Gaps, Or the Dialectics of Inter-imperial Art: The Case of the Belgrade Surrealist Circle

Preamble: The Gap that is the Text

Reflecting on the 1920s Belgrade in her book *Yugoslavia*, travel-writer Lena Jovičić describes the paradoxes of urban cohabitation in a Balkan capital: tall buildings and dilapidated small houses, creaking ox-carts and luxurious limousines, peasants in sandals and ladies in smart clothes, all coexist in this place where “East meets West in a curious jumble.” Jovičić detects “opposing forces everywhere: in the streets, in the houses, in the lives of the people” and surmises that, “in view of such extremes and contrasts you cannot but feel that there is a gap somewhere. The connecting link between one and the other is missing and so you constantly find that you suddenly drop into the gap” (11). Jovičić, a Scottish-Serbian writing in English, may well have felt this gap particularly poignantly. But Jovičić is careful not to reduce the matter to Orientalization or autobiography: while the gap in question might be read as a property of either the observer or the depicted geocultural terrain, it is in fact constituted only in their interaction. The gap is geo-cognitive and affect-ridden, and its effects are both discomforting and productive, suggesting that disorientation is vital to the creation of places. Challenging the habituated perceptual-ideological parameters of space, the gap between the ox-cart and the limousine into which we stumble co-constructs the site we are traversing. Had this book, published in London in 1928, not been intended for British children’s geography curriculum, one would have argued that Jovičić conceives of geopolitical space as an inter-imperially informed surrealist.

This article zooms in on the gap identified by Jovičić and reflects on the challenges posed to literary studies by such cases of inter-positionality: their repercussions on our understanding of lived temporalities, the strategies we use to translate this understanding into art and fiction, and the critical tools we deploy to evaluate thus produced artworks. To assist
in these ruminations I shall make operational and further examine the category of inter-
imperiality, theorized by Laura Doyle, and tackle phenomena of placedness, translatability,
and the futurity of artwork. My guides will be four artworks: the Yugoslav surrealists’ piece
of engagement art *Facing a Wall: A Simulation of the Paranoiac Delirium of Interpretation. Survey* (*Pred jednim zidom: Simulacija paranojačkog delirijuma interpretacije. Anketa*, 1932); two 1935 photographs by Vane Bor; and Marko Ristić’s 1928 anti-novel *Without Measure* (*Bez mere*, 1928). My siting aid will be the multi-ethnic history of the Belgrade
district called Dorćol.

**Contexts and Mandates**

The lovers of synchronicity often hurry to pronounce 1922 the *annus mirabillis* of
modernism. Provisional and problematic, this claim becomes re-energized if we remember
the imperial dynamics of the year: for example, that the 1922 Bauhaus exhibition in Calcutta
changed the nature of Indian modern art; the Irish Free State was born; the Fascists took over
in Italy; Tutankhamen’s tomb was discovered; and the Turkish army defeated the Greeks in
Asia Minor, resulting in an exchange of population that saw the displacement and
resettlement of about one million Greek Orthodox Christians and about half a million
Muslims. It was the last gasp of the Ottoman Empire, though: on 1 November 1922, the
newly founded parliament of Turkey abolished the Sultanate, thus ending 623 years of
monarchy and starting a radical reshuffling of state and culture. By this point in time, the long
history of contestations and exchanges between Western Europe and Timurid, Mughal and
Ottoman Empires had already inscribed this meso-region with specific imaginings (Todorova
1997), as witnessed in the 1922 German film *Nosferatu: A Symphony of Horror* (*Nosferatu,
eine Symphonie des Grauens*, dir. Friedrich Wilhelm Murnau). Both the film and its
(uncredited) literary inspiration, Bram Stoker’s *Dracula*, channel the anxiety of external
threat through the regional mythic figure of vampire, modelled on the medieval Voivode of Wallachia Vlad Drăculea (Vlad Țepeș). In the case of Murnau’s film, however, the details of the character’s fate seem to have been primarily sourced from the reminiscences of a displaced Serbian peasant, who, in 1916, had told a story about his “vampire-father” to soldier-turned-film producer Albin Grau (Grau 6). The farmer was a member of Serbian ethnic minority lodged in Romania after the establishment of the Kingdom of Serbia and both his name and his fate remain unknown. He may well have moved into Yugoslavia, a state that, after centuries of colonial rule over its diverse populace, came into being in the aftermath of the First World War and was ratified at the Conference of Ambassadors in Paris precisely in 1922. Yet he is unlikely to have seen the film or to have read another text to whose production he unwittingly contributed, namely, Serbian-Jewish writer Monny de Boully’s “transcription” of the graphic novel *Vampire*, published in *Testimonies*, the little journal of the Belgrade Surrealists Circle, and republished in the Paris-based *La Révolution surréaliste* in 1925.

My tracking shot to Yugoslav surrealism reveals the Balkans as a strategic inter-imperial zone shaped by multi-lateral circulations. In my interpretation of Doyle’s argument (2012), inter-imperiality refers to both, being positioned “inbetween” empires or, more generally, conditioned by simultaneous and consecutive imperial claims, and the structure of relations and affects resulting from global inter-imperial interactions over time. This affective structure creates geo-cognitive deposits that shape and reshape agents of history at all levels. Whereas inter-imperiality is a wide world-structure—almost no region on Earth has been immune to inter-imperial contests, collusions, and their bottom-up contestations—the early-twentieth-century Balkans seems to have exteriorized this dynamic in a particularly vivid form. Vied over for its geographical position and material and human resources for centuries, and politically and cognitively located at the intersection of two demising empires (Austro-
Hungarian and Ottoman) and between the demands of an imported notion of nation-state and the indigenous styles of political action, it was a charged locus of colonial contests and cultural interpellations. The history of interacting empires and human motions between and against those empires created intense (if at times constructed) awareness of the region’s inter-positionality and fortified its operation as a “historical legacy” (Todorova 2005); the latter shaped the investments and maneuvers of regional anti-colonial struggles, conceptualizations of history, and artistic expressions in the early twentieth century. To examine the last, Doyle argues, one needs to attend to “1) the contemporary dialectics of multiple empires; 2) the interaction of these inter-imperial dialectics with anticolonial and other dissenting movements; and 3) the legacies of centuries of inter-imperial cultural accretion that inflect later literature” (680). When approaching a text through this inter-imperial lens, then, scholars need to work at once horizontally and vertically, scrutinizing both the textual traces of transformative interactions of multiple empires in the past and the gravitational waves created by contemporary imperial contests and contestations. It is in this way that an unnamed peasant meets an Expressionist filmmaker and a surrealist writer to situate this article.

But why this particular constellation? Whereas the category of inter-imperiality offers fruitful ways to consider works of all epochs, it appears to be particularly serviceable for the consideration of planetary modernisms. Due to the context of escalating contestations and rapid development of global communication, travel, and trade, Doyle intimates, modernists intensely felt and self-consciously reflected on their inter-imperially sedimented positionality (685). The modernist artists’ maneuvers in a site at the rubbing edge of empires are particularly illuminating, I add. The investigation in such liminal zones is heuristically useful for at least three reasons. First, and generally: the conditions that become easily discernable if we refocus our lens on the loci where the uncanny proximities of empires are directly
negotiated are reflective of the universal operation of inter-imperiality, and thus useful for our reading of cultural artefacts produced at any site of imperial transaction. Second, and conveniently: the traces of inter-imperiality appear in the texture of artworks in particularly pronounced ways in those sites and at those times when the ripples of imperial contests and interactions are most intensely felt, either due to some recent historical fissures or as a consequence of failure to narrativize historical cross-breeding into the originary fantasy and retrospective finality of nation-state. Third, and programmatically: the artworks and art-practices that emerged in the communities that have been exposed to the violent interactions of empires and material suffering for a long period tend to be less known globally precisely as a result of this history of interruptions and often rigid social, economic, linguistic, and access-to-education hierarchies between and within empires. They are vulnerable and prone to obliteration in the global economy of modernist artefacts. Their emphatic “placedness” (Doyle and Winkiel) and the tensions occurring between vernacularizing practices and cosmopolitan movements like surrealism make the modernist artworks created in such areas not only poorly visible but also partly untranslatable to global audience. Because their products fall in-between the models of comprehension and patterns of interpretation we have developed, and because our insistence on the irreducibility of indigenous modernist practices to external descriptions has mostly failed to generate alternative homegrown approaches, the modernist practices inter imperia tend to be misinterpreted or neglected. The aesthetic production of the Belgrade Surrealist Circle, operational in the liminal (and, history would prove, transient) zone of Yugoslavia, belongs to this category.

Founded in 1918, amid the post-war inter-imperial shuffling of power, the state in question, initially named the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, constituted the first union of predominantly South Slavic communities previously living in the territories of the Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian Empires. For the majority of its history, the region has been a
borderline between empires, and its population have often been viewed (and they have viewed themselves) as a wall between the West and the East, a perception rooted in their experience of serving as forcefully conscripted frontier troops, “border-guards.” These frontier communities gained independence in a series of processes commencing with the mid-nineteenth century liberation wars, the Russo-Turkish War (1877/78), and the 1878 Congress of Berlin. Consistent with the *longue durée* history of the region as the site of contests and conformations, the very foundation of Yugoslavia was contingent upon an inter-imperial incident with global repercussions: on 28 June 1914, Gavrilo Princip—an impressionable youth whose father had participated in the Herzegovina Uprising against the Ottomans in 1875-77 and transported illegal migrants across the border between the empires—assassinated the Austro-Hungarian Archduke Franz Ferdinand at Latin Bridge in Sarajevo. The event sparked the First World War but also enabled the unification of the South Slavs. The union operated as a constitutional monarchy (1918-1929), absolute monarchy/dictatorship (1929-1934), and parliamentary monarchy, increasingly dependent on Nazi Germany (1934-1943). The Turks, French, Germans, Russians, Italians, and British continued to battle for cultural hegemony in the region (Marković), with the French interpellation particularly palpable in education, as instanced in the schooling of about 3,500 Serbian children, including many future surrealists, in France during the First World War. Caught between the desire for independence and the legacy of imperial claims, and between modernizing aspirations and a conservative political set-up, the new Kingdom of Yugoslavia was a highly repressive state, with a notorious impressment law and penitentiary system for the dissenting. Unsurprisingly, then, since the very beginning of the Yugoslav monarchy, the ground was also receptive to the influence of the USSR revolutionary knowledge-building, spread among the members of undercover resistance organizations. These counted in their ranks many affiliates of the Belgrade Surrealist Circle.
Walls, Roads, People: The Belgrade Surrealists’ Engagement Art

Coincidentally, it was in the year of modernist miracles, 1922, that young Marko Ristić, later the leader of the Yugoslav surrealists, published his first poetry, started international correspondence, and took up the editorship of *Ways*, a Belgrade-based little magazine dedicated to contemporary literature. Over the course of the following year, Ristić would transform the journal into a voice of international proto-surrealist literature and art, and facilitate the coming together of a like-minded circle. Over the three periods of its operation—that of individual and joint art-practices (1922-1929), activities as a public organization (1929-1933), and the post-detention/dissipation production (1933-1940)—the Belgrade Surrealist Circle published more than twenty books of poetry and prose, a few manifestoes, theoretical treatises, magazines, and bilingual journals, produced a range of public interventions, and mounted one group presentation/exhibition. The members were mostly highly educated merchant-class youth, many of them of Jewish or Aromanian (Tsintsar) descent, and most of them living at the time in the Belgrade neighborhood of Dorćol and surrounding zones. Beginning in early 1924, the Belgrade and the French surrealists collaborated intensely and enthusiastically. But the two circles also harbored profound differences, stemming from the divergent “placedness” of their work, that is, the site-specific convergences between material history and intellectual history and the meanings that art production acquires in each context (see Bahun-Radunović). The Yugoslav state authorities perceived the Belgrade Surrealist Circle as rather a dangerous political party than an artistic grouping: its members were occasionally imprisoned and many of their publications were banned, while the arrest and detention without trial of several key members in December 1932 put an end to their public activities. Accused of excessive appropriation of both Western (imperial) art and Soviet (imperial) politics by the local cultural elite, the Circle
nevertheless produced artwork that activates regional ethnography and emphasizes the social responsibility of the artist. Not only anti-bourgeois and anti-establishment but also actively committed to a proletarian revolution, the Belgrade surrealists understood their artistic enterprise as a subversive act, “boundless, unselfish, and moral” (Ristić 2003: 166), by comparison to which the French surrealist activities—even at their most radical—were unhelpfully innocuous.

It was both within this contemporary context and with the deep-time inter-imperial legacy in mind that the collective produced some of their most memorable work. One such is a piece of conceptual-engagement art called *Facing a Wall: A Simulation of the Paranoiac Delirium of Interpretation. Survey*, *Nadrealizam danas i ovde* No. 3 (1932), n.p. 1-2 and p. 51. Courtesy of the author.

It was both within this contemporary context and with the deep-time inter-imperial legacy in mind that the collective produced some of their most memorable work. One such is a piece of conceptual-engagement art called *Facing a Wall: A Simulation of the Paranoiac Delirium of Interpretation. Survey*. The collective commissioned (or acquired) a photograph of a dilapidated city wall taken by Rahamim Raka Ruben, a photographer at the *Politika* newspaper, and then asked six members to visually survey/interpret the picture. Their artistic responses to Ruben’s frontal-view close-up took the form of interventions/simulations, which were subsequently photographed, processually arranged around the photo, reproduced on two pages in the third issue of the surrealist journal *Nadrealizam danas i ovde* (*Surrealism Today and Here*, 1932), and accompanied by Marko Ristić’s article “Pred jednim zidom—objašnjenje istoimene strane ilustracija” (“Facing a Wall—An Explanation of the Eponymous Illustration Page”) (see Sretenović 187-92). This collective action had four stages: photographing the wall, free-associating, intervening (materialization of the idea), and reflecting (the article itself) (Ristić 51). Paranoiac simulation had already been expounded on
in both Salvador Dalí’s “The Stinking Ass” (“L’âne pourri,” 1930) and Breton and Paul Éluard’s *The Immaculate Conception* (*L’Immaculée conception*, 1930), but the immediate context for this artwork is the philosophical treatise *Nacrt za jednu fenomenologiju iracionalnog* (*Outline for a Phenomenology of the Irrational*, 1931), written by two key members of the Belgrade Surrealist Circle, Marko Ristić and Koča Popović. As this book clarifies, “simulation” is a volitional scientific action, aimed to awaken the latent content through an external, conscious impetus. This process produces a simulacrum which, rather than being a result of solitary simulation, emerges only through the twin hermeneutic (“paranoiac”) activity of the producer of the work of art and its interpreter. Ristić and Popović insist that such simulacra are also markedly historical: they articulate the dialectical struggle between the thought and the unthought/not-yet-thought. This struggle, felt acutely by the Belgrade surrealists, governs and shapes the historical subject-in-becoming.

So where does this phenomenological continuum from the observable to the unobservable and back into history of becoming leave us with the installation *Facing a Wall*? What Ristić does not mention in his article but what I am particularly struck by is a pre-phase of the project: the very choice of (the picture of) the wall, and the insistence on the materiality of an infrastructural object which, while taken out of its physical setting, nevertheless confirms it—here, the 1932 Belgrade. My hypothesis is that self-consciously inter-imperial artworks like *Facing a Wall* negotiate their placedness in specifically marked ways: by insistence on material substances and their conative and affective impact. Positioned uncomfortably in relation to and between different imperial narratives, the authors and works that bear witness to the violent histories of empires often resort to emphatic referencing of their site-specificity. Understood in this way, *Facing a Wall* instates a bidirectional dynamic: as much as the exterior impetus does not deprive the artefact of the quality of being a “representation” of the unconscious flow (and thus also a participant in
international surrealist conversations), so the intention to elicit the interior affective content that binds objects and observing subjects does not take away from the artefact the quality of being a representation/simulation of a particular physical infrastructure in the 1930s Belgrade, metonymically linked to the deep and contemporary history of the area.

The reason for this orientation towards site-specificity lies in the geo-cognitive liminality of the terrain out of which the work sprouted. For centuries, those who called Belgrade their home have been intensely aware of its status as an inter-imperial cauldron, a “borderline workshop” in and through which empires and states were formed (O’Dawd 172). Favorably situated at the low hills surrounding the confluence of the Sava and the Danube, the settlement has attracted more than forty waves of invasion and trans-formation by the Celts, Romans, Huns, Byzantines, Ottomans, Habsburgs, and Slavs themselves. One of the most charged imperial frontier-points ran through the Belgrade neighborhood of Dorčol, precisely where Kalemegdan Fortress stands and where the wall introduced in Facing a Wall in all likelihood stood (photographer Ruben both lived and had a studio in the neighborhood at the time). Dorčol has long been the axial point of the region’s inter-imperial dynamics, and the city’s main fortification—a Roman castrum, then the Turkish fortress of Kalemegdan—its walls delimiting the neighborhood and facing another fortification wall on the other side of the Danube river, stands as an emblem to this history. The area was traditionally organized by the crossroads of today’s streets of Dubrovačka/Kralja Petra and Cara Dušana, which, in the Middle Ages, this crossroads hosted four major trade routes, leading to Vienna, Widdin, Istanbul, and Dubrovnik, respectively; Dorčol, “dört yol,” means “four roads” or “crossroads” in Turkish. Fronting the border between empires, Dorčol was, for centuries, a terra incognita, a hub for refugees, homeless, and tradespeople. Sited on a marker of division, the neighborhood also positioned itself as defying the border, insouciantly stretching across the walls, and, through all the legitimate and illicit commerce of goods and people that
took place there, blurring the physical and cultural boundaries between the imperial zones. The Belgrade Surrealist Circle’s site-specific art obsessively engaged the physical and ideational manifestations of boundary-walls: the Belgrade surrealists described and pictured walls, meditated on the metaphoricity of walls, and used the images of Belgrade walls to trigger art-making, as in the case of Facing a Wall. Their choice to focalize the simulation through the fragment of a Belgrade wall—a fractal of a larger whole (wall) which in itself is a fractal of a yet larger whole (a house, a city)—was, then, fitting: the photographed wall could serve as simultaneously a metaphorical trope and a metonymy of both deep and contemporary history. As a zero-point of simulation, the close-up of the wall could also attract and contain two opposing functions that the Circle ascribed to walls more generally: their permeability, or porosity, and their status as a palimpsest of histories and socio-political inscriptions in deep time, on the one hand; and their capacity to operate as prison-walls, and the “wall of ignorance” reflective of an incompetent and repressive state, on the other (see Vane Bor and Marko Ristić’s 1932 book Anti-Wall: A Contribution towards a More Correct Understanding of Surrealism).

In the early twentieth century, Đorđićol was an eclectic architectural composite hosting the traces of imperial contests and those who lived them, morsels of the oral history of Serbs, Turks, Jews, Armenians, Aromanians, Roma, Greeks, Germans. Within a square mile, one could find a synagogue, a mosque, an Orthodox Christian, and a Catholic church, a fact marveled over by Jovičić, among others. The area had already been informally divided along class and architecture lines into the less affluent Lower and the baroquely revamped Upper Đorđićol in the nineteenth century and was undergoing further profound changes in the first decades of the twentieth century. Two urban structures which opened for operation in 1932 emblematized these developments: a state-sanctioned cultural center for the capital, Ilija M. Kolarac Endowment, on the upper edge of Đorđićol, and the coal-fired power plant “Power and
Light” in the Lower Dorćol quay. The latter’s symbolic name and impressive crane arching the river aimed to invoke in the city-dwellers a sense of ushering in a new age while trying to transform the “messy” lower Dorćol into a gridded industrial zone. Locationally, the power plant presented itself as an ungainly continuation of the Roman-medieval-Ottoman Kalemegdan Fortress.

The Belgrade surrealists could read the sediments of inter-imperial frictions perhaps primarily in such instances of the unique lack of architectural consistency in Belgrade cityscape. The latter led young Swiss Charles-Édouard Jeanneret—later known as Le Corbusier—to describe Belgrade in 1911 as an “uncertain city,” “a ridiculous capital, worse even: a dishonest city, dirty and disorganized” (43). Le Corbusier’s pairing of the category of honesty with organized urbanity and planned certitude not only announces his later theory of purism but also discloses its affiliations with a more general imperial vision of interstice-regions as somehow “messy,” “impure,” visually and cognitively “unclear”, and, therefore, both ontologically and ethically suspicious. As he overviewed the city from the vantage point of Kalemegdan, Le Corbusier must have felt not only perplexed but also somewhat threatened by all this messiness and misrule, indeed fearful he might fall into one of those “gaps” identified by Jovičić. He seems to have been profoundly disinterested in, even anxious about, the potential of this unreadable cityscape to harbor what, in an opposite argumentation about city-legibility, Michel de Certeau would call the liberating “practices of everyday life” (91-93). Dwelling on these gaps in urban legibility, however, one is led to another artefact of the Belgrade Surrealist Circle, which exploits precisely the sense of uneasiness that the lack of visual and cognitive clarity imparts: Vane Bor’s (Stevan Živadinović) 1935 series of photographs of a semi-deserted Dorćol underpass, Milica S. Lazović kao senka ili dva minuta pre zločina (Milica S. Lazović as a Shadow, or Two Minutes before Crime) and Jedan minut pre ubistva (One Minute before Murder).
Caption: Fig. 2 Stevan Živadinović Vane Bor, *Two Minutes before the Crime (Milica S. Lazović as a Shadow)*, 1935, vintage photograph, 90x60mm, Inv. No. M112. Courtesy of the Museum of Contemporary Art, Belgrade.

Caption: Fig. 3 A *Minute before the Crime*, 1935, vintage photograph, 87x62mm, Inv. No. M111. Courtesy of the Museum of Contemporary Art, Belgrade.

Capturing the perspective of someone looking down at a female (Fig. 2) and a female and a male (Fig. 3) figures in the white roadway below, this series of photographs was probably taken during a random walk but was carefully staged as a pair of film-frames showing the cobble-stone road on one side and the other side of a bridge. The road is demarcated on both sides by tall cement walls, constituting two main compositional lines that converge towards the horizon of each image. Exemplary of the art-practice which Pavle Levi recently called “cinema by other means” (2012), Bor’s stop motion series foregrounds the interplay of geometrical lines and shapes, darkness and light, similar to the aesthetic of an Expressionist film like *Nosferatu* (Todić 35). The “crime” is oddly absent in Bor’s pictures, but it looms in the surprising emptiness of urban space, reminding one of Eugene Atget’s photographs of empty Parisian streets, which Camille Recht and then Walter Benjamin memorably linked to the scenes of crime (Recht 15; Benjamin 256). For my purposes in this article, however, the key aspect of Bor’s series lies in its orientation towards interaction with
the recipient. In Milica S. Lazović..., the slanted-horizontal occlusion that tantalizingly diminishes the view draws the viewer into an uncomfortable hermeneutic effort: the blurred bordure signals the mythic operation of bridge as passage to death but the uncanny close-up also suggests that the viewer is somehow implicated in this passage, or the crime itself. On her way to the river (of death?) in One Minute before Murder, then, the girl has suddenly turned back; she looks away with a half-smile, as if interacting with someone under or on the other side of the bridge, while a passer-by is approaching her, hands in his pockets, unnoticed yet. The cinematicity of Bor’s series forces the viewer to become an editor/co-creator of this film, namely, to supplant a montage between the two film-frames, and, most importantly, dénouement. All of this places the observer in the position of not only a witness of a crime, but also, hypothetically, its perpetrator.

The Belgrade surrealists’ interest in time before/after crime was directly historical. While mythic in tenor, Vane Bor’s photographs disclose—just as Benjamin demanded—“every inch of [Belgrade] as the scene of crime” and “every passer-by as a culprit” (256). The 1935 artwork indexes some specific crime-related events in the region’s recent history, namely, the discovery of 53 skeletons of the First World War soldiers near the photographed site, the ratification of trade treaty between Yugoslavia and Hitler’s Germany, and the assassination of King Alexander of Yugoslavia—all of which had happened in 1934, less than a year before Bor’s photographs were taken. Or Bor may have had in mind some deeper-time inter-imperial dynamics related to the site his photos memorialize. The location captured in Bor’s photographs overlooks, on the one side, Dubrovačka street (in Milica S. Lazović...), and, on the other side, the Danube river-bank (in One Minute before Murder), and it sits proximate to the trade cross-roads out of which the neighborhood of Dorćol itself had developed. The cobblestone road captured in Bor’s photographs was located—and the wall used in Facing a Wall may have been located—in the immediate vicinity of the Jewish
quartier, a small commerce area of Dorćol that had become a refuge for the Ladino-speaking Sephardic Jews fleeing Spain and Portugal in the fifteenth-sixteenth century and the Ashkenazi Jews from Central Europe later, and had prospered as a result of its inhabitants’ important role in the salt trade between the Ottoman northern and southern provinces. The two horizons in Bor’s photographs, furthermore, embody the contrasts that characterized 1930s Belgrade, themselves legacies of inter-imperial history. On the Dubrovačka street-facing photograph, the horizon is a dense mixture of heterogeneous abodes—ground-level Turkish-style houses, two-floor baroque edifices, and, towards Upper Dorćol, modern buildings; on the Danube-facing photograph the horizon is ominously consumed by the unpopulated river bank, more pointedly, by a recently constructed canal that would allow cargo ships to bring coal for “Power and Light” plant. Importantly, in terms of epistemological articulation of space, Bor’s photographs foreground the claustrophobic enclosure of both horizon-paths between two tall, bare walls. Such is the architecture of public crime.

**Anti-monuments and Anti-novels**

As the previous discussion suggests, the state efforts to assert a national identity in the 1920s-30s Yugoslavia were mostly played out in the streets of its capital. The most popular of the enumerable monuments dotting Belgrade streets in the early 1930s was a fountain called Čukur česma (Čukur fountain/A Boy with Broken Jug; Fig. 4), opened to the public in Upper Dorćol in 1931, the year before the *Facing a Wall* project and four years before Bor’s photographs. It commemorated a place where, in 1862, Turkish soldiers killed 13-year-old Serbian boy Sava Petković, an event which, through a series of further incidents, led to the two uprisings of indigenous population, the establishment of the Kingdom of Serbia, and, eventually, the unification of South Slavs itself.
The fountain, whose construction was financed by personal funds of a Tsintsar tobacco merchant called Vandel Toma, is a blend of sculptor Simeon Roksandić’s anachronistic hyperrealism and state-architect Jan Dubovy’s functionalist-modernist corrective. The Belgrade surrealists bemoaned both its displaced nature in the surrounding architecture and its appropriation of real human suffering for blatant nation-building. Their anger is illuminating. While Parisian surrealists celebrated the capacity of monumental art to deaden the past and thus liberate the present, the members of the Belgrade Circle detested historic monuments. Instead, they found scriptural-revolutionary potential in decrepit walls and streets almost deprived of any outward signs of historical specificity—except that it was precisely their dilapidated, unembellished, forcefully erased condition that testified to the workings of history. As both Facing a Wall and Bor’s series intimate, the collective believed that historical occlusions could be brought into historical presence through neither abstraction nor vocal commemoration, but through the strategic selection and treatment of physical space as a writing pad, where the traces of sedimented history would be elicited by methods of facilitated indirect association (e.g., paranoiac simulation or montage-seeking).

How does one write such an anti-monument, though? How does one preserve in it the poignant traces of imperialism—that “most facile form of dogmatism,” as Marko Ristić characterized it (BM 233)—and make them active in forging future history? These questions tormented Ristić as he set out to compose his own anti-monument, novel Without Measure. The novel was written in Belgrade and Paris in 1927, during Ristić’s intense study of Hegel.
and artistic-friendly exchange with Breton (the latter was writing Nadja at the time and the two novels would be published nearly simultaneously in May 1928). Without Measure is an antithetical text. The status of the book as a text that negates itself is explicitly confirmed on a number of occasions and most extensively in Chapter 32, “The Foresigns of Chasm.” In the metatextual diatribe that consumes the entire chapter, one learns that one is reading a “novel without a novel,” and, pointedly, that “it is from the interiority of this book that its very negation erupts” (204; Novaković 212-13). Without Measure is, then, an anti-novel, in the precise fashion in which it would manifest itself in the texts of Nouveau Roman and would be theorized by Jean-Paul Sartre some twenty years later: it runs like a detective novel but simultaneously undermines its own generic status. Insofar as it reads as a novel, however, the text is focalized through a quasi-autobiographical narrator who follows the wanderings of a man appositely named Roman (“roman” is “novel” in both Serbo-Croatian and—imperial—French); the narrator and Roman stroll in and out of the diegetic reality, and from history into mythic supra-history and back into the current political and cultural debates. The opening pages suggest that the protagonist has migrated to the city center, a move that implies physical and metaphorical descending: “By that shaded side of the road Roman descends into the city, where a water-dragon and the most forceful reflection of the past are awaiting him” (33). This opening significantly reconfigures the cityscape as the space where the traces of the past are most acutely felt—if only one agrees to face them through an impossible creature (water-dragon) and an impossible (both immeasurable and measuring-resistant) narrative mode, announced in the novel’s title. The novel thereafter follows the protagonist and the narrator as they interact with these traces and experience fascination, resentment, and radicalization. While the narrative tension rises and murders, dream-murders, and executions accrue, the two entities become progressively indistinguishable from each other until they finally transform into a writer penning a polemic response to a certain Ivan Nevistić.
Creating a writing pad for the sediments of private, cultural and general history, this narrative meandering is oriented by what Ristić calls “geometrical points”: a mansard where the writing takes place (point 1), the site of dream which dreams itself dreaming and writing (point 2), and a place of execution by the firing squad (point 3). These general chronotopic points are further punctuated by subsidiary references to locations in Belgrade, Paris, Cannes, and Vrnjci, including an “avlija” (Turkish for “yard,” the word widely adopted in local dialect during the Ottoman rule) at 79 Kralja Milana street, Belgrade, the real-life setting of Ristić’s childhood and the projected locus of imagination play in the novel. This chronotope is continuously built and dispersed in the text as we enter and exit various characters’ stories, each with its own imperial accretion. Of these, the most memorable, perhaps, is that of a melancholic Turk who has sailed in on a yacht from Tsarigrad (“city of the Caesar,” present-day Istanbul), fleeing the spleen he succumbed to once when he sat on a bench listening to the hysterical voices of the enslaved women inside his harem. His escape to the site of the text (Belgrade) is in vain, for he is pursued by a “demon who fears neither Cross nor Crescent” (100), and his wanderings are doomed to be intercepted by a black ship carrying coal from Newcastle, one of those carriers seen around “Power and Light” plant. The last image swiftly reconstellates the novel’s chronotope into an industrial capitalist dystopia: we learn that the ship is a “kin of this polluted air […], this eclipsed sun, [and] this leaden sea that grinds itself into copper coins” (101). No sooner has this distinctive image been constituted, the section reverses into metatextuality, ending with the question whether Roman—protagonist as well as the genre—is actually the Turk’s demon, or perhaps his co-traveler in obsession, the two devils wandering the seas together. Ristić’s reworking of the Wandering Jew myth irreverently crosses cultures and sediments of reference to assemble an image of history as the melancholy story of displacement and exploitation, in turn commenting on the proclivity of the genre of novel to voraciously feast on this history.
Writing itself is, of course, one of the main subjects of Ristić’s novel, performatively explored with determination reminiscent of one James Joyce. Ristić’s narrator continuously ponders the nature of fiction and probes the quality and integrity of his own writing. Interspersed with accurate and inaccurate quotations and paraphrases, and glossing everything from Lautréamont’s and Rimbaud’s poetry to children’s books, regional folkloric sayings, and the 1920s films, the book also aims to provide the reader with a short history of literature and a surrealist (re)writing-guide. But the text engages in lineage-rewriting cautiously: while the narrator proclaims the surrealist disdain for the belle lettres (that is, the realist novel and its habituated modes of production and reception, as opposed to “true poetry”), he also argues against l’art pour l’art escapism and both celebrates and questions the Gothic tradition. Metatextuality and intertextuality in Ristić’s text thus seem to serve a more comprehensive literature-flexing. Rather than simply challenging one mode of literary expression, Without Measure instates a dialogical interaction between various types of utterance, textual planes and elements (Delić 64-66). The novel consists of not only the loose plot outlined above, but also its own paratext and visuals, accrued across three editions (1928, 1962, 1986): the 1928 acknowledgments, motto, and footnotes; the 1962 author’s prologue and endnotes; the 1928 kabalistic pictographs, the 1962 reproduction of Max Ernst’s “Owl (A Bird in a Cage)” (owned by Ristić since 1927), the 1986 reproduction of Giorgio de Chirico’s 1914 Piazza d’Italia, and others. These further interact with the elements of fairy tale, detective chronicle, Gothic novel, manifesto, satire, and symbolist performance. The expression is dominated by convoluted sentences that take advantage of the property of Serbo-Croatian as a case-based language to delay the appearance of the subject, or omit the subject altogether. This choice simultaneously unsettles and heterogenizes the narrative chronotope and foregrounds the nature of the text as an unending identity-quest. The last impression is reinforced by the frequent use of relative clauses and meandering parataxis, a
performative stratagem which, one intertextual reference (90) and the holdings of Ristić’s personal library suggest, present a covert dialogue with Marcel Proust. The interaction of narrative planes, modes, and references in Ristić’s anti-novel thus dialogizes the genre from within; but it also performs a specific historical mandate.

This mandate is visible at the ultimately dialogic plane of the novel: that of the relationship between figurative bodies. Insofar as the spatio-temporal coordinates of the protagonist’s and narrator’s actions are blurred (or without ascertainable measure), the subject/narrator-object/protagonist relation is indeterminable, and the text traverses the zones of dreams and reality, Ristić’s *Without Measure* appears to be a prototypical surrealist novel. In tune with the status of the text as a writing pad, however, the protagonist and the narrator remain metatextual traces rather than iconographically embodied beings. Roman/roman operates as, simultaneously, the subject of the work of art, the activity of its production, the artwork itself, and its formal, generic and contextual interpretation. Likewise, the quasi-autobiographical narrator is involved in the story as both observer and participant, but he is also metatextually distanced, more comparable to the later development of the role of the narrator in Nouveau Roman than to the typical narrating entity in a surrealist novel. The choice of the male pair of protagonists (rather than the male-female format, as found in, for example, Breton’s *Nadja*) assists the politics of Ristić’s text: it helps him contain to the periphery of the text the surrealist fascination with the female muse and to foreground, instead, the narrative line of maladjustment and revolt. The latter strand, in turn, reconstellates the scope of meanings one may attach to the female figures, fictional, autobiographical, and intertextual, in *Without Measure*. Operating from the charged margins, and often ambivalently glossed by the pronoun “ona” (“she”), they present metaphorical articulations of freedom (freedom, “sloboda,” is a female noun—a “she”—in Serbo-Croatian) or metonymic signals of a will to freedom, as in the chapter-long discussion of Wanda von
Sacher-Masoch’s 1906 memoirs (113-17) and in the dream-commentary on the gender relations in the USSR (119). As the writer keenly reinterpreted his own text in the prologue, both the form of the text and the desires it articulates are continuous with struggle for freedom—that is, political freedom (13-14, 17).

Surrealist art tends to be oriented by a notion of freedom that is over-arching yet sometimes abstract, but Ristić’s target is specific and direct. While writing Without Measure in Paris, he complained to his Belgrade friends about a sudden lapse in communication between the two surrealist circles. Belgrade surrealist Milan Dedinac replied: “I cannot advise you to pass over certain differences (…) Our position is immeasurably more stupid and more brutal than theirs in France… Just think what freedom means in our country… and what in theirs (not to mention our press law!)” (Legacy MR, the letter of February 15, 1927).

In the contexts of long history of invasion and occupation, the concept of freedom is herein geo-cognitively re-sited to articulate the legacy/condition of inter-imperial contestation. This is why, in Ristić’s novel, the search for unconditional freedom, and freedom relevant to one’s integrity—one that would be universal yet “immanent to… our existence” (233)—segues seamlessly into a dialectical challenge to the very notion of freedom as enshrined in the philosophical discourse and onwards into the pursuit of a specific freedom: revolution in Yugoslavia. While the ethical imperative of resistance should not be regarded as normative to the operation of the subaltern inter-imperial positionality (see Joyce in this Special Issue), it operated vigorously in the Belgrade Surrealist Circle. In Without Measure, these questions are addressed through the play of metaphoric substitution and metonymic extension of leitmotifs such as revolver and “atentat” (“assassination”)—wherein the “atentat” of “a certain artistic convention” becomes, across three editions, inextricably linked to the near past, present, and future history of the region (e.g., the assassination of Franz Ferdinand, that of five Croatian MPs in the Parliament in 1928, and of King Alexander in 1934). In the face
of an abstract, or mediated notion of freedom, the narrator of Ristić’s text muses, the only “position which remains fruitful for the spirit”, is “a MORAL and REAL attitude […]]: a working, active rejection of a certain order which has proven itself as dead and artificially maintained”, that is, “a bloody dialectic.” For, “passive resistance is insufficient” (233-34).

For the Circle, yearning for freedom is, however, intensified by another kind of captivity, an incarceration in regional and global imperial inscriptions, which, parenthetically, the French group might have also unwittingly deployed. These are meticulously related in Without Measure: “East, West, Catholicism, Mediterranean Culture, Europe in Danger, Balkan Man, Racial Expression, the Slavic Mission, Reslavicisation—what are all those games and toys to me?” queries Ristić’s narrator, “and what is love for homeland, nurturing beauty, belief in good, and other abstractions?” (232-33) Some of these labels are space- and time-specific and gesture towards particular routes of inter-imperial interaction in the early twentieth century; others are recognizable as more permanent discursive currencies, deployed and handled without questioning even today. As an impassionate and lengthy footnote to the text at this point further explicates, it is the concept and discourse of “racial art”, whose rise and global spread we can date to 1925-1930, that bothers Ristić most. He deems it a doubly limited, superficial way to refer to identity through entity, entrapping us, sometimes unawares, in an imperial construction. And “imperialism itself, including imperialism of the spirit”, the footnote-voice argues, is “the most facile form of dogmatism” (233). Folding into one the phenomena of overseas and continental imperialisms, the footnote addresses the discursive visibility and ambivalence of the terms “racial art” and “racial expression” (high in use in the US and French periodicals which Ristić obtained in 1926-27; see Library MR) side by side with the concept of “imperialism of the spirit”, deployed to justify reinvigorated Germanic nationalism in multi-ethnic Austria and former Habsburg colonies in the 1920s (see Martins; also Kafka’s letters referenced in Kwon in this Special Issue). The poly-lateral
bridges Ristić thereby forges are illuminating: they cohere an image of inter-imperially intersected world, where the strategies of imposition and suppression are ultimately comparable.

How, in this context, one preserves the “integrity of one’s freedom,” and, more to the point, how one makes art resistant to the imposition of an identity in the name of (sometimes myopic) idealism, Ristić’s narrator ponders (233). Rejecting imposed measures and demarcations, Ristić’s novel itself—“bezoblično čudovište za ujed”—“a shapeless monster which bites” or a “shapeless monster to be bitten”, both meanings being strategically sustained in this perplexing phrase (65)—professes to function as a “silent witness” (91) to global injustices. The very duality of the above phrase and one peripheral character may be our best pointers here. In the embedded symbolist play the reader encounters Jan, a character whose brief appearance is vital for the figuration of the novel as a whole. Jan describes his name as derived from “Ja-Ne”, meaning “I-Not I” in Serbo-Croatian, and his very existence as shaped by dialectical tension. Formalizing the relationship between the narrator and the protagonist, this character serves as a covert signpost, indicating that this anti-novel, out of whose interiority “its very negation erupts” (204), should be understood as a performative of Hegel’s philosophy. Ristić, who was simultaneously writing the introductory chapters of his PhD dissertation in Philosophy, studied Hegel avidly during the production of the novel.11

The novel is peppered with references to Hegel and its overall composition articulates a passage through the model of thesis-antithesis-synthesis superimposed on a topography of the author’s journey Paris-Cannes-(Vrnjci)-Belgrade.12 And it is a Hegelian alternative that is invoked explicitly as Ristić denounces imperial labels such as “racial expression” or “Europe in danger” (232-33). In the dialectical universe of Ristić’s Without Measure, it is only to be expected, then, that the first person narrator’s writing also stages a pamphlet against its own writer, framed as an “I against itself” (Ja-Ne): “This [text] is a pamphlet against myself,
perpetuated for years, and in vain. This negation would have been creative had it not been tainted by cowardice, compromise, a pleasant smile. I wonder if the crisis—that fundamental crisis which does not obey the measures of utilitarianism, and which is at once the cause and the effect of negation itself—would be enough [to break free]” (234). Permanent (aesthetic and ethical) self-critique was the governing principle of the Belgrade surrealist project and these words confirm it. But they also offer a more general vision of the self as profoundly dialectical, at once cause and effect, and perpetually split and reshaped in its interaction with the others in the situations of crisis; a self that stares at an execution, executes and is executed; a self that observes the Turkish galley, becomes one with the Turk’s melancholy self, and then distances itself to allow the Turk to transform into a Wandering Jew and onwards into a Newcastle coal-miner, on a writing pad.

One should take seriously, then, the novel’s signature assertion that it is aimed “against the reader,” that is, against the passive entity habituated into the “logical” or “consequential” progression of narrative and history in this context. This proclamation, I suggest, is a call for a more active readerly entity which would be at once the novel’s co-creator and its interpreter, thus an entity which would liberate thought from the prison-cell of the previously thought/written. The postulates of Facing a Wall and Bor’s photo-series thus also shape Ristić’s text. The novel gives varied bodies to historical subject-in-becoming, but this embodiment is itself subject to provision: Roman/roman is constituted only through the collaboration of the producer and recipient/interpreter of the text. Consequently, Chapter 14, entitled “Against the reader”, opens with the assertion that this book does not end or stop on its last page. The narrator entreats the reader to abandon “kaišarenje” (both “belt measure-taking” and “belting”; 64). Having read the last word in the novel—“obala” (“shore”)—the reader should return to the beginning and continue to read the associative and convoluted foreword that opens the book; and she/he should feel free to expand down any lines of flight
that the text suggests as this is a book *without measures* imposed by its author.\(^{13}\) The textual monster’s existence and shape, indeed its very coming into being, are thus conditional upon our commitment to read against the grain.

Unsurprisingly, then, the text ultimately renounces its prerogatives as a text: rather, it describes itself as an “aktivitet” (“activity” or “being active”; 47), thus a processual entity, a dynamism at the heart of the object. The term “aktivitet” has very limited currency in colloquial Serbo-Croatian; what Ristić likely has in mind here is the specific way in which the term was used in Hegel’s *Lectures on the Philosophy of History* (*Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Geschichte*, 1837). In response to Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics* in one of the lectures, Hegel describes the circumstances governing the abrogation of passivity in the face of thought’s propensity for reification. Because thought reifies its own content as being, Hegel reasons, it must be receptive. Dialectically understood, then, the thought-assumed-as-object must be simultaneously an instance of active thinking, wherein “the object reverses into activity” (“der Gegenstand schlägt um in Aktivität”; 162). In Ristić’s reworking of this insight, a committed readerly pursuit would galvanize this inner capacity of thought to dynamize itself into activity and thus, in turn, co-create the activity that is the text; this dialectic activity, Ristić believes, is deeply political. Here the producer and the user of art become one, enjoined in the “aktivitet” of endlessly co-creating and co-witnessing historical reality, what Ristić (after Marx) called “reversing, or transforming praxis” (“umwälzende Praxis”) (Ristić 1969: 11). The ultimate purpose of such writing-reading activity is, Ristić claims, the “affirmation of the human” (*BM* 20)—that is, a man’s or a woman’s realization as a human. Strategically, as we have seen, such realization implies resisting imperial captions.

Coda, or the Merit of Prolepsis
A remarkable artefact lies cushioned in the boxes containing the Legacy of Marko Ristić at the Archive of Serbian Academy of Science and the Arts: a small-size Château de Lancy notebook with the year 1928 hand-written on the cover. The notebook is filled with Ristić’s cultural reflections, quotations, and introspections that led to and followed the publication of *Without Measure*, all written in blue ink. At some point half way through the notebook, however, the page is suddenly divided by a thick horizontal line in green ink, under which one reads, “It’s May 15, 1943 today, when I’m writing *this*. The war’s ongoing; it’s occupation. Here we are in Belgrade…” What follows are reflections on bourgeois culture, collaborationism, the North Africa Campaign, imperialism, and meticulous records of everyday life in the German-occupied Belgrade. Interacting with the surrounding 1928 notes, the writer concludes: “I *am* still the same person, one who recorded his nausea, his naïve romantic revolt, in this boyish notebook 15 years ago…” (Legacy MR).

We are yet to develop a model of thinking that would encompass the past, present and future lives of modernist objects and their settings. One such model would target the gap captured within the thick green line in Ristić’s notebook, taking into consideration, for example, the 1938 publication of Ristić’s exceptional long poem, entitled *Turpitude* (*Turpitude*), the almost entire 500-copies edition of which was confiscated and destroyed, or the very setting of Ristić’s 1943 scribbling—his study/salon dominated by “The Wall of Surrealism,” an installation-wall methodically assembled over 40 years and featuring, among other artefacts, a particularly fine example of “Gelede” mask/headdress from the Yoruba tribe. Or, better still, I hope for a model that could capture some wider historical ripples relating to the artworks discussed in this article: the image of a large group of Dorćol Jews walking through the same underpass that Vane Bor memorialized in his photos, herded into their tragic future by German and Belgrade police, in 1941 (another imperial snapshot); tales of the surrealists’ arrests, executions, and emigration; Koća Popović’s rise through the ranks
of military service in the Spanish Republican Forces and Josip Broz Tito’s partisans; the
former surrealists’ prominent position in the cultural and political landscape of socialist
Yugoslavia; that Ristić, as a member of Société Européenne de Culture, wrote particularly
inspiringly on the dignity and service of translator (1963); that Oskar Davičo visited African
countries one by one in the 1950s-1960s and subsequently published a travelogue in which he
self-consciously rejects the Orientalizing gaze while suggesting trans-hemispheric solidarity
and a commonality of the “downtrodden” that, he believes, avoids Western imperial and
racialized inscriptions (1962: 9, 20); that the ex-surrealists were vitally involved in the
intellectual-political preparation and organization of the first Conference of Heads of State or
Government of Non-Aligned Countries in Belgrade, September 1-6, 1961, an event that
occasioned the introduction of night-lighting of that charged inter-imperial wall on
Kalemegdan Fortress. (Let it be also said: the non-aligned movement came into being as a
supremely inter-imperial creation, forged between and against empires by a cohort of the
dissenting—formerly enslaved, colonized, disenfranchised—but also, paradoxically, as an
alternative imperial creation in its own right, inscribed by accreted imperial desires, deep-
time projections, and material traces of Egyptian, Persian, Ghana/Wagadou, and Maurya
Empires, among others.) Finally, this model would beckon us to notice that the wall in
Facing a Wall has itself disintegrated, the area being bombed by different imperial powers at
least three times since Ruben’s photograph was taken and the last time in 1999.

There are marked gaps between each item on Ristić’s “Wall of Surrealism” I
mentioned above—gaps which attract us, gaps into which we fall, gaps which provide space
for future inscriptions. Ristić’s wall is a palimpsest of histories of empires and those who
lived among them; but it is also an objet d’art reflecting on its own porosity to our desires and
positionalities, our past, present and future inter-imperial monograms. The above prolepsis
indicates just some possibilities opened up by adopting the model of deep and divergent time
in a more daring fashion—encompassing not only axial points such as the development of nation-state and international capitalism but also multilateral third-side agents and co-formations, and in such a way as to account for both memory and futurity of art objects. The surrealist artworks I have addressed in this article are not directly altered by their “futures” but they are reconfigured at each historical turn insofar as they are all (meant to be) constituted through an interaction between the producer and the recipient. Expanding our inquiries to account for the multiple and ongoing histories of imperial intersection that have inscribed us as both producers and interpreters of artworks can only enrich our understanding of human, lived time. This is so because each of its cultural crops acts a writing pad, or a heavily engraved wall, intended for interpretation, even when its inscriptions have been erased by lengthy passages of time and all the more so if its future scribbles are illegible.

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On entangled and inter-imperial history of the meso-region of the Near East and the Balkans/Southeast Europe, see Subrahmanyam; Kaser; Barnath; and Daskalov, Mishkova, Marinov, and Vezenkov.

Le Corbusier contextualised these remarks as “youthful” in a later note (39).

From 1-11 April 1934 the workers constructing a twin-underpass unearthed the skeletons of the soldiers who had unsuccessfully defended Belgrade against the Central Powers in the battle on 7 October 1915; Yugoslavia signed a major trade treaty with Germany on 1 May 1934; and King Alexander I was assassinated on 9 October 1934 in Marseilles, France.

Herein I correct my erroneous siting in Bahun-Radunović 2006.

All translations from Ristić’s novel are mine.

Sartre writes: “[T]he aim [of an anti-novel] is to pit the novel against itself, to destroy it under our very eyes (at the same time as it would seem to be erected), to write the novel of a novel that does not, that cannot develop” and thus “safeguard [one’s] honesty as a story-teller” (7-8).

Ristić was admitted to PhD study in Philosophy at École normale supérieure, Paris, in 1927, but abandoned it the same year. The surviving drafts of his projected dissertation, “La Métaphysique des faits divers” (“Metaphysics of News”), focus on the flaws of traditional metaphysics, circulation of news, and the category of the dialectic moment (Ristić 1985: 243-54).

The 1926-27 journey is also recorded in Ristić’s simultaneously produced cycle of collages La vie mobile.

Inspired by a 1926 visit to Breton’s Montmartre flat and produced from 1930-1970, this wall, now on permanent display of the Museum of Contemporary Art in Belgrade, is regarded as the first installation in Yugoslav art.