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## *Mutual exchange between Polish and Belgian magazines: a case study in cultural mobility within the interwar network of the avant-garde*

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### ABSTRACT

In January 1924, Flemish avant-garde magazine *Het Overzicht* published a list of its congenial modernist formations named 'Het Netwerk'. It named nineteen magazines from Europe, the United States and Brazil, including the Polish magazine *Zwrotnica*. It exemplified the close and direct relationships within the supranational network of the avant-garde. Various formations belonging to this network, both bigger and smaller nodes, were linked to each other, often directly through befriended artists and writers. It did not only concern places such as Paris or Berlin, but also less pivotal nodes of the avant-garde network. In this paper I will present a case study of two countries, namely Poland and Belgium, as an example of European interwar cultural mobility. Joined in their pursuit of modern art, and crossing national and linguistic frontiers, Polish, French and Dutch-language magazines exchanged and re-printed each other's texts and artworks, a practice also discussed in the correspondence between their representatives. Based on such tangible traces I will describe the cultural mobility and mutual exchange between the Polish and Belgian modernist journals, and attempt to shed light on the features, dynamics, and key figures of the network.

### KEYWORDS

modernism, avant-garde, little magazines, Polish-Belgian exchange, cultural mobility

One of the main features of the interwar avant-garde network was the international exchange of works and ideas, which surpassed national, cultural and linguistic borders and limitations. This exchange took place in modernist magazines, established by particular groups worldwide, linked to each other by their representatives. This article presents a case study exemplifying the exchange and mobility between two parts of the network – Belgium and Poland – which have rarely been considered as canonical contributors to the development of European interwar art, and have mostly been described with reference

to more pivotal formations from France or Germany.<sup>1</sup> I will demonstrate that besides links to the so-called ‘centers,’ these less pivotal formations were also directly related to each other, regardless of the cultural and linguistic barriers between them.

The international exchange of works and ideas was crucial for the avant-garde network, because most of its nodes stayed on the side-lines of local contemporary artistic and literary life, and needed to diffuse their accomplishments and spread their viewpoints elsewhere. Magazines featured a plethora of international novelties and artworks, and their editors strove to broaden the reception of their periodicals by sending them to as many places as possible, be it in the East or in the West. Thus, the contact between the different nodes was of a reciprocal character, because one part of the network would not only propagate their works, but also receive new impulses from numerous congenial formations and artists, which had a major impact on the general development of modern art in Europe.

Strongly related to the mutual exchange between avant-garde magazines is the notion of cultural mobility, as discussed by Stephen Greenblatt.<sup>2</sup> The concept of cultural mobility has no strict definition, and it encompasses a number of social and cultural phenomena, yet for the sake of this article I would describe cultural mobility as a multi-dimensional exchange of viewpoints, ideas, activities, people etc., taking place across cultures, countries, languages and social classes, while having the ability to freely move between cultural circles defined by those factors. Greenblatt postulated that the dynamics of metaphorical transfer of ideas and influences might be understood only when the actual movement is well described, which is my objective here. In the description of cultural mobility a number of factors should be taken into consideration, such as the particular individuals who facilitated the contacts and functioned as intermediaries.

In order to reflect on the cultural mobility between Poland and Belgium, I will analyze the exchange between their most prominent avant-garde literary, artistic and architectural magazines, which were established during the interwar period.<sup>3</sup> Aiming to shed light on the constant circulation and diffusion of works and ideas between its nodes, whether seen as pivotal or not, I will discuss traces of the exchange left in the magazines in question and in the correspondence between the artists.

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<sup>1</sup> For existing studies on Belgian and Polish avant-gardes as well as on the international interdependencies of the modernist network see e.g. Per Bäckström and Benedikt Hjartarson (red.), *Decentring the Avant-Garde*. Amsterdam/New York: Rodopi 2014; Timothy O. Benson (red.), *Central European Avant-Gardes: Exchange and Transformation, 1910-1930*. Los Angeles: County Museum of Art/Cambridge: The MIT Press 2002; Hubert van den Berg & Gillis Dorleijn (red.), *Avantgarde! Voorhoede? Vernieuwingsbewegingen in Noord en Zuid opnieuw beschouwd*. Nijmegen: Vantilt 2002; Hubert van den Berg & Lidia Gluchowska (red.), *Transnationality, Internationalism and Nationhood. European Avant-garde in the First Half of the Twentieth Century*. Groningen: Peeters 2013; Johan De Smet (red.), *Modernisme. L'art abstrait belge et l'Europe*. Gent: Fonds Mercator 2013; Harri Veivo (red.), *Transferts, Appropriations et fonctions de l'avant-garde dans l'Europe intermédiaire et du nord*. Paris: L'Harmattan 2012.

<sup>2</sup> Stephen Greenblatt, *Cultural Mobility: A Manifesto*. Cambridge: University Press 2010.

<sup>3</sup> I confine my analysis to the following titles: *Het Overzicht, De Driehoek, 7 Arts, Anthologie, Cercle et Carré, Zwrotnica, Blok, Praesens, L'Art Contemporain – Sztuka Współczesna, a.r., Europa and Linia*.

## BELGIAN AVANT-GARDE FORMATIONS

The Belgian avant-garde gave birth to a very wide spectrum of little magazines, for instance *Het Overzicht*, *De Driehoek*, *7 Arts* and *Anthologie du Groupe Moderne d'Art de Liège*. Geert Pijnenburg (1896-1980) and Michel Seuphor (1901-1999, pseudonym of Fernand Louis Berckelaers) founded *Het Overzicht* [The Overview] in Antwerp in June 1921. Initially it was a nationalist Flemish magazine, yet Seuphor '[est vite] devenu passionnément, furieusement, rageusement antinationaliste' [soon became passionately, furiously, ravingly antinationalist]<sup>4</sup> and since November 1922 – when Jozef Peeters (1895-1960) replaced Pijnenburg as the co-editor of the magazine – *Het Overzicht* became more devoted to international art and the avant-garde. In February 1925 the last issue of *Het Overzicht* appeared, after which Seuphor moved to Paris and Peeters launched his new magazine *De Driehoek* [The Triangle]. Peeters invited Dutch writer Edgar du Perron (1899-1940) and Flemish poet Paul Van Ostaijen (1896-1928), as well as Hendrik Werkman (1882-1945), the editor of *The Next Call*, to contribute to his new initiative.<sup>5</sup> *De Driehoek* published ten issues between April 1925 and January 1926, and featured some original contributions from Italy, Romania, Germany, France and the Netherlands.

Having settled in Paris, Seuphor became the co-editor of *l'Esprit Nouveau* [The New Spirit]. Like Peeters, Seuphor also contacted Werkman, asking him to contribute to this new journal and suggesting that he would like to organize Werkman's exhibition in Paris.<sup>6</sup> In 1927 Seuphor, together with Paul Dermée, published only one issue named *Documents Internationaux de l'Esprit Nouveau* [International Documents of the New Spirit] with one text of Polish provenance.<sup>7</sup> Two years later he founded *Cercle et Carré* [Circle and Square] together with Joaquín Torres-García (1874-1949), which consisted of an international group of avant-garde artists based in Paris. In 1930 the group published three issues of its magazine and organized an exposition featuring works by numerous European artists, including Polish and Belgian representatives. In vain Seuphor tried to involve Werkman or Theo van Doesburg (1883-1931), two editors of the Dutch magazine *De Stijl* [The Style], in this new initiative. Seuphor invited them to join artists from Holland, Belgium, Poland and other countries united in their pursuit of modern art: 'J'espère que vous ne refuserez pas de figurer aux côtés de Mondrian, Vantongerloo, Stazewski, Léger, Ozenfant, Torrès-García, Léonce Rosenberg et bien d'autres' [I hope that you will not refuse to figure next to Mondrian, Vantongerloo, Stazewski, Léger, Ozenfant, Torres-García, Léonce Rosenberg and others].<sup>8</sup>

Parallel to the Dutch-language Antwerp-based journals, a French-language review

<sup>4</sup> Grenier 1996 (27). The original spelling is kept in all the quotations; all translations from foreign sources are mine.

<sup>5</sup> See Peeters's letter to Werkman from 10 February 1925, Werkman Archief in Amsterdam (WA), inv. nr. 1.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Seuphor's letters to Werkman from 24 November 1926, 30 May, 10 June 1927, WA, inv. nr. 1.

<sup>7</sup> Syriusz Korngold, 'Les éléments du dessin...' *Documents Internationaux de l'Esprit Nouveau* 1, 1927.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Seuphor's letter to van Doesburg from 8 January 1930, Archive of Theo and Nelly van Doesburg (0408), Rijksbureau voor Kunsthistorische Documentatie in The Hague (RKD), inv. nr. 189 and Seuphor's letter to Werkman from 13 January 1930, WA, inv. nr. 1.

named *7 Arts. Journal hebdomadaire d'information et de critique* [7 Arts. Weekly journal for information and critique] was published by *L'Équerre* [The Set Square] in Brussels between 1922 and 1929. Edited by Victor (1897-1962) and Pierre Bourgeois (1898-1976), Karel Maes (1900-1974), Pierre-Louis Floquet and Georges Monier (1892-1974), *7 Arts* appeared weekly on cheap, thin paper (similarly to *De Driehoek*) as if meant to be thumbed in the tram on the way to or from work.<sup>9</sup> It proved, however, to be one of the most consistent Belgian avant-garde magazines: it appeared regularly and published 156 issues covering a wide range of subjects, such as poetry, visual arts, architecture and music. Other Belgian French-written journals reflecting the revolutionary modernist currents of interwar literature, art and architecture were *Anthologie du Groupe Moderne d'Art de Liège* [Anthology of the Modern Art Group of Liege] edited between 1921 and 1940 by Georges Linze and Constant de Horion, and *L'Équerre* (equal to *7 Arts's* publishing house) launched in Liège in October 1928.

#### THE AVANT-GARDE IN POLAND

Among focal Polish interwar avant-garde formations key publications were *Zwrotnica*, *Blok*, *Praesens*, *L'Art Contemporain – Sztuka Współczesna, a.r.*, *Europa* and *Linia*. Cracow-based *Zwrotnica* [The Switch] was founded in 1922 by Tadeusz Peiper (1891-1969) and published in two series (1922-23 and 1926-27). Peiper had spent the war and the first post-war years abroad, and his viewpoints – shaped in a different environment than his peers – found reflection in the theoretical program of *Zwrotnica*.<sup>10</sup> Initially identified with futurism, *Zwrotnica* soon gained a more constructivist character and Peiper became a key actor in the Polish avant-garde scene. His undeniable status was reflected for instance in Przyboś's letter from 1930 when launching the new magazine *Linia*: 'Bez Peipera absolutnie nie możemy wystąpić, a czekaliśmy 4 lata, możemy jeszcze 3 miesiące do jesieni.' [Without Peiper we may absolutely not begin, we have waited 4 years, we might as well wait 3 more months into the autumn].<sup>11</sup> Peiper was repeatedly asked in vain to participate in new initiatives – such as *a.r.*, *Linia* and *L'Art Contemporain*.

In May 1923, the *Exhibition on New Art* took place in Vilnius. It featured works of emerging Polish avant-garde artists such as Strzemiński, Stażewski, Szczuka and Żarnower who later established *Blok* [Block] – the major Polish constructivist group. *Blok* was published in Warsaw between March 1924 and March 1926 and featured a plethora of European artists. However, internal tensions and theoretical differences, already visible in the Vilnius catalogue, resulted in the fact that many artists left the group to join Szymon Syrkus and his new initiative *Praesens*, leaving only Szczuka and Żarnower in the editorial board of *Blok*. *Praesens* was mostly devoted to architecture but its two issues –

<sup>9</sup> An Paenhuysen, *De nieuwe wereld. De wonderjaren van de Belgische avant-garde [1918-1939]*. Antwerp: Meulenhoff Manteau 2010 (143).

<sup>10</sup> Alina Kowalczykova, *Programy i spory literackie w dwudziestoleciu 1918-1939*. Warszawa: Ludowa Spółdzielnia Wydawnicza 1981 (113-114).

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Przyboś's letter to Kurek from 10 April 1931, quoted in: Tadeusz Kłak, *Materiały do dziejów awangardy*. Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich 1975 (105).

from June 1926 and May 1930 – featured other forms of art as well. *Praesens* was for instance involved in the organization of Malevich's exhibition and van Doesburg's lectures in Warsaw.<sup>12</sup> Yet, interpersonal antagonisms and opposing viewpoints proved to be insurmountable and after the General National Exhibition held in 1929 in Poznań, hostilities between the architects and painters affiliated with *Praesens* led to a split between these two factions.<sup>13</sup>

The Polish artistic milieu of the late 1920s and early 1930s was reflected in a number of short-lasting and competing magazines. Following the break-up of *Praesens* in 1929, Strzemiński, Kobro and Stażewski launched *a.r.* (*revolutionary artists or real avant-garde*) – a group aiming to unite all artistic disciplines: visual arts, architecture, typography and poetry. To achieve this goal, they invited Przyboś and Brzękowski, two poets formerly involved with *Zwrotnica*, to join their initiative. Instead of publishing its own magazine, *a.r.* published two short bulletins and eight books as parts of the *a.r. collection*. Parallel to *a.r.*, Baczyński published *Europa* [Europe], and Brzękowski and Chodasiewicz-Grabowska (Nadia Léger) launched the Polish-French *L'Art Contemporain – Sztuka Współczesna* [Modern Art], both published in 1929-30, respectively in Warsaw and in Paris. Dreading a lack of cooperation between Polish artists and aiming to constitute a common ground for all Polish avant-garde formations, Brzękowski and Strzemiński initiated a new magazine which after long-lasting disputes appeared in May 1931 under the name *Linia* [Line] edited by Jalu Kurek.<sup>14</sup> Due to financial problems and programmatic differences, however, *Linia* did not manage to unify the Polish avant-garde scene, which remained fragmented throughout the 1930s.

#### POLISH CONTRIBUTIONS TO BELGIAN AVANT-GARDE MAGAZINES

Belonging to an international network of avant-garde formations and periodicals, the previously mentioned magazines and artists from Poland and Belgium were directly related to each other, and not only via the more pivotal nodes of the network, such as Paris. Although French was indeed the *lingua franca* of the period, Polish avant-garde artists also had direct ties to Flemish magazines. Especially noteworthy is the link between *Zwrotnica* and *Het Overzicht*, initiating a long-lasting reciprocal exchange of texts, reproductions of artworks, and architectural projects between magazines from Poland and Belgium. Obviously, Polish and Belgian magazines did not only have contact with each other. Cultural mobility within the avant-garde network had a multidimensional

<sup>12</sup> The latter did not come to fruition due to financial reasons. See Andrzej Turowski, *Malewicz w Warszawie: rekonstrukcje i symulacje*. Kraków: Universitas 2004 and Van Doesburg's correspondence with *Praesens*, RKD, inv. nrs. 201 and 308.

<sup>13</sup> Andrzej Turowski, *Konstrukttywizm polski: próba rekonstrukcji nurtu (1921-1934)*. Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich 1981 (74-78 and 274).

<sup>14</sup> Cf. Strzemiński's letter to Przyboś from 8 September 1930, quoted in: Andrzej Turowski, 'Listy Władysława Strzemińskiego do Juliana Przybosia z lat 1929-1933.' *Rocznik Historii Sztuki* 9, 1973, 223-268 (247), Brzękowski's letters to Kurek from 27 April 1931 [Kłak 1975 (62-63)], and to Przyboś from 4 September 1930 and 19 February 1931, quoted in: Tadeusz Kłak, *Źródła do historii awangardy*. Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich 1981 (67-69 and 82-83).

and supranational character, and it surpassed national, as well as cultural borders, between the East and the West and between the so-called ‘centres’ and their ‘peripheries’. Below I will refer to Polish-Belgian relations as an example of such circulation.

Two key figures influencing the cultural mobility between Poland and Belgium were Tadeusz Peiper, the editor of *Zwrotnica*, and Michel Seuphor; the two had exchanged letters since 1922.<sup>15</sup> In October 1923 *Het Overzicht*, as one of few international journals, published a note on the Vilnius exhibition of May 1923.<sup>16</sup> Six months later *Het Overzicht* published an article on modern Polish art written by Jan Brzękowski, an exceptional example of cultural exchange between Polish and Dutch-speaking formations.<sup>17</sup> The correspondence between Seuphor and Peiper started in 1923 when the former asked Witold Kajruksztis – a *Blok* artist, co-organizer of the Vilnius exhibition and co-author of its catalogue – for information about modern Polish art, who then passed the request on to Peiper.<sup>18</sup> Although Peiper offered to write two texts on Polish modern art and poetry, he sent only one text to Seuphor in February 1924. Too busy publishing a book, Peiper had asked Brzękowski – a young poet related to *Zwrotnica* – to write the article. According to Peiper, Brzękowski’s text was ‘peut-être même trop objectif’ [perhaps even too objective] yet, it was ‘le premier article qui met au point, d’une façon à peu près exacte, la physionomie véritable de nos groupements artistiques’ [the first article which describes, in a more or less precise manner, the genuine physiognomy of our artistic formations].<sup>19</sup>

The Dutch version of Brzękowski’s text was published with some delay in April 1924. The same issue of *Het Overzicht* included a short note on Peiper’s poetry volume *A* (drawings by Kisling), and the following issue mentioned his *Żywe Linie* [Living Lines] with drawings by Juan Gris.<sup>20</sup> Both books were published in 1924 and one of them was the reason why Peiper could not write the article on poetry himself. Moreover, in the same letter Peiper also asked Seuphor to write an article on Belgian art for *Zwrotnica*, which never appeared in the magazine.<sup>21</sup> In January 1924, *Het Overzicht* published a list of congenial modernist periodicals with the meaningful title ‘Het Netwerk’ – a tangible indication that avant-garde formations and their magazines saw themselves as parts of a world-wide network characterized by cooperation.<sup>22</sup> It listed titles from Belgium, France, Germany, Brazil, the US as well as Polish *Zwrotnica*. *Zwrotnica* had also been

<sup>15</sup> Andrzej Turowski, *Budowniczość świata z dziejów radykalnego modernizmu w sztuce polskiej*. Kraków: Universitas 2000 (98).

<sup>16</sup> ‘Boekbesprekingen.’ *Het Overzicht* 18/19, October 1923, 119-120.

<sup>17</sup> Jan Brzękowski, ‘Nieuwe Kunst in Polen.’ *Het Overzicht* 21, April 1924, 155.

<sup>18</sup> Peiper’s letter to Seuphor from 15 December 1923, Archief van Michel Seuphor, Letterenhuis in Antwerp (LH), inv. nr. 186877/1.

<sup>19</sup> Peiper’s letter to Seuphor from 12 February 1924, LH, inv. nr. 186877/2.

<sup>20</sup> ‘Boekbesprekingen.’ *Het Overzicht* 21, April 1924, 163; ‘Tijdschriften (6<sup>e</sup> aanvullingslijst).’ *Het Overzicht* 22/23/24, February 1925, 178.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. Peiper’s letter to Seuphor from 12 February 1924, LH, inv. nr. 186877/2.

<sup>22</sup> ‘Het Netwerk.’ *Het Overzicht* 20, January 1924.

mentioned in the sixteenth issue, and *Blok* appeared in the two last issues of *Het Overzicht*, including a table ‘Tijdschriften – Revues Modernes’ on the final cover of the magazine.<sup>23</sup>

## HET NETWERK

Antwerpen :	(Berckelaers-Peeters) " Het Overzicht ,, (Jozef Muls) " Vlaamsche Arbeid ,,
Amsterdam :	(Wijdeveld) " Wendingen ,, (Groenevelt) " Het Getij ,,
Berlijn :	(Walden) " Der Sturm ,, (v. Wedderkop) " Der Querschnitt ,,
Brazilië :	(Serge Milliet) " Klaxon ,,
Brussel :	(Bourgeois, enz.) " 7 Arts ,, (Verwilghen) " La Cité ,, (Hellens) " Le Disque Vert ,,
Lyon :	(Malespine) " Manomètre ,,
New-York :	(Andersen) " The Little Review ,, (Thomas Mann) " The Dial ,,
Parijs :	(Beauduin) " La Vie des Lettres ,, (Ozenfaut-Jeaneret) " L'Esprit [Nouveau ,,
Polen :	(Haddie Peiper) " Zwrotnica ,,
Rome :	(Prampolini) " Noi ,, (Bragaglia) " Cronache d'Attualita ,,
Weenen :	(Lajos Kassak) " Ma ,,

## DE NIEUWE KUNST IN POLEN

De nieuwe kunst was reeds in West-Europa in volten bloei, toen hare eerste straten in Polen drongen. De politieke toestand, waarin Polen zich was in oorlog bevond, was een grootte hinderpaal voor de normale evolutie van het intellectueel leven.

Het waren de dichters en schilders, geschaard rond het tijdschrift "Zdrój" (De Bron) te Poznań, die de invoerders der nieuwe kunst in Polen waren. Ofschoon dit tijdschrift onder invloed van het Duitse expressionisme stond, heeft het een grooten invloed uitgeoefend op het kunstleven van ons land. Het heeft de schrijvers ontvoerd van de dogmatische onderwerping aan het romantisme en het "jonge Polen". Het ontwekeld de in de jonge generatie de behoefte naar een nieuwe kunst. Zelf schreef het niet, maar door zere eerlijke inlichtingen aangaande de voorstrevende beweging in het buitenland, bracht het de Poolse kunstenaars op de hoogte der overwinningen op kunstgebied verwezenlijkt in Frankrijk, Italië en Duitsland.

De kunstenaars van "Zdrój", waren te wettig modern om op logische wijze den weg te vervolgen, die zij ingelagen waren bij den aanvang hunner artistieke. Na eenigen tijd dwalen gingen zij vastberaden tot de boerenkunst en daar raakten zij de begrepen van het primitivisme. Doch vermits zowel onze romantische, als het "jonge Polen", de volkscultuur aan-schouwden als de belangrijkste bron hunner inspiratie, was het onderscheid tusschen de kunstenaars van "Zdrój" en die der oudere generatie schier onmerkbaar. Alvoers zij niet dit realisme erkenden, ontstond een nieuwe groep te Warszawa, rond het tijdschrift "Skamander".

Dit gebeurde toen het verzeen Polen zich vrij kon geven aan de spontane uiting zijner levendige energieën. Tot dan toe werd de gansche natie bezig gehouden door den strijd tegen de verduiking, terwijl de kunstenaars zich groepen schieden om de nationale ziel te streunen. Doch dezen toestand verholpen, konden de dichters, dichters rijen. Zij konden zinnig zijn, mochten schrijvers zinnig hunne scherpzinnige gril het ingaf. Het genoot te leven, overmaat der instincten, de gekke jeugd, de roes van de bezinnende, de vervoering op de wijze van Whitman en Rimbaud waren de voornaamste klanken hunner dichtkunst. Dit was een groote ideologische verdienste voor een land dat steeds een sonde en onmenselijk ontzettend had. Nachten blijven die slechte verdiensten van ideeën — Op een kunstzinnig domein, ten behoeve van poëtischen vorm hebben de jonge dichters van Warszawa nieuw gedaan. Zij zijn epigonen.

De werkelijke nieuwe Poolse kunst is ontstaan te Krakau. Te midden van den atmosfer dieer oude stad, die het middenpunt was van het nationaal leven van Polen tijdens onze politieke slavernij, bleef de behoefte bestaan zich te verzetten tegen de traditie. Hier grepen de meest belangrijke revolutionaire plannen, die de Poolse kunst gederende de 30 laatste jaren onderging.

De eerste kreet van opstand werd geslaakt door een groep schilders die zich zelf "Formisten" noemden. Zij verlangden emancipatie van het kunstwerk en verbanning van het oeder-weg; zij streeden tegen het subsonen der realiteit, zij bevochten het impressionisme en het naturalisme, en verdedigden het recht der zuivere beelding. Zij ondergingen het lot van alle avant-garde. Benchinging en alle mogelijke moeilijkheden werden hen ver-toornacht. Sommigen hadden met de kracht om deze toestand het hoofd te bieden en zij verlieten de basis van het "Formisme" — om meer gebaande en erkende wegen te bewandelen.

Anderen hebben zich rond het tijdschrift "Zwrotnica" geschaard.

Op het domein der letterkundige verzeen de nieuwe kunst onder de benaming "Futurisme". De meest entante Poolse futuristen hebben enige jaren in Rusland doorgereisd die krijgsvaart en leeren daar de Russische futuristen kennen. Terug in Polen, propageerden zij hunne ideeën op de wijze, welke Marinetti reeds ingeborgd had in de kunstbeweging. Voordrachten, aanspreekingen door alle middelen voor reklaam, gemaakte ballet met treffende vermissingen. Dit alles floede om de massa te boeien, te dwingen hen te volgen. Zij trachten de dichtersrijke taal te veroveren. Zij schrepen nieuwe woorden, experimenteer, meer geschikt om een redutrechtke visioen te verwekken. Zij schrepen nieuwe antropoïemen, en ver-vordende de schrijfwijze. In den beginne handelden zij in dichte getijden, met militaire tucht, maar na drie jaren gremenschappelijk streven, ontbonden zij zich, gedwongen door de meer individualistische evolutie, die hen schakelde.

De meest vooruitstrevende werken om made aan "Zwrotnica", "Zwrotnica" (Sporoogvaam!) is heten het middenpunt van alle werkelijk Poolse avant-garde. Peiper, Janinsky, Pryboc, Stern, Cyszkowy, Wikiewicz, schrijvers en Zamosky, Stramowski, Wankler, Stronika, Korynt, plastiche kunstenaars. Zwrotnica wil een kunst toonen, die onze tijd weerspiegelt, wil den mensch de tegenwoordige sensus toonen, in hen de liefde werken voor het nieuwe, dat hij zelf schep. Zwrotnica wil uit de nieuwe ziel de nieuwe kunst lokken. Zwrotnica wil de schoolmeesters in het licht stellen ontstaan uit het moderne leven, voor de scène, de vormen en de instrumenten. Zwrotnica wil den stijl onzer eeuw helpen ontstaan (Peiper "vervolgden Zwrotnica" n° 1) De taal, de maas, de maas, de economische verhoudingen, de bioscoop en de teekst zijn de stuwkrachten voor een modern kunstenaar. Dit wil niet-ingen dat men deze modische zaken moet aanvaarden als onder-wep maar wel dat men er zich van becijner moet om de mid-delen der kunst te verzeen, en zelfs voor de natuur van zekere kunst te verzeen. Men moet belang stellen uit de vormen van het tegenwoordig leven om nieuwe kunstvormen te schep-en. Dit is de houding van Peiper tegenover het leven. Niet alle medewerkers van Zwrotnica zijn deze zinnige detschig. Voce Wikiewicz bestaat het leven niet. Hij verlegt den nieu-ven vorm ondsaan van allen invloed van het omringend leven.

Janinsky, futurist, wil het leven verzeen. Ouder-geregeld werd Peiper door het Italiaansch futurisme beïnvloed maar het zijn slechts de eerste stellingen die hem met Marinetti vereenigen. De gevoelkrachten zijn totaal verschillend (Art. Zwrotnica n° 6. Kritiek op het Futurisme).

De verhoudingen, die het tijdschrift uit Krakau met het buitenland heeft, beletten niet dat het voor Polen de lip tekst die noodig is om onze kunstenaars te drijven tot hun eigen mogelijkheden.

De gevolgen vooruitzien is onmogelijk: "Zwrotnica" bevindt zich aan het begin van een leven. Nu gaat de kon-struktie aan.

Tegenwoordig bestaan er twee belangrijke tijdschriften in Polen: "Skamander", en "Zwrotnica". Skamander heeft zijne zending volbracht en voor Zwrotnica ooploopt zich de toekomst.

(vert. J. P.) JAN BRZĘKOWSKI (Krakau)

Figure 1. ‘Het Netwerk’ and Jan Brzękowski’s article published in *Het Overzicht*

Brzękowski’s article, which was published in *Het Overzicht*, also appeared in the Czech magazine *Pasmo*. As mentioned above, it is a particular example of Polish-Belgian (and Polish-Czech) mobility, as its appearance led to some controversy among *Blok* artists and intensified the tensions between members of the Polish avant-garde. Because it was written in 1923 but published in 1924, the article did not include *Blok*, which was yet to be founded, among the modern Polish movements.<sup>24</sup> As a result, the sixth/seventh issue of *Blok*, edited by Szczuka and Żarnower, included a warning to all avant-garde journals referring to Brzękowski’s articles on Polish art in foreign journals.<sup>25</sup> It criticized the articles, their sources and the fact that Brzękowski had ignored a number of modernist writers. The warning also demanded that the artistic life of Poland, still largely unknown to the rest of the world, be described properly. This is noteworthy, because from that time *Blok* included no more mention of *Het Overzicht*, contrary to previous issues.<sup>26</sup> This remarkable example indicates how foreign publications (in this case Belgian and Czech) influenced the dynamics of Polish artistic circles, showing that the mobility within the

<sup>23</sup> ‘Wij ontvingen als periodieken O.M.’ *Het Overzicht* 16, May/June 1923; ‘Tijdschriften (5e aanvullingslijst).’ *Het Overzicht* 21, April 1924; ‘Tijdschriften – Revues Modernes.’ *Het Overzicht* 22/23/24, February 1925.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. Brzękowski’s letter to Tadeusz Kłak from 23 February 1927, Jan Brzękowski’s Archive, Muzeum Literaturny im. Adama Mickiewicza in Warsaw (MLAM), inv. nr. 2193.

<sup>25</sup> ‘!Zur Beachtung! der Zeitschriften der Avantgarde!!.’ *Blok* 6/7, September 1924.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. ‘Przegląd czasopism zagranicznych.’ *Blok* 1, 8 March 1924 and ‘Przegląd pism modernistycznych polskich i zagranicznych.’ *Blok* 3/4, June 1924.

network was not just a one-way movement, but that what happened in any node of the avant-garde network reverberated throughout it and had a direct or indirect influence on other formations. All in all, Brzękowski's article in *Het Overzicht* marked a turning point in his international career, as it begun his long-lasting friendship with Seuphor and allowed him to become an active actor on the Parisian avant-garde scene.

Not only the Flemish magazine *Het Overzicht*, but also French-language *7 Arts* published in Brussels maintained close relationships with avant-garde groups based in Krakow and Warsaw. Correspondence between the editors of *7 Arts* and respectively *Zwrotnica* or *Blok* reveal their reciprocal interest in each other's works and novelties, which boosted the cultural mobility and exchange between these periodicals. Letters between Victor Bourgeois and Tadeusz Peiper indicate that the artists were planning to supply each other with texts on Belgian and Polish modern art, which however never appeared in either *7 Arts* or *Zwrotnica*.<sup>27</sup> Earlier, Bourgeois had also written to the editors of *Blok* informing them about the launch of the third volume of *7 Arts* and requesting articles and reproductions of Polish art, while at the same time offering them to supply *Blok* with relevant reproductions.<sup>28</sup>

Consequently, many traces of reciprocal exchange between *7 Arts* and Polish magazines can be found. *7 Arts* repeatedly referred to Polish magazines such as *Zwrotnica*, *Blok* or *Almanach Nowej Sztuki* [Almanac of New Art] as congenial titles.<sup>29</sup> Notably, *Blok* also appeared in Hannes Meyer's table 'Die Neue Welt' published in the Swiss magazine *Das Werk* [The Work], which *7 Arts* reproduced in January 1926.<sup>30</sup> The third volume of *7 Arts* begins with a survey on the international situation of modernism, and of a Polish reaction was the first to be published, confirming the close connections between these Polish and Belgian titles.<sup>31</sup> The Belgian magazine presented an outline of *Blok*'s main programmatic statements (mostly Szczuka's theories, Strzemiński's unistic perspective was omitted) accompanied by five reproductions of works by Stażewski, Strzemiński, Rafałowski, Szczuka and Żarnower.<sup>32</sup> In addition, *7 Arts* of 30 April 1925 included a noteworthy juxtaposition of novel Polish and Dutch works by Szczuka, Żarnower, Marres and Sandhövel, and another collage of Polish works appeared in *7 Arts* of 18 April 1926.<sup>33</sup> Moreover, Polish artists such as Szczuka, Strzemiński, Stażewski, Żarnower and others were listed as *7 Arts*'s collaborators on the third and fourth volume.<sup>34</sup>

<sup>27</sup> Cf. Peiper's letter to Bourgeois from 13 October 1924 and Bourgeois's letter to Peiper from 20 October 1924, quoted in: *ICSAC* 1984 (141-142).

<sup>28</sup> Cf. Bourgeois's letter to *Blok* from 5 October 1924 [*ICSAC* 1984 (140)].

<sup>29</sup> Cf. 'Remerciements.' *7 Arts* 2.30, 20 July 1924 and *7 Arts* 3.25, 30 April 1925 and a table in *7 Arts* 3.18, 5 March 1925.

<sup>30</sup> 'Quelques revues modernes – Extrait de Hannes Meyer. "Die Neue Welt".' *7 Arts* 5.10, 23 January 1926.

<sup>31</sup> '7 Arts fait une enquête...' *7 Arts* 3.2, 13 November 1924.

<sup>32</sup> 'Notre Enquête Internationale sur le Modernisme. Pologne. La Revue Blok (Varsovie) nous répond' and 'Documentation. Le mouvement moderne en Pologne.' *7 Arts* 3.5, 4 December 1924.

<sup>33</sup> 'Documentation internationale. Pologne Holland.' *7 Arts* 3.10, 8 January 1925.

<sup>34</sup> '7 Arts. Collaboration.' *7 Arts* 3.25, 30 April 1925 and 'Ont collaboré à 7 Arts.' *7 Arts* 4.25, 18 April 1926.

*7 Arts* included information on Polish exhibitions and on architectural and literary novelties. It discussed the architectural exposition of *Blok* in Warsaw of 1926 as well as Alicja Halicka's exhibition in *Gallérie de Centaure* in the same year.<sup>35</sup> Architectural drawings of Żarnower, Szczuka, Koziński and Karczewski's projects (e.g. residential buildings, a cinema and a theatre) were reproduced in *7 Arts*.<sup>36</sup> All of these drawings also appeared in volumes 10 and 11 of *Blok*, yet some of them were first published in *7 Arts* before appearing in that Polish magazine. The fact that Polish works would first appear abroad (in this case in Belgium) indicates the importance and influence of international exchange and mobility. As far as literature is concerned, *7 Arts* published fragments of Anatol Stern's poem *Europa* translated by Benjamin Goriély together with a short text on Stern, as well as a review of the French-language Polish journal *Pologne littéraire* published in Warsaw between 1926 and 1936.<sup>37</sup> Also worth mentioning is the following remark in *7 Arts* (1927), indicating the interdependencies between various nodes of the European avant-garde network: 'Nous ne pouvons malheureusement contrôler la justesse de cette affirmation, mais il nous paraît utile de montrer par ce cas étranger, combien la vie de l'Europe est liée à de communes préoccupations.' [Unfortunately we cannot measure the accuracy of this statement, yet we found it useful to demonstrate, based on this foreign example, how much the life of Europe is related to common concerns].<sup>38</sup>

A similar viewpoint can also be discerned in letters sent to *7 Arts* by *Blok* and *Zwrotnica* on the occasion of the 100th issue of the Belgian publication. Excerpts of these Polish congratulations were published together with letters from congenial Dutch, German or French periodicals. Both letters emphasized the fact that *7 Arts* functioned as a meeting place for the Eastern and Western avant-gardes: *Blok* appreciated it as 'une revue qui lutte pour le modernisme à l'Est ainsi qu'à l'Ouest de l'Europe' [a journal which fights for modernism in the East as well as in the West of Europe],<sup>39</sup> while Peiper emphasized that 'L'avenir des idées nouvelles dans chaque pays est déterminé par l'avenir de ces idées dans tous les autres pays. Peiper est nécessaire à Braque aussi bien que Picasso' [the future of new ideas in every country depends on the future of such ideas in all other countries. Braque needs Peiper as much he needs Picasso].<sup>40</sup> When *7 Arts* intended to publish 'un bref tableau du modernisme international' [a brief table of international modernism] on the occasion of its 130th issue, Peiper wrote to the editors of *7 Arts* expressing his hope that the artistic efforts of *Zwrotnica* would be incorporated into the 'catalogue' in question and offered to write a suitable article.<sup>41</sup> However, the

<sup>35</sup> 'Communiqué.' *7 Arts* 4.13, 10 January 1926; 'Expositions. Au Centaure: A. Halicka.' *7 Arts* 5.8, 9 January 1927; see also 'Expositions. Au Centaure: Les femmes peintres.' *7 Arts* 2.20, 20 February 1924.

<sup>36</sup> Cf. *7 Arts* 4.20, 28 February 1926 and 5.3, 28 November 1926.

<sup>37</sup> Benjamin Goriély, 'Lettres étrangères. Anatol Stern le poète polonais' and 'Europe d'Anatol Stern.' *7 Arts* 4.6, 22 November 1925.

<sup>38</sup> 'Revue de la presse. Pologne littéraire – Złota 8 – Varsovie.' *7 Arts* 5.17, 13 March 1927.

<sup>39</sup> '7 Arts et le modernisme international.' *7 Arts* 4.20, 28 February 1926.

<sup>40</sup> '7 Arts et la presse étrangère.' *7 Arts* 4.24, 4 April 1926.

<sup>41</sup> 'Avis important.' *7 Arts* 5.24, 15 May 1927; Cf. Peiper's letter to *7 Arts* from 21 May 1927 [ICSAC 1984 (147)].

following issue of *7 Arts* did not include *Zwrotnica* in the special appendix to its 130th issue, nor was Peiper's article published in a later issue.<sup>42</sup>

An analysis of the exchange and mobility between Polish and French-written Belgian magazines may not omit *Anthologie du Groupe Moderne d'Art de Liège*, edited by Linze and De Horion. In October 1923 it referred to *Zwrotnica* in 'Mouvement d'art en Europe' [Art movement in Europe], and between December 1924 and November 1925 *Blok* regularly appeared on its back cover. Remarkably, the third/fourth issue of *Anthologie* published in March/April 1925 was mostly dedicated to Polish Surrealism and Constructivism. This issue included French translations of two significant programmatic statements of *Blok*: 'Qu'est-ce que le "Constructivisme"', which was based on 'Co to jest konstruktywizm' [What is constructivism] from *Blok* 6/7 (both texts are not entirely similar) and Henryk Stażewski's 'L'Art Abstrait', published originally as 'O sztuce abstrakcyjnej' [On abstract art] in *Blok* 8/9. In addition, *Anthologie* 3/4 featured Szczuka's text on modern Polish art 'Le mouvement artistique en Pologne' from August 1924, De Horion's article on Władysław Reymont as well as Linze's 'Słowo o nowej sztuce' [A word on new art] which had appeared in *Blok* 6/7.<sup>43</sup> The issue also featured five reproductions of Polish avant-garde art by Golus, Nicz-Borowiakowa, Stażewski, Szczuka and Żarnower.<sup>44</sup> It is important to note that the French versions of such important texts as 'Co to jest konstruktywizm' or 'O sztuce abstrakcyjnej', as well as the reproductions, appeared only five or six months after their original publication in *Blok*, allowing a broader scope of readers to get acquainted with Polish contribution to the development of the constructivist thought. This again shows that the pace of circulation and the scope of the cultural mobility of the avant-garde were striking.

Jan Brzękowski's text on Polish art published in *Het Overzicht* in 1924 would be the starting point of his long-lasting friendship with Seuphor and later allowed him to become an active member of *Cercle et Carré*, further enhancing the mobility between Polish and Belgian circles. Brzękowski participated in almost all meetings of the group and he put Seuphor in touch with Léon Mickum, the head of Polish-French printing house *Imprimerie Polonaise / Ognisko* where Seuphor published *Cercle et Carré*.<sup>45</sup> Moreover, Brzękowski informed other Polish artists (e.g. Przyboś and Kurek) about *Cercle et Carré*, trying to link them to Seuphor's magazine. For instance, he informed Przyboś that Seuphor had positively reacted to his poem 'Krajobraz / Le paysage' printed in *L'Art Contemporain* 2, and that Seuphor wanted to incorporate some of his works in *Cercle et Carré* 1, though he later changed his mind and devoted the issue entirely to painting. While preparing the next issues Seuphor repeated his offer, yet none of Przyboś's texts ever appeared in *Cercle et Carré*.<sup>46</sup> More of Brzękowski's attempts to promote Polish

<sup>42</sup> Cf. 'Supplément au Journal 7 Arts du 19 Juin 1927.' *7 Arts* 5.25, 19 June 1927.

<sup>43</sup> The manuscript of Szczuka's text is also to be found in Theo van Doesburg's Archive, RKD, inv. nr. 202.

<sup>44</sup> Cf. *Anthologie du Groupe Moderne d'Art de Liège* 5.3/4, March/April 1925.

<sup>45</sup> Marie-Aline Prat, *Cercle et Carré: peinture et avant-garde au seuil ses années 30*. Paris: L'Age d'Homme 1984 (30); Michel Seuphor, *Cercle et carré*. Paris: Belfond 1971 (25).

<sup>46</sup> Cf. Brzękowski's letters to Przyboś from 9 January and 2 April 1930 [Klak 1981 (52 and 60-61)].

artists in *Cercle et Carré* are reflected in his letter to Kurek: ‘Przypuszczam, że do następnych numerów uda mi się wpakować Was wszystkich, choć Seuphor jest b. nieobliczalny i dziś mówi tak, a jutro nie.’ [I suppose that I will be able to force you all into the next issues, yet Seuphor is highly unpredictable and today he says ‘yes,’ and tomorrow ‘no’].<sup>47</sup> He also gave Przyboś’s book *Z ponad* [From Above] as well as the French translation of the first *a.r.* bulletin to Seuphor, which were to appear in *Cercle et Carré*. However, Seuphor refused to publish the text, because of the negative attitude towards the work of Le Corbusier expressed in this bulletin.<sup>48</sup>

Eventually, *Cercle et Carré* published two short theoretical statements by Brzękowski and Stażewski, a reproduction of Stażewski’s work, Brzękowski’s article on abstract cinema ‘Pour le film abstrait’, accompanied by a short script, and information about an international congress of intellectuals that was to be organized by *Europa*.<sup>49</sup> *Cercle et Carré* also published an enthusiastic note on *Praesens* 2, acknowledging its ‘magnifique illustrations, collaboration internationale’ [magnificent illustrations, international cooperation].<sup>50</sup> From a letter of Torres-García’s to Seuphor we learn that the two magazines also shared certain common features: ‘Stażewski m’a envoyé la revue “Praesens”. Même esprit que la nôtre.’ [Stażewski has sent me the magazine *Praesens*. The same spirit as our own].<sup>51</sup> Furthermore, the second issue of *Cercle et Carré* featured a catalogue of the group’s exhibition organized between 12 April and 1 May 1930 in *Galerie 23* in Paris. The catalogue listed 130 artworks, including works by Chodasiewicz-Grabowska, Hoste, Moszczyński, Mondrian, Stażewski, Vantongerloo, Werkman and Wolska.<sup>52</sup> Archival photos from the exhibition, featuring the works of Werkman, Mondrian and Stażewski, hanging side by side, clearly show a common direction of artistic development of various group members.

<sup>47</sup> Based on the letter in question, Brzękowski probably meant Peiper, Przyboś, Kurek and Ważyk. Cf. Brzękowski’s letters to Kurek from 9 January 1930 [Kłak 1975 (45-47)].

<sup>48</sup> Cf. Brzękowski’s letters to Przyboś from 2 April, 13 May and 20 June 1930 [Kłak 1981 (60-66)].

<sup>49</sup> Jan Brzękowski’s, ‘Après une vingtaine de d’années...’ and Henryk Stażewski, ‘L’homme nouveau...’ *Cercle et Carré* 1, 15 March 1930; Georges Vantongerloo, ‘Plastique d’art (S=L2 V=L3).’ *Cercle et Carré* 2, 15 April 1930; Jan Brzękowski, ‘Pour le film abstrait.’ *Cercle et Carré* 3, 30 June 1930. Its Polish version ‘Kobieta i koła’ appeared in *Linia* 1 from 1931; S. [= Michel Seuphor], ‘Notices.’ *Cercle et Carré* 3, 30 June 1930.

<sup>50</sup> ‘Vient de paraître: PRAESENS N° 2.’ *Cercle et Carré* 3, 30 June 1930.

<sup>51</sup> Cf. Torres-García’s letter to Seuphor from 25 June 1930, LH, inv. nr. 186534/17.

<sup>52</sup> Noteworthy, the exhibition was harshly criticized, especially by Polish contemporary critics, cf. Prat 1984 (79-80).

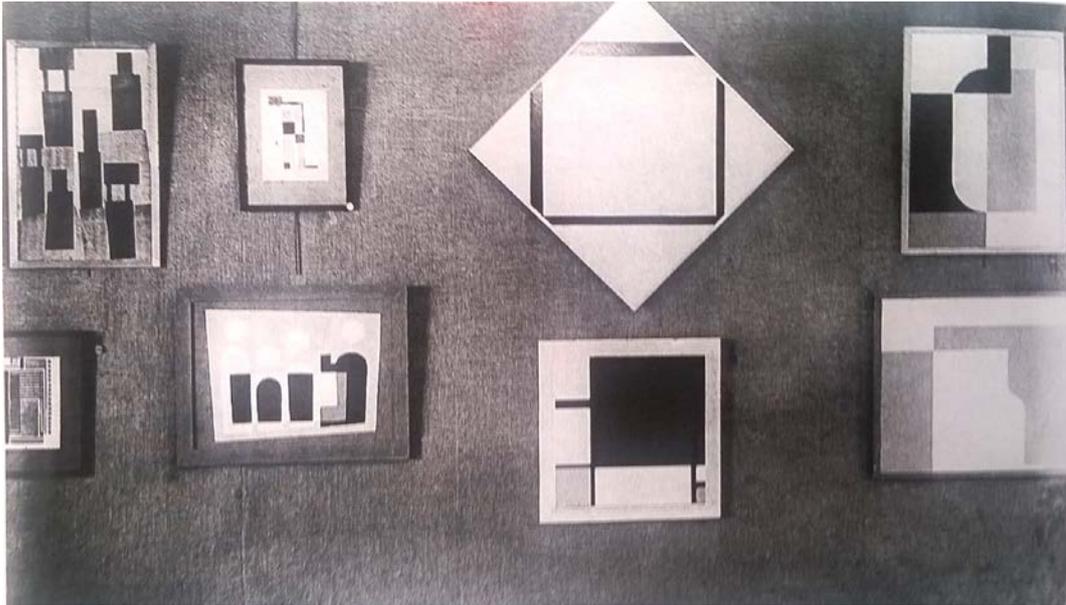


Figure 2. Photo of the *Cercle et Carré* exhibition in 1930 with works by Werkman, Mondrian and Stażewski

What's more, we read in Seuphor's correspondence that he received texts written by Kobro and Stażewski, which were also to be published in *Cercle et Carré*.<sup>53</sup> They did not appear in Seuphor's magazine, but were probably published in *Abstraction-Création*, the magazine of the Paris-based international group established in 1931 by Herbin, Héliou and Vantongerloo, which continued the activities of *Cercle et Carré*. The five issues of *Abstraction-Création. Art non-figuratif* issued between 1932 and 1936 featured numerous European avant-garde artists, including the representatives of Polish and Belgian formations.<sup>54</sup>

#### BELGIAN ELEMENTS IN POLISH AVANT-GARDE MAGAZINES

Cultural mobility between Poland and Belgium not only left traces in Belgian, but also in Polish avant-garde magazines. *Zwrotnica* referred to *Het Overzicht* and *7 Arts* only once – respectively in its sixth (*Het Overzicht* was listed among other titles) and eleventh issue (an excerpt from an article 'Notre Position: Confiance en l'Art' published earlier in *7 Arts*).<sup>55</sup> The articles on Belgian modern art, which Peiper mentions in his correspondence with Seuphor and Bourgeois, unfortunately never appeared in the magazine. Succeeding Polish formations developed contacts with Belgian journals established by *Zwrotnica*. This probably happened via Strzemiński, who had collaborated with Peiper before he co-organized the Vilnius exhibition and joined *Blok*. Thus the mobility between Belgian magazines and *Blok* was intensified, and the latter included several examples of mutual exchange.

<sup>53</sup> Cf. Brzękowski's and Strzemiński's letters to Przyboś from resp. 13 May 1930 [Klak 1981 (62-63)] and 3 February 1930 [Turowski 1973 (232-234)].

<sup>54</sup> Among other texts and works by Seuphor, Vantongerloo, Kobro, Strzemiński and Stażewski.

<sup>55</sup> 'Otrzymaliśmy.' *Zwrotnica* 6, October 1923; 'Artysta a rewolucja.' *Zwrotnica* 11, March 1927.

*Blok* regularly referred to *7 Arts*, *Anthologie* and *Het Overzicht* – although as mentioned above, after the fifth issue *Het Overzicht* was no longer mentioned.<sup>56</sup> In its sixth/seventh issue *Blok* informed its readers that it had been invited to participate in an exhibition in *Le Cabinet Maldoror* in Brussels in December 1924, which eventually did not take place; during this period *Le Cabinet Maldoror* held another exposition, namely ‘Œuvres des peintres russes’ (6-31 December 1924).<sup>57</sup> However, Belgian architects and artists did participate in the exhibition of modern architecture held in Warsaw between 27 February and 25 March 1926. The catalogue, i.e. the eleventh issue of *Blok*, featured a variety of works from several countries, including works by Belgian artists Huib Hoste, Victor Servanckx and Henri van de Velde. However, a note on the first page of the catalogue stated that not all Belgian participants had been included due to a delay in the transportation of their works.<sup>58</sup> *Blok* 11 published two reproductions of Van de Velde’s theatre, his French-written article ‘Le Style Moderne’ (dated May 1925), a short text and three photos of Servanckx’s works, as well as two linocuts by Peeters (1921-24).<sup>59</sup> It is not certain whether Victor Bourgeois participated in the exhibition. His name was not included on the list of Belgian participants, but *Blok* and *Polski Klub Artystyczny* [Polish Art Club] did send him an invitation in November 1925.<sup>60</sup> Two drawings of his ‘La Cité Moderne’ in Brussels were depicted in the exhibition catalogue together with a short note regarding the proper orientation of houses (originally published as ‘L’Art du Groupement’ in *7 Arts* from July 1924).<sup>61</sup> Other works of Belgian provenance in *Blok* included G. Linze’s text on modern art and three reproductions of Servanckx’s works.<sup>62</sup>

The cultural mobility between Poland and Belgium was not only reflected in *Blok*, but also in other periodicals, such as *L’Art Contemporain – Sztuka Współczesna* and *Praesens*. Close ties between Seuphor and Brzękowski boosted the mobility and exchange with *L’Art Contemporain* – it referred for instance to *Cercle et Carré* and published four poems by Seuphor.<sup>63</sup> Moreover, Seuphor revised French translations of Polish texts published in *L’Art Contemporain*.<sup>64</sup> Additionally, two reproductions of Vantongerloo’s sculptures

<sup>56</sup> Cf. ‘Przegląd czasopism zagranicznych.’ *Blok* 1, 8 March 1924; ‘Przegląd pism modernistycznych polskich i zagranicznych.’ *Blok* 3/4, June 1924; two tables with congenial titles published in *Blok* 6/7, September 1924 and 8/9, November/December 1924 as well as a note on the 100th issue of *7 Arts* published in *Blok* 11, March 1926.

<sup>57</sup> ‘O propagandzie sztuki polskiej zagranicą.’ *Blok* 6/7, September 1924; D’Haeseleer 1984 (117).

<sup>58</sup> ‘L’arrivée des œuvres tchécoslovaques et belges étant en retard, il fut impossible de les reproduire dans ce numéro.’ *Blok* 11, March 1926.

<sup>59</sup> Cf. Henry van de Velde, ‘Le Style Moderne’ and Victor Servanckx, ‘Za najważniejsze zadanie artysty...’ *Blok* 11, March 1926.

<sup>60</sup> Cf. Swierczyński, Szczuka and Rutkowski’s letter to Bourgeois from 19 November 1925 [ICSAC 1984 (145)].

<sup>61</sup> Victor Bourgeois, ‘Sztuka Grupowania.’ *Blok* 11, March 1926.

<sup>62</sup> Reproduced in *Blok* 10, April 1925; earlier to be found in *Het Overzicht* 21, April 1924; *7 Arts* 2.8, 29 November 1923 and 2.15, 17 January 1924.

<sup>63</sup> Small advertisements were published in *L’Art Contemporain* 2 and 3 from 1930; Michel Seuphor, ‘Sardaigne / Sardynja’ and ‘Filozofia aktualności.’ *L’Art Contemporain* 1, April 1929, 31; ‘Spokój Wód.’ *L’Art Contemporain* 2, May 1930, 69 and ‘Coeur Tendre’ *L’Art Contemporain* 3, June 1930, 104.

<sup>64</sup> Cf. Brzękowski’s letters to Przyboś from 3 June 1929 and 9 Jan. 1930 [Klak 1981 (38-41 and 52)].

appeared in *L'Art Contemporain* as well as Michel Seuphor's and Piet Mondrian's 'Tableau-poème (Textuel)' from 16 May 1928.<sup>65</sup> *L'Art Contemporain* was the first magazine to publish this work, which later gained much renown. This is reflected in a postcard from the National Museum of Modern Art in Paris featuring Mondrian's work and sent by Seuphor to Brzękowski in 1973: 'Mon cher ami, Petite image en souvenir de "l'Art Contemporain" où tu fus le premier à reproduire le tableau, maintenant si connu.' [Dear friend, A small image in memory of 'L'Art Contemporain' where you were the first one to have published the *tableau*, now so well-known.].<sup>66</sup>

'Tableau-poème (Textuel)' appeared as well in *Praesens* and in *Cercle et Carré*.<sup>67</sup> Interestingly enough, *Cercle et Carré* published only Seuphor's text, while Mondrian's layout of this artwork was omitted. This remarkable piece of avant-garde work, which originated in the Low Countries, did not appear in its totality in any of the analyzed Dutch/Belgian interwar avant-garde magazines, while two Polish journals – *L'Art Contemporain* 1 and *Praesens* 2 – did publish it. It is thus a unique example of Polish-Belgian mobility within the avant-garde network, where an exceptional artwork originating from one of its nodes was introduced to the public in an apparently remote place.



Figure 3. Seuphor and Mondrian's 'Tableau-poème (Textuel)' published resp. in *L'Art Contemporain* *Sztuka Współczesna* 1 and *Cercle et Carré* 2.

<sup>65</sup> Cf. *L'Art Contemporain* 2, May 1930, 69 and 3, June 1930, 90; Piet Mondrian and Michel Seuphor, 'Tableau-poème.' *L'Art Contemporain* 1, April 1929, 31.

<sup>66</sup> Seuphor's postcard to Brzękowski from 6 May 1973, MLAM, inv. nr. 2192.

<sup>67</sup> Michel Seuphor [and Piet Mondrian], 'Textuel.' *Praesens* 2, May 1930 (168) and *Cercle et Carré* 2, 15 April 1930.

The cooperation between Polish and Belgian architects within the CIAM intensified the mobility and exchange between these countries, which was reflected in *Praesens*.<sup>68</sup> After the CIAM congress in Frankfurt, Szymon Syrkus wrote to Bourgeois asking for drawings and pictures of his project of workers' housing, which had been discussed during the conference.<sup>69</sup> In the following letter Syrkus thanked Bourgeois for his materials and promised to send him the second issue of *Praesens*, which featured one of Bourgeois's drawings.<sup>70</sup> Moreover, *Praesens* 2 included a résumé of preparatory works for the third CIAM congress in Brussels, to be held in October 1930.<sup>71</sup> Both issues of *Praesens* referred to *7 Arts*, and the second issue featured Pierre Flouquet's article on modern painting with reproductions of Belgian artworks by Vantongerloo, Servranckx and Flouquet.<sup>72</sup> In addition *Praesens* published a text on simultaneous theatre by Szymon and Helena Syrkus referring to Van de Velde's theatre project presented during the Warsaw exhibition in 1926, a photograph of Seuphor, Mondrian and Prampolini, and reviews of four Belgian books by Seuphor, Vantongerloo, Paul Werrie and Camille Poupeye.<sup>73</sup> An exhibition catalogue of *L'Art Polonais* held between December 1928 and January 1929 in Palais des Beaux-Arts in Brussels was also mentioned – another example of direct mobility Polish art in Belgium.

In other Polish avant-garde magazines we can find fewer traces of Belgian influence. For instance, after having established *Europa*, Strzebiński asked key European artists to answer his short survey on modern art. Consequently, *Europa* published the reactions of Vantongerloo as well as Torres-García, Mondrian and Van Doesburg.<sup>74</sup> The *a.r.* bulletins bear no explicit traces of Polish-Belgian exchange, yet – beside plans to publish a fragment of the first bulletin in *Cercle et Carré* – an article written by Georges Vantongerloo was meant to be included in the second bulletin. It was eventually removed, probably because Brzękowski disapproved of its content.<sup>75</sup> Close and direct relations between the *a.r.* artists and the representatives of Belgian avant-garde formations, however, enabled

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<sup>68</sup> CIAM (International Congresses of Modern Architecture) noticeably tightened the links between modern Polish and Belgian architects – for instance Syrkus wrote to Huib Hoste referring to his magazine *Opbouw* (cf. Syrkus's undated letter to Hoste, Architecture Archive – Sint-Lukasarchief in Brussels) and Paul Fitschy asked Syrkus to write an article on Polish architectural novelties for *L'Équerre* (see letters from 23 November 1934 and 24 October 1935, The Getty Research Institute in Los Angeles, inv. nr. 850865).

<sup>69</sup> Cf. Syrkus's letter to Bourgeois from 16 November 1929 [ICSAC 1984 (150)].

<sup>70</sup> Cf. Syrkus's letter to Bourgeois from 31 December 1929 [ICSAC 1984 (151)]; Roman Piotrowski, 'Przyczynek do sprawy mieszkaniowej w Polsce.' *Praesens* 2, May 1930, 77-81 (81).

<sup>71</sup> 'Kronika. Międzynarodowe Kongresy Architektury Nowoczesnej.' *Praesens* 2, May 1930, 180-182.

<sup>72</sup> 'Czasopisma modernistyczne.' *Praesens* 1, June 1926 and 'Czasopisma zagraniczne.' *Praesens* 2, May 1930, 198-199; Pierre Floquet, 'Panorama malarstwa współczesnego.' *Praesens* 2, May 1930, 125-138.

<sup>73</sup> Helena and Szymon Syrkus, 'O teatrze symultanicznym.' *Praesens* 2, May 1930, 142-147; Cf. Piet Mondrian, 'Neo-plastyzm.' *Praesens* 2, May 1930, 122-124 (123); 'Książki nadesłane 1927-1930.' *Praesens* 2, May 1930, 191-197.

<sup>74</sup> Vantongerloo's response was published in *Europa* 3 (November 1929); other reactions appeared in the second and sixth issue.

<sup>75</sup> Cf. Brzękowski's letter to Przyboś 19 February 1931 [Kłak 1981 (82-83)].

Strzemiński to establish the International Collection of Modern Art in Łódź and to acquire a number of progressive European artworks, including Seuphor, Vantongerloo and Joostens. The Łódź collection was the first permanent collection of abstract art in a European museum and a unique example of cultural mobility in the interwar Europe, formed partly thanks to the links between Polish and Belgian avant-garde artists.

#### CONCLUSION

The aim of this article was to reflect on the cultural mobility between Poland and Belgium as an example of the multidirectional circulation and diffusion of works and ideas between various nodes of the avant-garde network. Each particular avant-garde group and periodical developed in a specific national, cultural and linguistic context. However, all these formations received limited attention from their respective local public, which made them seek a broader audience among other avant-garde groups. This enhanced supranational exchanges and mobility, which – as proved by the previously mentioned examples – was not limited linguistically or culturally.

The example of Poland and Belgium shows that artistic formations in these countries were directly related to each other and the mobility between them had a mutual, reciprocal character. Each side showed interest in the other's achievements and novelties, and was eager to share their own. Moreover, the formations perceived one another as equal, with no notion of inferiority or superiority – which is clearly demonstrated by the quoted letters and texts. Although the magazines in question also provided a platform for other countries and artists, the exchange and mobility between Poland and Belgium was quite intense, direct, and took place without intermediaries from the more pivotal nodes of the network. I have outlined some remarkable examples of direct mobility, e.g. Seuphor's and Mondrian's 'Tableau-poème', as well as important similarities and analogies in theoretical and artistic undertakings on both sides. Moreover, the close personal relations of artists such as Seuphor, Bourgeois, Brzękowski and Peiper played a crucial role: they enabled the actual movement of works and images, and facilitated the international cultural mobility.

The case study researched in this article shows the significance of cultural mobility within the avant-garde network. The broad diffusion of ideas and works as well as its pace were remarkable, as translations of foreign texts were published within a few months after their initial appearance. Furthermore, some pieces were first brought to light abroad, before being published in local periodicals. I have chosen a specific example of Poland and Belgium to illustrate the role of direct, supranational and intercultural exchange on the general functioning of the interwar avant-garde network, and therefore its impact on the development of modern art.

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