality of daily existence through its *papier collés*.[55] Leighten surmises that in the eyes of the Dadaists, Picasso was a "self-conscious revolutionary and antitraditionalist"—an appropriate description of an avant-gardist.[56]

Though one may assume that Barr bolstered Cubism as primarily formalist, Leighten makes the case that Barr thought beyond the formal in pondering whether Cubism's subject matter of the artists' café environment signified the "isolation of the artist."[57] However, he claims the opposite in the *Cubism and Abstract Art* exhibition catalogue, writing: "The Cubists seems to have had little conscious effort in subject matter."[58] Susan Noyes Platt, in her account of the exhibition, reveals that Barr had a predilection for post-World War I realism. But he chose to eliminate it from his chart in order to heighten Cubism's influence on abstract art.[59] It is likely that in the exhibition Barr overlooked Cubism's subject matter and cultural context and pushed it towards a formalist history to show a reasonably direct line from its "near abstraction," wherein "natural forms" become abstract, to the "pure-abstraction" of Malevich, Mondrian, and Gabo.

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[55] Ibid., 271.

[56] Ibid.

[57] Ibid., 272.

[58] Alfred H. Barr Jr, *Cubism and Abstract Art*, Exhibition Catalogue (New York: The Museum of Modern art, 1936), 15.

[59] Susan Noyes Platt, "Modernism, Formalism, and Politics: The "Cubism and Abstract Art" Exhibition of 1936 at the Museum of Modern art," *Art Journal*, vol. 47, no. 4, *Revising Cubism* (Winter, 1988): 289.

Any realism in Cubism would have interrupted Barr's straightforward history of its abstraction.[60] For Barr, Picasso's *Head of a Young Woman* from 1913 epitomized the switch from Analytic to Synthetic Cubism, as it "moves from three dimensional, modeled, recognizable images to two-dimensional, flat, linear form, so abstract as to seem nearer geometry than representation."[61] The cubist subject retreats as form reaches its abstract conclusion. Although Barr admits that Cubism "consistently stopped short of complete abstraction," he insists that the flatness of form in cubist artworks, notably Picasso's, continued after 1914.[62]

This flatness is discernable in Iancu and Maxy's cubist paintings, which gravitate towards postwar Synthetic Cubism, rather than the "near abstraction" of Picasso's *Head of a Young Woman*. As abstraction took hold of the avant-garde, Iancu and Maxy chose a different course, not the figurative representations of Surrealism but Cubism. Iancu's "Notes on Painting" from 1922 and Maxy's "Pictorial Timekeeping" from 1924 anticipated Barr's history of Cubism in which Cubism is the ancestor of abstract art. Yet, both artists eventually turned their backs on abstract art with their cubist paintings. Romanian art in the 1920s, thus, belies Barr's history. Not only in Romania but also in other East-Central European countries artists continued a cubist practice. For instance, Latvian artist Romans Suta, "the chief proponent of Latvian modernism," combined

[60] Christopher Green claims that the cubist *papier collés* exhibit a type of realism in Cubism because they involve reading and looking. The viewer must read the signs, through the words and drawn forms in the image, and figure out the spatial configuration of the composition. For further reading, see Green's chapter "Cubism as Realism, 1912-1914" in the exhibition catalogue *Cubism and War: The Crystal in the Flame*, 2016.

[61] Barr, 31.

[62] Ibid., 92.

Cubism and Suprematism in his still lifes and portraits of the early 1920s.[63] In Czechoslovakia, artists such as Josef Čapek, Emil Filla, and Vincenc Beneš, working throughout the 1910s, produced a myriad of cubist woodcut and linocut prints with representational elements.[64] They produced "a broader and more individual conception of Cubism" after their initial infatuation with Braque and Picasso's Analytic Cubism. This conception leaned on the materials and techniques of printing and Czech art's history with Czech Symbolism.[65]

None of the artists worked with collage and *papier collés* and all retained traditional subject matter in their artworks. Perhaps these artists were attached to the medium of painting, but the cubist Czech prints negate this assumption. Additionally, though there are many more artists in East-Central Europe who worked in the cubist style, the Czech artists' prints exemplify a consistent experimentation with Cubism in a non-painting medium—that which is missing in Iancu and Maxy's cubist *oeuvre*. Iancu and Maxy worked in different mediums and fields, but when it came to Cubism they did not produce collages, *papier collés*, or prints. Picasso and Braque ceased to make *papier collés*, with their references to modern life's consumer culture, in the summer before World War I. Rather than make *papier collés* with newspaper clippings of mass war casualties, they returned to the medium of painting, influenced by the history of

[63] Vojtěch Lahoda, "Migration of Images: Private Collections of Modernism and Avant-Garde and the Search for Cubism in Eastern Europe," *Decentring the Avant-Garde*, edited by Per Bäckström (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2014), 191.

[64] For more information on each artist's prints, see Jana Wittlichová's "Czech Cubist Prints," *Print Quarterly*, Vol. 5, No. 2 (June 1988): 127-147.

[65] Ibid., 131.

nineteenth-century French painting.[66] Due to the difference in time, Iancu and Maxy's refusal surely does not signify any avoidance of a confrontation with the war. Iancu and his Dadaist friends already confronted it in their anarchist, artistic acts. Maxy addressed the war indirectly in his paintings of post-war Romania and its dichotomy between industrial laborers and peasants.

Iancu and Maxy's refusal to experiment with and combine different mediums suggests a predilection for mastery of a particular medium. In his Zurich Dada days, Iancu went beyond painting and sculpture to create his masks with low brow materials of cardboard and twine, and his abstract constructions with wood and plaster. In his role as the founder of the Studio of *Integral* magazine and as director of the Academia Artelor Decorative (Decorative Arts Academy), Maxy advocated for decorative arts' integration into fine art. Be that as it may, Maxy and Iancu relied on the traditional medium of oil on canvas for their cubist paintings that they reproduced in their magazines, with the exception of Iancu's cubist rendering on glass in *Contimporanul* issue no. 70, 1926 and Corneliu Michăilescu *La toaletă* (At the Toiletry) woodcut in *Integral* no. 5, 1925.

According to Christopher Green, the Dadaists and Surrealists, through their practice with chance and automatism, opposed Cubism's modernist notion of the "autonomy of the artwork," its "pure painting," and the primacy of the artist. For them, cubist art was "too material," for it did not leave room for the imagination.[67] Cubism was

[66] Christopher Green, "The Crystal in the Flame: Cubism and the 1914-18 War," *Cubism and War: The Crystal in the Flame*, exhibition catalogue, edited by Christopher Green (Barcelona: Ediciones Poligrafia, 2016), 17.

[67] Green, *Cubism and its Enemies: Modern Art Movements and Reaction in French Art, 1916-1928*), 273.

still consequential from 1918 to 1925, but Dada and Surrealism posed a "serious threat" to Cubism's "avant-garde status and identity" from 1924 onwards.[68] Maxy and Iancu, though, viewed Cubism as a movement of "reform" and "resistance"—qualities that characterize the avant-garde—in the sense that they saw Cubism as means of reforming old ways of artmaking while upholding a powerful resistance to detractors who disparaged any artmaking that was not within the prescribed guidelines of what viewers were commonly used to seeing in art, as in naturalist and impressionist portraits and landscapes by other Romanian artists. Cubist art was such a divergence from these traditional styles of art in Romania that for Romanian artists Cubism must have seem a provocateur to the established art order at that time. Maxy and Iancu must have viewed the late cubist period of the 1920s in the same way because they created their cubist works in this period.

What may be at play in this complicated debate over the avant-garde versus modernist qualities is the Romanian avant-gardists' use of the two concepts interchangeably. For example, *Punct* issue no. 16 from 1925 announced the merger of the magazine with *Contimporanul* in order to increase their "modern effort in Romania."[69] *75HP* magazine, the most radical of all the Romanian avant-garde magazines, is the only one to call itself "the unique avant-garde group of Romania."[70] It is tempting to draw a distinct delineation between those who were avant-garde, i.e., the *75HP* group, and those

[68] Ibid., 221.

[69] *Punct*, no. 16 (March 1925).

[70] *75HP*, no. 1 (October 1924).

who were more modernist in their artistic approach, i.e., the rest of the magazines and their editors and contributors. Nevertheless, this distinction is futile since Maxy contributed his art to *75HP* while Iancu contributed to *Punct* and the rest of the magazines. Iancu may be less avant-garde than Maxy because he did not publish in *75HP*, but his constructivist art in the other magazines is on par with Maxy's constructivist art in *75HP*. And, they both painted in the cubist style at the same time.

It is no wonder, then, that Cubism retained for Maxy and Iancu its avant-garde and modern status concurrently, contrary to the Dadaists and the Surrealists' refutation of Cubism's modernism. Having not worked with surrealist automatism and chance, the two artists saw no conflict in their engagement with Cubism. Their practice was always rooted in the traditional medium of painting. As he was building his Dada masks and constructions, Iancu continued to paint and Maxy was predominantly a painter. If we were to judge their cubist art strictly based on their paintings, then we would conclude that their art is quite modernist. But, when situated in the broader context of the avant-garde magazines, their cubist-oriented art acquires an avant-garde identity. By reproducing the paintings, the magazines construct relationships between the paintings and tension between the text and the image. As mass media, print products, produced in collaboration between artists, writers, and publishing houses, the magazines challenge the idea of painting's supremacy and purity, and the artist's primacy. Just as Cubism occupies a middle space between the projects of avant-garde and of modernism, so too does the avant-gardists' cubist-oriented art.

The Kahnweiler Cubists in *Contimporanul* and *Integral*

Contimporanul and *Integral* highlighted the art of "Kahnweiler Cubists:" Pablo Picasso, Georges Braque, Juan Gris, and Fernand Léger, who all had contracts with art dealer Kahnweiler.[71] Surprisingly, the "Salon Cubists" Albert Gleizes and Jean Metzinger are nowhere in the magazines. One explanation for this could be because the magazine editors wanted to associate themselves with the most reputable cubists artists. In other words, I think the editors saw the Kahnweiler Cubists as the avant-garde Cubists because of their bold experimentation with Cubism, as opposed to the Salon Cubists' Cubism, which appealed to a broader audience. Nevertheless, *Contimporanul* and *Integral* featured articles on Robert Delaunay, despite his involvement with the Salon Cubists, which, perhaps, the editors overlooked because Delaunay came to reject the Salon Cubists' belief in the "essential ground of conception" in painting over color and optical theory.[72]

Picasso was a meaningful figure to Maxy. He calls Picasso a "fighter for humanity" whose "personality shows through his art as a symbol of universal humanism."[73] Although not extensively, Picasso makes a conspicuous appearance in the Romanian avant-garde magazines. Picasso's *Composition* is on the front page of *Contimporanul* issue no. 64 from March 1926 (Fig. 4.10). The magazine notes that the

[71] Green, "The Crystal in the Flame: Cubism and the 1914-18 War," 13.

[72] Gordon Hughes, "Envisioning Abstraction: The Simultaneity of Robert Delaunay's "First Disk,"" *The Art Bulletin* vol. 89, no. 2 (June 2007): 309.

[73] M.H. Maxy Archive at the National Museum of Art of Romania.

painting is from 1925, but it is actually from 1924 and titled *Mandolin and Guitar*.[74] The editors released the magazine number on January 1926. Hence, the fact that the magazine published Picasso's painting within a short timespan after its creation testifies to the magazine's pursuit of new trends in Cubism. Green writes that this painting that it was "the most ambitious" of Picasso's paintings from 1924 because of its spatial intricacies, weaving together architectural elements, objects, and colors to create "characteristic Cubist tension."[75] The painting's "soft, stretchable, organic" forms marked an expressive departure for Picasso from 1924 onwards.[76] With its vibrant, deep reds, oranges, and yellows counterbalanced by blue tones, the color version of the painting is livelier and more decorative than its somber black and white counterpart. In *Mandolin and Guitar,* Picasso showcases ubiquitous cubist motifs in the pairing of musical instruments with fruits but a peculiar manner. The mandolin and the guitar are strategically arranged, asymmetrically to each other, to convey the eyes of a human face. The lightly colored body of the mandolin and the guitar take the form of oval eyes while the sound holes function as the irises and the dark vase and fruit bowl in the center of the tilted table signify the nose and its nostrils.

Corneliu Michăilescu's *At the Toiletry* echoes Picasso's construction of a shallow, interior space through the juxtaposition of textured surfaces. The female figure in Michăilescu's print merges with the interior space; in Picasso's *Mandolin and Guitar* the

[74] The painting is listed as *Mandolin and Guitar* in *Pablo Picasso, A Retrospective*, edited by William Rubin (NY: Museum of Modern Art, 1980).
[75] Green, *Cubism and its Enemies*, 69-70.

[76] Ibid., 71.

figure emerges from the arrangement of objects. In the same issue number that featured Picasso's painting on the front page, there is an announcement that the magazine will soon present conversations between Iancu and Picasso, Breton, Delaunay, and Brancusi during his recent trip to France, Germany, and Switzerland.[77] With the exception of the one with Picasso, all of Iancu's interviews were published.

A few issue numbers afterward, *Contimporanul* featured Braque's *Compoziţie* (*Composition*) painting from 1925 on the cover of its issue no. 67, June 1926 (Fig. 4.11). Like Picasso's, the painting is a still life of a guitar with a fruit bowl in a shallow space but without the discernible anthropomorphism. Once again, as with Picasso, this is the only time we see Braque's painting in *Contimporanul*. *Integral* issue no. 9 features another still life painting by Braque, *Natura Moarta* (*Dead Nature*) rendered in a more naturalistic style Braque began "from the abstract"—as in not working from a real still life scene placed in front of his canvases—to nature, as Picasso and Gris also did, and not vice versa.[78] So while it may look like Braque's post-World War I paintings convey a rising naturalism, their foundation lies in their abstract, formal relationships, as do the cubist paintings of the Romanian avant-gardists.

In *Contimporanul* issue no. 42, two of Juan Gris's prints accompany an article by Paul Dermée, "Scrisori de arta: Pictorul Juan Gris" ("Art Letters: The Painter Juan Gris"). Dermée quotes Gris on how his painting is "a rigorous construction of lines and of colorful surfaces" wherein he does not start with the object such as a guitar but with a

[77] *Contimporanul*, no. 64 (January 1926).

[78] Green, 77.

winding line that transforms into a guitar.[79] One of the accompanying prints contains the winding line of a guitar amidst textured surfaces of hatched, cross-hatched, and circular lines (Fig. 4.12). Due to its rigid geometry and awkward placement of objects in a disjointed composition, Gris's *Natura Moarta* (*Dead Nature*) painting in *Contimporanul* issue no. 48 is less dynamic than the print (Fig. 4.13). *Contimporanul* issue no. 41 announced that Gris, "who was among the first fighters of modern painting alongside Picasso and Braque," had, in recent days, closed his exhibition at Galerie Simon in Paris.[80]

The Romanian avant-gardists believed in the promise of the city as the harbinger of progress. Ion Vinea writes a poem titled "Svon" about the atmosphere of the city "with lightning rods" and "swinging parks," and the time that is "dying."[81] The faceless individuals in Fernand Léger's painting *Metropola* (*The City*), published in *Contimporanul* no. 37-38 from April 1923, evokes the poem's melancholy and bitterness that pervades the city, which may promise to take Romanians into a swift, modernized future but not without robbing one's time and identity (Fig. 4.14). Léger's paintings are not seen again in *Contimporanul* or *Integral*. It is one of the few instances where an image caption in the magazine matches the actual title of a painting. The caption for *The City* has no date, but Léger painted it in 1919. The painting's panorama of an urban, claustrophobic environment is more distinguishable in the original painting, with its crisp

[79] Paul Dermée, "Scrisori de arta: Pictorul Juan Gris" ("Art Letters: The Painter Juan Gris"), *Contimporanul*, no. 42 (June 1923).

[80] "Cărţi şi Reviste," *Contimporanul*, no. 41 (May 1923).

[81] Ion Vinea, "Svon," *75HP*, no. 1 (October 1924).

colors. The high-rise buildings and flashy advertisements overshadow the faceless individuals.

Ion Călugăru, a contributor for *Contimpornul* and *Integral*, captured a young man's journey from the small town to the city in his 1936 novel *Copilăria unui netrebnic* (*The Childhood of a Worthless Man*). Bucharest is an exciting, new world for the young man compared to his childhood home in a shtetl that Călugăru portrays as backward. The young man, though, struggles to keep his Jewish identity and reconcile it with his new life in the city.[82] Léger's painting *The City* conveys the Romanian avant-gardists' intricate relationship with modernity and urbanization, a relationship explored in modern and avant-garde art since the time of the Impressionists.

Integral, *Contimporanul*, and *Punct* either have articles about or reproductions of works by two Cubists outside the Kahnweiler circle: Sonia and Robert Delaunay. *Integral* issue no. 6-7 has a two-page article, "Simultaneismul in Arta: De vorba cu Robert Delaunay" ("Simultaneity in Art: In Conversation with Robert Delaunay"), translated into Romanian, featuring a photograph of Delaunay in his studio and two more photographs: one captioned *Ambassade de France. Aux arts décoratifs Panneau de "Paris"* (*French Embassy. Decorative Art Panel of Paris*) and the other captioned *L'equipe de football* (*The Football Team*). The first is a large vertical panel (though it does not look enormous due to the distant view in the photograph) of the Eiffel Tower.

[82] Camelia *Crăciun*, "'The Clash of Generations': The Identity of Discourses of Romanian Jewish Intellectuals in the Interwar Period," *"Regimes of Historicity" in Southeastern and Northern Europe, 1890-1945: Discourses of Identity and Temporality*, edited by Diana Mishkova, Balázs Trencsényi, and Marja Jalava (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 329-330.

The actual title of the painting is *La Ville de Paris, La Femme et La Tour Eiffel* (*The City of Paris, The Woman and the Eiffel Tower*).

The Football Team seems to be a preliminary version of Delaunay's *L'équipe de Cardiff* (*The Cardiff Team*) from 1913, for both paintings portray football players (the same configuration of a player leaping for the ball) in the modern setting of Paris. The Ferris wheel is in the background of both paintings while the "A" sign in the magazine's reproduction most likely stands in for the "Astra" sign in *The Cardiff Team*, but either Delaunay did not complete the entire word, or the reproduction is too faded to note it. In addition to the word, the reproduction is missing "Société Constructions Aéronautiques" written underneath "Astra" in the 1913 painting. Delaunay adds the name of the Astra Société, a French manufacturer of planes, to represent the modern advancement of airplane technology and travel. The Romanian avant-gardists may have been drawn to Delaunay's painting because they viewed the airplane as a symbol of modern progress that could lead a backward country into the future. Ilarie Voronca insisted that "In the century of the automobile and the airplane anyone can travel with the ox-cart: but we will stay, to use the airplane."[83] The ubiquitous ox cart, as displayed in Nicole Grigorescu's nineteenth-century Impressionist paintings, was a preferred mode of transportation for Romanian farmers in rural communities. Voronca ridicules the ox cart and celebrates the airplane in order to underscore that avant-gardists such as himself are the harbingers of modernity in Romania due to their plane travel.

[83] Ilarie Voronca, "Constatari" ("Notes"), *Punct*, no 2 (October 1924).

Ilarie Voronca interviewed Delaunay for the “Simultaneity in Art: In Conversation with Robert Delaunay” article, introducing him with the compliment that “he will remain in the history of paintings among the greatest masters of color, maybe the greatest.”[84] It is ironic how Voronca applauds the primacy of color in Delaunay's paintings, but the magazine does not have any color reproductions of his paintings. The reader must have a strong imagination to make the colors described come to life in the lackluster black and white reproductions. Regarding Cubism, Delaunay remarks that unlike the Impressionists who used color to represent reality faithfully, Cubism, under the guidance of Apollinaire, gave an "orphic meaning" to color, in "a more political sense rather than artistic."[85] By this, he does not mean that Cubists used color for political ends but rather that their use of color acquired an enigmatic or “orphic” meaning, as the Cubists began to experiment more with how color alters form, which goes deeper than representations that merely appeal to the eye. For Delaunay, “color is life, it’s movement.”[86] In a *Contimporanul* article, Iancu describes Robert Delaunay’s and Sonia Delaunay’s simultaneity as “the synthesis of form that is born from the rhythm and relations of colors…movement through color.”[87] This movement is not evident in Iancu’s or Maxy’s static cubist paintings. Though they did not shy away from employing color in their paintings, they do not prioritize it, nor do they explore movement through color like

[84] Ilarie Voronca, “Simultaneismul in Arta: De vorba cu Robert Delaunay” (“Simultaneity in Art: In Conversation with Robert Delaunay*”*), *Integral*, no. 6-7 (October 1925): 2.

[85] Ibid., 2.

[86] Ibid., 3.

[87] Marcel Iancu, “La Robert Delaunay,” *Contimporanul*, no.73 (February 1927): 9.

in Delaunay's paintings. Their paintings are closer to Picasso, Braque, and Gris's, particularly in the subject matter of portraiture and still life. Sonia Delaunay sums it up when she says Robert created form through color while "the cubists created form through planes."[88] Iancu and Maxy shared with the Cubists an adherence to planar construction, which they also utilized in their Constructivist works.

Iancu mentions Sonia Delaunay in his article on Robert Delaunay, but, glaringly, the magazine's theoretical articles on art do not mention her art, and neither is her art featured as standalone artworks. Milița Petrașcu, a student of Constantin Brancusi and one of the few female Romanian artists to appear in the magazines, was good friends with Sonia Delaunay and wrote about her in *Contimporanul*. She commends Sonia's art because "Robert creates paintings but his wife Sonia creates an entire world which she places in space."[89] Moreover, in the same magazine number as Voronca's article on her husband, *Integral* has a two-page article in French by French surrealist René Crevel who informs readers of Sonia Delaunay's imaginative costumes, such as those she made for Tzara's play "Le coeur à gaz" ("The Gas Heart") in Paris in 1921, and her furniture designs (Fig. 4.15).[90]

Integral was no stranger to art that was deemed decorative: it published advertisements for the Academy of Decorative Arts, which offered classes in metalwork, fabrics and interior design, in addition to painting and sculpture classes.[91] My point here

[88] Milița Petrașcu, "Sonia Delaunay," *Contimporanul*, no.77, (March 1928): 14.

[89] Ibid.

[90] René Crevel, "La mode moderne: visite à Sonia Delaunay" (Modern Fashion: Visit to Sonia Delaunay") *Integral* no. 6-7 (October 1925): 18-19.

[91] *Integral* no. 10 (January 1927): 18.

is that Delaunay's achievement in decorative arts supports *Integral*'s integralist agenda of promoting multiple categories of artistic practice. Nevertheless, whether intentionally or not, the magazine's editors omitted Sonia Delaunay's substantial work in simultaneity and Orphism (though they did include an image of one of her sculptures), while they called her husband one of "the greatest masters of color, maybe the greatest."[92]

Primitivism, African Art, and Cubism

Aside from the stylistic elements that the artworks in the magazines share with cubist art, the "primitive" and African art were also of interest to the Romanian avant-gardists, as they were to the Cubists.[93] The Romanian avant-gardists did not have a pronounced relationship with primitivism in that they, besides Tzara, did not collect indigenous objects from Africa, Oceania, or the Pacific Northwest, nor did they integrate indigenous art forms in their art. Their access to indigenous objects was sparse, for Romania was not France, a colonial power that could siphon the cultural patrimony of its colonies to bolster French culture and trade. Tzara was able to build a collection of indigenous objects precisely because he lived in Paris, among the French avant-garde circle, and could turn to the Surrealists' knowledge of and captivation with primitivism. Nevertheless, one can find a few articles and artworks in the Romanian avant-garde

[92] Voronca, "Simultaneismul in Arta: De vorba cu Robert Delaunay," 2.

[93] Literature on the discourse of primitive art and modern art is too vast to discuss here. For more insight on this literature, see Amelia Miholca, "Constantin Brancusi's Primitivism," Master's Thesis (Arizona State University, 2014).

magazines that point to the avant-gardists' interest in indigenous objects as art objects. Their interest was primarily aesthetic rather than anthropological or ethnographic.

Positioned on the cover of *Punct* issue no. 13, next to one of Iancu's constructivist prints, the magazine highlighted Iancu's article "Pour le métier" ("For the Job"), initially written in Paris in 1918. Iancu derides excessive sentimentality in the art that elevates the artist above the craftsman and instead praises the "invention without hindrance and with purity of expression" of tapestries, printmaking, interior architecture, African art, and medieval art. With inspiration from these sources, he believed artists have found "new means of abstraction."[94] Iancu's comments echo his "Însemnări de artă" ("Art Notes") article in *Contimporanul* issue no. 45 from April 1924, in which he defends folk art, children's art, "art of psychopaths" and art "primitive people" as the "most alive, most expressive" art. [95] These types of art do not share romanticism's and Greek classicism's "culture of beauty," nor do they represent a "primitive," inferior art.[96]

The debate on primitivism continued in the Romanian magazines. In 1925, Corneliu Michăilescu wrote the article "Arta neagră" ("Black Art") for *Integral* issue no. 4. The article is a prime example of the appreciation and contemplation of African art in the Romanian avant-garde circle. Michăilescu reiterates Iancu's comments: he identifies positive aspects of "the inventive artist" whose "black art" conveys "powerful expression" and "perfect beauty."[97] Still, he derides, in a racist manner, the artist and

[94] Marcel Iancu, "Pour le métier" ("For the Job"), *Punct* no.13 (February 1925).

[95] Marcel Iancu, "Însemnări de artă" ("Art Notes"), *Contimporanul* no. 45 (April 1924): 7.

[96] Ibid.

[97] Corneliu Michăilescu, "Arta neagră" ("Black Art"), *Integral* no. 4 (June 1925): 11.

black culture as "primitive man" and racially associates this art with the hallmarks of uncivilization, that of spiritualism and nature. [98] Though not drawing a direct influence, modern artists use the "creative energy" of black art to devise the "style of tomorrow," as found in "expressionism, cubism, and derivative currents."[99] Michăilescu adds another link between Cubism and black art through the sculptures that culminate the article. A sculpture of an upright man with hands at his waist has the caption "Tiki, divinity from Marquesas Islands, Picasso collection."[100] Despite his effort to portray the African objects as sculpture worthy of artistic merit and as created by capable artists, Michăilescu's error with this Oceanic object speaks to his ignorance of, or, more critically, his refusal to learn about African art. Ironically, at the beginning of the article, he admits that "African art is little known in Romania."[101]

Furthermore, it is questionable whether the Oceanic sculpture came from Picasso's collection and how *Integral* obtained the photograph; Michăilescu probably added the Oceanic sculpture to the article because of its association with Picasso. Next to the Oceanic sculpture, there is an image of a mask from Côte d'Ivoire. Its caption states, "technique akin to Cubism, Kessler collection."[102] Michăilescu does not expound in his essay on the techniques that both cubist art and the African sculpture possess. However,

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[98] Ibid., 10.

[99] Ibid.

[100] Ibid.

[101] Ibid.

[102] Ibid., 11. Most likely, the sculpture comes from the collection of Harry Graf Kessler, a modern art collector and art patron. See Laird Easton, *The Red Count: The Life and Times of Harry Kessler* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2002).

given that it is a mask, he is more than likely thinking of the women in Picasso's *Les Demoiselles d'Avignon*, with their abstracted, flat faces that reveal only their essential features through pronounced outlines. The mention of Cubism and Picasso in an article about African art indicates that the Romanian avant-gardists were cognizant of this connection, just as Alfred Barr was in 1936 when he identified the African influence in *Les Demoiselles d'Avignon*.[103] The African sculptures at the beginning of the article—a Dahomey "fetish" and a "Congolian chair" from Paul Guillaume's collection—somewhat absolve Michăilescu's error of choosing an Oceanic sculpture from the Marquesas Islands for an article on "black art.".[104]

Like Michăilescu and Iancu's Cubists, Expressionist, and Dadaist contemporaries, Iancu admired outsider or "primitive" art, as they deemed it, for its aesthetic, rather than anthropological, value and the myriad artistic possibilities to which it opened modern and avant-garde art. Furthermore, he believed that "primitivism does not exist in art." Although this type of art is not part of western art academies—which to him "kills fantasy" and creativity—he says that it is no less advanced than the art produced by European, academically trained artists.[105] There is no evidence that Iancu sought to envelop himself in the anthropological and ethnographic knowledge of indigenous and tribal cultures. With that said, the cardboard and twine masks he created for performances at the Cabaret Voltaire and for Dada Soirées, such as *Mask for Firdusi*, aesthetically

[103] Barr, 30.

[104] Ibid., 10.

[105] Ibid.

resemble masks from Africa and Oceania. The Dadaists may also have used the masks in the Dadaist performance of Tzara's "Dances Nègre" at Galerie Dada. [106] Instead of statically displayed on the wall or a pedestal, the masks reenacted ritual dances, though it is unknown which specific African and Oceania dances.[107]

Michaela Oberhofer states that Iancu's masks "cannot be formally categorized as any one particular mask type. They are characterized more by a regional and stylistic pluralism."[108] She believes the masks, which Iancu fashioned out of painted cardboard, paper, and twine, have a resemblance to Oceanic masks and not African masks, in their "ephemeral materials" and "asymmetrical design."[109] But they also have a resemblance to Swiss Carnival masks from the region of Lötschental in Switzerland.[110] And, in my view, the masks could very well have been inspired by the Romanian folk masks in the Colinde rituals because of an overlap in their appearance: the narrow form of the elongated face, further abstracted by the angular nose and distorted eyes. This possible Romanian source for Iancu's Dada masks tells us that Iancu may have drawn from his Romanian national identity, which Romanian folk art strongly represents, and combined it with other cultural sources to obfuscate his ambiguous relationship with his Romanian identity. I agree with Oberhofer that Iancu's masks do convey a "stylistic pluralism"—much like his artistic

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[106] Timothy O. Benson, "Dada Geographies," *Virgin Microbe: Essays on Dada*, edited by David Hopkins and Michael White (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2014), 27.

[107] Ibid.

[108] Michaela Oberhofer, "'Our Belief in a Direct, Magical, Organic and Creative Art:' Marcel Janco's Masks and Designs," *Dada Africa: Dialogue with the Other*, edited by Ralf Burmeister, Michaela Oberhofer, and Esther Tisa Francini (Zurich, Switzerland: Scheidegger and Spiess, 2016), 32.

[109] Ibid.

[110] Ibid.

practice post-Dada. One cannot easily decipher in the masks the geographic region or culture from which the masks obtained their unique stylistic qualities. It could very well be that African masks also influenced his masks. Iancu must have known of the contemporaneous discussion about African art.[111] Moreover, he must have seen Tzara's collection of African art, as well as Jan Ephraim's. The Dadaists rented the space for Cabaret Voltaire from Ephraim who allegedly "had a suitcase of poems, songs, and dances of tribal people and another suitcase of African masks, which both were consulting materials for the Dadaists."[112] Additionally, Iancu's and Tzara's compatriot Constantin Brâncuși, whom the Romanian avant-gardists exalted profusely in their magazines, was working in the 1910s on his wood sculptures *Adam and Eve* and *Little French Girl*. These sculptures conjure the fusion of African wood sculptures and the wood craftsmanship of Romanian folk art.

It is easy to connect Iancu's masks to the mask-like faces in Picasso's *Les Demoiselles d'Avignon*. During a conversation with André Malraux in 1937, Picasso recounted his trip to Paris' anthropological museum Musée d'Ethnographie du Trocadéro where he encountered "magical" African sculptures, masks, and "Red Indian dolls." He admitted: "*Les Demoiselles d'Avignon* must have come to me that day, but not at all because of the forms: but because it was my first canvas of exorcism—yes,

[111] Around the same time of Zurich Dada, a discussion on the artistic merits of African art was growing. In 1914, Alfred Stieglitz organized at his New York gallery 291 the exhibition "Statuary in Wood by African Savages: The Root of Modern Art," which presented African objects for the first time as art. Carl Einstein's book *Negerplastik* (*Negro Sculpture*) was released in Germany in 1915.

[112] Saşa Pană, "Insurecția dela Zürich*." Primele poeme / ale lui Tristan Tzara. Urmate de, Insurecția dela Zürich / prezentată de Saşa Pană* (București: Editura Unu, 1934.), 40.

absolutely!"[113] If we assume that Picasso's confession was sincere (Picasso had a reputation for contradicting himself about his art), then we can conclude that African art or "primitive" art had a central role in the birth of Cubism. Picasso insisted that African "fetishes did not captivate him" for aesthetic reasons but rather for their supernatural ability give form to "spirits, the unconscious…emotions" and, henceforth, achieve independence.[114] In the context of Picasso's comments, the exorcism of *Les Demoiselles d'Avignon* entailed Picasso's liberation from the overbearing Renaissance legacy of naturalism, linear perspective, and modeling. At the risk of sounding fanciful, the image that comes to mind is Picasso exorcising this Renaissance legacy from the canvas through the new, cubist forms. Barr points out in the *Cubism and Abstract Art* exhibition catalogue that "the angularity of the figures at the right, their grotesque masks with concave profiles and staring eyes, are already of the Negro period at its most barbaric."[115] His description of the masks as "barbaric" contradicts Iancu's earlier belief that the art of "primitive people" is not primitive. [116] While Barr conceives of the "grotesque" masks in a negative, distasteful manner, Iancu, and to some degree Picasso too, cultivated the grotesque appearance of the masks, for they positively yield new modes of representation. Picasso attached spiritual meaning to his encounter with African art and

[113] Pablo Picasso, "Discovery of African Art 1906-1907," *Primitivism and Twentieth-Century Art: A Documentary History*, edited by Jack Flam and Miriam Deutch (Berkeley, Los Angeles; London, England: University of California Press, 2003), 33.

[114] Ibid.

[115] Barr, 30.

[116] Iancu, "Însemnări de artă," 7.

Iancu was drawn to African art's formalist aspects. Both artists employed the motif of the mask to develop their avant-garde art.

As with Picasso's oeuvre, Iancu's oeuvre during the 1920s did not exhibit discernable forms from African masks or discernable motifs from Oceania or Romanian folk art. His cubist art of that period did not engage in a dialogue with primitivism, but it does so explicitly in his *Chant Nègre* (*Negro Song*) drawing from 1916, which was in the *Cabaret Voltaire* magazine and reproduced again on the cover page of *Contimporanul* issue no. 16 from Nov 4, 1922. Iancu drew two figures in the style of African sculptures for a poster for the Dada soirée *Chant Nègre* that took place in March 1916 in Zurich.[117] The magazine has no further information on what the soirée entailed, though most likely the Dadaists performed in Iancu's mask as they did at Cabaret Voltaire and in the performances at Galerie Dada. The figures in the poster, one lying on the floor with an arm raised and a bent leg and the other figure dancing in the background, are sculptural in their solidity. Iancu rendered the figures with a cubist angularity reminiscent of the figures in the *Les Demoiselles d'Avignon*. Their faces, however, are not as mask-like but more expressively, even more naturalistically, portrayed. Iancu's figures contrast with the simplified African figure in Maxy's 1925 *Desen exotic* (*Exotic Drawing*) that he published in *Integral* issue no. 6-7 (Fig. 4.16).

Maxy veers towards a caricature of what constitutes exoticism in his drawing: an African man holding some kind of sphere or pole standing in front of his hut in a tropical setting. The African man acts as a generic fetish object because in his features, he does not resemble African sculpture from any particular region in Africa, but neither does

[117] *Cabaret Voltaire*, no. 1 (June 1916).

Iancu's drawing. The figures in Iancu's drawings look slightly more like wood or bronze sculptures from Guinea, Congo, or Cameroon except that the sculptures from these countries typically have disproportionate bodies. Their heads are more significant than their torsos, arms, and legs. Iancu drew the African figures in movement as though they were modern dancers on a stage and not ritual dancers in full costumes. The poster reflects the Zurich Dadaists' endeavor to participate in the sought-after primitivism of the time and it foreshadows an ensuing captivation with black culture, the "negrophilia," of the 1920s Paris.

When contrasting Iancu's grasp of primitivism in comparison with Tzara's, it becomes evident that Tzara was more engaged with indigenous and tribal cultures. Whether he attempted to understand them beyond their aesthetic appeal is an open question. Richard Huelsenbeck, who joined the Zurich Dadaists before leading the Dada in Berlin, describes Tzara as "the aesthete who collected antiques, African sculpture, and primitive art."[118] In addition to collecting, Tzara translated African poems into French, such as two *poèmes nègres* derived from the Loritja tribe that he published in *Dada* issue no 2.[119] Cosana Eram's study of how Tzara appropriated African poetry in his own poems and performances is multifaceted. The African poems that Tzara translated, or to use Eram's apt term, "adapted," had already been translated from the original tribal language of the Loritja tribe to German or French.[120] Eram concludes that Tzara was a

[118] Richard Huelsenbeck, *Memoirs of a Dada Drummer*, (Berkeley; Los Angeles; Oxford: University of California Press, 1969), 18.

[119] Cosana Eram, "'Lost in Translation?' Tristan Tzara's Non-European Side," *Dada/Surrealism* 20 (2015): 11.

[120] Ibid.

"modern ethnographe." In his "substitution and transmutation of poetic material, it was the translation of the translation that became the privileged object."[121] I think Tzara played with the idea of how language loses its meaning through the process of translation. The collision of African tribal culture, Romanian Jewish culture, and Dada collided into a "syncretic moment of experience" that reflected an avant-garde acceptance of different, non-academic art and, more chiefly, Tzara's identity as an exile traversing multiple countries and cultures.[122] Hence, Tzara may have gravitated to indigenous and tribal art a as means of transforming language and performance and not as means of really getting to know these cultures and their customs according to their system of beliefs. The Romanian avant-garde magazines did not publish Tzara's *poèmes nègres*. Nonetheless, the magazines carried out Iancu's and Tzara's captivation with primitivism and African art in their art content. The content is not extensive, but it does demonstrate a careful consideration on behalf of the Romanian avant-gardists of primitivism's and African art's importance in the development of Cubism and modern art as a whole.

Conclusion

To celebrate Romanian avant-garde art of the 1920s and 30s, Romania issued a series of stamps in 2004. Among the six stamps in the series—with artists Merica Ramniceanu, Jean David, Marcel Iancu, Victor Brauner, M.H. Maxy, and Hans Mattis-Teutsch—Iancu and Maxy's stamps are the only ones to feature cubist art. Iancu's

[121] Ibid., 23.

[122] Ibid.

painting *Compoziţie* (*Composition*), 1926, as titled on the stamp, and Maxy's portrait *Tristan Tzara,* 1924, epitomize the substantial influence that Cubism had on both artists' artistic practice given that these stamps aim to display the art that best identifies each artist.[123] Maxy's cubist portrait of Tzara appeared in *Contimporanul* issue no. 50-51, November-December 1924, but Iancu's *Composition* of a seated female figure did not appear in *Contimporanul* nor *Integral*. Nevertheless, both paintings attest to Iancu and Maxy's productive mid-1920s period in which they ardently pursued their cubist painting practice that would solidify their status as foremost artists of the Romanian avant-garde. The two artists stopped their cubist practice by 1930 as the Romanian avant-garde waned in a country that would soon push Jewish artists, like Iancu and Maxy, into exile within or outside Romania. For a future study, it would be worthwhile to determine to what extent cubist art in the Romanian avant-garde magazines influenced a younger generation of Romanian artists, working during the Communist years, to produce their own version of cubist art as they may have looked back to the avant-garde for an artistic and political alternative to Socialist Realism.

[123] For example, the painting *Femeia care visează II* (*Woman who dreams II*), 1934, on Brauner's stamp is a painting of his quintessential surrealist style for which he is most known in the studies of avant-garde and modern art.

CHAPTER 5

THE JEWISH IDENTITY OF THE ROMANAN AVANT-GARDISTS

Jewish identity is implicit in the content of the Romanian avant-garde magazines. It would be imprudent to write about the Romanian avant-garde magazines without devoting critical attention to Jewish identity and the anti-Semitic environment of the 1920s in Romania, given that a considerable number of Jewish Romanian artists and writers were involved with the avant-garde magazines. *Integral* magazine's editorial board was entirely Jewish Romanian, consisting of M.H. Maxy, Benjamin Fondane, Victor Brauner, Ilarie Voronca, Ion Călugăru, and János Mattis-Teutsch. On *Contimporanul*'s editorial board, Marcel Iancu was Jewish, along with *Contimporanul*'s contributor and Iancu's Dada colleague Tristan Tzara, while Ion Vinea was not. The editors of *Punct*, Scarlat Callimachi, and *Unu*, Saşa Pană and Stéphane Roll, were not Jewish. Brauner, Voronca, and Roll also edited *75HP*. These artists juggled multiple identities, as leftist avant-gardists, Jewish intellectuals, Romanian citizens (post-1922), émigrés, and exiles. Their Jewish identity was, therefore, one among many identities for them. I argue that, although to them, it may not have been an essential identity, their Jewish identity is a meaningful layer to our understanding of the Romanian avant-garde magazines.[1]

[1] I will not go as far as to presume that the artists and writers became avant-garde because they were Jewish, as though their marginality as Jews in Romania caused them to create marginal, controversial work outside the bounds of Romania's nationalist and bourgeois cultures. Their avant-garde magazines have no evidence of this causal relationship. The Romanian avant-gardists created some work that complemented nationalist art. Additionally, the Romanian avant-gardists who were not Jewish complicate this causal relationship. They were just as avant-garde as their Jewish colleagues, not to mention the many avant-garde

In lieu of a causal relationship, I propose to parallel the avant-gardists' Jewish identity with the magazines' avant-garde identity. The Jewish Romanian avant-gardists and the Romanian avant-garde magazines occupied an in-between space of non-belonging in which their identities ebbed and flowed with much ambiguity. The magazines are avant-garde but also considered modern. The magazines have been marginalized on the outskirts of the history of European avant-garde art. Likewise, the Jewish Romanian avant-gardists refused to adhere to one dominant identity, were ostracized for being Jewish, pressured into exile, and marginalized in Romania's history of art and literature. The parallelism between the avant-gardists and their magazines, in terms of their historical reception and identity formation, provides a specifically Romanian context of marginalization and resistance through which to differentiate the magazines from other European avant-garde magazines.

The Romanian avant-garde magazines were an instrument of resistance for the avant-gardists. Though the magazines did not feature Jewish content, besides *Contimporanul*'s few articles on anti-Semitism and Jewish culture, their resistance springs from the magazines' Jewish editors and collaborators. They persisted in their constant creative output, issue number after issue number, against the toxic anti-Semitism that took hold in the 1920s and 30s. The most potent form of resistance is in the Romanian Zionist magazine *Puntea de Fildeş* in which the avant-gardists published their writings and art. *Puntea de Fildeş* is a magazine that promoted and strengthened Romania's Jewish intellectual culture. The Jewish Romanian avant-gardists strengthened

figures in other European avant-garde groups who were not Jewish. To put it plainly, the magazines were not avant-garde merely because their creators were Jewish.

Jewish intellectual culture too, through their magazines, their contributions to *Puntea de Fildeş*, and their other artistic engagements, notwithstanding their reluctance to fully participate in this culture.

The avant-garde magazines possessed another paradoxical layer of resistance—of resistance against Jewish identity itself. Benjamin Fondane, in his poetry, and Mihail Sebastian in his novel *For Two Thousand Years*, demonstrate the identity crisis of not belonging to either the Jewish or Romanian world. Sebastian wrote several articles for *Contimporanul* but was not much involved with the avant-garde circle in Bucharest. Their writings are pivotal to my analysis for what they reveal about the avant-gardists' exiled condition of assimilation, relocation, and non-belonging as they navigated their Jewish Romanian identity. In interwar Romania, their choices were to remain in a country that saw them as foreigners, emigrate to Paris where they did not escape anti-Semitic persecution, or join the Zionist movement and emigrate to Palestine. Of the Jewish Romanian editors, only M.H. Maxy, János Mattis-Teutsch, and Ion Călugăru continued living and working in interwar and post-WWII, communist Romania.[2] M.H. Maxy and Iancu's paintings of peasant subjects tread the line between nationalist art and avant-garde art and communicate the Jewish Romanian avant-gardists' own nationalist sentiment, not only that of Romanian citizens. As seen in the magazines, their nationalist sentiment convolutes the study of their Jewish identity and the black and white narrative

[2] Victor Brauner, Benjamin Fondane, Ilarie Voronca, and Tristan Tzara emigrated to Paris. Tzara, Brauner, and Voronca survived Word War II by hiding in southern France during occupation. Fondane, tragically, was captured in Paris in 1944 and deported and gassed at Auschwitz. Voronca committed suicide in Paris in 1946. Iancu stayed in Romania until 1941 when he emigrated to Palestine.

of Jewish intellectuals against Romanian nationalists in the interwar period. Problematic assumptions, motivations, and conflicts make up the Romanian avant-gardists' Jewish identity, which was always in a state of flux.

To gain a deeper understanding of the historical background against which the Romanian Jewish avant-gardists operated, one must take into account Romania's political shifts post-World War I. In 1918, Romania acquired the Austro-Hungarian provinces Transylvania and Bukovina and the Russian province Bessarabia. The decade of the 1920s in Romania seemed like a fresh start due to the 1918 unification, which doubled Romania's land area and expanded its minority populations of Hungarians, Jews, and Roma. Upon its World War I allies' insistence, Romania granted its Jewish population citizenship in 1923 in the new constitution. Born and living in the country as citizens, but not legally so, with curbed rights, arguably Jewish people were living in exile in a hostile country. Hence, until 1923, the Jewish avant-gardists did not have the same rights as the non-Jewish avant-gardists because they were not legally Romanian. It is no wonder then that Samuel Rosenstock's new, chosen name Tristan Tzara sounds in Romanian awfully close to *trist în țara*, which translates to "sad in the country." And, when Iancu emigrated to Israel in 1941, he did so, he said, to "live on my own proper land."[3] Romanian Jews benefited from the new constitution, but they also experienced an onset of new anti-Semitism from those who feared that Jews posed a challenge to Romanian identity, to

[3] Francis M. Naumann, "Janco/Dada: Entretien Avec Marcel Janco," *Dada, Circuit Total*, edited by Henri Béhar and Catherine Dufour (Paris, France; Lausanne, Switzerland: Éditions L'Age d'Homme, 2005), 174.

which minority groups were not entitled. In the words of Romania's most celebrated, nineteenth-century poet Mihai Eminescu, Jews "are not, and cannot be Romanians."[4]

Romanian Jews integrated and assimilated into Romanian society and culture in different degrees, depending on regional and economic differences. The Romanian avant-gardists came from secular, bourgeois families and lived and worked in Bucharest, where Jews were more assimilated and "western" than Jews in Moldavia and Bessarabia.[5] Throughout the country, non-religious, Jewish community organizations supported Jewish social life and welfare, but in Bucharest membership to these organizations only numbered around 8,500 out of the city's 60,000 Jewish population.[6] Additionally, Zionism and socialism convoluted the issue of assimilation. The Union of Romanian Jews, based in Bucharest, represented Romanian Jews in all principalities and encouraged

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[4] Leon Volovici, *Nationalist Ideology and Antisemitism: The Case of Romanian Intellectuals in the 1930s* (Oxford; New York; Seoul; Tokyo: Pergamon Press, 1991), 13.

Romanian identity or Romanianess derived from the nineteenth-century when Romania was still catching up to the industrialization of other European countries such as France and England. After Romania became an independent nation in 1878, a political rift ensued between the "Traditionalists" and the "Europeanists." The Europeanists aimed to industrialize and urbanize the newly formed nation and build a stronger relationship with the West. The Traditionalists believed that Romania should keep its agricultural system, which depended predominantly on peasant farmers and preserve the peasantry's folk culture and "authentic national values." Even though the peasantry comprised "four-fifths" of the nation's total population, the Traditionalists saw the growing urban population as a threat partly because of their waning religious beliefs and partly because of a large number of the intelligentsia and the middle class were Jewish or ethnic Hungarian. Despite their education abroad, in countries such as France and Germany, Romanian artists were expected to return home and to contribute to Romania's national art, which expressed the conservative, national values of the Traditionalists. Romanian intellectuals saw Jews as a threat to the national peasant culture. Jewish communities existed in rural areas, but the Jew became synonymous with the cosmopolitan, atheist foreigner, which became synonymous with avant-garde artists and writers whose modern lifestyle and socialist politics threatened the national culture rooted in the peasantry. For more on Romania's political and intellectual landscape of the nineteenth-century, see Keith Hitchins, "Historiography of the Countries of Eastern Europe: Romania," *The American Historical Review* 97, no. 4 (October 1992): 1071-1079.

[5] Raphael Vago, "Romanian Jewry During the Interwar Period," *The Tragedy of Romanian Jewry*, edited by Randolph L. Braham (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1994), 31.

[6] Ibid., 41.

them to support political parties that advocated for Jewish rights and Jewish causes rather than form a separate political Jewish party. In 1930, however, the Jewish Party came to prominence, gaining followers mainly in northern Romania and advocating for Zionism and anti-assimilation.[7] Wealthy Romanian Jews typically favored assimilation while leftist Romanian Jews were more concerned about liberating "the Jewish working masses."[8]

The motley spectrum of Romanian Jewry, from Zionist to leftist, to assimilated bourgeoisie, and wealthy upper class, characterizes the Romanian avant-gardists as well. For example, upper-class Marcel Iancu was more of a Zionist than M.H. Maxy and, in turn, M.H. Maxy was more of a socialist than Iancu. These between the two artists intensified in the 1930s. During the period of the avant-garde magazines, Iancu and Maxy, as with the rest of the Romanian avant-gardists, worked as assimilated Romanian Jewish artists who had to juggle with their Jewish and Romanian identities as two often opposing identities. Stephen Fischer-Galati notes that "participation of Jews in the process of modernization was acceptable but only in their capacity of tolerated second-class citizens."[9] Romanian Jews could not hold bureaucratic government posts or military posts, but "encountered few, if any, difficulties in exercising their professions or engaging in economic activities."[10] As assimilated Jews, the avant-gardists were free to

[7] Ibid., 47.

[8] Carol Iancu, *Jews in Romania, 1866-1919: From Exclusion to Emancipation*, translated by Carvel de Busy (Boulder, Colorado: East European Monographs; New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), 160.

[9] Stephen Fischer-Galati, "The Legacy of Anti-Semitism," *The Tragedy of Romanian Jewry*, edited by Randolph L. Braham (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1994), 16.

[10] Ibid.

produce their magazines and explore their Jewish identities in *Puntea de Fildeş* and in *Contimporanul*'s articles about anti-Semitism. Yet, their reluctance to explore further their Jewish identity in their magazines may have been an act of self-censorship in order to present themselves to readers as assimilated artists and writers in a society that was always entrenched in anti-Semitism.

Discourse on Jewish Identity in Romanian Art and Literature

Although the Romanian avant-garde magazines have enjoyed increased attention in recent years, the subject of the Romanian avant-gardists' Jewish identity and how this identity factors into the magazines has been neglected. With my analysis, I seek to rectify this disregard and add to the few studies on Romanian art that have delt with Jewish identity. During the past twenty-five years, Romanian art history and literary studies have brought to the forefront Jewish artists and writers, whose artistic contributions were marginalized or their Jewish identity overlooked in the communist-era Romanian discourse. These studies include Amelia Pavel's 1996 book ***Romanian Painters from Romania: 1848-1948.*** Pavel broadly goes through many Jewish artists who progressed Romania's artistic pedigree.[11] Ovid S. Crohmălniceanu and Geo Șerban's 2001 book *Evreii în mișcarea de avangardă românească* (Jews in the Romanian Avant-Garde Movement) is a comprehensive inquiry into the major players of the Romanian avant-

[11] Amelia Pavel, *Romanian Painters from Romania:1848-1948*, translated by Vivian Prager (București: Editura Hasefer, 1996).

garde, from the Dadaists to the Surrealists. The book pinpoints Jewish humor in Tzara's Dadaism and the hostile environment that led to the avant-gardists' emigration.[12]

In 2006, Tom Sandqvist wrote extensively about Tzara, Iancu, and Arthur Segal's Jewish background and how they drew from Hasidic traditions for their Dada poetry, performances, and art.[13] Monica Enache and Valentina Iancu curated and then wrote the catalogue for the 2010 exhibition "Crossroads: Jewish Artists during the Holocaust" at the National Museum of Art of Romania. The exhibition features Iancu, Maxy, and Brauner and lesser-known artists outside of the avant-garde group whose "militant," expressionist art conveyed the injustices of the bourgeoisie and the anti-Semitic totalitarianism of the late 1930s.[14]

Ovidiu Morar's 2014 book *Scriitori Evrei din Romania* (Jewish Artists from Romania) offers a short biography of notable Romanian writers who were Jewish, including the avant-garde writers Tzara and Voronca. Because of their marginalization, Morar reckons that "it was natural for these writers to reject in principle a national tradition in which they could not integrate and develop a literature in line with them, often shocking by the unusual proposed formulas."[15] Radu Stern, in his 2017 essay "Jews

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[12] Ovid S. Crohmălniceanu and Geo Șerban, *Evreii în mișcarea de avangardă românească* (București: Editura Hasefer, 2001).

[13] Tom Sandqvist, *Dada East: The Romanians of Cabaret Voltaire* (Cambridge, MA; London, UK: The MIT Press, 2006).

[14] Artists like Iosif Iser, Iosif Klein, and Alex Leon.
Monica Enache and Valentina Iancu, *Crossroads: Jewish Artists during the Holocaust, exhibition catalogue* (Bucharest, Romania: Muzeul Național de Artă al României, 2010), 24.

[15] Ovidiu Morar, *Scriitori Evrei din Romania* (București: Hasefer, 2014), 19.

and the Avant-Garde: The Case of Romania," reaches the same conclusion, proposing that Jewish artists gravitated towards avant-garde art because these artists met with the same kind of derision that critics and the public bestowed on this new type of art, which they derided as foreign and strange, unlike proper Romanian, national art.[16] Although I believe that Morar and Stern make convincing arguments about the marginal position of the Jewish Romanian writers and artists positively affecting their avant-garde positions and practices, this cause and effect between the two may not be that straightforward.

Alexandru Bar's 2018 dissertation "The Multilayered Identity of Tristan Tzara and Marcel Janco – The Archives of an Identity Issue" investigates how Tzara and Iancu's Jewishness informed their relationship with each other, with Dada, and with Romania.[17] Through the application of the "Deleuzoguattarian concept of becoming" and the consideration of a specific, historical context of living and creating as Romanian Jews, Bar builds a careful analysis of Tzara and Iancu's "multilayered" Jewish identity, which, he argues, served as pivotal role in their creative work by how they avoided or transformed their Jewish identity into the "Other." [18] His analysis is a refreshing take on the subject of Jewish identity in the Romanian avant-garde because of the nuance and sensitivity allotted to this subject. As with the rest of the discourse discussed above, Bar

[16] Radu Stern, "Jews and the Avant-Garde: The Case of Romania," *Jewish Aspects in Avant-Garde*, edited by Marl H. Gleber (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2017), 35-51.

[17] Alexandru Bar, "The Multilayered Identity of Tristan Tzara and Marcel Janco – The Archives of an Identity Issue," Ph.D. Dissertation (Leeds, UK: The University of Leeds, 2018), 11.

[18] Ibid., 13.

serves an intricate and riveting historical period in which the Romanian avant-garde magazines operated.

Anti-Semitism and the 1922-23 Student Riots

The articles in *Contimporanul*'s early issue numbers, from 1922 and 1923, are the most potent demonstration of involvement with Jewish identity and anti-Semitism in the Romanian avant-garde. 1922-1923 were the years when the magazine took a staunch stance against anti-Semitism in reaction to what was happening at universities across the country. In his article "Cultura si anti-semitism" (Culture and Anti-Semitism) in *Contimporanul* no. 30, February 1923, Ion Vinea deplores the government's closure of universities as a "defeat of culture," "a high morality lesson for minorities," and a "de-intellectualization" of Jewish students.[19] In 1922 and 1923, violence and rioting against Jewish students were so extreme that Jewish students asked the Romanian king and the parliament to intervene. Comisea pentru combatarea antisemitismul Bucureşti (Bucharest's Commission for Combatting Anti-Semitism) kept track of violent incidents as the riots were occurring, providing numerous descriptions of Jewish students getting kicked, their classes suspended as the rioting students yelled, "Jews get out."[20] One Jewish student overheard the police captain telling soldiers, "these are Jews, hit them." Fondane reports in *Contimporanul* no. 22, December 1923 how students started beating

[19] Ion Vinea, "Cultura si antisemitism"(Culture and Anti-Semitism), *Contimporanul* no. 30 (February 1923).

[20] Comisia pentru Combaterea Antisemitismului Bucureşti. Activitate. Mişcare antisemita a studenţilor. Organizaţii fasciste. Documente. Doc. orig., mss., tip. 1922-1923 119 file Realit. Arhiva Centrului Evreiesc.

Jews and vandalizing cars and shops while singing "Jos Jidanii! Jos presa jidoveasca!" (Down with the Yids! Down with the Jewish press!).[21]

Through the protagonist of Sebastian's *For Two Thousand Years,* the reader learns that defiant Jewish students kept attending their classes, enduring the kicks and blows of their classmates, and fighting back.[22] During a moment of reflection, the protagonist struggles to believe that someone he did not know at all, a "stranger," physically hurt him because he was Jewish.[23] This shocking violence towards Romanian Jews set the tone for a new form of anti-Semitism, grounded in nationalism and a budding fascism. The Romanian government's solution to the riots was insufficient and unfavorable to Jewish students: they reopened the universities and asked Jewish students not to attend classes.[24] Vinea articulates the avant-gardists' concern with the government's handling of the situation to the detriment of Jewish students' education and Bucharest's intellectual culture, which flourished because of young Jewish students and intellectuals like those in the avant-garde scene.

Two prominent political figures led the charge for the legalization of *numerus clausus*—the chief determinant of the riots—instigated and inflamed the students' riots: A.C. Cuza, a law professor at the University of Iaşi and the founder of the nationalist

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[21] Aladin, "Scrisori din Iaşi" (Letters from Iaşi), *Contimporanul* no. 22 (December 16, 1922). Fondane sometimes used the pseudonym Aladin for his political articles.

[22] Mihail Sebastian, *For Two Thousand Years*, translated by Philip O. Ceallaigh (New York: Other Press, 2016), 12.

[23] Ibid., 6.

[24] Mara Dissegna, "Anti-Semitism in Universities and Schools in Romania and Hungary (1920-1938)," *Pius XI and America: Proceedings of the Brown University Conference (Providence, October 2010),* edited by David I Kertzer, Charles R Gallagher, and Alberto Melloni, (Berlin: Lit; London: Global, 2012), 308.

political party National Christian Defense League, and Corneliu Zelea Codreanu, a law student at the University of Iaşi and the future founder of Romania's fascist organization Legion of Archangel Michael.[25] *Contimporanul* mocked Cuza in a parody poem, attributed to Cuza, that "can be sung:" "Bum.Bum.Bum./Sa ma rezumi/Jidanii sus! Cu banii" (Bum.Bum.Bum/Let me summarize/Yids upstairs! With money).[26] The poem is a clever dadaist jab at Cuza and all anti-Semites' fear and stereotype of Jews as gatekeepers of wealth while unveiling the anti-Semites' lunacy in how they apply that derogatory term.

Contimporanul could not afford to keep silent on this university crisis when it is likely that nationalists saw the magazine as part of the Jewish press because of its Jewish editor and contributors.[27] Its progressive program critiqued the established cultural and

[25] Cuza and Codreanu formed Uniunea Nationala Crestina (National Christian Union) in early 1922, before the student riots began. The Union's brochure, with a swastika on its front page, has a pernicious anti-Semitic agenda around "strainilor jidani" (the foreign Yids). "Jidani" is the equivalent to the English word Yids, a derogatory term that anti-Semites used when speaking about Romanian Jews. Brochure of the Committe Uniunea Nationala Crestina (National Christian Union) from Jan. 24/ Feb. 6, 1922, Arhiva Centrului Evreiesc.
Numerus clausus is a law that limits certain groups of a county's population from obtaining admission to professional or educational institutions. In Romania, *numerus clausus* would have prohibited many Jewish students from studying at Romanian universities. In their meeting notes about *numerus clausus* from February 1923, members of the Commission for Combatting Anti-Semitism, bring up anti-Semite Dr. N.C. Paulescu's argument about the urgency of "protecting the Nation" and throwing out Jews "by force" because "large numbers of Jews" are increasing each day in Romania and in its universities while Romanian students cannot afford to pay university fees. Paulescu was outraged by how Jewish students outnumber "Christian students" one-hundred-thirty to thirty in the School of Medicine of the University of Iaşi—a proportion that cannot be found "even in Palestine."

[26] "A.C Cuza," *Contimporanul* no. 23 (December 23, 1922).

[27] Irina Livezenau points out that the student riots, or the "nationalist student protest," occurred at the same time as parliamentary discussions on the new Romanian constitution and at the time when young people became increasingly disgruntled about their economic situation. Jewish students were, thus, scapegoats for a large portion of the country, comprised of the peasantry and working class, and their misplaced anger, who felt economically left behind while the country's modernization efforts expanded. However, Jewish students and other educated, well-off Jews were also an object of envy and hatred because to the nationalists they seem to be infiltrating and expanding into all echelons of the country, from education to

political order. The articles in *Contimporanul* about anti-Semitism were not sweeping in number, but together the articles are a subversive action directed towards the fury of the avant-gardists' opponents. By publishing articles that exposed readers to what was occurring to Jews in Romania, the magazine turned into a bulwark against discrimination and in support of fair treatment and equal rights for Jews.

For example, *Contimporanul* no. 23, December 23, 1922, contains an article by Jewish Romanian politician and writer H. St. Streitman about how Jews enrich the country's diversity and its intellectualism, adding that "if they (Jews) did not exist they would have to be invented."[28] In *Contimporanul* no. 32, February 1923, Iancu and Vinea ran a short article on *numerus clausus* by Romanian modernist writer Camil Petrescu who contends the "impossibility of numerus clausus." First, he writes, no other country besides Hungary had *numerus clausus* and, second, that law will not stop Jews from returning to the country with diplomas earned abroad.[29] Additionally, an authorless article in *Contimporanul* no. 36 (March 1923) reports that authorities in the Șipote commune in Iași County are "hunting" Jews and that pogroms like that are "happening not in 15th century Spain but in Romania in 1923."[30] These articles did not deal exclusively with the student riots and *numerus clausus*. However, the tumultuous events and the debate about this law propelled the magazine, as it did the country as a whole, to

culture and industry. Irina Livezeanu, *Cultural Politics in Greater Romania: Regionalism, Nation Building, and Ethnic Struggle*, 1918-1930 (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2018), 265.

[28] H. St. Streitman, "Diversiunea" (Diversion), *Contimporanul* no. 23 (December 23, 1922).

[29] Camil Petrescu, "Numerus Clausus," *Contimporanul* no. 32 (February 1923).

[30] "Mici pogromuri la Șipote" (Little pogroms in Șipote), *Contimporanul* no. 36 (March 1923).

evaluate how the government and its citizens treat their Jewish neighbors and the vital presence that Jews have in Romanian culture. *Contimporanul* did not produce such articles again in its ten-year run because the anti-Semitic violence calmed down for a while after 1923, though the nationalist rhetoric on *numerus clausus* raged on, but also because the magazine seemed to have lost interest in issues outside of art.

These articles in *Contimporanul* link the magazine with the agenda of the Commission for Combatting Anti-Semitism. In the February 1923 meeting in which they discussed *numerus clausus*, the commission planned to create a brochure to inform the Romanian public about anti-Semitism. Its members considered hiring Ion Vinea and Ion Călugăru to design and write the brochure, but they concluded that "we do not know Vinea" and offered no further word on Călugăru.[31] The commission might have felt uncomfortable hiring someone who was not Jewish to do the brochure meant to represent the Commission for Combatting Anti-Semitism, or they just did not have his telephone number. In any case, it is odd that the commission did not add Marcel Iancu to the list of potential avant-garde creators because if they knew about Vinea, then, indeed, they must have known about his co-editor Iancu. The commission was aware of *Contimporanul*. They noted that *Contimporanul* "will have one or two issues on Jews in Romanian culture."[32]

Vinea and Iancu did not devote entire issue numbers to this topic, but they asked Fondane to write the article "Evreii in Cultura Română" (Jews in Romanian Culture),

[31] Comisea pentru combatarea antisemitismul Bucureşti.

[32] Ibid.

divided into two parts. For the article, Fondane used the pseudonym V. Danoiu.[33] In the first part of the article, which appeared in *Contimporanul* no. 39-40, April 1923, Fondane examines the Jewish impact on Romanian culture until 1920, starting with a large number of books by famous Romanian artists that Jewish publishers made available to the Romanian public in the nineteenth-century. These publishers "created, almost alone, our cultural atmosphere."[34] In turn, Fondane says, the contribution of Jewish writers to Romanian literature has increased "progressively, in quantity and quality." However, Societatea Scriitorilor Romani (Society of Romanian Writers) have not recognized "the most eminent writers" in Romania, Jewish and non-Jewish, because they are journalists by profession. Towards the end of the article, Fondane fixates on the Jewish-owned magazine *Versuri si Proza* (Verses and Prose) in which "young writers"—like "B. Fundoianu," as in Fondane himself—"undertook a natural fight to conquer the public for themselves." In the shorter, second part of the article, which appeared in *Contimporanul*'s next issue, Fondane praises Jewish Romanian theater director Stern for his Romanian translations of Shakespeare and several Jewish Romanian literary critics who make up "almost all of Romanian criticism."[35]

What Fondane is doing in the two-part article is teaching readers about this important history of Jewish writers while inserting himself and the avant-garde magazine

[33] Sofia Milancovici, "Benjamin Fundoianu / Benjamin Fondane: o biografie româno-franceză," *Goldiş University of Arad Studii de Ştiinţă şi Cultură*, no. 1 (12) (March 2008): 77.

[34] V. Danoiu, "Evreii in Cultura Română" (Jews in Romanian Culture), *Contimporanul* no. 39-40 (April 1923).

[35] V. Danoiu, "Evreii in Cultura Română" (Jews in Romanian Culture), *Contimporanul* no. 41 (May 1923).

in this history, though not outright admitting so. Working in tandem with the Commission for Combatting Anti-Semitism, *Contimporanul* was part of resistance efforts to undermine the anti-Semitic discourse with a positive narrative about Romanian Jews' Romanian culture. *Puntea de Fildeş* added to this narrative as well. The Commission planned conferences across the country, with Jewish writers and artists, to honor Jewish culture, with sponsorship from literary magazines *Flacăra* and *Gândirea*.[36] The two magazines were not Jewish, but they had a larger audience, a better-known reputation, and more funding (*Flacăra* still exists today) than the avant-garde magazines. It may be why the Commission excluded *Contimporanul* as a sponsor. Yet, *Contimporanul*'s articles about the student revolts and Jewish writers attest to the magazines' place within Romania's history of Jewish culture in the early twentieth century, however much the magazine and the Romanian avant-gardists desired to appear international outside the confines and conflicts of local culture.

Puntea de Fildeş: Zionism, Modernism, Israel

The symbiosis between the avant-garde and Jewish culture, wherein the Jewish Romanian avant-gardists deployed their avant-garde practice to honor Jewish traditions and achievements, is evident in the magazine *Puntea de Fildeş* (Ivory Bridge). Although in their avant-garde magazines the editors were ambiguous about what their Jewish identity meant to them in the content of their magazines, *Puntea de Fildeş* is an exception. There were as many as twenty Jewish newspapers and magazines, if not more,

[36] Comisea pentru combatarea antisemitismul Bucureşti.

in interwar Romania.[37] *Puntea de Fildeş* should be counted among them but it could also be considered a Romanian avant-garde magazine of the 1920s because of its avant-garde contributors, M.H. Maxy, Marcel Iancu, Benjamin Fondane, and Filip Brunea, and avant-garde content. Appearing in two issues in 1925 and 1926, on the occasion of the opening of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem in April 1925, it was yet another venue for the avant-gardists to display their work.[38] A collaborative spirit runs through the magazine, which has no listed editors. Each issue contains more than twenty contributing journalists, writers, and artists, both modernists and non-modernists, avant-garde and non-avant-garde, young and old. Its name, *Ivory Bridge*, conjures a metaphorical bridge that connects the Jewish intellectuals in Romania with those in Palestine and across the world.

The magazine's contributors celebrate Jewish intellectualism in poems, articles, and novel excerpts that delve into manifold facets of Zionism, Judaism, and anti-Semitism within the context of the Romanian Jewish community and the international Jewish community. The magazine begins with a poem dedicated to the "eternally misunderstood" nation of Israel.[39] It continues with an essay about anti-Semitic

[37] Josef Fraenkel, "The Jewish Press of the Diaspora," *Jewish Social Studies* 26, no. 4 (October 1964): 219.

[38] The magazine's introductory note on its first page states: "Since the moment a new University opened, Jewish writers and artists, gathered in a thriving colony near Jerusalem, have addressed an appeal to Jewish writers in all lands, asking them to organize a festival on the same day everywhere, whose product will serve the practical achievements of Palestine. The Jewish-Romanian writers also responded to this call and organized a gathering on the evening of April 11th. On this occasion, the festive issue of the magazine *Puntea de Fildeş* appears, in which Jewish-Romanian writers with various political and social conceptions collaborate, thus paying a collegial, fraternal homage from the distant shores of the Mediterranean." *Puntea de Fildeş,* no. 1 (April 1925): 1.

[39] Al. Dominic, "Israel," *Puntea de Fildeş,* no. 1 (April 1925): 1.

manifestations in the Romanian city of Pitești and an essay about the toil that a Jewish woman living in a Palestine colony, founded by Romanian Jews, has had to endure. [40] The boldest piece in the magazine is A.L. Zissu's fake "global survey" with answers from several known dead and living, European Jewish and non-Jewish, cultural figures and anti-Semites to the question "Ce-i Judaismul" (What is Judaism).[41] Zissu spotlights the intensity of debates about Judaism, in which everyone has a mix of favorable and unfavorable opinions, though mostly unfavorable, even the dead, and unknowingly foreshadows the Holocaust. Voltaire thinks Judaism is "an uncomfortable clinic," while Lenin thinks it is "intelligence." For Catholics, it means the "anti-Christ," and for "German anti-Semites," Judaism is "fatality incarnated in race." Zissu was a modernist writer and a Zionist leader, "the ideological voice of the national Jewish and Zionist 'rebirth'" in Romania—a stark departure from the usually uninvolved and non-political avant-gardists.[42]

In their written and visual work for *Puntea de Fildeş*, the four avant-gardists were not as outspoken about the topics outlined in the above texts. Yet, their involvement in the magazine is evidence of the fact that they did not shy away from acknowledging—on their own accord and not when forced by the government to reveal their Jewish origins—or even celebrating their Jewish identity and the Jewish cultural and intellectual output of

[40] F. Anderca, "Soluţia de la Pitești" (Solution from Pitești), *Puntea de Fildeş*, no.1 (April 1925): 3. Horia Carp, "Hadasa," *Puntea de Fildeş*, no.1 (April 1925): 4.

[41] A.L. Zissu, "Ce-i Judaismul: o ancheta mondiala" (What is Judaism: a world survey), *Puntea de Fildeş,* no. 1 (April 1925): 13.

[42] Leon Volovici, "Romanian writers — Jewish writers. The Dilemmas of Cultural Identity," *Studia Judaica*, no. XIII (2005): 154.

which they helped make prosperous in Romania. The work of the avant-gardists in *Puntea de Fildeş* was similar to the type of work they published in their avant-gard magazines. The first issue number of *Puntea de Fildeş* features an essay by Iancu about bringing new modernist architecture to Palestine.[43] The second issue number features Iancu's architectural drawings of a modernist villa in Palestine and his artwork. In addition to Iancu's cover of *Puntea de Fildeş*, the first issue has three Constructivist-inspired portraits by Maxy, and poems and a short story by Maxy's *Integral* colleagues Fondane and Filip Brunea. The second issue contains more of Maxy's portraits and one of his constructivist paintings, in addition to a poem by Fondane and a short story by *Integral* editor Ion Călugăru.

Fondane appears in the magazine's first and second issues, though it was not the first time that he published in a Jewish magazine. His poetry and translations appeared in Jewish newspapers and magazines, such as *Lumea Evreiasca* (Jewish World) and *Hatikvah*.[44] Produced in Galați, Moldova and edited by Leon Adler, the magazine fashioned itself as a "Zionist bi-monthly publication" to which Fondane submitted Romanian translations of Yiddish texts and his own poems that dealt with biblical stories.[45] In a letter to Fondane, Adler confirms that his poem "Scara lui Jacob" (Jacob's

[43] *Puntea de Fildeş,* no. 1 (April 1925).

[44] Ibid., 75.

[45] The magazine's name Hatikvah derives from the poem "Hatikvah" by Galician Jewish writer Naftali Herz Imber who wrote it while staying in Iași in 1878. The poem became the national anthem for the new Israeli state. Rachel Medoff and Chaim Waxman, *The A to Z of Zionism* (Lanham Scarecrow Press 2009), 106.

Ladder) will appear in the no.10 issue and refers to his translation of Bialik, a poem about the 1903 Chișinău pogrom in Moldova.[46]

Fondane's two poems in *Puntea de Fildeş* issue no.1 share the same title as his 1930 poetry anthology *Privelisti*, which contains his poetry written before his Paris relocation. Neither poem in the magazine pertains to specific Jewish aspects. Fondane focuses on the splendor of nature, on pigeons with their "simple souls" and the "growing" soil over asphalt.[47] However, in his poem "Cântec Simplu" (Simple Song) in issue no. 2, Fondane offers a brief glimpse into the mind of a Jewish individual imagining his death and burial in a Jewish cemetery.[48] Filip Brunea's short story "Povestea Neagra" (Black Story), in which Brunea feeds into the racist myth of the savage, colonialized black subject, is remarkably out of place in issue no. 1.[49] Călugăru's short story, "Rapirea lui Olvide" (The Kidnapping of Olvide) in issue no. 2, is just as disturbing as Brunea's in terms of violence and prejudice. It conveys the tension between Jewish and Roma communities in a Romanian town.[50] Călugăru tells the story of a fourteen-year-old Jewish boy named Oldvide who likes to observe the Roma people at the market, noting their similarities with the Jewish neighbors. However, the Roma shockingly kidnap the boy, causing his drowning. Thus, the moral of the story is that a Jewish community cannot

[46] Fondane Papers, Beinecke Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Yale University.

[47] Benjamin Fundoianu, "Privelisti" (Landscapes), *Puntea de Fildeş*, no. 1 (April 1925): 2.

[48] Benjamin Fundoianu, "Cântec Simplu" (Simple Song), *Puntea de Fildeş*, no. 2 (May 2, 1926): 9.

[49] Filip Brunea, "Povestea Neagra" (Black Story), *Puntea de Fildeş*, no. 1 (April 1925): 19.

[50] Ion Călugăru, "Rapirea lui Olvide" (The Kidnapping of Olvide), *Puntea de Fildeş*, no. 2 (May 2, 1926): 20-22.

trust the Roma, regardless of how both communities face discrimination from Romanians. What to make of these poems and stories by the avant-gardists? Because the magazine's text differs so much in their themes and style, we may conclude that the magazine's editors did not have a prescribed agenda but allowed each writer to submit whatever text they wanted. Hence, there is no overarching meaning in the content and not specifically in the avant-gardists' work. Călugăru is one of the three writers who wanted to say more than his colleagues about his perspective on ethnic relations in Romania, though a bias against the Roma population plagues this perspective. Moreover, the work that Fondane, Brunea, and Călugăru submitted to the magazine is not distinctly avant-garde. Not particularly avant-garde are Fondane's symbolist, pre-avant-garde period poems. Nevertheless, their reputation as Jewish avant-garde figures, stemming from their work with the avant-garde magazines, is what makes their inclusion in *Puntea de Fildeş* so stupendous. Their inclusion in the magazine enhances the magazine's association with the avant-garde and, in turn, enhances the avant-gardists' association with the circle of Jewish Romanian intellectuals. Marcel Iancu took it one step further in his Zionist contributions for *Puntea de Fildeş*, which presage the influential role he played in Israel's art and culture in the post-World War II era.

By implementing a white constructivist design of straight edges intermingled with flowing lines on a black background, Iancu's print on the cover of *Puntea de Fildeş* issue no. 1 harks back to his constructivist prints in the avant-garde magazines (Fig. 5.1). The design bears a resemblance to his constructivist linocut print *Compoziţie* (Composition) on the cover of *Contimporanul* issue no. 46, May 1924 (Fig. 5.2). Both prints contain geometric elements of modernist architecture. *Puntea de Fildeş* cover represents an

apartment building design—a modernist building, which Iancu built in Bucharest and which he envisioned for Palestine. His article in the magazine, "Reclădirea Palestinei" (The Rebuilding of Palestine), ushers a period of urban architecture that would accommodate the soaring "colonialization" of Palestine.[51] Iancu states that "Palestine cannot be rebuilt with oriental methods when we want a new, ideal, and modern country," which will "guarantee the happiness of future generations" through "urban, social architecture."[52] He names the United States, Sweden, and Finland as countries to emulate for their modern, hygienic urban planning.

Puntea de Fildeş issue no. 2, May 2, 1925, showcases this new type of architecture by means of Iancu and his brother Jules's floorplans of a modernist villa to be constructed in concrete in Palestine (Fig. 5.3). The villa has three parallel planes that designate three separate floors, designed on a horizontal orientation. Hanging plants adorn the first and third-floor terraces and soften the overall bareness of the villa's façade and intersecting squares and rectangles. The villa offers comfortable living for an upper-class family, with three bedrooms, two bathrooms, and enough space for a library room. Iancu's architecture designs unveil urban architecture's possibilities to give newly arrived emigrants a thriving, modern living environment in which they can set down roots and spend their wealth.

[51] Marcel Iancu, "Reclădirea Palestinei" (The Rebuilding of Palestine), *Puntea de Fildeş* no.2 (May 2, 1926): 22.

[52] Ibid.

In opposition to the "oriental methods" that Iancu mentions in his article, the designs amplify the Zionist movement.[53] From Iancu's perspective, modernist architecture not only develops, artistically and socially, a country's urban centers, as he aimed to do in Bucharest, but advances the creation of a new country on a western, modernist foundation. Iancu's print on the cover and the floorplans contained in the issue celebrate the modern nation-state as available to all Jewish people from Palestine and the diaspora, driven by urban construction and educational excellence. He maintains this positive tone regardless of not getting the chance to make his architectural plans a reality in Israel. The cover of *Puntea de Fildeş* issue no. 2, created by Jewish Romanian artist Henri Daniel, is a landscape depicting a physical bridge which many people are crossing to get to Palestine. Daniel's cover has its merits in the dramatic, expressionist rendering of the magazine's title (Fig. 5.4). However, Iancu's cover is much more effective in communicating Israel's modern future and the hope it contains for emigrants and the diaspora.

Iancu did not create the cover for the second issue, but he did contribute several artworks to it, such as a photographic reproduction of the cubist painting *Balul* (The Ball), from Iancu's Zurich Dada period (Fig. 5.5). The painting's caption notes that it was

[53] *Puntea de Fildeş* illustrates Iancu's early involvement with Zionism, which intensified in the late 1930s and 1940s. Alexandru Bar argues that Janco "joined the ranks of the Zionists and artistic militancy only when faced with antisemitic reactions. As an example, starting in 1938, his abstract and fantasist works characterised by the 'spiritual function of colour' is replaced by socio-political themes as exemplified, for instance, by his paintings *Prigoană* (Persecution, 1940), *Izgonirea din templu* (Expulsion from the Temple, 1940), and many others, focusing on the 'degrading inquisitorial spectacle' caused by the antisemitic laws of 1938." Alexandru Bar, "The Multilayered Identity of Tristan Tzara and Marcel Janco – The archives of an Identity Issue," PhD Dissertation (Leeds, UK: The University of Leeds, 2018), 180.
After his emigration to Palestine in 1941, Iancu further explored his adherence to Zionism in socio-political paintings of Jewish soldiers and Jewish historical subjects. In 1953, he opened the colony Ein Hod for Jewish artists on the location of a derelict Palestinian village.

in the Ellembogen Collection. Most likely, the painting exchanged owners because it is now at The Israel Museum in Jerusalem—a fitting destination for a painting that was featured in a Zionist magazine almost one hundred years ago. Iancu's "Note" (Notes) accompanies the painting. In these bullet point notes, Iancu proffers the same kind of theoretical ideas about art, of the superiority of art's creation over the imitation of nature, that he published in *Contimporanul*.[54] Maxy's article "Noi și Noi" (Us and Us), in the same issue number has a different tone than Iancu's article, for it addresses art of the "new brotherhood, between those who went (to Palestine) and those who remained (in Romania)."[55] Although the Hebrew Bible banished art, Maxy thinks that art, such as that of Chagall and Picasso, will "reclaim" a "determined role for the new Jewish sensibility" in Palestine. This article is remarkable in that it is the only one—among the articles Maxy published in avant-garde magazines—in which Maxy discusses, not precisely Jewish art, but what he refers to as the "Jewish, plastic spirit."[56]

While Iancu and his brother drew plans for new Israelite architecture, Maxy is impersonal in his outlook on the expansion of art and its Jewish spirit, recommending famous international artists rather than rallying himself and his avant-garde friends to bolster the initiative with their art. Moreover, Iancu and Maxy drew portraits of writers for *Puntea de Fildeş* issue no. 2. Continuing with his integralist style from the avant-garde magazines, Maxy provided *Puntea de Fildeş* with constructivist portraits and a

[54] Marcel Iancu, "Note" (Notes), *Puntea de Fildeş*, no. 2 (May 2, 1926): 5.

[55] M.H. Maxy, "Noi și Noi" (Us and Us), *Puntea de Fildeş*, no. 2 (May 2, 1926): 23.

[56] Ibid.

cubist painting in issue no.1 titled *Femeiee cu idol* (Woman with Idol) (Fig. 5.6)[57]. In the bizarre painting, which typifies how the male Romanian avant-garde personalities generally viewed their relations with women, a standing, nude woman props up a small figure of a man, presumably the idol of her worship. To make the glaring imbalance of power between genders worse, one cannot find a single woman artist or writer in either issue number of *Puntea de Fildeş.* The only female presence in the magazine is what the male contributors fashioned in the female subjects of their artworks and literary works. The absence of female artists or writers in *Puntea de Fildeş* is a bit stupefying, considering that the Romanian avant-garde magazines included female artists—Dida Solomon and Irina Codreanu, for instance—albeit in small numbers. *Puntea de Fildeş* was inclusive of diverse content as long as it came from male Jewish Romanians. His painting and article "Us and Us" also raises another issue of whether art by a Jewish artist should be termed Jewish art if it does not possess any Jewish motifs.

This issue pertains to Jewish Romanian artists' avant-garde art, not solely to the art in *Puntea de Fildeş*. Stern insists that there is not "anything specifically Jewish" in Romanian avant-garde art: "Iancu only painted Jewish subjects after his emigration," he writes.[58] Iancu may not have painted Jewish subjects, but by the 1920s, he was already thinking of how he could influence Israel's new state, as evidenced in *Puntea de Fildeş*. Amelia Pavel also observes that art by Jewish Romanian artists does not have an overwhelming number of Jewish motifs, but "some of them (artists), in quest for an

[57] Two months after the release of *Puntea de Fildeş*, the painting appeared in *Integral* no. 4, June 1925.

[58] Stern, 37.

identity, drew on the shtetl's folklore and distinctive imagery."[59] Yet, this kind of imagery is absent in the art of Jewish Romanian avant-garde artists.

Jewish identity and Jewish art are interlinked, but the question of what constitutes both, and whether an artist must demonstrate her or his Jewish identity with Jewish art, is perplexing. In his essay on Jewish art, Harold Rosenburg observes: "It is generally agreed that there is no such thing as a Jewish style of art. While Jews produce art, they do not produce Jewish art."[60] Rosenburg believes that a Jewish subject matter, with Jewish motifs and the representation of Jewish people, may constitute Jewish art, but it is not only the subject matter that should determine its status as a work of Jewish art. He leaves the problem of what is Jewish art unsolved and transitions to the "problem of Identity," which he believes is the "most serious theme in Jewish life" and also a serious "situation of the twentieth-century" due to exile and displacement.[61] An artist's engagement with her or his identity and "the aesthetics of the self" is "a profound Jewish expression" that replaces the artist's need to determine "whether Jewish art exists or can exist."[62] Rosenburg's approach to Jewish identity—which is not fundamentally conveyed through Jewish art but framed within the larger context of early twentieth-century exile and displacement—is pertinent to this study. When artists do not create a specific type of Jewish art with Jewish motifs, it becomes imperative to seek other means to understand

[59] Pavel, 8.

[60] Harold Rosenburg, "Is there a Jewish Art," *Jewish Texts on the Visual Arts*, edited by Vivian B. Mann (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 151.

[61] Ibid.

[62] Ibid., 152.

their Jewish identity. One such means is the Jewish Romanian avant-gardists' exile condition, within Romania and outside of it.

Romanian Nationalism and Romanian Identity

At the end of Sebastian's *For Two Thousand Years*, the narrator reflects on what it means to be Jewish in Romania:

> "Probably it will always be difficult for me to speak of 'my Romanian fatherland' without a feeling of sudden awkwardness…But I will speak of a land that is mine and for her I will risk appearing ridiculous, and I will love that which I am not allowed to love. I will speak of the Baragan and the Danube as belonging to me not in a legal or abstract sense, under constitutions, treaties and laws, but bodily, through memory, through joys and sorrows. I will speak of the spirit of this place, of its particular genius, of the lucidity I have distinguished here under the white light of the sun on the plain and the melancholy I perceive in the landscape of the Danube, drowsing to the right of the town, in the watery marshes."[63]

Sebastian was born in 1907 in the town of Brăila, located on the Danube river, three hours by car from Bucharest. He returned from Bucharest to his hometown often. In the above passage from his novel, he muses sentimentally about this unnamed town that sounds like Brăila and its "landscape on the Danube." However, in one of his diary entries from 1936, twenty-nine-year-old Sebastian complains of how the town "has never seemed so sad, provincial, godforsaken," with slow streetcars that barely move, old houses, and old people, as if "detached from a long time ago, from a previous life."[64]

[63] Sebastian, *For Two Thousand Years*, 226.

[64] Mihail Sebastian, *Journal:1935-1944*, edited by Patrick Camiller (London: William Heinemann, 2001), 92.

After having outgrown her or his place of origin, it is normal for someone to look back with a harsh eye or indulge in nostalgia about one's place of origin. What is more tragic than normal is the imposed prohibition of being able to call not only one's town as home—home as in the place to which one feels an emotional, cultural, and familial belonging—but your country as home, of loving "that which I am not allowed to love."

The Jewish Romanian avant-gardists shared the protagonist's complex relationship with Romania, as they flirted with nationalism in their magazines. In the exhibition catalogue for *Contimporanul*'s "First International Exhibition," the exhibition's organizers Maxy, Iancu, and Vinea listed the Romanian sculptor Constantin Brâncuși in the category of Romanian artists.[65] Meanwhile, they listed Arthur Segal, a less internationally known Romanian artist than Brâncuși, with German artists. Both Brâncuși and Segal had lived abroad a long time by that point and it makes little sense to categorize one as Romanian and not the other. Segal was Jewish and Brâncuși was not. Brauner, Teutsch, Maxy, and Iancu, who were all Jewish, represented Romania in the exhibition. The exhibition's organizers did not leave out Segal because he was Jewish. The most probable explanation of his exclusion is that Brâncuși was too big of a name to not have him represent Romania. As with everyone else in Romania, the avant-gardists felt immense pride in the amount of prestige that Brâncuși was garnering internationally—he was already exhibiting in New York by 1924. However, in categorizing Segal as German and not Romanian, the exhibition's organizers perpetrated inadvertently the Romanian nationalists' anti-Semitic belief in Jews as non-Romanians.

[65] "Catalogul Expozitie 'Contimporanul'" (Catalogue of Contimporanul Exhibition), *Contimporanul* no. 50-51 (December 1924).

Of the two artists who were no longer living in Romania, they chose to erase the Romanian identity of the Jewish artist.

The kind of art that the editors featured in their magazines likewise had a nationalist bent when analyzed through Romanian identity rhetoric. Readers of the avant-garde magazines may have been dumbfounded to see a nationalist painter in *Contimporanul* no. 35, March 1923. The magazine reproduced the nationalist artist Francis Şirato's painting *Târgul* (The Market) of a country market where peasants of different ages and genders are gathered to socialize against the backdrop of wagons lined up with produce (Fig. 5.7). The painting's naturalist style is incongruous with the avant-garde art that *Contimporanul* featured throughout the years. And its subject matter of Romanian peasants represents the Romanian nationalist narrative of the Romanian peasant as the real Romanian. However, *Contimporanul* was only a year into its run, and Vinea and Iancu were still trying to find their footing with what to include and exclude on its pages. Şirato's paintings are not present in later issue numbers as the magazine became somewhat more daring with its constructivist, expressionist, and abstract art. Arguably then, the magazine's early days of dithering between modernist and avant-garde art explains why Şirato's *The Market* is in one of its issue numbers, but the same cannot explain Maxy's painting of peasant women.

Maxy's heroic and monumental peasant subject of his cubist painting *Human Construction* in *Integral* no. 11, February-March 1927, is ubiquitous in Romanian nationalist paintings of the first half of the twentieth-century (Fig.5.8). Şirato also depicts two peasant women in his 1926 impressionist painting *Două Ţărăncuţe din Dolj* (Two

Peasant Girls from Dolj). The women appear less heroic than in Maxy's painting and more as though they are permanent, unchanging fixtures of the house behind them, of the rural world in which they inhabit, glued motionless and footless to the soil on which they depend for their livelihood. Camel Ressu continues the motif of two peasant women in the painting *Țărăncuțe* (Peasant Girls) that he completed between 1940-1945. The women are once again working the land like in Maxy's painting. Though not published in the avant-garde magazines, Iancu's 1930 painting *Țărancă cu Ouă* (Peasant Woman with Eggs) is yet another instance of avant-garde art overlapping with nationalist art.

Nineteenth-century Romanian artist Nicolae Grigorescu, the most revered artist in Romania and who is in this regard on par with Brâncuși, painted peasant girls and women in the Impressionist style that modernized the peasant subject for the first time, as in his 1894 painting *Țărancă voioasă (Cheerful Peasant Woman).* Several decades later, Ressu and Șirato carried on in the footsteps of Grigorescu's but what was once a radical style that diverged from the classicism of early nineteenth-century Romanian history paintings was now a stale, classical style. Maxy and Iancu's paintings of peasants are their answer to Grigorescu's original depictions, realized in the new modern, integralist style.

Universal Exhibition

Granting the stylistic differences, one cannot ignore the nationalism that underpins Maxy and Iancu's paintings because the peasant woman subject is so imbued with nationalist symbolism. A peasant girl covers the catalogue for the Romanian section at the 1900 Paris Universal Exhibition. The girl, dressed in folk dress, "gazes upward at a stern classical bust, crowned with laurels, representing the French Republic"—a

representation of Romania's western aspirations and its national identity.[66] It would be hard to believe that Maxy and Iancu were not aware of the loaded symbolism that the peasant woman subject matter carried in their paintings. The peasant woman and her youth simultaneously symbolize the innocence of the unchanging past, to counter the deviousness of modernity, and the assurance that this past will continue to extend to the future through her fertility and her steadfast devotion to the land. In 1870, the Romanian journal *Informatiunile Bucurestene* alleged that the young woman in one of Grigorescu's paintings recalls "our country's beautiful landscape and of the innocence of people living far from the madding temptations of large cities."[67] The article frames the city as a dangerous place, alluding to the city dwellers, i.e., the Jews, who threaten the "innocent" rural folks. This kind of antagonism that the article hints at between the good peasants and the bad, threatening city dwellers, which their cosmopolitanism identified them as Jewish, did not wane as the country entered the twentieth-century—it became worse.

There was also an economic factor that shaped national identity around the Romanian peasant and exacerbated animosity towards the Jewish population. In the nineteenth century, the peasantry leased land from Jewish landowners or acquired money from Jewish money lenders to purchase their own land.[68] Jewish landownership increased while the peasantry felt bitter about their stagnant economic conditions. The peasantry expressed their animosity towards the government and Jews, not only big landowners but

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[66] Shona Kallestrup, "Romanian 'National Style' and the 1906 Bucharest Jubilee Exhibition," *Journal of Design History* 15, no. 3 (2002): 147.

[67] Catalina Macovei, *Nicolae Grigorescu* (London: Parkstone Press, 1999), 51.

[68] Fischer-Galati, 10.

also Jewish farmers, in the Peasants' Revolt of 1907, in which they destroyed Jewish-owned land and businesses, forcing Jews to leave their villages for the cities.[69] Nationalist politicians and intellectuals capitalized on the peasantry's revolt and dire economic situation and perpetuated anti-Semitism that reached its high mark in Romania with the fascism of the 1930s and the Holocaust.

Viewing Maxy and Iancu's paintings with this history and political context in mind, their decision to paint peasant subjects no longer remains a neutral decision but one with political implications. Are Maxy and Iancu expressing a Romanian nationalist identity with this decision, just as they may have done with their decision to place Brâncuși and Segal in separate categories? Without the accompanying context, Romanian paintings of the countryside are quite charming in their representations of tranquil landscapes and people in authentic folk clothes. These paintings are akin to the French realist paintings of the Barbizon School or French impressionist paintings. With their depictions of peasant women, Maxy and Iancu may have desired to follow this tradition of French painting, as Grigorescu did before them. The viewer sees peasant women hard at work in Maxy's *Human Construction* and also in an earlier French painting of Jean-François Millet, in his 1857 painting *The Gleaners*. Unlike Iancu, Ressu, and Şirato, Maxy portrays the peasant women in the act of working. The former artists' portrayals reduce the women as passive objects of the viewer's gaze. Maxy glorifies the women and their work in their straight posture and monumental size. In contrast, Millet captures the reality of peasant labor in the women's hunched posture and lowered heads.

[69] Carol Iancu, *Jews in Romania,* 150-152.

Perhaps more so than signifying nationalism, Maxy's working women signify his socialist interest in representing labor.

It may also be that Maxy and Iancu aimed to express their Romanian identity through these representations of peasant women, undeterred by the nationalist symbolism that underpins these representations at odds with their Jewish identity. These paintings were their way of owning their Romanian identity, of openly communicating to the Romanian public that they too were Romanian. Their act of defiance is the equivalent of the protagonist of Sebastian's novel professing that nothing could stop him from claiming the land where he was born as his own and from loving the country that would not love him back.[70] Yet, the struggle between their Romanian and Jewish identities rarely subsided. The avant-gardists witnessed turbulent moments of anti-Semitism directed towards them and Jewish students, as articles in *Contimporanul* about anti-Semitism in Romania indicate.

Conclusion

Although Jews gained citizenship, to Romanians, they were not Romanians and never would be.[71] In this anti-Semitic environment, the Jewish Romanian avant-gardists

[70] Sebastian, *For Two Thousand Years*, 226.

[71] Although anti-Semitism was no longer a topic of interest for Contimporanul post-1923, it continued throughout the 1920s. In 1924, Codreanu assassinated the police chief of Iași for his opposition to the student riots and was found not guilty in the jury trial. The ordeal catapulted Codreanu's reputation as a fascist martyr who would fight for Romanians' welfare and identity with whatever means necessary. The police chief's assassination was the first of many that Codreanu and his Legionnaires committed in the 1920s and 1930s. Another round of anti-Semitic violence occurred in 1930 as peasants expressed their dissatisfaction yet again with their economic struggles. The 1923 student revolts were not frequent

released their magazines and published their work in *Puntea de Fildeş.* Additionally, Maxy worked with the Jewish theater and Fondane published in Jewish publications. The avant-gardists' Jewish identity varied for each of them and changed throughout their lifetime, while their artworks and writings do not demonstrate a consistent engagement with Jewish subject matter. Nonetheless, their artistic and intellectual activity in 1920s Romania is an act of resistance—to provoke and critique without letting anti-Semitism deter them. Romanian anti-Semitism pushed them into exile in their own country and abroad, and in their exile, they grappled with how to reconcile their Jewish and Romanian identities.

Ultimately, Romania failed these artists during their most intensive work period in the 1920s, during World War II when the government took away their citizenship and slaughtered many, and, lastly, during the communist period when their Jewish background was downplayed or entirely erased.[72] For good reason, thus, Mihail Sebastian, through the narrator of *For Two Thousand Years*, concludes, "it has always been hard for me to simply say those two words—'my country.'"[73]

occurrences, but it is not unfathomable that plenty of Romanians thought about the "Jewish problem" behind closed doors, even if their main issue was with the Romanian economy.

[72] See Henry Eaton's *The Origins and Onset of the Romanian Holocaust* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2013) for an extensive history of anti-Semitism in Romania.

[73] Sebastian, *For Two Thousand Years*, 225.

CONCLUSION

Hans Richter remarked the following about Dada: "Since Dada had no program in the art historian's sense, it became whatever the individual Dadaists made of it; and what they made of it was, in turn, conditioned by the then prevailing external circumstances. In the revolutionary Berlin of 1918, Dada was revolutionary."[1] Richter's statement reveals how Dada influenced the Romanian avant-garde and how the Romanian avant-garde operated within a historical context. The Romanian avant-gardists followed in Dadaists' footsteps in reimagining Dada, along with Constructivism and Cubism, based on their circumstances in non-revolutionary, interwar Romania. Zurich Dada demonstrated to the Romanian avant-gardists as it did to other avant-garde groups that art does not have to be bound to paint on canvas or to a prescribed style but can take any form through any materials that artists deem appropriate for the artworks' intended message. For example, Richter's geometric, abstract films are not like the organic, chance-driven collages of Hans Arp, but both are Dada artists. Although Romanian avant-garde artists Marcel Iancu, M.H. Maxy, and Victor Brauner adhered to traditional mediums of painting and woodcut and linocut printing, they presented in their avant-garde magazines their versions of dadaist, constructivist, and cubist artistic practice.

For this dissertation, I have researched six Romanian avant-garde magazines that formed the basis of the Romanian avant-garde in the 1920s. The magazines are

[1] Hans Richter, *Dada 1916-1966: Documents of the International Dada Movement, Exhibition Catalogue* (Haifa, Israel: Museum of Modern Art, 1967), 9.

Contimporanul (*The Contemporary*), 1922-1932; *75HP*, 1924; *Punct* (*Point*), 1924-1925; *Integral* (*Whole*), 1925-1928; *Puntea de Fildeş* (*The Ivory Bridge*),1925-1926; and *Unu* (*one*), 1928-1935. The avant-garde magazines' creators continued Tristan Tzara's method of disseminating their work and forging international contacts through print media. However, they sought to differentiate themselves from the rest of the European avant-gardes and the magazines in Tzara's network. While arguing for the Romanian avant-garde as both modern and avant-garde, I have analyzed the images and text in the magazines that evoke a middle space between absurd dadaist manifestos and poetry and innovative design on the one hand and formalist, abstract, and cubist art on the other hand. As to their identity as Romanian-Jewish intellectuals, Romanian avant-garde artists and writers likewise inhabited a middle space between confronting anti-Semitism and their exiled condition and exploring their Romanian national identity.

Because the dissertation is limited to the Romanian avant-garde magazines, it possesses a couple of limitations and potential for future research. One obvious limitation is the overwhelming focus on male Romanian artists to the detriment of Romanian female artists who participated in the magazines or exhibited their modern art during the 1920s. The magazines featured Irina Codreanu and Milița Petrașcu's semi-abstract and figurative sculptures and Dida Solomon's tragically comic expressionist drawings rendered with mesmerizing black lines. Other modern Romanian female artists are absent from the magazines. These artists include Merica Râmniceanu and Nina Arbore, whose paintings, with their application of intense colors and semi-cubist forms, rival Iancu and

Maxy's cubist paintings.[2] Râmniceanu, Arbore, and Petrașcu exhibited in Bucharest with the New Art group in the 1930s, which, along with the Criterion Group, replaced the 1920s avant-garde group assembled around the avant-garde magazines.

These two groups enjoyed an assortment of Romanian artists whose works were too modern to appear in the avant-garde magazines and former avant-garde artists Marcel Iancu and M.H. Maxy. According to Erwin Kessler, New Art and the Criterion Group discarded the avant-garde's "radicalism in favor of traditional values of good art, pictorial quality, and aesthetic gratification."[3] Iancu and Maxy's involvement with the two groups is a fitting development. Throughout the decade of the avant-garde magazines, their art conveyed a gradual shift from daring abstraction to Cubism, culminating in more realistic depictions of people and places, with cubist and expressionist remnants, by 1930. Unlike in Iancu and Maxy's art, figuration was always at the forefront in Codreanu, Râmniceanu, Arbore, and Petrașcu's art. Their sculptures, paintings, and drawings do not represent a 1930s break with the Romanian avant-garde art of the previous decade but a continued investigation of color, line, and form through modernist means. Their art gives further credence to the Romanian avant-garde as a modern rather than an avant-garde tendency. Delving deeper into their collaboration with the editors of the avant-garde magazines and the New Art and Criterion groups would build a broader picture of interwar Romanian art in relation to the ensuing Socialist Realism.

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[2] The Museum of National Art of Romania held an exhibition on modern Romanian female artists. From December 17, 2015 to April 17, 2016. See the exhibition's catalogue *Egal: artă şi feminism în România modernă*, edited by Valentina Iancu (București, Romania: Vellant, 2015).

[3] Erwin Kessler, "Retro-garde," *Culorile Avangardei: arta in Romania 1910-1950, Exhibition Catalogue*, edited by Erwin Kessler (București, Romania: Institutul Cultural Român; Sibiu: Muzeul Național Brukenthal, 2007), 28.

Another limitation and avenue for future research is the avant-gardists' political beliefs and political actions in the two decades before World War II and before Romania's fascist regime and dictatorship. I have chosen to minimize their politics in the dissertation because the art in their magazines does not convey a zealous commitment to leftist or right-wing beliefs, which clashed with each other in Romania's interwar political arena.

Nevertheless, politics were not entirely absent in the magazines. *Contimporanul*'s early issues numbers has robust commentary on contemporaneous political events. For example, its issue no. 3, June 17, 1922, features an article by Benjamin Fondane, under his pseudonym Aladin, on the proletarian's reinforcement in the face of oligarchy.[4] In *Contimporanul* issue no. 34, March 1923, an article by journalist Horia Verzeanu titled "O constituție tiranică" (A tyrannical constitution) is the main article on the magazine's front page, alongside Marcel Iancu's woodcut print of a gang of dogs barking at a giant, tyrannical monster (Fig. 6.1).[5] Verzeanu spouts harsh words about Ion I.C. Brătianu of the National Liberal Party, who served six terms as Prime Minister of Romania, two of which were during World War I and during the establishment of Romania's 1923 constitution. The constitution is the subject of Verzeanu's attack in his *Contimporanul* article, which denounces the political dynasty of the Brătianu family whose members, as Verzeanu alleges, are personally profiting off the new constitution. In opposition to the Conservative Party that represented the interests of landowners, Brătianu's National

[4] Aladin, "Mobilizarea Proletariatului" (The Mobilization of the Proletarian) *Contimporanul* no. 3 (June 17, 1922).

[5] Horia Verzeanu, "O constituție tiranică" (A tyrannical constitution), *Contimporanul* no. 34 (March 1923).

Liberal Party represented the bourgeoisie and led a campaign to centralize and unify Greater Romania after World War I.[6]

Far from rejoicing about a new constitution that granted universal male suffrage to all Romanians and citizenship to Romania's Jewish population, the avant-gardists viewed the constitution as substantiating the oligarchic rule and power of the Brătianu family—and the stale, immutable world that it represented as it controlled the National Liberal Party for many years—over the needs of the people.[7] The centralization and unification efforts of the National Liberal Party, which required a heightened nationalism that erased regional and ethnic identities, may have added to the avant-gardists' disdain for Brătianu. However, they did not voice this disdain in calling for a revolution or any extreme denouncements. Instead, their magazines feature opinion pieces and cartoons on the current state of politics, as one would find in the British magazine *Punch*. Renato Poggioli claims that avant-garde artists were attracted to Communism because it was the party of "action and agitation," but this ideological connection did not go beyond the "rhetorical."[8] His claim certainly applies to the Romanian avant-gardists, whose manifestos articulate an agitation of the bourgeoisie and status quo as part of their avant-garde agenda despite not joining the illegal PCdR (Communist Party of Romania) during their avant-garde activities. Their only link to PCdR is Lăptăria Enache. In 1920,

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[6] Balázs Trencsényi, *A History of Modern Political Thought in East Central Europe. Volume II: Negotiating Modernity in the 'Short Twentieth Century' and Beyond, Part I, 1918-1968* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2018), 39.

[7] I.C. Brătianu's father Ion Brătianu led the National Liberal Party and his uncle Dimitrie Brătianu served as Prime Minister in the late nineteenth-century.

[8] Renato Poggioli, *The Theory of the Avant-Garde* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2011), 5.

Communist Max Goldstein bombed the Romanian Senate. The archives of Siguranța, the Romanian secret police, mention that Goldstein met with his conspirators at Lăptăria Enache, the milk bar owned by Stéphane Roll's father, where the avant-gardists met as well.[9]

Siguranța must have become aware of the avant-gardists from 1920 onwards but kept no files on them during the 1920s, suggesting that the Romanian avant-garde magazines and their creators posed no real threat to the government. It is unclear whether the avant-gardists were friendly with Goldstein and his accomplices at Lăptăria Enache. As Stelina Tănase observes, the police's monitoring substantially increased when the Romanian avant-gardists strengthened their relationship with the French Surrealists and when M.H. Maxy, Stéphane Roll, Ilarie Voronca, Saşa Pană, and Scarlat Callimachi joined the Romanian Communist Party in the 1930s.[10] The Siguranța archives testify how the Romanian state monitored the avant-gardists for their alleged communist and the Soviet Union links. None of the avant-gardists were arrested except for Scarlat Callimachi in 1940 for his participation in the communist-associated National Antifascist Committee.[11]

Siguranța took direct and indirect action against members of the Romanian avant-garde. It confiscated copies of *Unu* issue. no 21 (January 1931) because the Ministry of the Interior deemed it pornographic and not because it contained communist

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[9] *Avangarda românească în arhivele Siguranţei*, edited by Stelina Tănase (Iaşi; Bucharest, Romania: Polirom, 2008), 128.

[10] Stelina Tănase, "Preface," *Avangarda românească în arhivele Siguranţei*, edited by Stelina Tănase (Iaşi; Bucharest, Romania: Polirom, 2008), 30.

[11] *Avangarda românească în arhivele Siguranţei*, 106-107.

undertones.[12] When Victor Brauner moved back to Bucharest from Paris, Siguranța files on Brauner identify him as a likely communist spy seeking to initiate a Romanian branch of the Association des Écrivains et Artistes Révolutionnaires in which French intellectuals were active, including Tristan Tzara.[13] Moreover, though the identification of Jewish intellectuals with the far left was a common anti-Semitic trope in Romanian and elsewhere, Siguranța made its accusation explicit when it named Maxy and Ion Călugăru among the Jewish intellectuals who led the "illegal press" and the Romanian Communist Party.[14]

What the archives disclose about the Romanian avant-garde artists and writers and their leftist activities is not remarkable, especially not so regarding their magazines, which shocked people due to the uninhibited sexuality in their content, not due to their politics. At least *Unu* did so; the other magazines are not mentioned in the archives. And it seems that the avant-gardists' Jewish identity made them a target of the police more than their work. However, the archives disclose how the Romanian avant-gardists changed from a group that criticized the government but revolved their magazines around artistic matters to a group that joined the Romanian Communist Party. Their membership in the Party points to an increased concern with substantiating the Party's influence in Romanian politics and activating their art for the proletarian cause, as they did post-1945.

[12] Ibid., 229-232.

[13] Tănase, "Preface," 44-45.

[14] *Avangarda românească în arhivele Siguranţei*, 124.

One must keep in mind that most Romanian avant-gardists officially became Communists against the backdrop of the rise of fascism and political unrest.

Puntea de Fildeş magazine is another avenue for the Romanian avant-gardists' political activity. Publishing in the Jewish magazine was political because the magazine, as a representative of the Jewish diaspora in Romania, promoted the Zionist movement and the culture and rights of Jewish Romanian during the rise of anti-Semitism in Romania in the 1920s. As seen in the files of Siguranța, the police were monitoring Maxy and Călugăru in the 1930s for being Jewish Romanians; getting involved with a Zionist publication was a considerable risk for the avant-gardists even if Siguranța was not as attentive to their activities of the 1920s. *Puntea de Fildeş* forged a cultural link to Palestine and the Romanian avant-gardists were instrumental in bolstering this cultural link through their art, poetry, and prose, which conveyed the artistic and literary accomplishments of Jewish Romanians.

The decision of Iancu and Maxy—and the rest of the avant-garde contributors to the magazine—to be affiliated with the Zionist magazine speaks volumes about their political orientations. Raphael Vaga notes that Romanian "Zionists played a big part in Jewish communities in the interwar period, focused on achieving minority rights and autonomy."[15] However, the Romanian Zionists' top priority was their emigration to Palestine.[16] Emigration did not seem to be of great interest to the Romanian avant-gardists. Iancu wrote in *Puntea de Fildeş* about his architectural plans in Palestine, but he

[15] Raphael Vago, "Romanian Jewry During the Interwar Period," *The Tragedy of Romanian Jewry*, edited by Randolph L. Braham (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1994), 49.

[16] Ibid., 54.

did not emigrate there nor put his architectural plans into action until he was forced into exile during World War II. Maxy likewise wrote about art in Palestine, but he gave no signals that he yearned to build his career there. Benjamin Fondane was more preoccupied with cultivating his Jewish identity in the diaspora. Hence, the Romanian avant-gardists hesitated to call themselves Zionists and get involved with the Zionist movement outside the cultural sphere.

Nonetheless, the Jewish Romanian avant-gardists supported minority rights and autonomy for Jewish Romanians, as evinced in *Puntea de Fildeş,* which explored in its articles and prose what it meant to be Jewish in Romania versus Palestine and what Jewish identity entails. Writing on the concept of the diaspora, Richard Marienstras states that "the maintenance of the feeling of belonging and the certainty of identity is, in minority situations, a matter of will, of conscious decision and, one might say, determination."[17] For the avant-gardists, the assimilation that Romanian culture required of Jewish intellectuals came into conflict with maintaining their Jewish identity and their belonging in the Romanian Jewish diaspora. One sees this conflict in *Contimporanul* and the other Romanian avant-garde magazines, which have little to no content on Jewish identity and the Romanian Jewish diaspora due to the international, apolitical image that the avant-gardists fashioned for themselves. *Contimporanul* is the only magazine that features articles on anti-Semitism and Jewish culture. The avant-gardists' work in *Puntea de Fildeş* and *Contimporanul* can be interpreted as a political act of self-determination, of acknowledging and defending their Jewish identity in the face of oppression.

[17] Richard Marienstras, "On the Notion of Diaspora," *Migration, Diasporas, and Transnationalism*, edited by Steven Vertovec and Robin Cohen (Northampton: Edward Elgar, 1999), 363.

The Romanian Jewish diaspora in which the Jewish Romanian avant-gardists partook and their Jewish identity intermingle with the problem of the center-periphery. From the 1920s onwards, the Romanian avant-garde held—and still does to this day—a peripheral position in the European avant-garde and its history. The reasons for the peripheral position are manifold: Romania's eastern geography on the European continent; the relatively limited art history scholarship and exhibitions, particularly in the English language, on the Romanian avant-garde; and the decades of state Communism that closed off the country and diminished the history and influence of the Romanian avant-garde in the historical, international avant-garde scene. Another possible reason is the avant-gardists' Jewish identity, which was missing or deemphasized in Romanian art history and literary discourse during Communism. The Romanian avant-gardists could not place the limelight in their magazines on their Jewish identity, other than in *Puntea de Fildeş,* whose readership was the Jewish community in Romanian and abroad and not the European avant-garde community. As one of the only European avant-garde groups with a majority of Jewish members, they needed to appear international, beyond cultural or ethnic identities, and western enough to gain recognition from someone in an avant-garde center like the French avant-garde group.

The dilemma of trying to be part of the center and yet maintaining an individual identity extends to the Jewish Romanian avant-gardists' involvement with the Romanian Jewish diaspora—located on the periphery—and Israel (or Palestine, as it was called in *Puntea de Fildeş*)—the center of Jewish history and religion. A fixed place for the cosmopolitan Jewish Romanian avant-gardists did not exist. They moved back and forth between the center and the periphery, traveling and moving, temporarily or permanently,

to France and Germany while they navigated the Jewish diaspora's closeness with Palestine as a permanent home for their community. Iancu eventually ended up living in the center of Jewish life, i.e., Israel, and many avant-gardists lived in one of the leading European avant-garde centers, i.e., Paris. The Romanian avant-garde utilized both the center and the avant-gardists' peripheral position to produce avant-garde magazines that transformed the Romanian avant-garde and the Romanian Jewish diaspora into respective centers. The works in *Puntea de Fildeş* celebrated Zionism and, in doing so, demonstrated the cultural strength of the Romanian Jewish diaspora. Meanwhile, the cubist and constructivist artworks in the magazines and the copious magazine production strengthened the Romanian avant-garde's merit in the network of European avant-gardes.

The Romanian avant-garde utilized the center via Integralism, a marketing ploy conceived by Maxy and his *Integral* magazine. Integralism rested on the belief that the Romanian avant-gardists synthesized different art styles from avant-garde centers to create original, integralist art. The concept was a marketing ploy to increase international attention on the Romanian avant-garde by claiming that what the Romanian avant-garde magazines presented was art unique to the Romanian avant-garde. In reality, the magazines did not present integralist art but the avant-gardists' interpretations of Cubism and Constructivism through cubist paintings and constructivist prints. These artworks expressed the Romanian avant-gardists emulation of Pablo Picasso and Georges Braque and constructivist artists like El Lissitzky.

Are these cubist paintings and constructivist prints pastiches of other cubist and constructivist works? The Romanian cubist paintings are pastiches, mainly the guitar

paintings of Iancu that minutely mimic Picasso and Braque's paintings with guitar and mandolin compositions. In 1926, the Romanian art critic Petru Comarnescu thought the same of Maxy's cubist work, criticizing one of Maxy's paintings displayed in an exhibition as looking "too much like a Picasso."[18] Maxy responded to Comarnescu's criticism by insisting that "the painting signed by Maxy is by Maxy" and that trying to find Picasso in his painting is "like searching the planet Mars with a telescope to identify sunspots," meaning that his painting has no traces of Picasso's work.[19] Comarnescu fought back, having the last word in their duel of words, stating that Maxy's paintings "indulged in servility to Braque and especially appeared like unsuccessful copies of Juan Gris," and then he "arrived at Picasso."[20] Maxy's Cubism is a "servile imitation" of the French Cubist and not merely a "weakened influence…an aesthetic fraternization."[21] The harsh words that Cormanescu threw at Maxy contain a grain of truth. Maxy's paintings *The Boatman* and *Human Construction* reproduced in *Integral* resemble the cubist figures of Picasso and Braque, though not to the extent that these paintings are a servile imitation. In 1925, Maxy came up with Integralism, perhaps a means of fending off the imitation accusation from critics like Cormanescu. The fact that Maxy's retort to the accusation is so insubstantial—he fails to defend himself by labeling his art integralist as he does in *Integral*—signifies how uncomfortable the Romanian avant-gardists felt about

[18] Petru Comarnescu, "Expositia Academiei Artelor Decorative" (The Exhibition of the Academy of Decorative Arts), *Rampa* (November 3, 1926).

[19] M.H. Maxy, "Scrisoarea unui modernist" (A Modernist's Letter), *Rampa* (November 5, 1926).

[20] Petru Comarnescu, "Raspuns unui pretins modernist (Response to an alleged modernist), *Rampa* (November 8, 1926).

[21] Ibid.

admitting their appropriation, even as they continued to appropriate Cubism in their work. The avant-gardists viewed any appropriation as a failure of the imagination that belittles their art as less than avant-garde, less new and radical.

Regarding Romanian constructivist art, through my formal analysis of constructivist prints, I conclude that Romanian constructivist art is not a pastiche of Russian and western European constructivist art. The pervasiveness of constructivist prints is special to the Romanian avant-garde and its magazines, for I have not found other European avant-garde groups that employed the medium of print to enact and grow their constructivist art. Similar in appearance, the constructivist prints of Iancu, Maxy, and Brauner grace the pages of more than one Romanian avant-garde magazine. Devising a Romanian type of Constructivism was a concerted effort among the Romanian avant-garde. Iancu and Maxy's cubist paintings do not share many formal similarities. On the other hand, the constructivist prints resemble one another, regardless of who made it, in their balance of geometric abstraction, free-flowing lines, decorative forms, and enclosed compositions.

The Romanian constructivist prints resemble Iancu's Dadaist prints, as well as his abstract reliefs, from his Zurich Dada period. Thus, one may trace the lineage of the Romanian constructivist prints to Iancu's abstract works, which leads to the inference that the Romanian avant-gardists appropriated Constructivism from one of their very own. But this inference ignores the time in which the Romanian avant-gardists were developing their Constructivism when artists across Europe participated in the constructivist tendency. Russian Constructivism most likely captivated Iancu, Maxy, and Brauner, as it did Hans Richter and Theo Van Doesburg. The Romanian artists

appropriated the rigid geometry of Russian Constructivism and fused it with the pliable abstraction of Iancu's Dada works. That is not to say that their appropriation reduces the artistic ingenuity of the Romanian constructivist prints. Iancu and Maxy painted among the first cubist canvases in Romania. Their magazines feature these canvases because the artists and the magazine readers were aware of how modern and influential their cubist art was to Romanian art in general, regardless of Comarnescu's opinion. Yet, suppose that avant-garde and modern art historians could only remember one thing about the Romanian avant-garde magazines. In that case, they should remember the magazines' constructivist art, which announces to the European avant-garde centers and European avant-garde groups that Romanian artists are keeping up with the continent's newest art and their art deserves serious attention.

Future studies on the Romanian avant-garde would benefit from a closer examination of the 1930s political context and the Romanian avant-garde artists' exhibition history in the 1930s and their disengagement from more radical artistic practices so as to determine how the Romanian avant-garde waned. The avant-gardists slowly phased out their magazines, with *Contimporanul* ending its ten-year run in 1932 and *Unu* holding on until its last issue number in 1935. A new crop of avant-gardists, this time wholly Surrealists, emerged in Bucharest in 1940. However, this group was small, published books, not magazines, operated in secret during the war, and then was forced to terminate all its activities in 1947 when the new communist government came to power. For Poggioli, "the avant-garde, like any culture, can only flower in a climate where

political liberty triumphs, even if it often assumes a hostile pose toward democratic and liberal society."[22] In other words, artists typically cannot create avant-garde art in an anti-democratic state that dictates with coercion and censorship what artists can and cannot create. Despite the avant-gardists' criticism of the regime and alarming issues like anti-Semitism, the Romanian avant-garde flourished during Romania's stable, democratic period of the 1920s. The expanding middle class, urbanization, mass culture, and artistic innovation converged and made it possible for the Romanian avant-garde magazines to imprint a lasting effect on Romanian art and literature and the history of European avant-gardes.

[22] Poggioli, 95.

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APPENDIX

Fig. 2.1: Victor Brauner, *Constructie (Construction)*, *75HP* no. 1 Cover (1924), Biblioteca Digitala a Bucurestilor, www.digibuc.ro

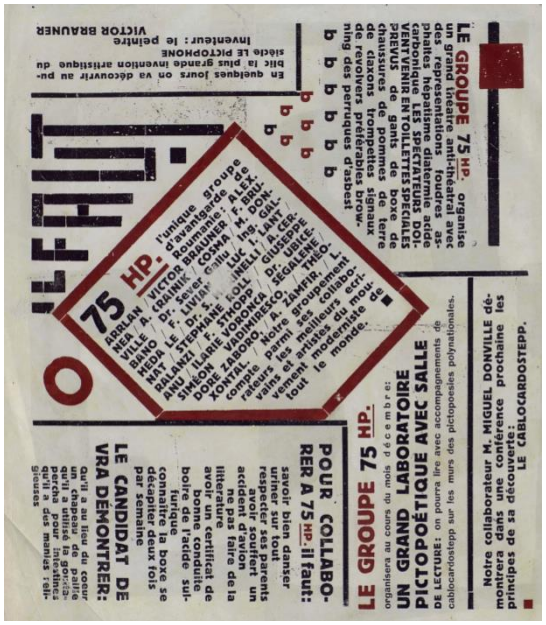

Fig. 2.2.: *75HP* no.1 (1924), Biblioteca Digitala a Bucurestilor, www.digibuc.ro

Fig. 2.3: Ilarie Voronca, "Aviograma (In loc de manifest)" (Aviograma (Instead of a manifesto), *75HP* no. 1 (1924), Biblioteca Digitala a Bucurestilor, www.digibuc.ro

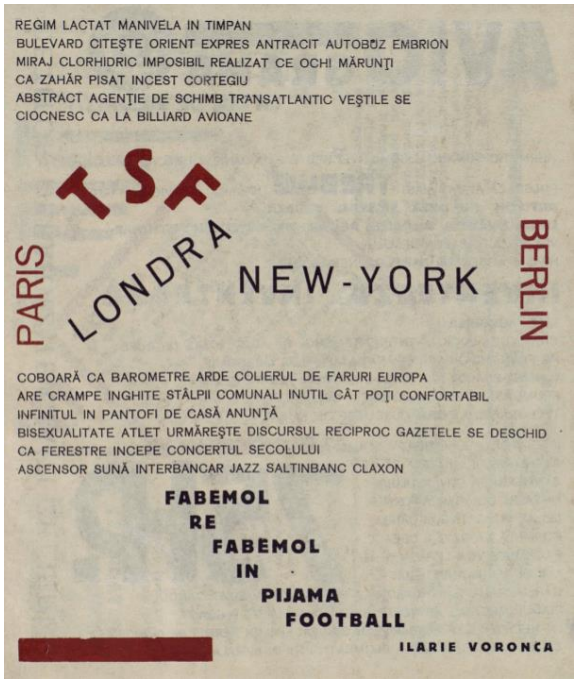

Fig. 2.4: "Aviograma," second page, *75HP* no. 1 (1924), Biblioteca Digitala a Bucurestilor, www.digibuc.ro

Fig. 2.5: Victor Brauner and Ilarie Voronca, *Pictopoetry no. 5721, 75HP* no. 1 (1924), Biblioteca Digitala a Bucurestilor, www.digibuc.ro

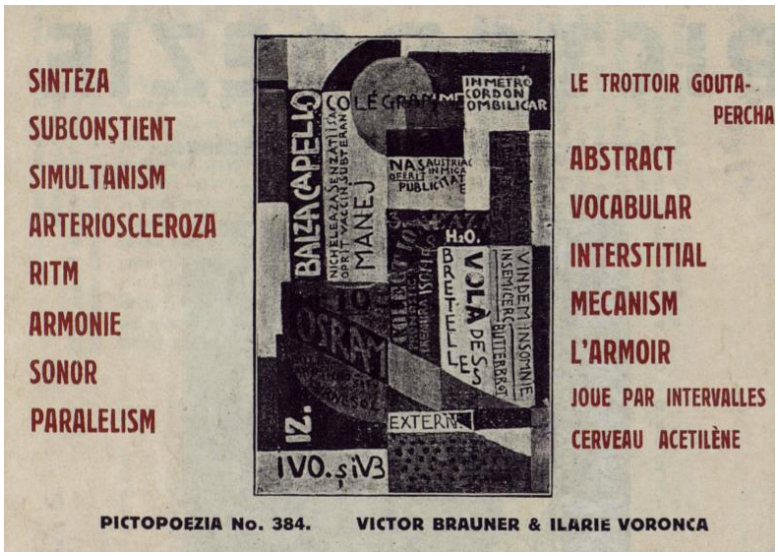

Fig. 2.6: Victor Brauner and Ilarie Voronca, *Pictopoezia No. 384, 75HP* no.1 (1924), Biblioteca Digitala a Bucurestilor, www.digibuc.ro

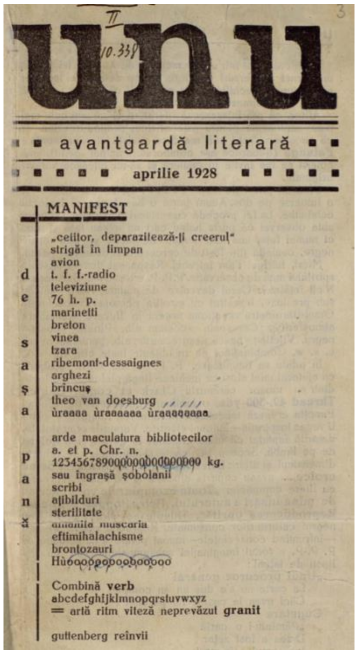

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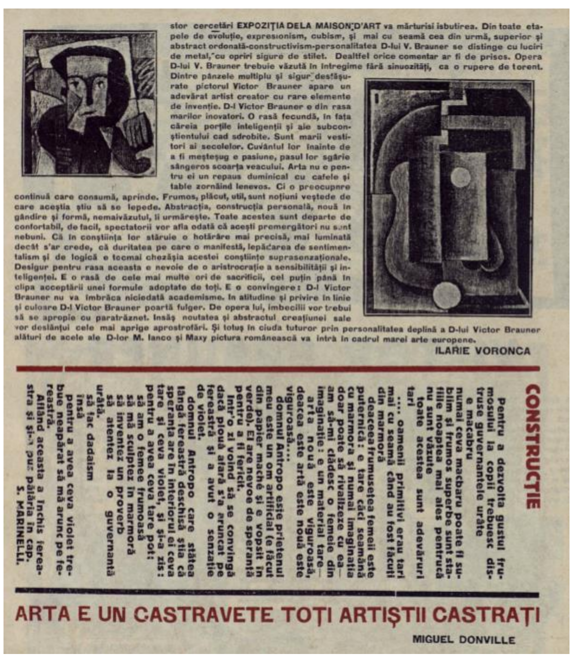
Fig. 2.7: Saşa Pană, “Manifest,” *Unu* no.1 (April 1928), Biblioteca Digitala a Bucurestilor, www.digibuc.ro



stor cercetări EXPOZIŢIA DELA MAISON D'ART va mărturisi isbutirea. Din toate etapele de evoluţie, expresionism, cubism, şi mai cu seamă cea din urmă, superior şi abstract ordonată-constructivism-personalitatea D-lui V. Brauner se distinge cu luciri de metal, cu opriri sigure de stilet. Dealtfel orice comentar ar fi de prisos. Opera D-lui V. Brauner trebuie văzută în întregime fără sinuozităţi, ca o rupere de torent. Dintre pânzele multiplu şi sigur desfăşurate pictorul Victor Brauner apare un adevărat artist creator cu rare elemente de invenţie. D-l Victor Brauner e din rasa marilor inovatori. O rasă fecundă, în faţa căreia porţile inteligenţii şi ale subconştientului cad sdrobite. Sunt marii vestitori ai secolelor. Cuvântul lor înainte de a fi meşteşug e pasiune, pasul lor sgârie sângeros scoarţa veacului. Arta nu e pentru ei un repaus duminical cu cafele şi table zornăind lenevos. Ci o preocupare continuă care consumă, aprinde. Frumos, plăcut, util, sunt noţiuni veştede de care aceştia ştiu să se lepede. Abstracţia, construcţia personală, nouă în gândire şi formă, nemaivăzutul, îi urmăreşte. Toate acestea sunt departe de confortabil, de facil, spectatorii vor afla odată că aceşti premergători nu sunt nebuni. Că în conştiinţa lor stăruie o hotărâre mai precisă, mai luminată decât s'ar crede, că duritatea pe care o manifestă, lepădarea de sentimentalism şi de logică e tocmai chezăşia acestei conştiinţe suprasenzaţionale. Desigur pentru rasa aceasta e nevoie de o aristrocraţie a sensibilităţii şi inteligenţei. E o rasă de cele mai multe ori de sacrificii, cel puţin până în clipa acceptării unei formule adoptate de toţi. E o convingere: D-l Victor Brauner nu va îmbrăca niciodată academisme. În atitudine şi privire în linie şi culoare D-l Victor Brauner poartă fulger. De opera lui, imbecilii vor trebui să se apropie cu paratrăznet. Însăş noutatea şi abstractul creaţiunei sale vor deslănţui cele mai aprige aprostrofări. Şi totuş în ciuda tuturor prin personalitatea deplină a D-lui Victor Brauner alături de acele ale D-lor M. Ianco şi Maxy pictura românească va intră în cadrul marei arte europene.

ILARIE VORONCA

CONSTRUCŢIE

Pentru a dezvolta gustul frumosului la copii trebuesc distruse guvernantele urâte
e macabru
numai ceva macbaru poate fi sublim şi frumos superbe sunt stafiile noaptea mai ales pentrucă nu sunt văzute
toate acestea sunt adevăruri tari
.... oamenii primitivi erau tari mai cu seamă când au fost făcuţi din marmoră
deaceea frumuseţea femeii este puternică: e tare căci seamănă cu marmora şi numai imaginaţia doar poate să rivalizeze cu ea— am să-mi clădesc o femeie din imaginaţie: e un material tare—
arta nouă este viguroasă, deacea este artă este nouă este viguroasă....
domnul Antropo este prietenul meu este un om artificial (e făcut din papier maché şi e vopsit în verde). El are nevoe de speranţă pentru a fi fericit.
Intr'o zi voind să se convingă dacă plouă afară s'a aruncat pe fereastră şi a avut o senzaţie de violet.
domnul Antropo care stătea lângă fereastră deschisă ştia că speranţa are în interiorul ei ceva tare şi ceva violet, şi şi-a zis: pentru a avea ceva tare pot:
să am o femee frumoasă
să mă sculptez în marmoră
să inventez un proverb
să atentez la o guvernantă urâtă.
să fac dadaism
însă
pentru a avea ceva violet trebue neapărat să mă arunc pe fereastră.
Aflând aceasta a închis fereastra şi şi-a pus pălăria în cap.

S. MARINELLI.

ARTA E UN CASTRAVETE TOŢI ARTIŞTII CASTRAŢI

MIGUEL DONVILLE

Fig. 2.8: *75HP* no.1 (1924), Biblioteca Digitala a Bucurestilor, www.digibuc.ro

Fig. 2.9*: Integral* no. 5 Cover (July 1925), Biblioteca Digitala a Bucurestilor, www.digibuc.ro

Fig. 2.10: *Contimporanul* no. 69 (October 1926), Biblioteca Digitala a Bucurestilor, www.digibuc.ro

Fig. 2.11: *75HP* no.1 (1924), Biblioteca Digitala a Bucurestilor, www.digibuc.ro

Fig. 2.12: *Contimporanul* no. 50-51 Cover (December 1924), Biblioteca Digitala a Bucurestilor, www.digibuc.ro

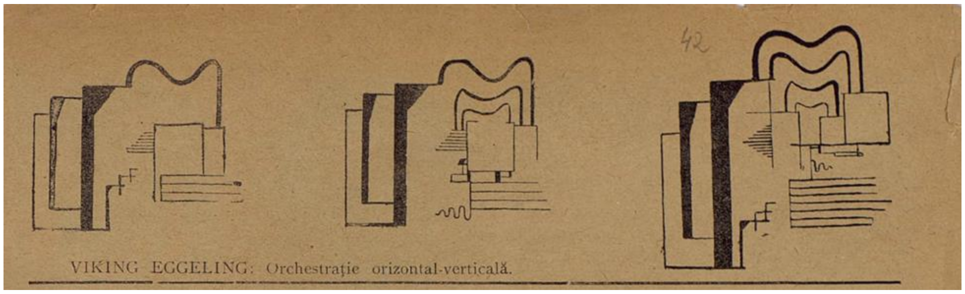


Fig. 3.1: Viking Eggeling, *orchstrație orizontal-verticală* (*Horizontal-Vertical Orchestration*), *Contimporanul* 55-56 (March 1925), Biblioteca Digitala a Bucurestilor, www.digibuc.ro

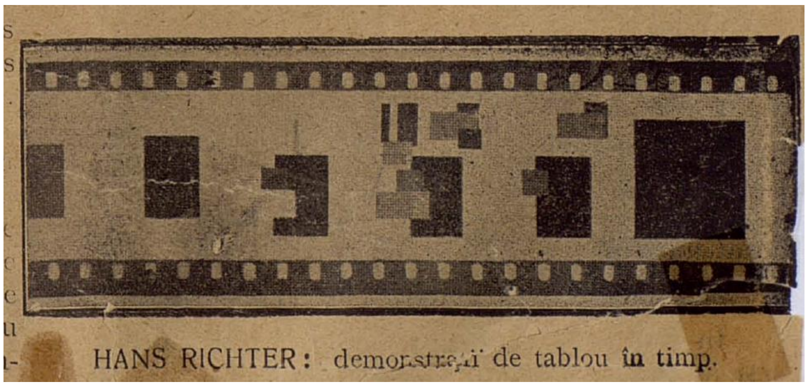
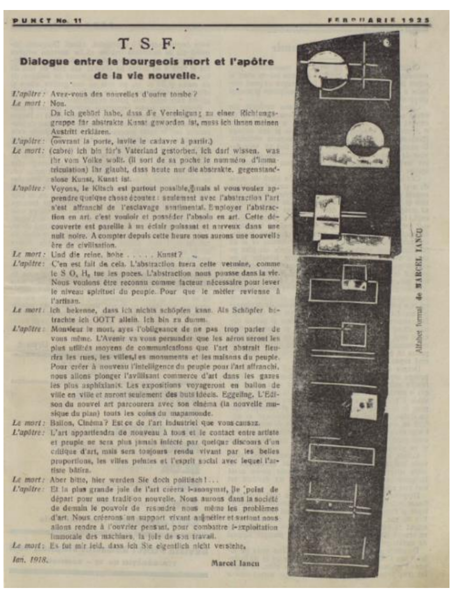


Fig. 3.2: Hans Richter, *demonstrație de tablou in timp* (*Demonstration of painting in time*), *Contimporanul* 55-56 (March 1925), Biblioteca Digitala a Bucurestilor, www.digibuc.ro



PUNCT No. 11

T. S. F.

Dialogue entre le bourgeois mort et l'apôtre de la vie nouvelle.

L'apôtre: Avez-vous des nouvelles d'outre tombe?
Le mort: Non.
Da ich gehört habe, dass die Vereinigung zu einer Richtungsgruppe für abstrakte Kunst geworden ist, muss ich Ihnen meinen Austritt erklären.
L'apôtre: (ouvrant la porte, invite le cadavre à partir.)
Le mort: (cabré) Ich bin für's Vaterland gestorben, ich darf wissen, was ihr vom Volke wollt. (Il sort de sa poche le numéro d'immatriculation) Ihr glaubt, dass heute nur die abstrakte, gegenstandslose Kunst, Kunst ist.
L'apôtre: Voyons, le Kitsch est partout possible, mais si vous voulez apprendre quelque chose écoutez: seulement avec l'abstraction l'art s'est affranchi de l'esclavage sentimental. Employer l'abstraction en art, c'est vouloir et posséder l'absolu en art. Cette découverte est pareille à un éclair puissant et nerveux dans une nuit noire. A compter depuis cette heure nous aurons une nouvelle ère de civilisation.
Le mort: Und die reine, hohe . . . . . Kunst?
L'apôtre: C'en est fait de cela. L'abstraction tuera cette vermine, comme le S O, H, tue les puces. L'abstraction nous pousse dans la vie. Nous voulons être reconnu comme facteur nécessaire pour lever le niveau spirituel du peuple. Pour que le métier revienne à l'artisan.
Le mort: Ich bekenne, dass ich nichts schöpfen kann. Als Schöpfer betrachte ich GOTT allein. Ich bin zu dumm.
L'apôtre: Monsieur le mort, ayez l'obligeance de ne pas trop parler de vous même. L'Avenir va vous persuader que les aéros seront les plus utilités moyens de communications que l'art abstrait fleurira les rues, les villes, les monuments et les maisons du peuple. Pour créer à nouveau l'intelligence du peuple pour l'art affranchi, nous allons plonger l'avilissant commerce d'art dans les gazes les plus asphixiants. Les expositions voyageront en ballon de ville en ville et auront seulement des buts idéels. Eggeling, L'Edison du nouvel art parcourera avec son cinéma (la nouvelle musique du plan) touts les coins du mapamonde.
Le mort: Ballon, Cinéma? Est ce de l'art industriel que vous causez.
L'apôtre: L'art appartiendra de nouveau à tous et le contact entre artiste et peuple ne sera plus jamais infecté par quelque discours d'un critique d'art, mais sera toujours rendu vivant par les belles proportions, les villes peintes et l'esprit social avec lequel l'artiste bâtira.
Le mort: Aber bitte, hier werden Sie doch politisch! . . .
L'apôtre: Et la plus grande joie de l'art créera l'anonymat, le point de départ pour une tradition nouvelle. Nous aurons dans la société de demain le pouvoir de résoudre nous même les problèmes d'art. Nous créerons un support vivant au métier et surtout nous allons rendre à l'ouvrier pensant, pour combattre l'exploitation immorale des machines, la joie de son travail.
Le mort: Es tut mir leid, dass ich Sie eigentlich nicht verstehe.

Ian. 1918. Marcel Iancu

Alfabet formal de MARCEL IANCU

Fig. 3.3: Marcel Iancu, *Alfabet formal* (*Formal Alphabet*) *Punct* no. 11 (January 1925), Biblioteca Digitala a Bucurestilor, www.digibuc.ro

Fig. 3.4: Marcel Iancu, *Linoleum*, *Contimporanul* no. 49 (November 1924), Biblioteca Digitala a Bucurestilor, www.digibuc.ro


PUNCT No.13

REVISTĂ DE ARTĂ CONSTRUCTIVISTĂ

DIRECTOR: SCARLAT CALLIMACHI | 14 FEBRUARIE 1925

Pour le métier

Ce n'est pas en voulant rendre l'artisan artiste mais l'artiste artisan qu'on relèvera le métier d'aujourd'hui.

Pourquoi jadis le métier fleurissait, aux campagnes comme aux villes? Pourquoi le plus simple vase était harmonieux comme une compositions musicale? Notre époque est-elle dégénérée? Combien de merveilles avons-nous vu naître pourtant? L'aéro, les machines. la guerre, le cinéma. Il faut, je crois, en chercher ailleurs que dans les conditions d'intelligence la vraie cause.

Une sentimentalité maladive n'est elle pas la cause du mal? l'homme doué de jadis ne réfléchissait pas bien longtemps à choisir son métier et toute son ambition était de devenir maître dans celui-ci. Combien de noms illustres de ciseleurs de tapissiers de peintres de vases de marquetier ébénistes ou décorateurs l'histoire ne vous a-t-elle pas conservés? On ne saurait démentir l'influence d'une tradition puissante qui à surtout su prolonger jusqu'au milieu du siècle passé l'état heureux du métier d'antan. Car déjà sous la rénaissance on prêchait que l'artiste, être surnaturel, ne doit rien avoir de commun avec l'artisan. Les avantages sociaux que l'artiste du temps désirait étaient soutenus par le monde humaniste. J'ai dit ailleurs si l'artiste du temps a eu ou non raison de prétendre être autrement traité qu'un serviteur ou artisan du noble seigneur mais aujourd'hui on fait par sentimentalité bien trop d'abus avec cette dignité d'artiste. De nos jours quiconque grifonne une image se dit artiste, croit se réserver par ce titre des libertés et droits et, trempé par le sentimentalité douce des Lavalières, ne s'abaisserait au prix de la plus grande misère a devenir artisan. Combien de bras et d'intelligences perdus pour la société, pour l'art. Non! L'artiste est un homme comme un autre. Son art devrait être métier et cette fierté lâche procurant la dignité a bon marché est aussi la cause des vilaines classifications que l'„artiste" invente: art appliqué et art pur, art industriel, métier d'art et métier ordinaire etc., etc.

Il existe un métier qui devrait aussi être de l'art. Il existe le beau et le laid conditionant l'art n'importe s'il est question d'un tapis à pendre ou à jetter par terre, d'une peinture sur toile a accrocher ou sur vase, d'une ciselure ou de l'enlèvement d'Europe. Comment veut-on préfixer la valeur et la distance entre l'art applique et celui nommé „pur".

Construcţie : MARCEL IANCU

Fig. 3.5: Marcel Iancu, *Construcţie (Construction)*, *Punct* no.13 (February 1925), Biblioteca Digitala a Bucurestilor, www.digibuc.ro

Fig. 3.6: Marcel Iancu, *Compoziţie (Composition), Contimporanul* no. 46 (May 1924), Biblioteca Digitala a Bucurestilor, www.digibuc.ro

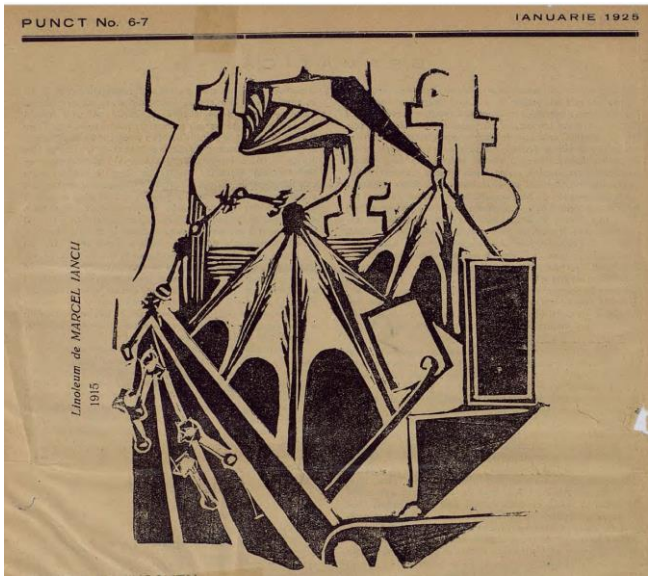


Fig. 3.7: Marcel Iancu, *Linoleum, Punct* no.6-7 (January 1925), Biblioteca Digitala a Bucurestilor, www.digibuc.ro

Fig. 3.8: Marcel Iancu, *Linoleum, Punct* no.10 (January 1925), Biblioteca Digitala a Bucurestilor, www.digibuc.ro

Fig. 3.9: Marcel Iancu, *Linoleum, Punct* no. 9 (January 1925), Biblioteca Digitala a Bucurestilor, www.digibuc.ro

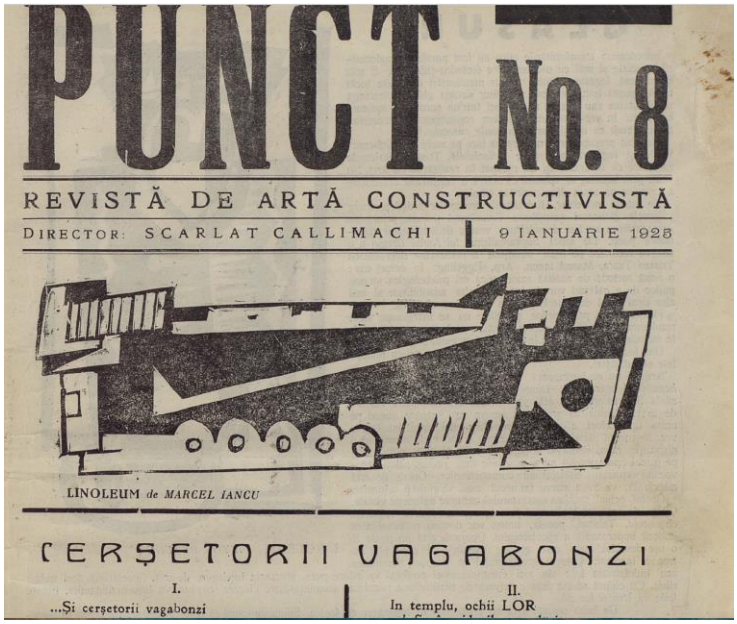


Fig. 3.10: Marcel Iancu, *Linoleum*, *Punct* no.8 (January 1925), Biblioteca Digitala a Bucurestilor, www.digibuc.ro

Fig. 3.11: Hans Mattis-Teutsch, *Linoleum*, print, *Punct* no.9 (January 1925), Biblioteca Digitala a Bucurestilor, www.digibuc.ro

Fig. 3.12: M.H. Maxy, Constructie grafica (*Graphic Construction*), *Contimporanul* no.49 (November 1924), Biblioteca Digitala a Bucurestilor, www.digibuc.ro

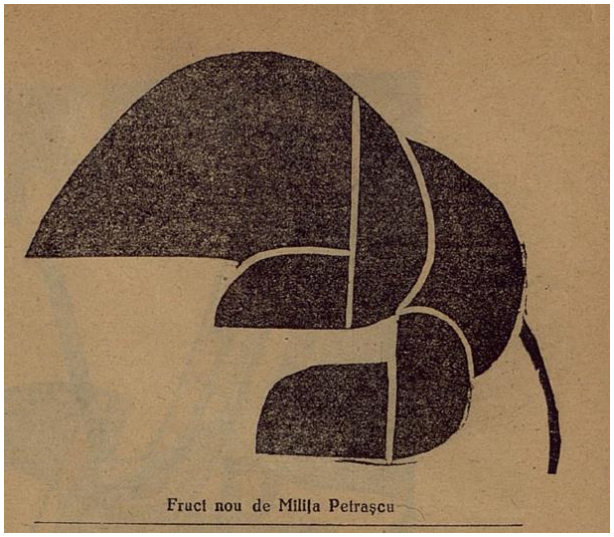


Fig. 3.13: Milița Petrașcu, *Fruct Nou* (*New Fruit*), *Contimporanul* no.49 (November 1924), Biblioteca Digitala a Bucurestilor, www.digibuc.ro

Fig. 3.14: Teutsch, *Cocosul* (*The Roster*), *Contimporanul* no.49 (November 1924), Biblioteca Digitala a Bucurestilor, www.digibuc.ro

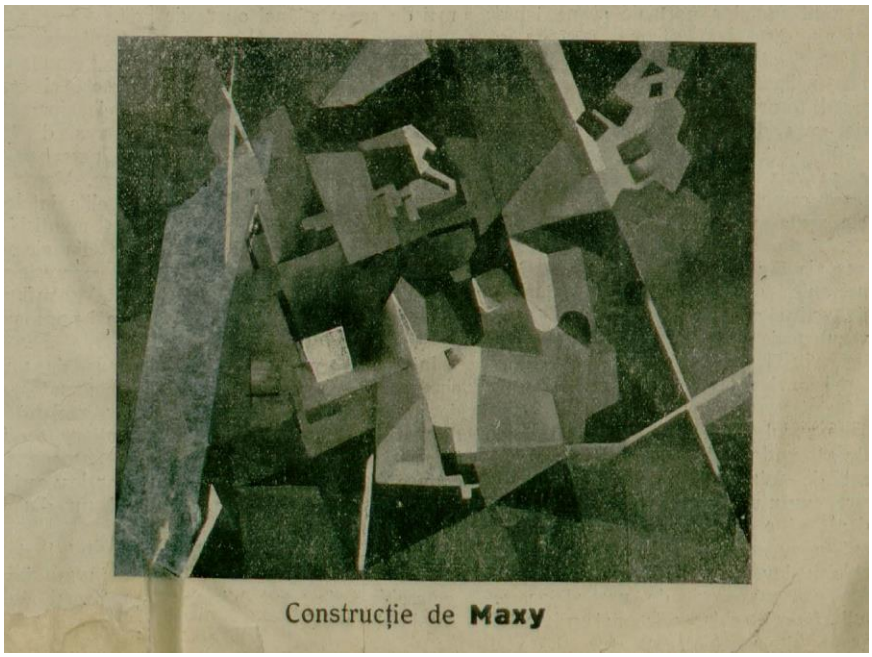


Fig. 3.15: M.H. Maxy, *Construcție* (*Construction*), *Contimporanul* no. 42 (June 1923), Biblioteca Digitala a Bucurestilor, www.digibuc.ro

Fig. 3.16: M.H. Maxy, *Xilogravură*, *Contimporanul* no. 44 (July 1923), Biblioteca Digitala a Bucurestilor, www.digibuc.ro

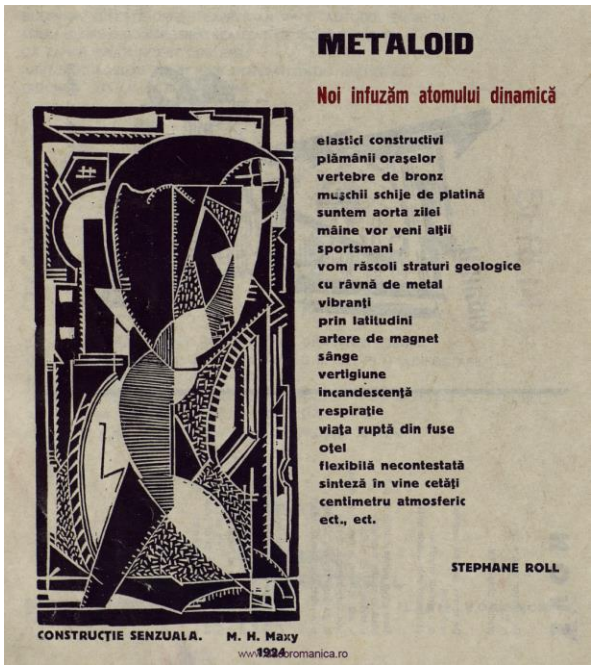


Fig. 3.17: M.H. Maxy, *Construcție Senzuală* (*Sensual Construction*) *75HP* (1924), Biblioteca Digitala a Bucurestilor, www.digibuc.ro

PUNCT No. 3 DECEMBRIE 1924

SEMNALIZĂRI.

Pian lent, cerul de gutapercă uite viziune atrofiată
cinematograf incendiat, abecedar abstract, calendar.
Peste pod ca o nucă de cocos s'a spart o lumină, iar
la fiecare stâlp o stea ca un nod de cravată.

Gândul rupe mături, toamna a plâns în adevăr
vântul strânge pentru pomii fără frunză chetă
cântec fărâmat în așchii, prin sita de brumă lunetă
autodafeu amurgul și convoi casele cu cenușă în păr.

Ascultă de aici corul afișelor, dactilografă saltimbanc abor
deschisă cartea de rugăciuni Oberchelner bucanț astrul
singur prin toamna balcoanelor fior vesperal
prin urmare (dece?) stele și îngeri au coborât fără ascensor.

Stărule promenarea terestră a caselor, șoaptă ca fum
în parcul comunal băncile și-au pus surdină.
Ascultă pulsul bulevardelor și motor svâcnind - inimă citadină,
la barieră sălciile ți-au ieșit ca gâște în drum.

Ritmul încuiat și firmele vorbesc cu glas tare.
Oraș volatilizat și-ți spui: prin viață ta Clary a trecut
cu o viteză interzisă de Biroul Circulației. Steag mut
tristețe în veștejiri un glas mâinile sunt amare.

Târziu, pe-acoperiș luna și-a plimbat faetonul cu lapte.
Presimți mireasmă policromă, inimă cerc levins
lo: ești rachete liniștii acrobație pe gândul arc întins
caută în gâtlejul cocoșilor ultima sângerare de azinoapte.

Auzi? Dimineața se apropie în pas gimnastic VITEZĂ
Clopotele își bat capul de pereți. Treci
Strigătul fabricilor se destinde ca un aparat Sandow. Deci
Toți pomii fac gimnastică suedeză.

1922. ILARIE VORONCA

Construcție de MARCEL IANCU

EXPOZIȚIA „CONTIMPORANULUI"
(Însemnări)

Revista care printr'o stăruință de trei ani a stârnit în literatura și plastica noastră un curent nou și-a deschis prima sa expoziție internațională modernistă. E doar un început victorios și o considerabilă promisiune. După aceasta demonstrație la care au participat Polonia, Germania, Belgia, Cehoslovacia, Serbia, Ungaria și România, „Contimporanul" anunță pentru luna Mai o expoziție la care vor participa Italia, Franța, Spania și Rusia.

Mișcarea nouă a fost pornită simultan, de pretutindeni. Românii s'au numărat, se știe, printre precursori. Sculptorul *Brâncuș* a fost poate cel dintâi primitivist și mai apoi cel dintâi abstractivist din Europa. Printre elevii săi se numără *Liepschitz* și *Arhipenko*. *Marcel Iancu* publică în revistele „Dada" primele „construcții". La Universitatea din Zürich prezintă, ca arhitect, reliefuri cubiste și planuri arhitectonice așa cum astăzi de-abia le regăsim în toate revistele străine care-și propun refacerea orașelor Europei pe baze corespunzătoare nevoilor vremii. Aceste două cazuri înlătură singure învinuirea de imitație și import la noi de artă occidentală. Arta aceasta s'a desvoltat sub imperiul atmosferei comune a continentului.

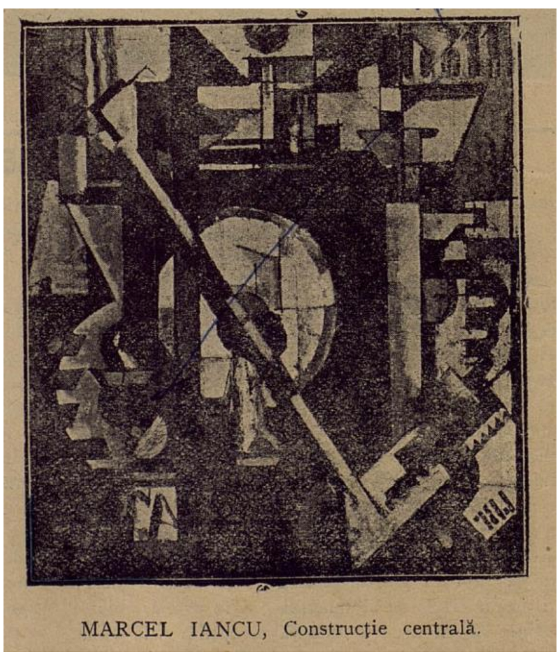
Ca premergători deci, deși la o apreciabilă distanță de vârstă: notăm prezența lui *Brâncuș* și *Marcel Iancu* la această expoziție. Cunoaștem de mult, minunata, halucinanta „Pasăre măiastră" și acea elementară și aspră piatră „Îmbrățișarea" amândouă ale lui *Brâncuș*. *Marcel Iancu*, sub violența și echilibrul vulcanic al viziunilor sale ne amintește totuși de virtuozitatea dissimulată și de tehnica vrăjitorească în desen, construcție, culoare, a meșterilor de altădată. D-na *Milița Petrașcu* e o revelație pentru noi. „Sculptura în lemn", „Torsul", prin depărtate și depășite influențe brâncușiene, exprimă un ardent și superior senzualism care a înflorit materia. *Maxy* marchează o întoarcere dela culoarea „industrială" a trecutelor sale construcții, la pasta picturală. Pânzele sale ferm și intens realizate, ne minunăm în special de două, denotă un cerebralism adecuat picturii constructive și explică evoluția victorioasă a artistului în acest sens. *Mattis Teutsch* cumpănește fantezia cu sobrietate. Clădește în încordări elegante prin tranziții coloristice lirice. *Dida Solomon* aduce straniile sale „păpuși" răpite din cine știe ce fermecat tărâm al subconștientului său bogat: vervă, coloristică naivă și liberă, cum o dorim în zadar celor mai gravi profesori de academie. *Victor Brauner* cutezător în invențiile sale dinamice, cari prind în circuitul lor ceva din tensiunea aparent statică, a lumilor.

Despre artiștii străini în numărul viitor.

S. C.

Formă de M. H. MAXY

Fig. 3.18: M.H. Maxy *Forma* (*The Form*), *Punct* no.3 (December 1924), Biblioteca Digitala a Bucurestilor, www.digibuc.ro



MARCEL IANCU, Construcție centrală.

Fig. 3.19: Marcel Iancu, *Construcție Centrală* (*Central Construction*), oil on canvas, *Contimporanul* no. 50-51 (December 1924), Biblioteca Digitala a Bucurestilor, www.digibuc.ro

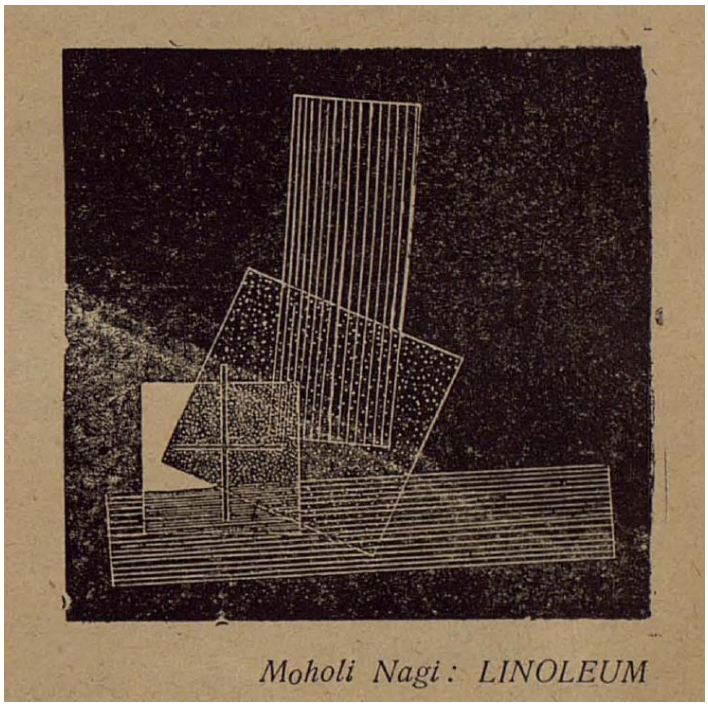


Fig. 3.20: Moholy Nagy, *Linoleum*, *Contimporanul* no.59 (May 1925), Biblioteca Digitala a Bucurestilor, www.digibuc.ro

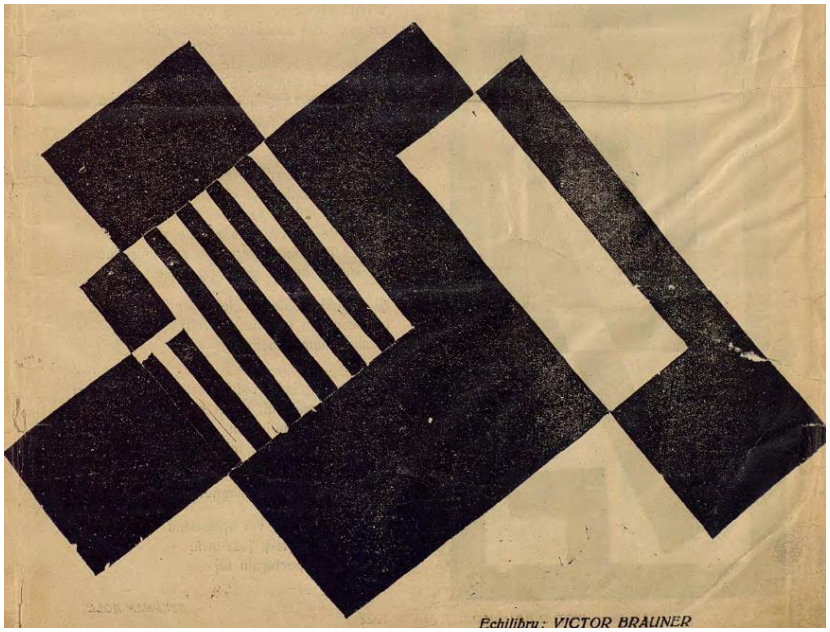


Fig. 3.21: Brauner, *Echilibru* (*Equilibrium*), *Punct* no.6-7 (January 1925), Biblioteca Digitala a Bucurestilor, www.digibuc.ro

Fig. 3.22: Lajos Kassák, *Linoleum*, *Contimporanul* no. 47 (September 1924), Biblioteca Digitala a Bucurestilor, www.digibuc.ro

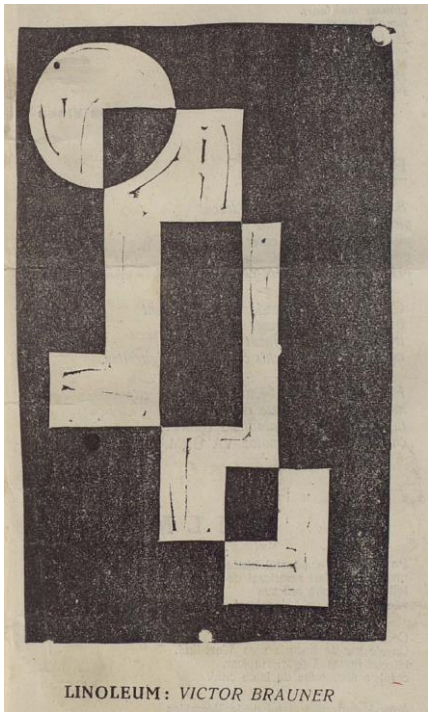


Fig. 3.23: Victor Brauner, *Linoleum*, *Punct* no.10 (January 1925), Biblioteca Digitala a Bucurestilor, www.digibuc.ro

GLASURI

Întotdeauna transformările etice au fost paralele transformărilor sociale şi mai cu osebire celor technico-ştiinţifice. E atât de strânsă legătura dintre aceste manifestări deosebite încât ne-am putea lesne închipui un viitor savant ghicind întreagă sensibilitatea sau cultura unei epoci într'un şurub de automobil găsit în vre-o săpătură precum contemporani cercetători au realcătuit cu un singur os animale antedeluviene.

Desigur presupunerea noastră va face pe mulţi să zâmbească şi totuşi legătura aceasta e indisolubilă. Toate experienţele ştiinţifice de laborator îşi au răsunet în realizările de artă. Nu voim prin aceasta să spunem că există o *conştientă* răsturnare a formelor pe urma descoperirilor tehnice.

De multe ori chiar, îndrăsnelile creatorilor artişti premerg viitoarele elaborări ştiinţifice: Freudismul şi toate principiile psihoanalitice au fost demult încă vestite de inconştient cercetătorii poeţi. De altfel Suprarealismul lui André Breton e o tardivă reeditare pe baze freudiene a realizărilor dela Zürich Tristan Tzara, Marcel Iancu, Arp, Eggeling. În orice caz: o nouă metodă de analiză matematică ori psichologică un nou mijloc de a călători vor da loc la o altă sensibilitate şi mai ales unui altfel de exteriorizare a acestei sensibilităţi.

Firește, ecoul primenirilor ştiinţifice nu se mărgineşte aici: rezultanta lor va fi în aceeaşi măsură resimţită în pedagogie în metodele de instrucţiune în aspectul întregului angrenaj social.

Dar fecundarea cea mai deplină o va avea arta cu multiplele ei înfăţişări.

Artistul nu se interesează niciodată de gradul de *comprehensibil* al operei sale. Dimpotrivă: cu cât mai incomprehensibilă îi va fi opera cu atât va reprezenta o mai mare valoare de artă. Pentru că arta e un amnar care scapără numai pe urma unui efort a unei împotriviri, a unei lupte. Inteligibile vor fi mereu listele de bucate sau ordonanţele anunţând o dispoziţie administrativă. Opera de artă devenită dintr'odată pe placul spectatorului nu e cu nimic mai presus salatei provocând sportan entusiasmul consumatorilor. Opera de artă adevărată, va avea mereu farmecul unei virginităţi reînnoite. Gustul, ochiul, urechea spectatorului trebuesc neîncetat violate. Opera de artă trăeşte numai prin ignorarea tuturor regulelor cunoscute. Tabloul, poezia, unice, vor domina personalitatea imbecil impersonală a spectatorului. Opera de artă nu poate fi o uşe deschisă prin care ghetele murdare ale publicului să tropăe insolent. Uimirea spectatorului va provoca timiditatea sau îndrăzneala lui: de aici cumplitul efort cerebral va aduce pura, abstracta înţelegere de artă. Spectatorul deci trebue siluit. Cu chipul acesta arta e salvată de platitudinea necurmat ameninţătoare. Fiecare cuvânt va isbucni dinamită, fiecare linie va tresări fecund.

De bună seamă, arta nu poate trăi în înţelegere cu logica. Spuneam totuşi că noile investigaţiuni făcute în domeniul filosofiei, ştiinţei în genere, profită artei. Un caracter unitar deci, se va imprimă peste tot. E marca de produse a epocei. Semnificaţia lui e de vădită însemnătate.

LINOLEUM: *VICTOR BRAUNER*

Fig. 3.24: Victor Brauner, *Linoleum*, *Punct* no. 8 (January 1925), Biblioteca Digitala a Bucurestilor, www.digibuc.ro

Linoleum: VICTOR BRAUNER

Fig. 3.25: Victor Brauner, *Linoleum*, *Punct* no. 6-7 (January 1925), Biblioteca Digitala a Bucurestilor, www.digibuc.ro

Fig. 3.26: Marcel Iancu, *Atelier la tara pentru Vinea* (Studio in the countryside for Vinea*), Contimporanul* no. 53-54 (February 1925), Biblioteca Digitala a Bucurestilor, www.digibuc.ro

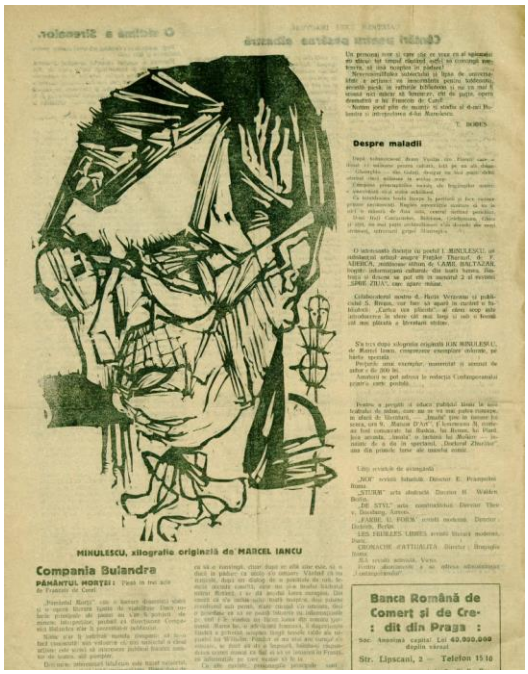
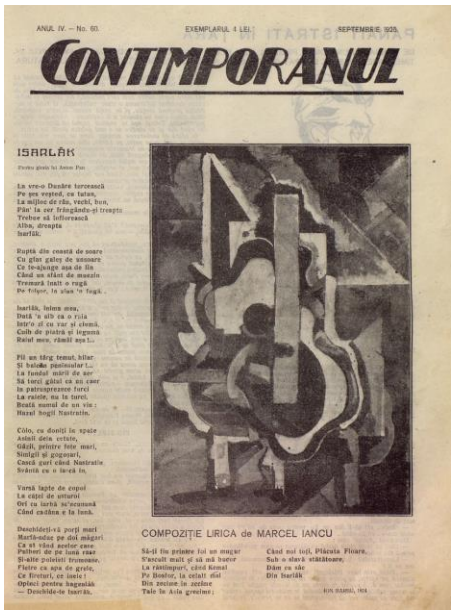


Fig. 4.1: Marcel Iancu, *Minulescu, Contimporanul* no. 35 (March 1923), Biblioteca Digitala a Bucurestilor, www.digibuc.ro



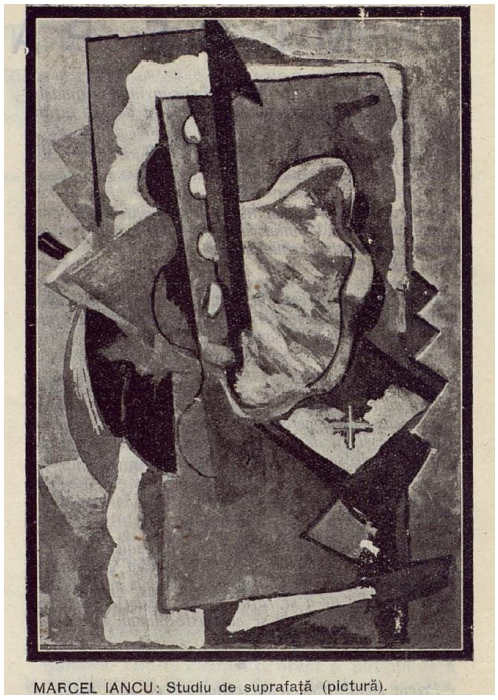
ANUL IV. — No. 60. EXEMPLARUL 4 LEI SEPTEMBRE 1925

CONTIMPORANUL

ISARLÂK

COMPOZIȚIE LIRICA de MARCEL IANCU

Fig. 4.2: Marcel Iancu, *Compoziție lirică* (Lyrical Composition), *Contimporanul* no. 60 (September 1925), Biblioteca Digitala a Bucurestilor, www.digibuc.ro



MARCEL IANCU: Studiu de suprafață (pictură).

Fig. 4.3: Marcel Iancu, *Studiu de suprafață* (Surface Study), *Contimporanul* no. 61 (October 1925), Biblioteca Digitala a Bucurestilor, www.digibuc.ro

CONTIMPORANUL

UVEDENRODE

La râpa Uvedenrode
Ce multe gasteropode!
Supra sexuale
Supra muzicale.
— Uvedenrode
Peste mode şi timp:
Olimp,
Ceruri-eşarfă,
Antene în harfă,
O, limpezi rapsozi
Gasteropozi.
La ceas cristalin,
Lângă Geraldine.
Prin braţele ei,
Cu aceste idei:
Paralogică, ora;
Melcul sexual,
Din pietre tari,
Apari. . . . . ,
Papă geologic
Amant mitologic;
Hi, cal de val
Peste cavală,
In spate cu varu'n spirală!
Incorporată poftă,
Uite o fată.
Poftim odată,
Poftim de două
Ori, până la nouă.
Până o înfăşori,
In fiori uşori,
Şi pe foarte lente
Antene atente
O cobori
Şi o porţi încet

MARCEL IANCU: DECOMPOZIŢIE.

Fig. 4.4: Marcel Iancu, *Decompoziţie* (Decomposition), *Contimporanul* no. 63 (November 1925), Biblioteca Digitala a Bucurestilor, www.digibuc.ro

PUNCT No. 5 DECEMBRIE 1924

Construcţie de: MARCU IANCU

DOMINO.

Stelele şi-au înfipt degetele în ochi, corecturi de asfalt;
Sensibil în tuş trupul celuilalt
trec umbre'e cari au golit din seară:
tripied botanic o lună amestecă'n dinţi alcool şi ceară

Plopii aleargă la dreapta cu sondele de petrol,
noembre a stors sulfat de cupru pentru fruct domnesc
în spirale plămân fără dimensiuni în sol
întregi mânerele câmpului putrezesc

Sub ferestre Ford-uri au epuizat faruri
se învălure apa ceasului vânăt de humă
între sârmele de in şi pojarul de grâu du-mă
Vântul pe esplanadă a aruncat zaruri

Acum să aminteşti în zgomotul rotund
Vedenii cu panduri de chilimbar şi pas
Satura ca America de West fecund
Identic au dansat păpuşi albastre'n bas

Viziunea ta a topit toate plugurile de alamă
Stele acustice copiază indigo masca ta
în fiecare os te posed buric şi filigrană
toate fotoliile pământului vor aplauda.

STEPHAN ROLL

SFÂRŞIT.

Spectacol de mahala. Zare se frânge.
Toamna a dansat, a dansat. Ceasul e deplin.
Şi glasul pământului a răspuns cu pâine şi vin.
Dinspre abator, noaptea se apropie cu sânge.

Dureros drumul şi pe trotuar, mersul sonor.
Apoi, sboruri ca lemne în ogradă sparte.
Noaptea cu cerul ei pentru fiecare fereastră se imparte.
Alunecă un gând ca pe câmp umbra unui nor.

Peste herghelille toamnei, dâra stelelor ca în despletire
hăţuri. Perde-te suflet ca o mireasmă. Treci.
Mari, peste oraşe ventuze de umbră deci
de prisos ierburi pletoase în amintire.

Singur trupul tău ca o harmonică deşirat.
Auzi corul-lătrat: sirene şi ciori-Ave-Marie.
Abstract surâsul. Vântul prins de epilepsie,
Intreg şahul cer, în apă cu frunze răsturnat.

Prin tusea oraşului, stilet invizibil, pas
îngeresc. — Tu — pe umărul nopţii, o amforă târziu,
sanie subţire cu armăsari iuţi, ştiu
o tristeţe vine spre mine ca pe o sârmă un glas.

Apropiere tăcută, cu mâini — ferigă.
Intind asemeni unui gât, auzul atent
şi deodată: muzică ţipând pe acoperiş strident.
Linişte s'a rupt de mine, ca o verigă.

Acesta e gândul peste cupole despletit.
Greu, huruitul roţilor în besnă
şi nebunia ca un noroi până la glesnă.
Nu auzi? Râd pentru reprezentaţia de sfârşit.

1922

ILARIE VORONCA

TUZLA

lui MARCEL IANCU.

Luna lăsă pagini de argint
şi vibrau buzele apelor
neînţelese cetiri.
Am dezlegat barca dintre stâncile de fier
am desfăcut pânzele palide
Ţii minte — pescarul tocmit
ştia cântecele Dobrogii
asfinţiri în bezna dela cârmă
şi-l ascultă marea când încetă.
Pe sidef patinam în respirări
— ce vânt moale aiura prin lume —
drumul sticlià mâna lui cu jucării de diamant
luna erà oglindă uitată într'un palat
ne gândiam la cine încă nu ne-a mângâiat.
Pe ţărm cârciuma roşie danţă
şi'n fund dormiau bancurile de aur.

TUZLA (II)

Val pal stâncile arse
albastrul sat într'un inel de var
femeile ţăranului au unghii de mărgen
şi se vând pe strass şi suliman.
Vreau să rămân aci la Tuzla
când valsurile tac în Casa Albă
când pleacă şcolarii rahitici
şi'n plajă sângeră macul sălbatic
cheag tuşit de amiaza fragedă
Seara bate semne din far
pentru trâmbiţele vagi de apă
când se întorc contrabandişti cu stele pe mâini
când trec vapoarele şi planetele.

1913

I. VINEA

Fig. 4.5: Marcel Iancu, *Constructie de: Marcu (sic) Iancu* (Construction by Marcu Iancu), *Punct* no. 5 (December 1924), Biblioteca Digitala a Bucurestilor, www.digibuc.ro

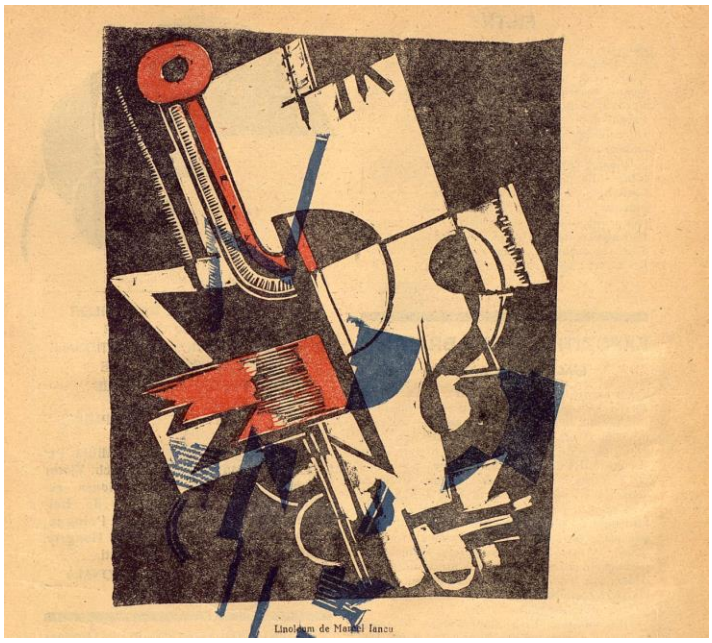


Fig. 4.6: Marcel Iancu, *Linoleum*, *Contimporanul* no. 49 (November 1924), Biblioteca Digitala a Bucurestilor, www.digibuc.ro

cunds-out.

Iţi observ : ascensiunea. De la expoziţia precedentă, la aceia de acuma, te vâd ca peste un viaduct. Funicular, prefacerea, pururea, flueră din toate tuburile golite. Nu mai eşti constructivist, numai eşti abstract. O faţetă nouă te acoperă ; o integralizare cu sine însuţi. Pictezi subiecte. Dincoace câteva laterale cubiste, minunate invenţii suprarealе şi peisagii indigene. E o pictură românească cetăţeană ?

— Nu ştiu şi nici nu aşi vrea să ştiu. O singură dorinţă se zbate în mine. Aceia, de-a mă vedea cât mai adânc şi de a-mi izola celulele de preţ, de sgură, pentru cea din urmă valorificare.

E un fel de a te cunoaşte pe tine însuţi, ca să ştii cum stai cu activul şi cu pasivul.

Subiectele ? Subiecte cetăţeneşti ? Intreaga valoare a subiectelor înconjurătoare, are pentru mine un înţeles în afară de emotivitate. Băltoaca moralei cetăţeneşti împrumută peisajului un parfum de bucătărie.

Sănătatea şi linia vieţii deplină din palma cu semnul ?, o găseşti în lu-

şi o negaţie. Frica de-a asimila magnetele e necondiţionată lor. In artă elementul rudimentar se exclude. Singura posibilitate e să posezi contraverse de negativ şi pozitiv. Congelat în arta veche el există sensibilităţii, astfel cum ea l'a dorit. Amorf, fără obstrucţii — hidromel. Facem artă numai pentru contigenţele severe ale unei noneducaţii, sau putem publica comunităţei valorile ei logic existente ?

— A fost o perioadă de vreme, când o pătură de intelectuali, artişti şi esteţi, sabotaţi de oficialitatea scârnavă a unui estetism vulgaro-burghez, au pus mâna pe târn şi-au umplut lumea cu praful propriei ei putreziciuni.

In nimbul creiat prin dislocare, s'a întărit tancul virtuţiilor proaspete. Rolurile erau împărţite : Unii la cârmă, alţii în interior.

E cert că experienţa dadaistă e profund umană şi deci spontană. Ea se continuă de câte-ori se înoesc stindardele, de câte ori se vâruesc pereţii. Publicul de aici şi chiar de aiurea, e prea grăbit

de ale vieţii, ca să-şi poată regula montura ; iar

Construcţie umană

M. H. Maxy

Fig. 4.7: M.H. Maxy, *Construcţie Umana* (Human Construction), *Integral* no. 11 (February-March 1927), Biblioteca Digitala a Bucurestilor, www.digibuc.ro

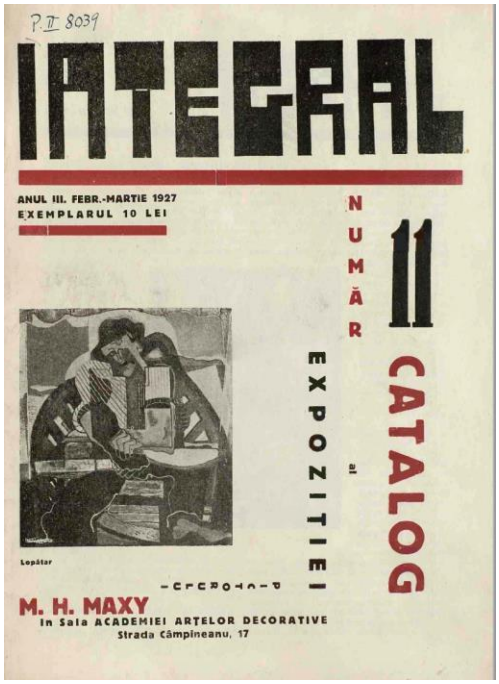


Fig. 4.8: M.H. Maxy, *Lopătar*, in Integral no. 11 (February-March 1927), Biblioteca Digitala a Bucurestilor, www.digibuc.ro

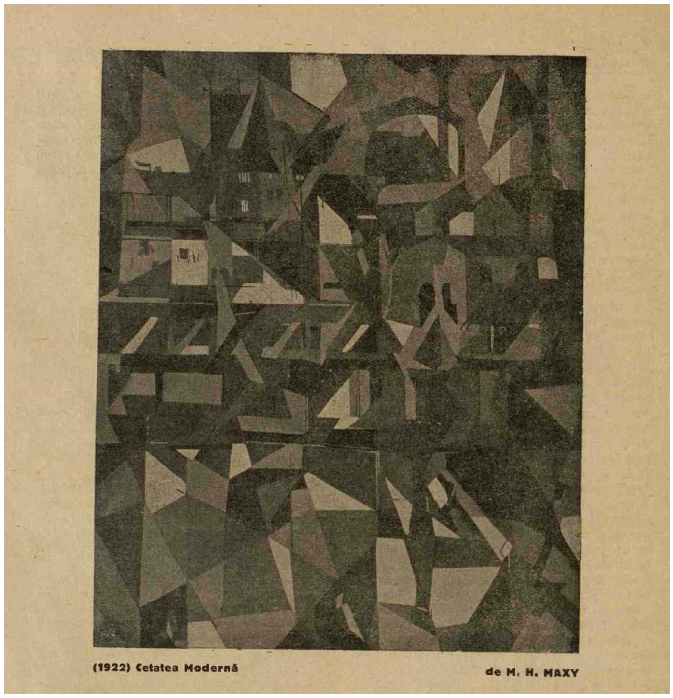


Fig. 4.9: M.H. Maxy, *Cetatea Modernă* (The Modern Citadel), *Integral* no. 12 (April 1927), Biblioteca Digitala a Bucurestilor, www.digibuc.ro


ANUL V. No. 64 1 Ianuarie 1926

CONTIMPORANUL

EXEMPLARUL 5 LEI

PICASSO Compoziție 1925

Fig. 4.10: Pablo Picasso, *Compoziţie* (Composition), *Contimporanul* no. 64 (March 1926), Biblioteca Digitala a Bucurestilor, www.digibuc.ro


CONTIMPORANUL

ANUL V. No. 67. 1 IUNIE 1926 EXEMPLARUL 5 LEI

PRELUDIU LA DANSUL PLANETELOR EXTERIOARE

Ion Barbu

Inaltă conexiune
Gardă eficace nunților
Drum și carte

Pentru roșul rac al lui Marte
Pentru Jup
(Acel trup)
Pentru Saturn centurat în aparte
— Uran ca un tiv
Neptun aditiv :

Cădelnițare 'n cor a nunților
La zece Lune în rampă
O, foarte cerească și amplă
Mătanie
A Frunților !

Salut de pe scară de noapte
La sexul seral
De trei ori spiral :
Al lumii rău static de lapte.

Plecăciune joasă
La față întoarsă
Tristă
Care ajună
Acolo'n cărbuni din lună.

Mătanie adâncă
Îndoită încă
Norului violaceu
Fumat lung de soare
La ziua'n vărsare
Când pipăe sufletul meu.

GEORGES BRACQUE (Paris) Compoziție 1925

Fig. 4.11: Georges Braque, *Compoziţie* (Composition), *Contimporanul* no. 67 (June 1926), Biblioteca Digitala a Bucurestilor, www.digibuc.ro

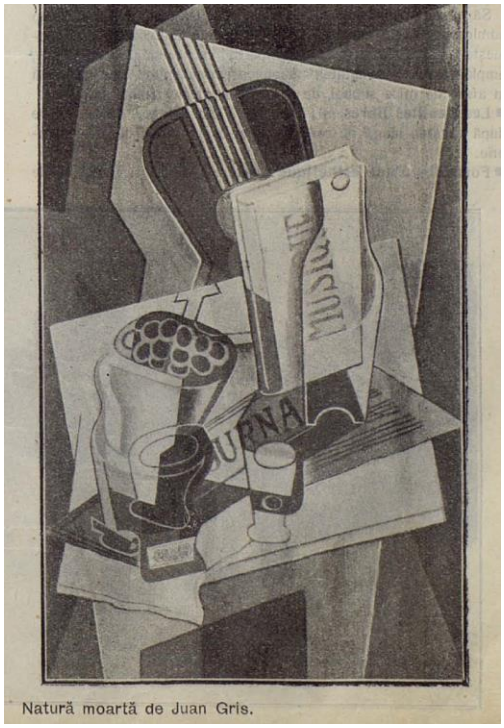
Scrisori de artă

Pictorul Juan Gris

Avantgarda rusă

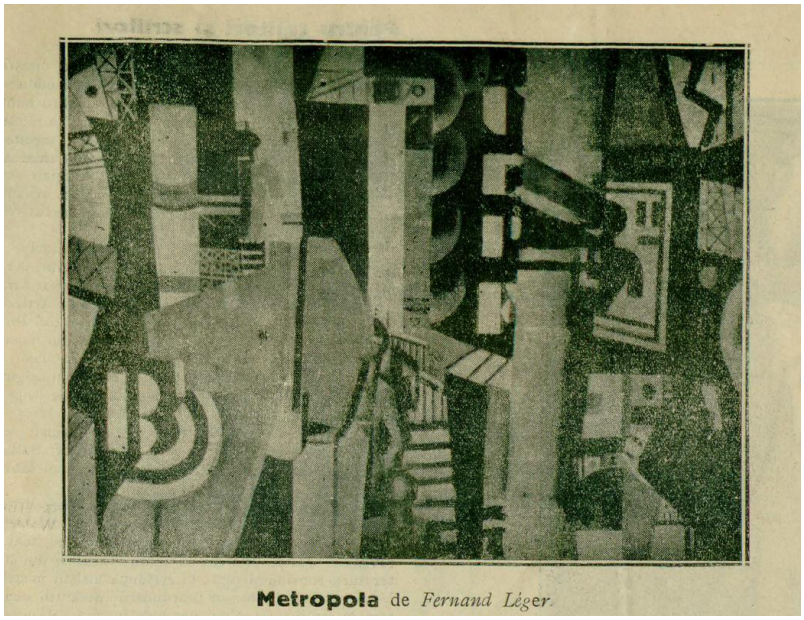
Arta războiului acum 23 veacuri

Fig. 4.12: Juan Gris, *Untitled*, *Contimporanul* no. 42 (June 1923), Biblioteca Digitala a Bucurestilor, www.digibuc.ro



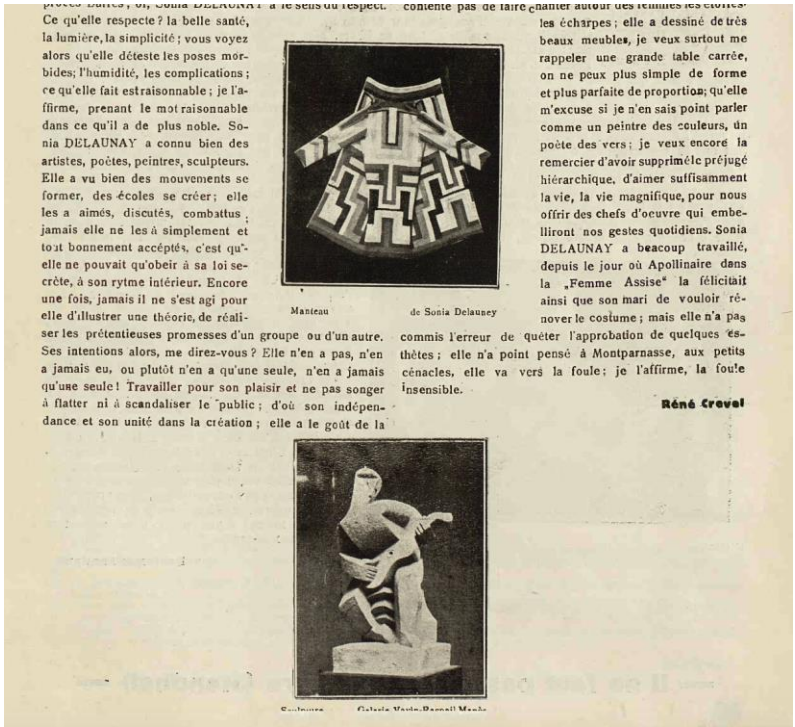
Natură moartă de Juan Gris.

Fig. 4.13: Juan Gris, *Natura moarta*, *Contimporanul* no. 48 (October 1924), Biblioteca Digitala a Bucurestilor, www.digibuc.ro



Metropola de *Fernand Léger*

Fig. 4.14: Fernand Léger, *Metropola*, *Contimporanul* no. 37-38 (April 1923), Biblioteca Digitala a Bucurestilor, www.digibuc.ro



Ce qu'elle respecte ? la belle santé, la lumière, la simplicité ; vous voyez alors qu'elle déteste les poses morbides; l'humidité, les complications ; ce qu'elle fait est raisonnable ; je l'affirme, prenant le mot raisonnable dans ce qu'il a de plus noble. Sonia DELAUNAY a connu bien des artistes, poètes, peintres, sculpteurs. Elle a vu bien des mouvements se former, des écoles se créer; elle les a aimés, discutés, combattus ; jamais elle ne les a simplement et tout bonnement acceptés, c'est qu'elle ne pouvait qu'obeir à sa loi secrète, à son rytme intérieur. Encore une fois, jamais il ne s'est agi pour elle d'illustrer une théorie, de réaliser les prétentieuses promesses d'un groupe ou d'un autre. Ses intentions alors, me direz-vous ? Elle n'en a pas, n'en a jamais eu, ou plutôt n'en a qu'une seule, n'en a jamais qu'une seule ! Travailler pour son plaisir et ne pas songer à flatter ni à scandaliser le public ; d'où son indépendance et son unité dans la création ; elle a le goût de la

Manteau de Sonia Delauney

contente pas de faire chanter autour des femmes les étoffes les écharpes ; elle a dessiné de très beaux meubles, je veux surtout me rappeler une grande table carrée, on ne peux plus simple de forme et plus parfaite de proportion; qu'elle m'excuse si je n'en sais point parler comme un peintre des couleurs, un poète des vers ; je veux encore la remercier d'avoir supprimé le préjugé hiérarchique, d'aimer suffisamment la vie, la vie magnifique, pour nous offrir des chefs d'oeuvre qui embelliront nos gestes quotidiens. Sonia DELAUNAY a beacoup travaillé, depuis le jour où Apollinaire dans la „Femme Assise" la félicitait ainsi que son mari de vouloir rénover le costume ; mais elle n'a pas commis l'erreur de quéter l'approbation de quelques esthètes ; elle n'a point pensé à Montparnasse, aux petits cénacles, elle va vers la foule ; je l'affirme, la foule insensible.

René Crevel

Fig. 4.15: Sonia Delaunay, *Integral* no. 6-7 (October 1925), Biblioteca Digitala a Bucurestilor, www.digibuc.ro

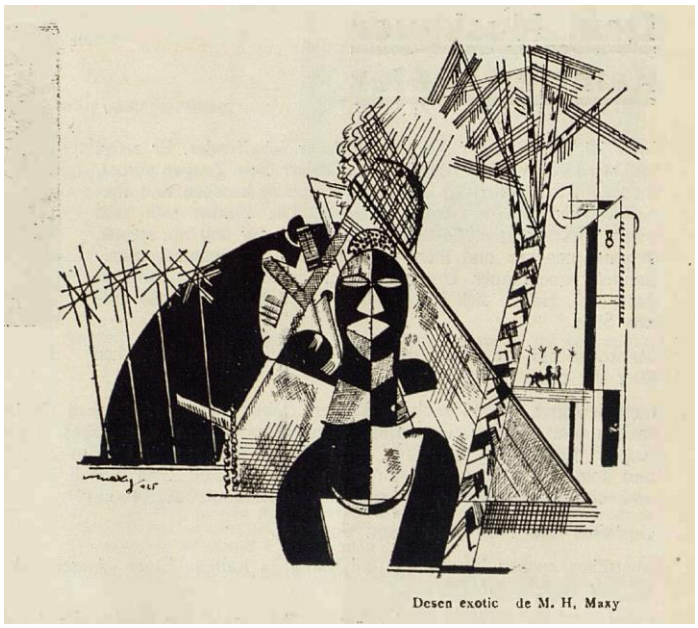


Fig. 4.16: M.H. Maxy, *Desen exotic* (Exotic Drawing), *Integral* no. 6-7 (October 1925), Biblioteca Digitala a Bucurestilor, www.digibuc.ro

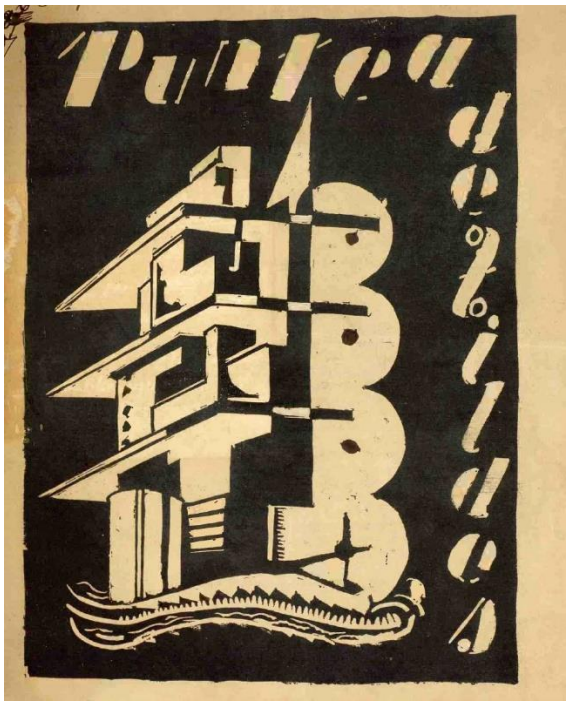


Fig. 5.1: Marcel Iancu, *Puntea de Fildeş* no. 1 Cover (April 1925), Biblioteca Digitala a Bucurestilor, www.digibuc.ro

Fig. 5.2: Marcel Iancu, *Compoziţie* (Composition), *Contimporanul* no. 46 (May 1924) Biblioteca Digitala a Bucurestilor, www.digibuc.ro

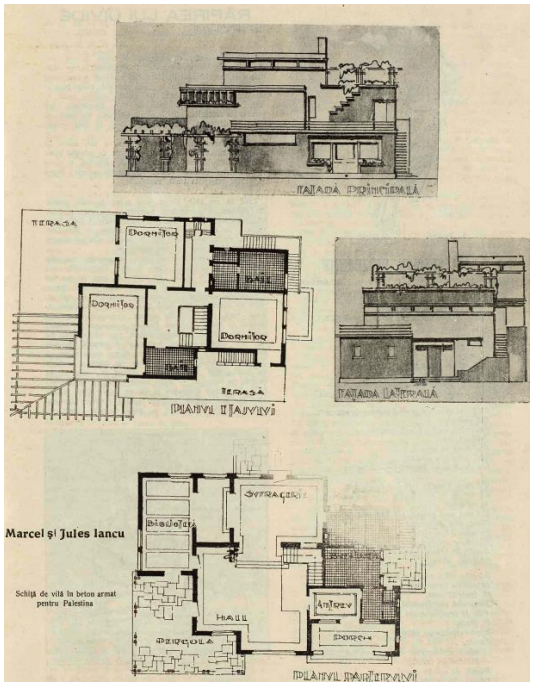


Fig. 5.3: Marcel and Jules Iancu, Villa Floorplans, *Puntea de Fildes* no. 2 (May 1926), Biblioteca Digitala a Bucurestilor, www.digibuc.ro

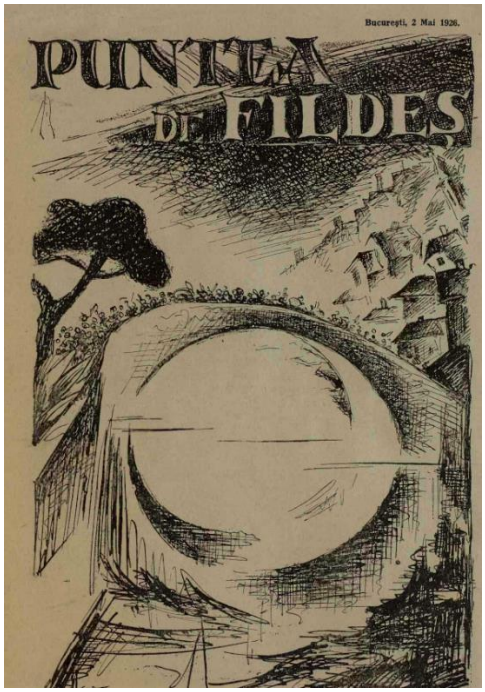
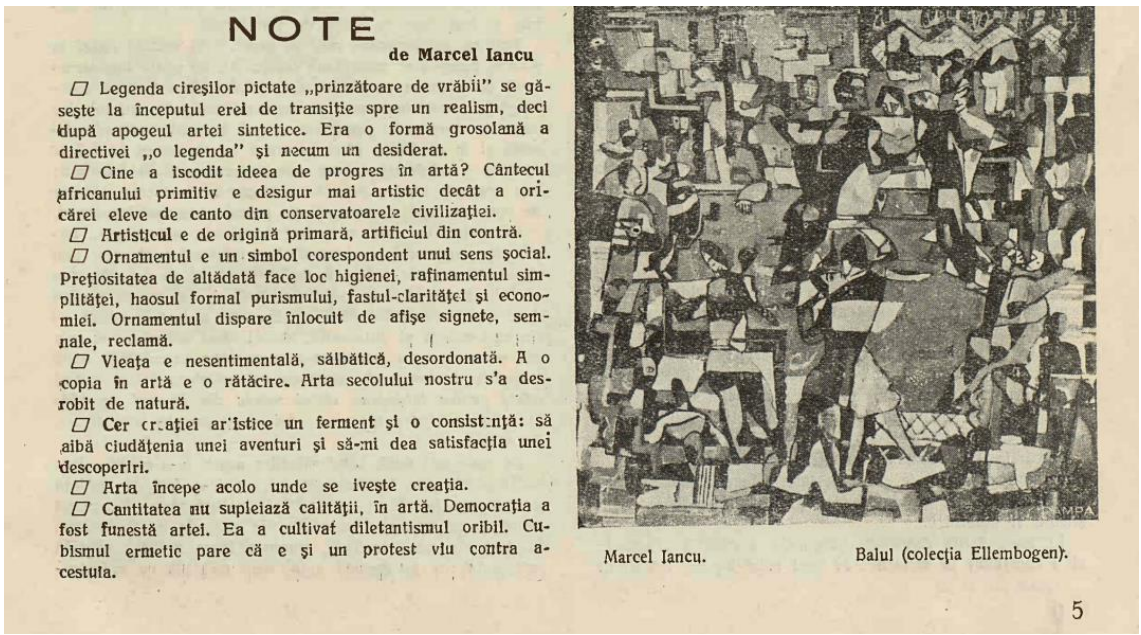


Fig. 5.4: Henri Daniel, Cover of *Puntea de Fildes no. 2* (May 1926), Biblioteca Digitala a Bucurestilor, www.digibuc.ro



NOTE

de Marcel Iancu

☐ Legenda cireşilor pictate „prinzătoare de vrăbii" se găseşte la începutul erei de transiţie spre un realism, deci după apogeul artei sintetice. Era o formă grosolană a directivei „o legendă" şi necum un desiderat.

☐ Cine a iscodit ideea de progres în artă? Cântecul africanului primitiv e desigur mai artistic decât a oricărei eleve de canto din conservatoarele civilizaţiei.

☐ Artisticul e de origină primară, artificiul din contră.

☐ Ornamentul e un simbol corespondent unui sens social. Preţiositatea de altădată face loc higienei, rafinamentul simplităţei, haosul formal purismului, fastul-claritătei şi economiei. Ornamentul dispare înlocuit de afişe signete, semnale, reclamă.

☐ Vieaţa e nesentimentală, sălbatică, desordonată. A o copia în artă e o rătăcire. Arta secolului nostru s'a desrobit de natură.

☐ Cer creaţiei artistice un ferment şi o consistenţă: să aibă ciudăţenia unei aventuri şi să-mi dea satisfacţia unei descoperiri.

☐ Arta începe acolo unde se iveşte creaţia.

☐ Cantitatea nu supleiază calităţii, în artă. Democraţia a fost funestă artei. Ea a cultivat diletantismul oribil. Cubismul ermetic pare că e şi un protest viu contra acestuia.

Marcel Iancu. Balul (colecţia Ellembogen).

5

Fig. 5.5: Marcel Iancu, *Balul* (The Ball), *Puntea de Fildes* no. 2 (May 1926), Biblioteca Digitala a Bucurestilor, www.digibuc.ro

M. H. Maxy Femee cu idol

popor. Aci s'a restatornicit pentru vecie Căminul evreesc. Poporul, vechiul-nou popor, şi-a regăsit aici pământul cel bătrân al strămoşilor şi limba vechea-nouă a profeţilor. Şi va fi iar acolo, o ţară, un popor, o limbă; şi toate ale noastre.

Emek Iesreel! Ce poveşti minunate, împletite în vis şi ideal, vor povesti după noi copiii copiilor noştri.

CÂNTEC SIMPLU

de B. Fundoianu.

Şi va veni o seară când voi pleca de aici,
fără să ştiu prea bine unde mă duc şi nici
de numai putrezirea, sau încolţirea vine,
tăcerea se va pune, ca un pământ, pe mine.
Ştiu, o să vii în seară ca de-obicei s'aduci
pe piele, umbra rece a frunzelor de nuci;

Vei înţelege 'ndată că's dus, din nemişcare,
la capul meu rămasă, ca 'ntâia lumânare.
N'ai să întrebi pe nimeni dece-ţi sunt de prisos,
genunchii copţi, cerceii şi sufletul frumos.
Taci! pentru noui privelişti să cer alte cuvinte.
Mai bine'n tine, surde, aducerile aminte...

Tumult! Dar ca un ţipăt într'ânsul te iubesc,
şi aş zidi-o piatră cu scrisul ovreesc.
Toamna, în cimitirul urban, dela barieră,
pune tristeţea 'n lespezi, a stupilor cu miere,
şi pune 'n peisajul metalic, pomii goi.
Par'că ţi-aud pantofii cum gâfâe prin foi.

1922.

Fig. 5.6: M.H. Maxy, *Femee cu idol* (Woman with idol), *Puntea de Fildes* no. 2 (May 1926), Biblioteca Digitala a Bucurestilor, www.digibuc.ro

F. ŞIRATO: TÂRGUL

Fig. 5.7: Francisc Şirato, *Targul* (The Market), *Contimporanul* no. 35 (March 1923), Biblioteca Digitala a Bucurestilor, www.digibuc.ro

cunds-out.
Iți observ : ascensiunea. De la expoziția precedentă, la aceia de acuma, te văd ca peste un viaduct. Funicular, prefacerea, pururea, flueră din toate tuburile golite. Nu mai ești constructivist, numai ești abstract. O fațetă nouă te acoperă ; o integralizare cu sine însuți. Pictezi subiecte. Dincoace câteva laterale cubiste, minunate invenții suprareale și peisagii indigene. E o pictură românească cetățeană ?

— Nu știu și nici nu aș vrea să știu. O singură dorință se zbate în mine. Aceia, de-a mă vedea cât mai adânc și de a-mi izola celulele de preț, de sgură, pentru cea din urmă valorificare.
E un fel de a te cunoaște pe tine însuți, ca să știi cum stai cu activul și cu pasivul.
Subiectele ? Subiecte cetățenești ? Intreaga valoare a subiectelor înconjurătoare, are pentru mine un înțeles în afară de emotivitate. Băltoaca moralei cetățenești împrumută peisajului un parfum de bucătărie.
Sănătatea și linia vieții deplină din palma cu semnul ?, o găsești în lu-

și o negație. Frica de-a asimila magnetele e necondiționată lor. In artă elementul rudimentar se exclude. Singura posibilitate e să posezi contraverse de negativ și pozitiv. Congelat în arta veche el există sensibilității, astfel cum ea l'a dorit. Amorf, fără obstrucții — hidromel. Facem artă numai pentru contingențele severe ale unei noneducații, sau putem publica comunității valorile ei logic existente ?

— A fost o perioadă de vreme, când o pătură de intelectuali, artiști și esteți, sabotați de oficialitatea scârnavă a unui estetism vulgaro-burghez, au pus mâna pe târn și-au umplut lumea cu praful propriei ei putreziciuni.
In nimbul creiat prin dislocare, s'a întărit tancul virtuților proaspete. Rolurile erau împărțite : Unii la cârmă, alții în interior.
E cert că experiența dadaistă e profund umană și deci spontană. Ea se continuă de câte-ori se înoesc stindardele, de câte ori se vărueșc pereții. Publicul de aici și chiar de aiurea, e prea grăbit de ale vieții, ca să-și poată regula montura ; iar

Construcție umană — M. H. Maxy

Fig. 5.8: M.H. Maxy, *Construcție Umana* (Human Construction), *Integral* no. 11 (February-March 1927), Biblioteca Digitala a Bucurestilor, www.digibuc.ro

CONTIMPORANUL

O constituție tiranică

HORIA VERZEANU

Cântec

Xilogravie originală de **Marcel Iancu**

Fig. 6.1: Marcel Iancu, woodcut print, *Contimporanul* no. 34 (March 1923), Biblioteca Digitala a Bucurestilor, www.digibuc.ro