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Béatrice Joyeux-Prunel. Provincializing Paris. The Center-Periphery Narrative of Modern Art in Light of Quantitative and Transnational Approaches. *Artl@s Bulletin*, 2015, Spatial (Digital) Art History, 4 (1). hal-01479104

HAL Id: hal-01479104

<https://hal.science/hal-01479104>

Submitted on 28 Feb 2017

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Béatrice Joyeux-Prunel
Ecole normale supérieure, beatrice.joyeux-prunel@ens.fr

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Recommended Citation

Joyeux-Prunel, Béatrice. "Provincializing Paris. The Center-Periphery Narrative of Modern Art in Light of Quantitative and Transnational Approaches." *Artl@s Bulletin* 4, no. 1 (2015): Article 4.

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Cover Page Footnote

Béatrice Joyeux-Prunel is an Associate Professor for Modern and Contemporary Art at the École normale supérieure, Paris. She works on the history of the artistic avant-gardes in a global and transnational perspective, and promotes quantitative and cartographic approaches, digital humanities, and collaborative research. She is the director of the ARTL@S Project (www.artlas.ens.fr)

Provincializing Paris

The Centre/Periphery Narrative of Modern Art in Light of Quantitative and Transnational Approaches

Béatrice Joyeux-Prunel *

École normale supérieure, Paris

Abstract

The alternative “centre-periphery” is essential to the myth of modern art and its historiography. Even though Postcolonial studies have denounced the implications of such geopolitical hierarchies, as long as our objects remain centred on one capital city and within national boundaries, it will be difficult to escape the hierarchical paradigm that makes Paris and New York the successive capital cities of Modernism. This paper highlights how approaches focusing on different scales of analysis—from the quantitative and geographic to the monographic—challenge the supposed centrality of Paris through 1945.

Résumé

L'alternative « centre/périphéries » est essentielle au mythe de l'art moderne, comme à son historiographie. Si les études postcoloniales en dénoncent les implications, tant que les objets d'étude restent centrés sur une capitale et un cadre national, il reste difficile de sortir du paradigme hiérarchique qui a fait de Paris et New York, les capitales successives de la modernité. Cet article remet en cause la prétendue centralité de Paris jusqu'en 1945 à partir d'approches à plusieurs échelles, du quantitatif et du géographique au monographique.

** Béatrice Joyeux-Prunel is an Associate Professor for Contemporary Art at the École normale supérieure, Paris. She works on the history of the artistic avant-gardes in a global and transnational perspective, and promotes quantitative and cartographic approaches, digital humanities, and collaborative research. She is the director of the ARTL@S Project (www.artlas.ens.fr)*

As Napoleon III opened the Paris Universal Exhibition in 1855, an event organized to show that Paris was equal to London for industry, but superior for arts, the poet Charles Baudelaire wrote:

[...] la vitalité se déplace, elle va visiter d'autres territoires et d'autres races [...] les lois [...] déplacent la vitalité artistique, et [...] Dieu dépouille les nations quelquefois pour un temps, quelquefois pour toujours...¹

Many of Baudelaire's contemporaries also thought that "Vitality moved," that Paris had taken Rome's place, Rome having succeeded to Byzantium, Byzantium to Athens, Athens to Alexandria, etc. Today, New York is considered as the new art world centre that "stole Modernism" from Paris after 1945.²

The canonical narrative of art history since the modern times has never contested the idea that a succession of artistic centres dominated the world of art. It comes from a naive idea of World history, made of three main presuppositions that are at the core of the modernist tale: the first, that art history is a linear continuation of progress; the second, that innovation happens in one "centre" that decides what time it is—a Greenwich meridian of modernity;³ and lastly, that the peripheries of this centre remain deemed to imitation, borrowing, or influence. According to this spatiotemporal idea of artistic progress, different aesthetic positions, from the traditional to the modernist, would correspond to different spatial positions. Abstract painter Wassily Kandinsky himself explained it around 1912:

Im praktischen Leben wird man kaum einen Menschen finden, welcher, wenn er nach Berlin fahren will, den Zug zu Regensburg verlässt. Im geistigen Leben ist das Aussteigen in Regensburg eine ziemlich gewöhnliche

Sache. Manchmal will sogar der Lokomotivführer nicht weiter fahren, und die sämtlichen Reisenden steigen in Regensburg aus.⁴

Are time and place so fatally associated, and are places so hierarchized? The centre-periphery frame is essential to the myth of Modernism. Numerous avant-gardes, if not a majority of them, justified their legitimacy with the idea that Modernism contributed to the international influence of their own country. The supporters of impressionism in Paris did so as soon as the French Republic was consolidated in 1875.⁵ So did their counterparts in Germany and in Austria.⁶ The Parisian Cubists and the German Expressionists gained institutional recognition locally by claiming that they served their country in the international competition for cultural hegemony.⁷ After 1945, not only the Abstract Expressionists and their supporters,⁸ but also even after them the promoters of Pop Art used the national tune to impose their existence to a public sphere claiming cultural power for America.⁹

The centre-periphery alternative is also essential to scholarship on Modernism. Postcolonial and Subaltern studies have denounced its political and social implications.¹⁰ They diagnose the humiliating effect of the centre-domination, and its pervasiveness not only in the constitution of archives and museum collections, but also in the Westernness of terms and questions. Postcolonial

⁴ Wassily Kandinsky, "Über die Formfrage", in Franz Marc, and Wassily Kandinsky (ed.), *Der Blaue Reiter – Dokumentarische Ausgabe* von Klaus Lankheit (Munich; Zurich: Piper, 1984-2000), 132-182 - Quotation p. 142.

⁵ Philip Nord, *Impressionists and Politics: Art and Democracy in the Nineteenth Century* (London; New York: Routledge, 2000); and Béatrice Joyeux-Prunel, *Nul n'est prophète en son pays? : L'internationalisation de la peinture des avant-gardes parisiennes, 1855-1914* (Paris : N. Chaudun : Musée d'Orsay, 2009).

⁶ Béatrice Joyeux-Prunel, *Les avant-gardes artistiques. Une histoire transnationale. Vol. 1 1848-1920* (Paris: Gallimard, forthcoming November 2015).

⁷ On French Cubism's nationalism see David Coddington, *Cubism in the Shadow of War: The Avant-Garde and Politics in Paris 1905-1914*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998); and Mark Antliff, *Inventing Bergson: Cultural Politics and the Parisian Avant-Garde*, (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1993). On the nationalist orientation of many expressionist artists in Germany see for instance Christian Weikop (ed.), *New Perspectives on Brücke Expressionism: Bridging History*, (Farnham, Surrey; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2011.)

⁸ Guilbaut, *How New York Stole the Idea of Modern Art*; Peter Schneemann, *Von der Apologie zur Theoriebildung: die Geschichtsschreibung des Abstrakten Expressionismus* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2003).

⁹ About the nationalist discourse for Pop Art, see for instance Catherine Dossin, *The Rise and Fall of American Art, 1940s-1980s, A Geopolitics of Western Art Worlds* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2015) ; and Andy Warhol, "New Talent U.S.A.", *Art in America* vol. 50, 1 (February 1962), 40, quoted by Sophie Cras, *L'Economie à l'épreuve de l'art (1955-1975). Expérimenter la valeur, le marché et la monnaie dans la pratique artistique*, PhD. Thesis (Paris : Univ. de Paris I Panthéon-Sorbonne, 2014), 217.

¹⁰ On literature, see, among many books, Rajeev Shridhar Patke, *Modernist Literature and Postcolonial Studies*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013); chapter 1: "Modern" in a Postcolonial Perspective", 15-28. For art history see for instance Kitty Zijlman and Wilfried van Damme, eds. *World Art Studies*, (Amsterdam: Valiz, 2008).

¹ Charles Baudelaire, "L'Exposition universelle, I. Méthode de critique – De l'idée moderne du progrès appliquée aux beaux-arts – déplacement de la vitalité," *Le Pays* (May 26, 1855) – see Charles Baudelaire, *Œuvres Complètes*, Vol. 2 (Paris : Gallimard, Pléiade, 1976), 582.

² Irving Sandler, *The Triumph of American Painting: A History of Abstract Expressionism* (New York; London: Harper and Row, 1977); Serge Guilbaut, *How New York Stole the Idea of Modern Art: Abstract Expressionism, Freedom, and the Cold War*, translated by Arthur Goldhammer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983).

³ Pascale Casanova, *The World Republic of Letters* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2004).

reflections lead to seriously reconsider the space given to areas deemed as peripheral, and hence a step behind the avant-garde.

Yet, little can be done against such a hierarchical idea of Modernism as long as our objects remain located in one capital city, and as we keep on using national frames of interpretation. Examining the so-called centrality of Paris until 1945, this paper highlights how approaches focusing on different scales of analysis, rather than the traditional monograph, the stylistic study, or the old national prism, produce a different story of Modernism that is not dominated by Paris until 1945. First, macro-scale analysis of the circulation of modern art before 1914 will lead to the interpretation of modern art as a polycentric space where social and geopolitical logics dominated. Focusing on the Interwar period, I will then show how a global network study of Modernism questions the very idea of a Parisian centrality before the Second World War on a world-scale.

Modern Art as a Global Mobility

Modern art has always circulated. Why not then study its history in a circulatory perspective, and not try to do this globally in both directions—at a global scale, and with big data? A quantitative study of the internationalization of European avant-garde painting before the First World War provides a global and new idea of the formative years of Modernism.¹¹ It challenges the narrative that 19th century “modernity” was a centralized process, with Paris as its capital city. In the meantime, it also questions the idea that internationalism and antinationalism were the virtue of modern artists, and that modern art practices evolved in a continuous progression towards abstraction and artistic autonomy.

¹¹ Joyeux-Prunel, *Nul n'est prophète en son pays?*

Quantitative Study of Exhibition Catalogues on a Global Scale

The work hereby presented is based on a collection of exhibition catalogues and was completed with archival research. It adopted a “remote” point of view, to analyse the exportation and importation of modern European works of art between the 1850s and 1914. The study moved from the individual to the collective level, from local and national markets to an international context, from the artwork and discourses that surrounded it to its receptions. Having first identified a population of artists who were considered and pretended to be avant-garde, the idea was to study the opportunities those artists had to exhibit abroad, to see which of their works were exhibited and which were not, to track the precise circulations of their works, and to highlight artistic career paths. A relational database we have developed helped list shows, count artists, track artworks, and identify important transnational intermediaries such as exhibition organizers, art critics, translators, merchants, and collectors. Aiming to go beyond loosely-articulated case studies towards structural logics, this study highlighted channels and networks that were either favourable, or not at all, to this internationalization. It analysed how the reputation of the Parisian avant-gardes were constructed and perceived at the time, and looked closely at how their aesthetics were adapted throughout these circulations. The database also allowed putting the prices of artworks in perspective as well as their evolution while in circulation when information about prices was available. The study contributed, therefore, to a broad analysis of what is now understood as the first globalization of the modern art market.

No Diffusion, But Differentiated Strategies

Even with a “Parisian” beginning, the initial serial and transnational working choices led to an unusual picture of Modernism and its geopolitics. It demonstrated that the internationalisation of

the 19th century Parisian avant-garde did not follow centralist logics, but rather that it rested on differentiated strategies adapted to the numerous reception systems involved. The study showed a differentiated distribution and display of artistic innovation according to places, markets, and environments. Therefore, the internationalisation of the Parisian modern art markets and styles cannot at all be described as a phenomenon of diffusion.

Differentiating exhibitions internationally proved to be an efficient strategy indeed, and it was not only used by Parisian actors.¹² From Realism to Impressionism, and even Cubism, Expressionism and Futurism, the various European avant-gardes did not hesitate to alter their production according to their different markets: avant-gardism for the local market, more commonplace art for foreign ones. As early as the 1850s, the Parisian Gustave Courbet wished to sell his huge paintings of stags in England and Germany, explaining to his friend the writer Champfleury in 1860: “This is a place for big hunts, Germany; it is a place of great nobles or little ones, who are there to spend money.”¹³ Realism’s social and political advocacy was forgotten for foreign markets. This strategy was implemented in a systematic way within the Naturalists’ network. Determined since 1858 to find outlets in England while still remaining avant-garde within the Parisian field, the “independent painters” James Whistler, Henri Fantin-Latour, and Alphonse Legros based their strategy on a specific type of production for their collectors. Fantin-Latour began by making copies of canvases of the old masters for London collectors and then launched into the production of still-lives and portraits whose existence he did not wish to reveal to the Parisian market. These three undervalued kinds of artistic activity made him feel ashamed, as his letters reveal.¹⁴ Nevertheless, they enabled him to earn a living. As if to exorcize this compromise, Fantin-Latour attacked academicism all the more

in painted manifestos he sent to the Salon in Paris, such as *L’Hommage à Delacroix* in 1864 (Paris, musée d’Orsay).

Similar strategies can be identified for the German “Impressionists” who regularly exhibited conventional works at the traditional academic Salon in France in the 1880s, and were well integrated in artistic circles in Paris, but whose luminous works were badly received in Germany.¹⁵ Some artists chose the place where they wanted to be scandalous, and those where they longed for good reception. The Norwegian painter Edvard Munch consciously chose to shock in Berlin, whereas he tried to please in modern Salons in Paris.¹⁶ Such individual and collective strategies were grounded in spontaneous national comparisons and had a lot to do with triangular logics of mimesis.¹⁷ After 1910, the development of international artistic polemics, the internationalisation of the avant-gardes, and the appearance of major international art fairs prompted more subtle strategies. Some, like Robert Delaunay or Marc Chagall, again chose to exhibit works whose aesthetics varied from country to country, sometimes touching up their canvases, changing titles, and even, as Delaunay did with the help of Apollinaire, commenting on their works in different ways for Berlin, Moscow, and New York. Although he had taken a step toward abstraction, in 1913-1914 Delaunay still exhibited only representational works in France, whereas he exhibited his abstract paintings in Germany. With his figurative paintings he celebrated the influence of Paris as the World capital of modern art—for instance with *La Ville de Paris*, a huge cubist composition celebrating Paris at the 1912 Salon des Indépendants, or with *L’Equipe de Cardiff* (Fig. 1), a painting that celebrated the only rugby match won by France at a time when the French press lamented the

¹² Joyeux-Prunel, *Les avant-gardes artistiques. Une histoire transnationale 1848-1920*.

¹³ Gustave Courbet, *Correspondance de Courbet*, éd. Petra Ten-Doesschate Chu, (Paris: Flammarion, 1996), 163-164; Ormans, October 1860, letter n° 60-8.

¹⁴ See for instance a letter from Fantin-Latour to his father, 12 September 1864, in the exhibition catalogue Michel Hoog and Douglas Druick ed., *Fantin-Latour*, (Paris: Réunion des Musées Nationaux, 1982), 102.

¹⁵ *Manet bis van Gogh. Hugo von Tschudi und der Kampf um die Moderne*, Johann Georg von Hohenzollern and Peter-Klaus Schuster ed., (Munich, New York: Prestel, 1996).

¹⁶ See Uwe M. Schneede and Dorothee Hansen ed., *Munch und Deutschland*, (Stuttgart: Hatje, 1994); and Arne Eggum and Rodolphe Rapetti ed., *Munch et la France*, (Paris: RMN, 1991).

¹⁷ René Girard, *Le Bouc émissaire* (Paris: Grasset, 1982 ; new edition Paris : Librairie générale française, coll. Le livre de poche, Biblio Essais, 1986).

national inferiority in this sport.¹⁸ In 1914, Delaunay sent the *Hommage à Blériot* to the Salon des Indépendants in Paris, where he celebrated France's victory since the French aviator Louis Blériot had been the first person to fly across the English Channel in 1909.¹⁹



Figure 1. Robert Delaunay (1885-1941), *L'Équipe de Cardiff (troisième représentation)*, 1912-1913, Oil on canvas, 326 x 208 cm. Musée d'Art moderne de la Ville de Paris.

In Germany, in the contrary, Delaunay sent along abstract works with abstruse titles and cosmopolitan messages—for instance at the *Erster Deutscher Kunstsalon* in Berlin, Fall 1913: *Contraste Simultané Mouvement de Couleur Profondeur* (cat. N. 78), *Contraste Simultané Mouvement de couleur profondeur Prisme Soleil 1*

¹⁸ See the exhibition catalogue *Robert Delaunay 1906-1914, De l'impressionnisme à l'abstraction*, ed. Pascal Rousseau, (Paris: musée national d'art moderne, 1999), as well as Joyeux-Prunel, *Nul n'est prophète en son pays*.

¹⁹ See *Robert Delaunay : hommage à Blériot*, ed. Roland Wetzfel (Bielefeld : Kerber Verlag, 2008).

(N.79), *Contraste Simultané Mouvement de couleur profondeur Prisme Lune 2* (N. 80).

Therefore, from Realism in the 1850s to the virulent varieties of Futurism in the 1910s, avant-garde artistic innovation and recognition were made possible by a physical as well as symbolic detour abroad. Even the construction of the international reputation of the Parisian founder of Cubism Picasso was made possible by differentiated foreign exhibitions. Picasso's young German dealer based in Paris, Daniel Henry Kahnweiler, stopped exhibiting his artist in the French capital as early as 1909, one year after he began to represent Cubism in his gallery: he sent Picasso abroad instead. But the dealer did not send his most advanced cubist works abroad until 1913. After this year, when he dared to send Picasso's Cubism to Germany and Central Europe, it was always with larger ensembles that featured Picasso's former painting (Blue and Pink Periods, and *Cubisme cézanien*).²⁰ As a result, foreign publics were able to see that Picasso was a skilled painter, who had evolved progressively toward Cubism. Moreover, foreigners were better informed about Picasso than the Parisians, hence the rumours that circulated in Paris about Picasso's foreign reception, which in turn increased Picasso's local reputation. The *détour*, evidenced by the study of the circulation of exhibitions, provided Cubism a foreign legitimization. In turn, Apollinaire, a friend of the Cubists, summarized this process by stating that "no one is a prophet in his own country."²¹ This detour allowed artists to remain avant-garde within one field (usually the local one) while at the same time exporting a saleable kind of painting to a different field. On the symbolic level, the proverb that "A prophet is not without honour save in his own country", stirring European elites' guilty national consciences, legitimized the avant-gardes. Surprisingly—because it goes against the

²⁰ Béatrice Joyeux-Prunel, "¿Exponer al cubista sin cubismo? De cómo Kahnweiler llegó a convencer a Alemania —e incluso al mundo entero— del aura de Picasso mediante su pedagogía expositiva (1908-1914)", *Picasso. Registros Alemanes*, exh. cat. Malagá, Picasso Museum (Fall 2015), forthcoming.

²¹ Guillaume Apollinaire, "Peinture espagnole moderne (*Les Arts*, July 6, 1914)," in Apollinaire, *Oeuvres en prose complètes*, ed. Pierre Caizergues and Michel Décaudin, (Paris: Gallimard Pléiade, 1991), 809-10.

humanist myth of Modernism—this legitimizing process relied on mostly national, and even nationalist communicational and media logic that the avant-garde did not oppose. Modern artists and their introducers to foreign countries used the claim for international hegemony for local strategies, in such a way that “internationalism” became compatible with nationalism.

To Each Modern His Own Centrality

On the scale of institutions and social elites, the recognition and institutionalisation of Modernism was closely tied with a collective endeavour to gain centrality. The liberal elites of the main capital cities in Europe, as well as in the United States and in Latin America, and later in the Middle East and in Asia, gradually came to fight for a place for their city on the global map of modernity. Organizing regular and selective modern art exhibitions was a way to do this.²² The global geography of these Salons does not produce a map necessarily centred on Paris. Strictly speaking, the first modern Salon was not founded in Paris but in Brussels in 1883—known as the *Salon des Vingt*—and the *Salon des Indépendants*, founded in Paris in 1884, was quite despised by a majority of modern artists who preferred to exhibit at the selective *Salon des artistes français*. After 1890, the “Moderns” founded numerous selective Salons in Europe. These “Secessions” were modelled upon one another. The example of the Parisian *Société nationale des beaux-arts* (SNBA, founded in 1890) was inspired by the Belgian *Salon des Vingt* (1883), which featured the “selected” jeunes, as they called themselves using an English phrase to express their singularity.²³ The SNBA and the *Vingt* were models for the Munich Secession (1892) and for the Venice Biennial (1895). These modern and selective Salons founded in Brussels, Paris,

Munich, and Venice inspired the the Viennese (1897) and Berlin Secessions (1898), the exhibitions of the Manes Society after 1897 in Prague, as well as for other Secessions in Central Europe, up to the Exhibition Society *Мир Искусства* (the World of Art) in Saint-Petersburg at the turn of the century. After 1900, modern exhibitions were regular events for most of the cultural centres of Europe. Many cities competed then for cultural hegemony (Figs. 2-3).

As an explanatory model, the “centre/periphery” discourse puts aside not only those who did not take part in the game at the centre, but also those who did not live the international geopolitics of arts in a hierarchical way, as well as those who played on these hierarchies and subverted them for their own strategies. Indeed, the question of artistic geographies and hierarchies had much to do with imagined communities.²⁴ The promotion of internationalisation in order to develop a “true national art” was a running theme in most of the modern circles of *fin-de-siècle* Europe. One can find it in every foundation of a new modern circle, Salon, or magazine around the world until the 1950s when so many Museums of Modern Art and Biennials were created. Modern art museums were inaugurated in São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro in 1948, in Buenos Aires in 1956-1957, in Dubrovnik in 1945, in Paris in 1947, and in Zagreb in 1954. The *Louisiana Museum* opened its doors in 1958, not far from Copenhagen, the same year as the *Moderna Museet* in Stockholm. At the same time, other museums were enlarged to welcome modern art, from Amsterdam’s *Stedelijk Museum* in 1954 to the new building for the modern collections of the Berlin *Nationalgalerie*. Other cities organized Biennials that were less expensive and proved to get a better share of international cultural events: resumption of the Milano Triennale (1947), the Rome Quadriennale and the Venice Biennale (1948), the inauguration of Biennials in São Paulo (1951), Tokyo (1952), and Ljubljana (1955), and of the Kassel Documenta (1955).

²² Some examples of the involvement of social elites in the development of modern art to “increase the level” of their country: in the US compared to France see Véronique Tarasco-Long, *Mécènes des deux mondes. Les collectionneurs donateurs du musée du Louvre et de l’Art Institute de Chicago 1879-1940*, (Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, coll. Art & Société, 2007); for Argentina see María Isabel Baldasarre, *Los dueños del arte. Coleccionismo y consumo cultural en Buenos Aires*, (Buenos Aires: Edhasa, 2006).

²³ Émile Verhaeren, “Chronique artistique. Exposition des XX,” *La Jeune Belgique*, Brussels, 15 February 1884, 195-202 (quotation p. 195).

²⁴ See Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism*, revised edition (London; New York: Verso, 2006).

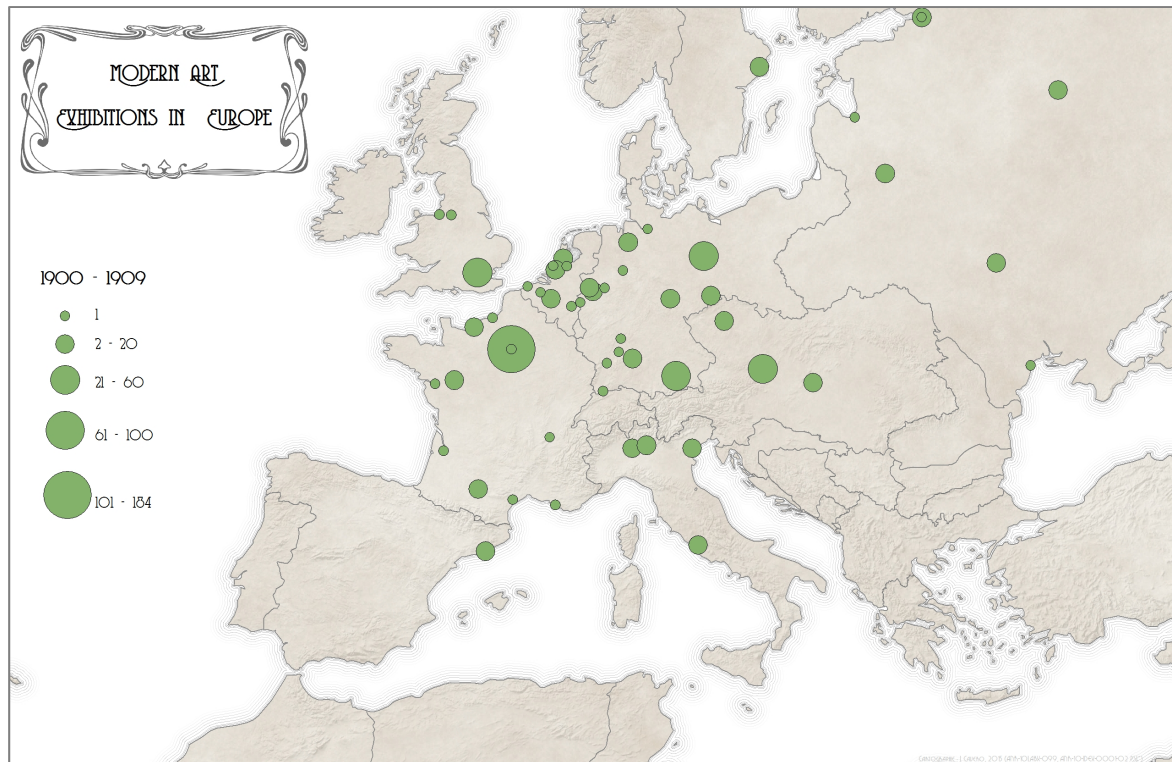


Figure 2. Modern Art Exhibitions in Europe, 1900-1909. Data : Béatrice Joyeux-Prunel. Map realized by J. Cavero with the support of TransferS (laboratoire d'excellence, program "Investissements d'avenir" ANR-10-IDEX-0001-02 PSL*, and ANR-10-LABX-0099).

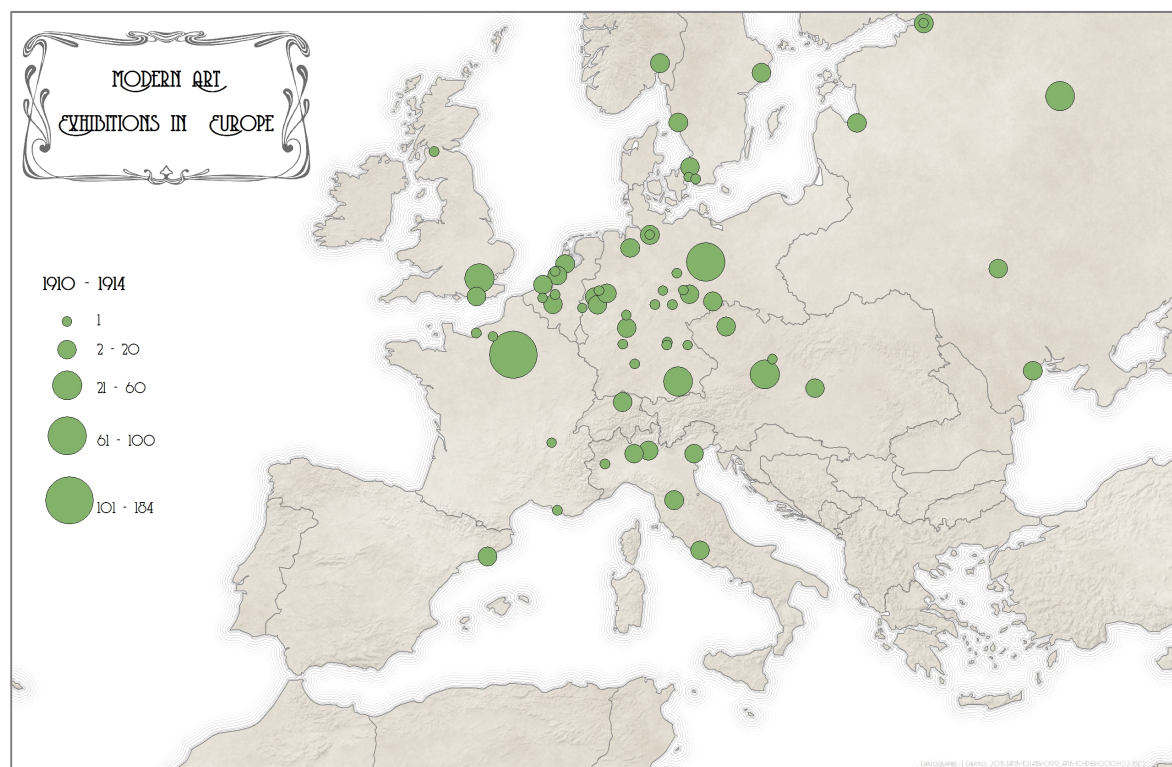


Figure 3. Modern Art Exhibitions in Europe, 1910-1914. Data : Béatrice Joyeux-Prunel. Map realized by J. Cavero with the support of TransferS (laboratoire d'excellence, program "Investissements d'avenir" ANR-10-IDEX-0001-02 PSL*, and ANR-10-LABX-0099).

In contexts where the local embedded the international, and the international embedded the local, each one had its own centre for Modernism, according to one's goals and interests. Many actors could change their discourse about the centre from one place to the other. For instance, Barcelona's modernists played with and on Paris against Madrid;²⁵ some of the Parisian modern artists allied with those of London (for the Realists), of Brussels (for the Neo-Impressionists), or of Berlin (for the Fauves) against their French rivals; those from Berlin, with Paris and sometimes Munich against Wilhelminian culture; those from Vienna, with Paris and Brussels against Berlin; those from Prague, with Paris against Vienna; those from Saint Petersburg, with Paris and Vienna against Moscow, *et cetera*. But abroad, it was always interesting to refer to one's local belongings.

Modern Art's Centre Before 1914: A Transnational Social Elite

As a result, depending on the context, until 1914 Paris was either a central target or an asset in the modernist international struggle against the theoretical "Ancient." Moreover, it was not a capital city that dominated the international field of modern art at the beginning of the 20th century, but rather a specific social elite. A transnational, cosmopolitan milieu reigned over Modernism. One can measure the importance of this elite in the organisation and population of modern Salons, whose committees listed in Salon catalogues, give names that come back from one Salon to the other. Numerous testimonies underline the proximity between the Secessions all over the world, not only because of their similar objectives and because of the similar styles they promoted, but also because of their social homogeneity. In 1906, writing to the Parisian dealer Paul Durand-Ruel, the American painter Mary Cassatt regretted the similarity of the London International Society of Painters, Sculptors, and Gravers, and the Paris *Société nationale des beaux-arts*:

Je viens de recevoir une lettre de M. Pannel de la part du Comité de l'Exposition Internationale à Londres. [...] Les peintres résidant à Paris et faisant partie de cette exposition sont les mêmes qui font partie à Paris de la Société Nationale.²⁶

The values of the modern cosmopolitan elite impregnated the numerous "little magazines" of the time. From *L'Art Moderne* (Brussels, 1881-1914), to Paris with *La Revue Indépendante* (1884-1895), *La Plume* (1889-1914), *La Revue Blanche* (1889-1903) and the *Mercure de France* (1890), to London *The Studio* (1893), to Berlin *Pan* (1895-1900) and *Kunst und Künstler* (1902-1933), *Jugend* in Munich (1896-1940), in addition to the *Ver Sacrum* from Vienna (1898-1903), *la Battaglia per l'Arte* from Milan (1892-1893), and the *Taaetnet* from Denmark (1893-1894), the layouts, typographies, and illustrations were similar, the Salons reviewed were the same—the names quoted as well. As for the authors, they wrote for several titles, sometimes with the same article simply translated into a different language. Columns were adorned with reproductions of the well-known artists who exhibited in the Secessions—recognized impressionists, renowned symbolists, important signatures of *Art nouveau* and *Jugendstil* ... The modern elite magazines were decisive for the marketing of modern art. In Berlin, *Kunst und Künstler*, founded in 1902 by Bruno Cassirer, supported the Secessionists. Bruno Cassirer's cousin, his former business associate, was the art dealer Paul Cassirer who himself was also the director of the Berlin Secession. The Cassirer Gallery was a business partner of prominent modern galleries all over Europe, such as Durand-Ruel, Bernheim-Jeune, and Vollard in Paris, as well as the Miethke Galerie in Vienna where the strongest personalities of the Viennese Secession like Gustav Klimt sold their artworks.²⁷ Closely associated to the Secessions and to modern journals, an international network of modern art

²⁵ Brigitte Léal et Maria Teresa Ocaña (ed.), *Paris-Barcelone. De Gaudí à Miró*, (Paris: RMN, 2001).

²⁶ Mary Cassatt to Paul Durand-Ruel, Le Mesnil-Beaufresne [autumn 1906], in Lionello Venturi, *Les Archives de l'impressionnisme. Lettres de Renoir, Monet, Pissarro, Sisley et autres. Mémoires de Paul Durand-Ruel, Documents*, 2 vol., (Paris; New York: Durand-Ruel, 1939) volume 2, 123-124.

²⁷ Robert Jensen, *Marketing Modernism in Fin-de-Siècle Europe* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994).

galleries controlled access to the Secessions and to magazines that were important for carriers.

Quantitative study helps to better understand the social composition of the modern artistic elite at the turn of the century. The social trajectories of artists can be measured with exhibition catalogues taken serially and completed with biographical information, using the method called prosopography.²⁸ If one finds, for instance, what group of artists most often exhibited in the principal modern Salons of the turn of the century, it is possible, then, to study the social profile of this population, and to assess how it evolved over time. To identify this population, I chose sixteen catalogues of representative Secessions that took place between 1888 and 1906 (Table 1), and decided to select the names of artists who exhibited more than five times in these sixteen Salons.

From 1888 to 1906, the Salons chosen for the study featured 2,317 modern artists (out of 3,519 exhibitors). Among them, a minority of artists (twenty six) exhibited more than six times in these sixteen Salons. Sixty exhibited more than five times. Among the artists studied, the younger their generation, the higher their social origins. For example, all of the artists born after 1855, i.e. the youngest of this study, came from prosperous social classes, some of them from the aristocracy. Not surprisingly, the living addresses of these artists, when available, indicated increasingly rich areas over time (an easily measurable phenomenon for Parisian addresses available in the catalogues of the *Société nationale des beaux arts*, often with a primary foreign address). Furthermore, the variety of styles represented diminished gradually as the elite artists got younger.

City	Name of the Salon	Year
Berlin	Sezession	1900
Berlin	Sezession	1901
Berlin	Sezession	1902
Brussels	Les XX	1888
Brussels	Les XX	1891
Brussels	Libre Esthétique	1900
Brussels	Libre Esthétique	1895
Brussels	Libre Esthétique	1905
London	International Society of Sculptors, Painters and Gravers	1898
Paris	Société nationale des Beaux-arts	1890
Paris	Société nationale des Beaux-arts	1892
Paris	Société nationale des Beaux-arts	1902
Paris	Salon d'Automne	1903
Venice	Biennale	1895
Venice	Biennale	1897
Weimar	Deutscher Künstlerbund	1906

Table 1. Exhibitions Chosen to Study Modern Artists' Careers at the Turn of the 19th-20th Centuries

²⁸ Béatrice Joyeux-Prunel, "Apports, questions et limites de la prosopographie en histoire de l'art. L'exemple de l'élite moderniste européenne au tournant des XIXe-XXe siècles", in : Bernadette Cabouret-Lauriou (ed.), *La prosopographie au service des sciences sociales* (Lyon : Presses universitaires de Lyon, 2014), 339-357.

Whereas the eldest generation (born before 1840) could still exhibit various styles at the turn of the century (from Realism and Social Art to Symbolism and Impressionism), the youngest were—for the majority—portraitists, supplying portraits for members of high society throughout the world.

The centre of modernity around 1900 was therefore not a city (Paris), but a social network. Modern art had become a product for a rich distinguished class of cosmopolitan collectors who could afford to travel and visit numerous Salons successively. Those collectors, such as the German Count Harry Kessler, could be in Brussels in February, in Paris in the spring, summer in Venice, and go to Berlin for the fall, then back to Paris again for the *Salon d'Automne* after 1903.²⁹ The modern elite and their painters met also regularly in important places of leisure such as Venice, the Normandy coast, Baden-Baden in Germany, or the *Côte d'Azur*. They gathered in private salons located in the rich cosmopolitan areas of the main European capital cities, such as the Parisian *Faubourg*, or the Berlin *Tiergarten*. Everyone could speak French and English, meet celebrated modern artists, order one's portrait and visit elite exhibitions. Modern artists who wanted to get recognition in the 1900s had to closely follow this social pattern.

Artistic Innovation Beyond Influence: A Structural Fact

The social reassessment of “who ruled modern art, and from where”, helps understand why an international reaction against the system of the Secessions happened around 1905-1906. This upheaval was led by young artists from socially lower strata, who didn't pass the “social exam” required to enter the networks of modern art. All over Europe, these artists reacted against the way “secessionism” blocked social progression. This can explain the striking similarities between

Fauvism in Paris (1905) and Expressionism in Dresden (1906), and helps to depart from the idea of influence that is not supported by historical facts.³⁰ People have struggled, and are still struggling to decide who influenced whom. In fact, we can just say that the Fauves and the Expressionists reacted similarly, and at the same time, against a same problem: the hegemony of an internationally marketed modern art that was dominated and produced by and for socially cosmopolitan elite that they could not even imagine reaching. The explosion of numerous avant-gardes that were for the most part anti-elitist, anti-cosmopolitan, and locally oriented, is a structural historical fact all over Europe around 1905-1908 and cannot be reduced to the shallow explanation of Parisian influence. Just like how the French Fauves and the German Expressionists, the Dutch Expressionists in Belgium, the Viennese Expressionists, the Russian Fauves, or the Camden Town Group in Great Britain privileged bright color and thick painting, chose popular subjects and refused the genre of the portrait, they also did not exhibit in the modern elitist Salons. Their works testify to a similar opposition to what was then the most appreciated criterion of modern painting: bright colours applied flatly (instead of hell “*touches*”), stuffy interiors (as opposed to outdoor painting), primitive collective portraits (rather than the mundane embellished individual portraits), writings of popular expressions in the local language, sometimes pornographic locutions (versus the absence of the written and the reign of allusion), reference to ancient artistic techniques such as wood engraving and glass painting (rather than referencing to urban civilized and humanist culture), folklore (versus refinement), nation, locality, and particularism (instead of cosmopolitanism and universalism).

Among these new avant-gardes, some artists were immediately successful and attracted collectors and art dealers searching for novelty. Henri Matisse got a contract from the Galerie Bernheim-

²⁹ See Kessler's journal: Harry Graf Kessler, *Das Tagebuch 1880-1937*, 9 vol., (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 2004-2009) ed. by Carina Schäfer and Gabriele Biedermann.

³⁰ On the absence of facts to prove any influence, see Gabrielle Linnebach, “La Brücke et le Fauvisme. Une querelle dépassée”, *Paris-Berlin 1900-1933. Rapports et contrastes*, exh. cat. (Paris: Centre Georges Pompidou, 1978), 70-71.

Jeune as early as 1906. This contributed to a growing competition between younger generations. After 1908-1909, European avant-gardes realized they had to reclaim public space over one another: with the internationalization of modern art markets, geopolitical questions interfered. The “international war of the avant-gardes”—that some artists already felt before 1900³¹—became generalized around 1909-1910, when artists like the Futurists openly used nationalist mottos, published their manifestos in many different places, and travelled all over Europe to organize thunderous performances and exhibitions. In this artistic war, many avant-gardes chose nationalism against their foreign counterparts, even more so when nationalist polemics against Modernism occurred at home. In almost every country where modern art was exhibited, a majority of the avant-gardes were the first to react, with nationalist arguments, against the presence of their foreign competitors. The 1911 Vinnen Affair in Germany, for instance, was mainly led by German modernists, not by traditionalists.³² Similar logics also applied in France in 1910 and 1912,³³ in Belgium and in the Low Countries in 1912, and in the United States in 1913.³⁴

The structural allure to innovation and its international expansion could be felt with anxiety, adding a geopolitical understanding to Harold Bloom’s theory on the “anxiety of influence” in modern aesthetics.³⁵ Some artists expressed clearly that they could no longer bear the situation. The most innovative and critical were often those who were the less dependent from the market because they had pensions and various resources, like Marcel Duchamp and Francis Picabia, or because they were supported by an art dealer, like

Picasso. Already in 1913, a diffuse international crisis reached modernist circles, a conscience that the system could not continue to be like it was. There was tremendous competition, nationalist hatred between artists, obligatory strategies of differentiated exhibitions, artistic hypocrisy, inequalities in carriers, and jealousy. For instance, social, transnational, and geographical analysis of the first readymades highlights how jealous the Parisian cubist Marcel Duchamp could be of his fellow artist Robert Delaunay. Consciously or not, Duchamp used the readymade to mock his rival and to express his own discontent against the geopolitics of Modernism.³⁶ The autonomous project of the avant-garde was not just utopia; it had also become a nightmare.

In the history of Modernism, we can isolate other structural and international crises such as the international “return to order,” the simultaneous development of “junk art” from 1950 to 1960 all over the world against European Lyrical Abstraction and Abstract Expressionism, or the numerous waves of actionism (from Fluxus to Viennese Actionism) from 1962 to 1966, that expressed a clear reaction against the sudden international marketing of junk art.³⁷ A distant, comparative, and transnational reading of the sources, crossing social, economic, and artistic questionings, helps reconstitute international logics that are completely overshadowed in a centre-periphery interpretive frame derived from non-satisfactory explanations such as influence, originality, intrinsic superiority, and *genius loci*.

Provincializing Paris in the Interwar: Modernist Networks

In the history of Modernism, the Interwar period has been overlooked, to Paris’ advantage. A political interpretation of this era dominates the field, to the benefit of Surrealism, a Paris-based movement. It associates the idea of revolution,

³¹ Joseph Sattler, *Bilder vom internationalen Kunstkrieg- La Guerre des Peintres - Artists on the War-Path*, (Paris: Paul Ollendorff; Berlin: J. A. Stargardt, [1895]).

³² See Wulf Herzogenrath, “Ein Schaukelpferd von einem Berserker geritten”: Gustav Pauli, Carl Vinnen und der “Protest Deutscher Künstler” in the exhibition catalogue *Manet bis van Gogh. Hugo von Tschudi und der Kampf um die moderne Kunst*, (New York; Munich: Prestel, 1996), 264-273.

³³ For France see for instance Nancy Troy, *Modernism and the Decorative Arts in France. Art nouveau to Le Corbusier*, (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 1991), and Béatrice Joyeux-Prunel, « L’art de la mesure », *Histoire & Mesure* XXII – 1, 2007. URL: <http://histoiremesure.revues.org/2333>

³⁴ Joyeux-Prunel, *Les avant-gardes artistiques. Une histoire transnationale*. Vol. 1, 1848-1920.

³⁵ Harold Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997).

³⁶ Béatrice Joyeux-Prunel, “Géopolitique des premiers readymades”, *Revue de l’Art* 85/2014-3, 27-33.

³⁷ Béatrice Joyeux-Prunel, *Les avant-gardes artistiques. Une histoire transnationale*. Volume 3. 1945-1968, (Paris: Gallimard, forthcoming 2016).

political engagement and progress, to the notions of avant-garde and aesthetic innovation.³⁸ Along with this political over-determination, the common-sense geography of the avant-gardes between the Wars reintroduces the old centre-periphery model.

Parisian Narrative Dies Hard

During the Interwar period, Paris was more than ever presented as the “Capital of the arts” since it was a place for liberty during the American Prohibition in the 1920s, and a refuge after the take-over by the Fascists in Italy, by the Nazis in Germany, or after the hardening of Stalinism in the Soviet empire. Many national narratives of modern literature are deeply grounded in this idea of a Parisian centrality, from the American and the British histories of Modernism to Latin American literature.³⁹ As for the artists, Archipenko, Arp, Gabo, Gleizes, Gris, Kupka, Larionov, Léger, Marinetti, Picasso, it is thought that true artists could only create in Paris. Even specialists of Constructivism—a movement that spread all around Europe at the beginning of the 1920s—recognize that the dream of an international Constructivist Avant-garde died as early as 1922. Thus, because the dream died, its avant-gardes disappeared too. According to this narrative, Paris was the only centre of innovation and influence around 1925. Specialists underline that Avant-gardes in other countries remained nationally oriented (e.g. *Neue Sachlichkeit* in Germany, and *Valori Platici* in Italy). Therefore, since avant-gardes must be internationalist, those groups could not be considered modern.

The discourse on the domination of Paris during Interwar Modernism has been encouraged by Surrealist historiography. Surrealism, “born in 1924” and centred in Paris, is presented as the core of avant-gardism during the interwar period,

as if abstraction had been only surviving and repeating itself. The credit given to this narrative is reinforced by the fact that it is one of the preconditions of the subsequent geography of Modernism: 1945 Surrealism lost the battle for Modernism, and the New York moderns, those who no longer wanted to follow Surrealism, stole the capital position from Paris.⁴⁰ Now, some historians have strongly contested the idea that other places did not offer the right “ingredients” for Modernism to flourish. Why not consider Prague, for instance, as the capital of modern art of the 20th c.⁴¹ From a historical point of view, the centre/periphery frame of analysis of the Interwar period is a binary alternative that reuses the winner/loser discourse in the game of art history, namely the notion of a surrealist centrality, and after that the victory of Abstract Expressionism. Such dualism prevents us from seeing this alternative in its political, economic, social, and cultural dimensions, and from comparing it to other artistic geographies that indeed existed, but did not win the battle of history.

The International Modernist Community as Networks

What were the important places for artistic innovation during the Interwar, not only in the discourses, but also in the practices of modern artists? Studying modernist magazines is a way to answer such questions. Then many artists founded magazines as a means to become part of the modernist scene. In order to sketch a plausible map of this international avant-garde activity, one can reconstitute a list of the approximately 305 magazines that were considered modernist at the time of publication, between 1917 and 1940, both in Europe and in the Americas, and map their foundations.⁴² The establishment of a modernist

³⁸ From Peter Bürger's *Theorie der Avantgarde*, (Frankfurt am Main; Berlin: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1974), translated by Michael Shaw into Bürger, *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984) to Hal Foster, Rosalind E. Krauss, Benjamin H. D. Buchloh, Yves-Alain Bois, and David Joselit, *Art Since 1900. Modernism, Antimodernism, Postmodernism*, (New York: Thames & Hudson, 2011).

³⁹ See Pascale Casanova, *The World Republic of Letters*.

⁴⁰ Serge Guilbaut, *How New York Stole the Idea of Modern Art*. See also Martica Sawin, *Surrealism in Exile and the Beginning of the New York School*, (Cambridge, Mass.: London: the MIT Press, 1995).

⁴¹ Derek Sayer, *Prague, Capital of the Twentieth Century: A Surrealist History*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2013).

⁴² The collection of data was made with the following sources: Henri Béhar, and Catherine Dufour, *Dada, circuit total* (Lausanne: L'Âge d'Homme, 2005); Passuth and Moya, *Les avant-gardes de l'Europe centrale, 1907-1927*; Gladys C. Fabre et al., *Van Doesburg & the International Avant-Garde: Constructing a New World* (London: Tate Publishing, 2009); Yves Chevrefils Desbiolles, *Les Revues d'Art à Paris, 1905-1940*

magazine is an interesting criterion to localize the birth of an avant-garde group: it can reveal the groups that *wanted to be recognized as avant-garde*, and to be recognized *at an international level*. By studying their corresponding social and professional networks, we can depict the geopolitics of the avant-garde, and compare this image to the practices and ideas of the men and women involved in Modernism.

A time for “peripheries”

A chronological and statistical panorama of our magazine foundations highlights that Paris was not the predominant center of innovation in the 1920s (Fig. 4). New magazines were created in Belgium (Brussels, Namur, Antwerp) and were especially numerous in Germany and in the centers of a large cultural area grouping Bohemia, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania, Poland, Serbia, and Croatia. Until 1928, new magazines multiplied in Prague, Vienna, Budapest, Cracow, Warsaw, Bucharest, and Zagreb. In Spain, especially in Catalonia, a regular activity of foundations was also to be noted (though not between 1925 and 1931). The United States and Latin America were also concerned – but with a chronology disconnected from that of Europe.

Cartographic translation of this chronology reveals a regular extension of modernist magazine activities all over the world.⁴³ The European part of this geography is strikingly polycentric (Figs. 5, 6, and 7).

After 1916 in Zurich and in Germany, Dada shook the culture of war and went against established Modernism. Its internationalization from 1918 to 1922 reached not only Cologne and Hanover but also Munich, Vienna, Prague, and Zagreb. In Paris,

the opposite occurred and magazine activity decreased. Parisian magazines founded during the war did not subsist: the last issue of *L'Elan* was published in 1917. New magazines in Paris were oriented towards literary issues, that is to say language-oriented and national strategies that did not consider internationalism to be interesting—especially around 1924 and the battle for the appropriation of the “Surrealist” label. *Esprit nouveau*, founded in 1920 by Amédée Ozenfant and Le Corbusier, was more international than other Parisian magazines, but with a limited local reception. The downfall of Parisian modernist magazines accelerated around 1925 (Fig. 8), at a time when magazine creations increased in other parts of Europe. At that time, Surrealism began to monopolize Parisian avant-gardism, as it was difficult to imagine different ways of being modernist in Paris.⁴⁴

On the contrary, the diffusion and creation of new vanguard magazines in Central Europe was very active. After the Dada period (1917-1920), when German-speaking countries hosted important activity, there came a time when new avant-gardes tried to build something more positive than the Dadaist *tabula rasa* (1921 - 1922). Without totally dismissing Dada, the new European magazines fostered the innovative aesthetics of the machine, the modern city, contemporary architecture, publicity, and geometrical abstraction. New magazines were created from Belgium, via northern German centres, to Prague and Vienna, even Ljubljana in Slovenia and Zagreb in Croatia had them, as well as larger capitals like Milan. From 1924 to 1926, the avant-gardes consolidated in Central Europe. This period was favourable to constructivism and abstract movements that were not conducive to Paris where in contrary abstract groups had difficulties to exist.⁴⁵ From 1927 to 1929, this rhythm of the establishment of modernist magazines stopped in Germany, mainly for political reasons.

(Paris: Ent'revues, 1993); Brigitte Léal, and Bernadette Caille, *Paris-Barcelone : de Gaudi à Miró* (Paris: Réunion des Musées Nationaux, 2001); Jacqueline Chénieux-Gendron, Françoise Le Roux, and Maité Vienne, *Inventaire analytique de revues surréalistes ou apparentées : le surréalisme autour du monde 1929-1947* (Paris: CNRS Editions, 1994). Were also consulted: <http://www.dadacompanion.com/journals/index.php> and <http://sites.davidson.edu/littlemagazines/>.

⁴³ Maps on a World-scale are available in: Catherine Dossin and Béatrice Joyeux-Prunel, “The German Century? How a Geopolitical Approach Could Transform the History of Modernism,” in Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann, Catherine Dossin, and Béatrice Joyeux-Prunel (eds.), *Global Artistic Circulations and the History of Art*, (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2015), 183-202.

⁴⁴ Béatrice Joyeux-Prunel, *Géopolitique des avant-gardes 1918-1939. Une histoire transnationale*. Thèse d'Habilitation à diriger les recherches, (Paris: Institut des Sciences Politiques, 2015).

⁴⁵ Marie-Aline Prat, *Peinture et avant-garde au seuil des années 30* (Lausanne : L'Âge d'homme, 1984), and Lynn Boland, ed. *Cercle et Carré and the International Spirit of Abstract Art* (Athens: University of Georgia Museum, 2013).

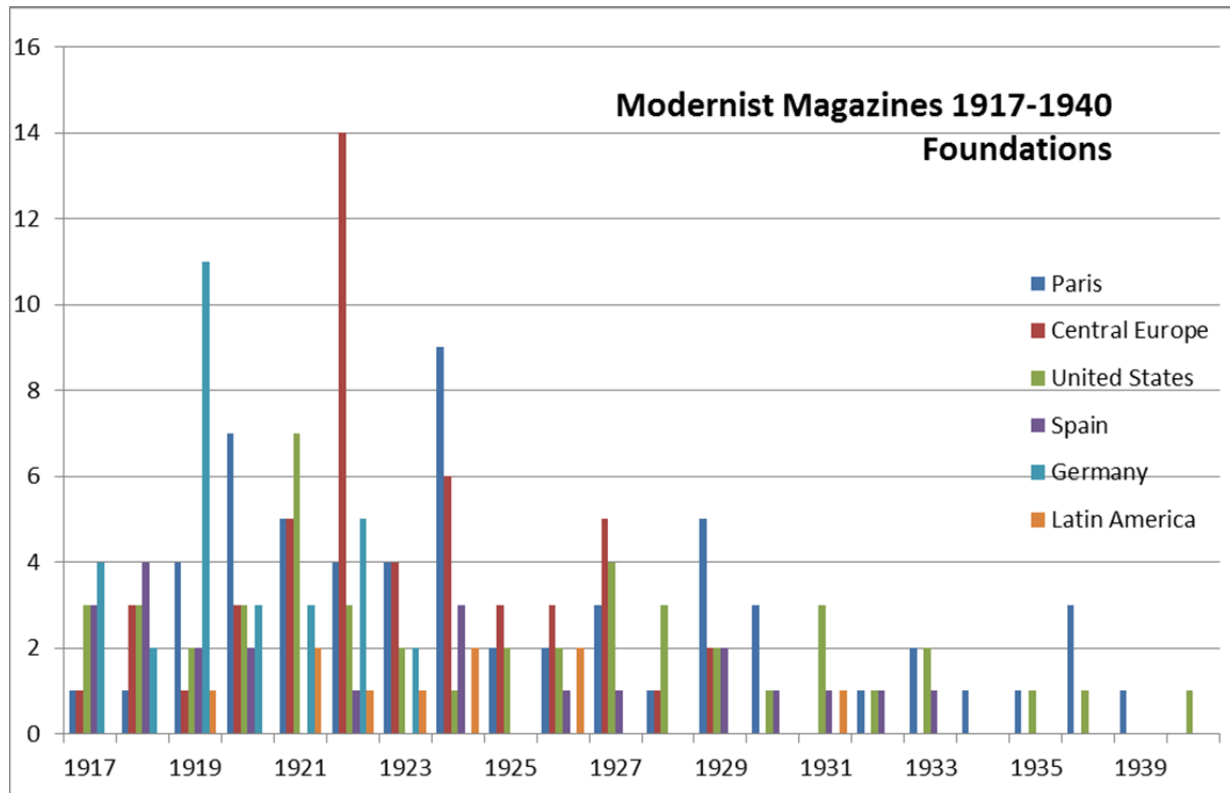


Figure 4. Foundation of new modernist magazines 1917-1940

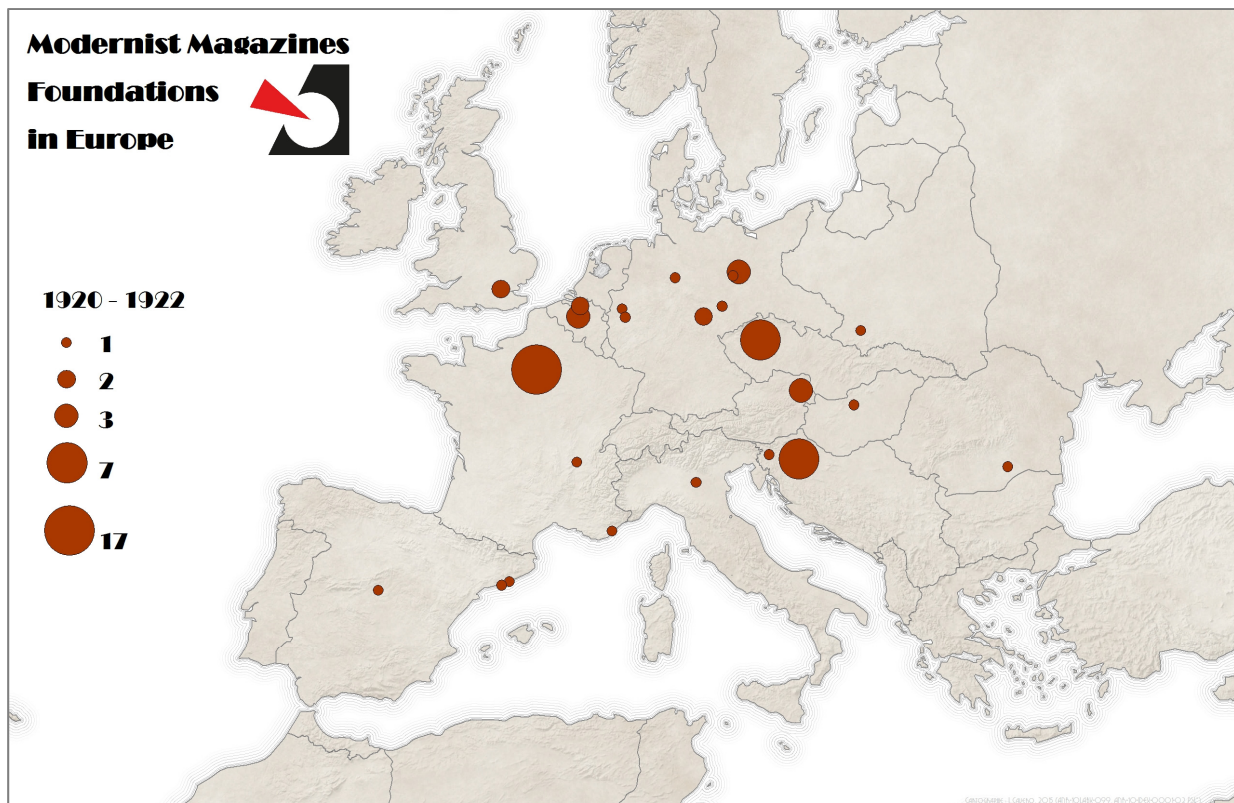


Figure 5. Modernist Magazine Foundations in Europe, 1920-1922. Data : Béatrice Joyeux-Prunel. Map realized by J. Caverio with the support of TransferS (laboratoire d'excellence, program "Investissements d'avenir" ANR-10-IDEX-0001-02 PSL*, and ANR-10-LABX-0099).

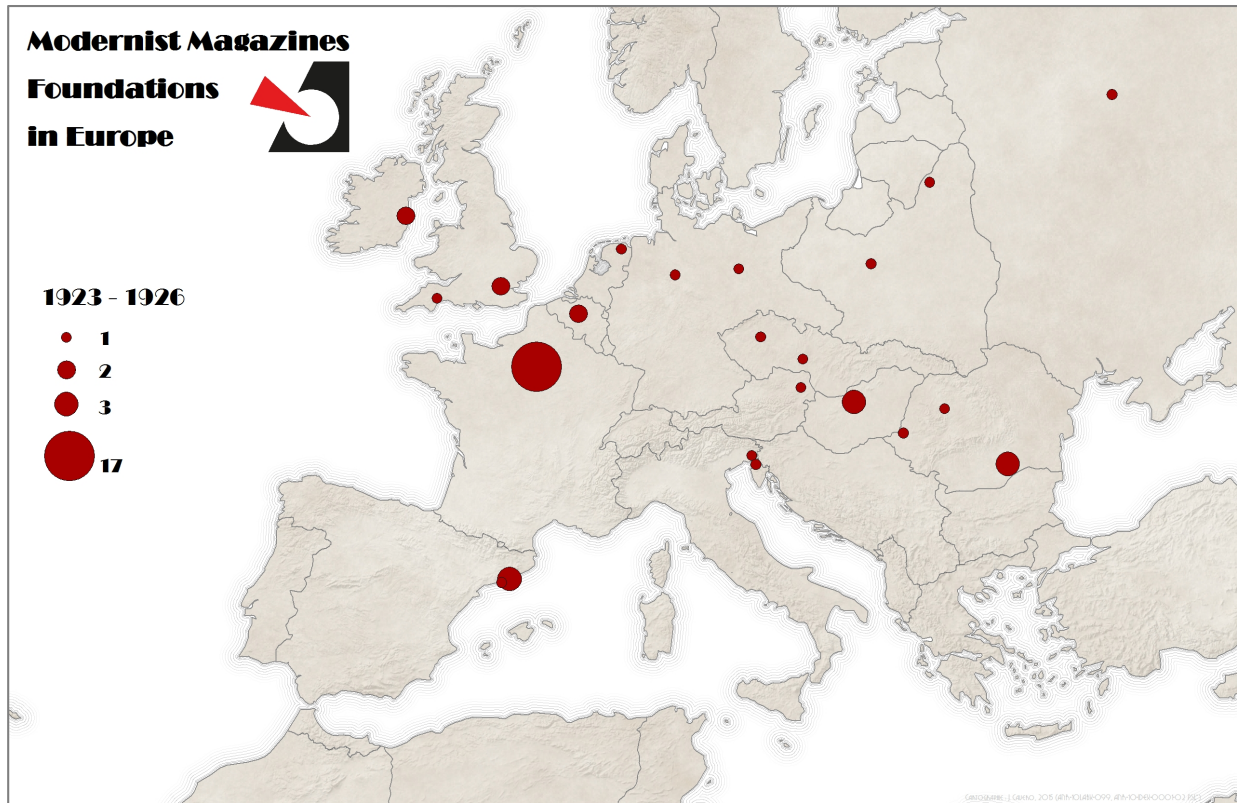


Figure 6. Modernist Magazine Foundations in Europe, 1923-1926. Data : Béatrice Joyeux-Prunel. Map realized by J. Caverro with the support of TransferS (laboratoire d'excellence, program "Investissements d'avenir" ANR-10-IDEX-0001-02 PSL*, and ANR-10-LABX-0099).

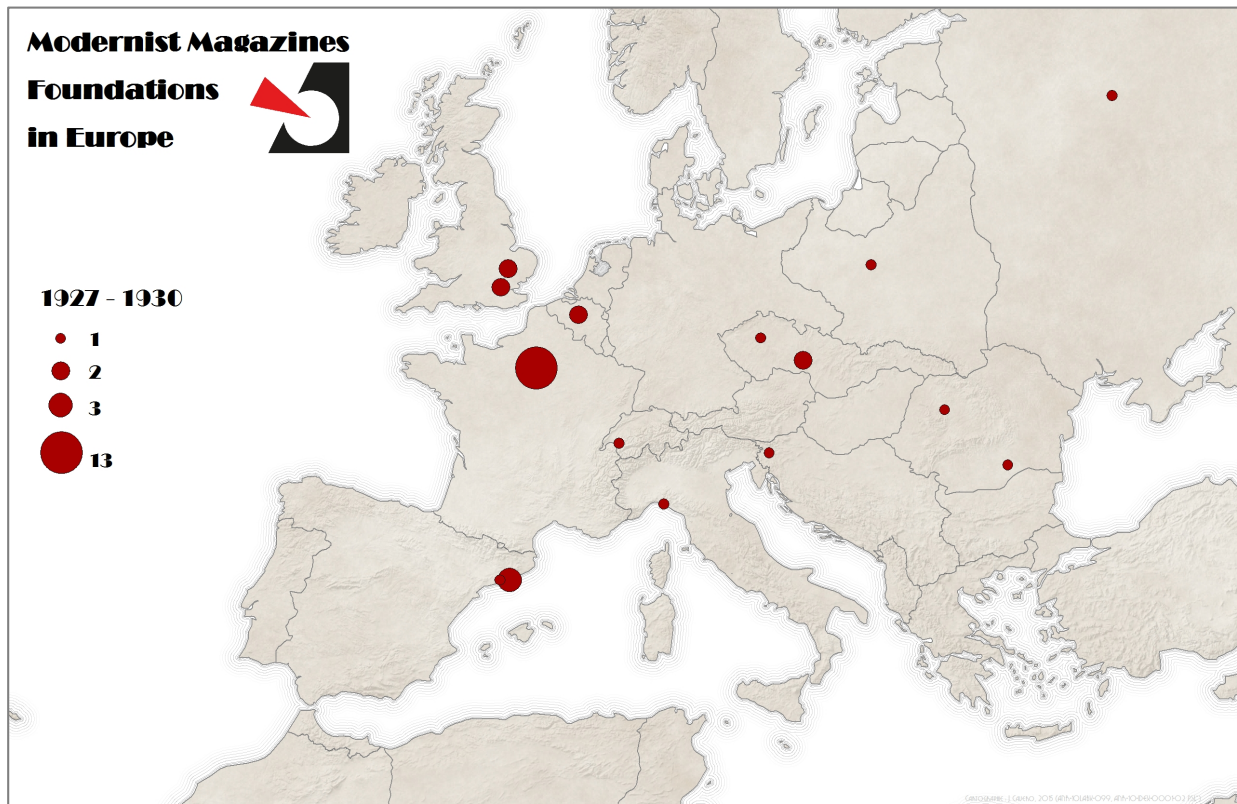


Figure 7. Modernist Magazines Foundations in Europe, 1927-1930. Data : Béatrice Joyeux-Prunel. Map realized by J. Caverro with the support of TransferS (laboratoire d'excellence, program "Investissements d'avenir" ANR-10-IDEX-0001-02 PSL*, and ANR-10-LABX-0099).

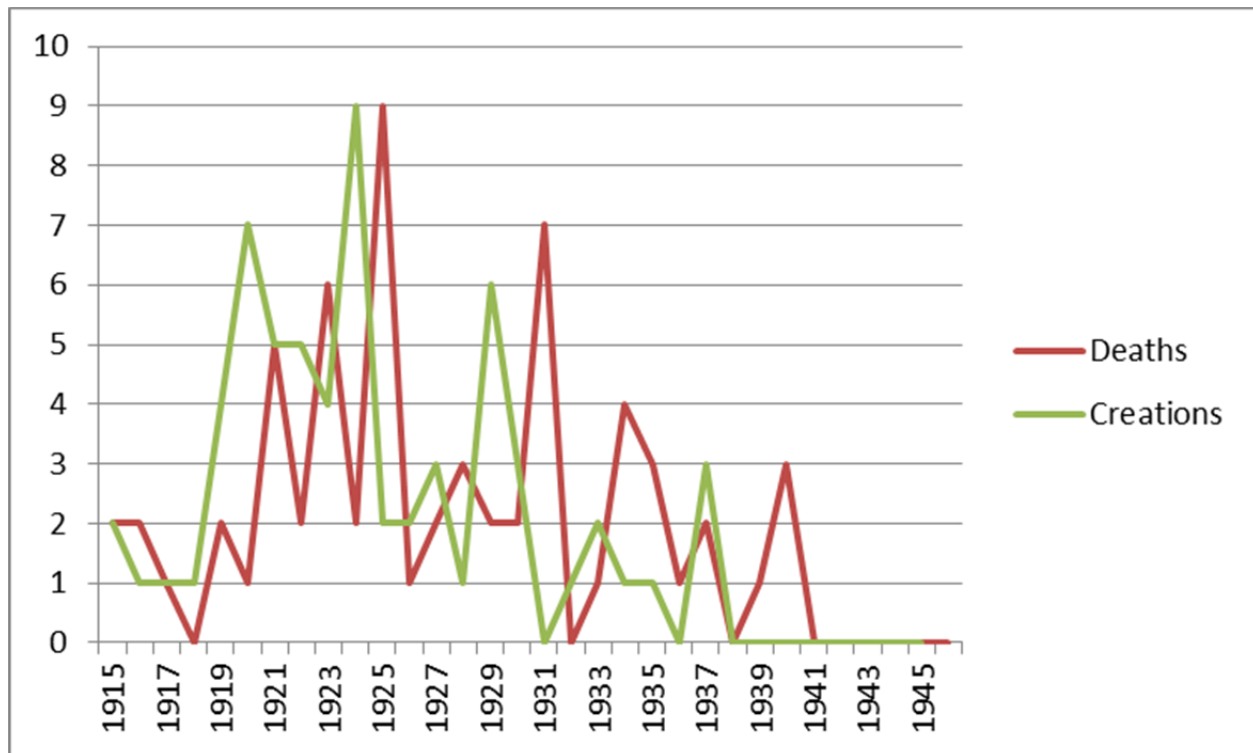


Figure 8. Modernist Magazines in Paris 1914-1945. Births (Date of First Publication) and Deaths (Ending Date of Magazine Publication).

Nonetheless, new magazines continued to be created in Central Europe. The end of the period of modernist magazines creation finally touched all of Europe at the beginning of the 1930s.

The Great Depression and the apparition or consolidation of fascist or totalitarian regimes in Italy, Germany, Central Europe, and the Soviet Union, were not the only factors. Magazines also stopped being essential in the diffusion of theories, works of art, and names, because galleries were taking up that role. Moreover, in Central Europe a majority of modern artists got involved in concrete professional commissions for local publics (mainly architecture, design, and advertising, be it modern or not), and stopped involving in vanguardist manifestos and magazines. The avant-gardes were turning to the market.

When Artists Left Paris for Better Transnational Networks

So, where was the centre of the international avant-garde during the Interwar period? In the

1920s, magazines were a means to express one's belonging to international Modernism. For instance, in the magazine *75 HP*, published in Bucharest in 1924, the editors Ilarie Voronca and Victor Brauner claimed their local originality ("l'unique groupe d'avant-garde de Roumanie") and their extensive involvement in the international avant-garde (Fig. 9). In a Dadaist style of proclamation and with a Constructivist layout, the editors gave an international list of collaborators, and commented in broken French: "Notre groupement [instead of "groupe"] compte parmi ses collaborateurs les meilleurs écrivains et artistes du mouvement moderniste de tout le monde [instead of "du monde"]."⁴⁶ So, they belonged to the centre. Extended to all the magazines that were created during the Interwar period, the analysis shows that the international avant-garde was divided into two, or three, milieus whose geographies and centralities were very different.

⁴⁶ *75 HP* (ed. Ilarie Voronca, Stéphane Roll, and Victor Brauner). N 1 (Bucharest: October 1924). Only one issue published.



Figure 9. 75 HP (ed. Ilarie Voronca, Stéphane Roll, and Victor Brauner). N 1 (Bucharest: October 1924).

For one branch, Paris was the centre, and this is the narrative that became history. Some took this centrality for natural. Ford Madox Ford, the British Editor of the *Transatlantic Review*, a modernist magazine founded in 1924 in Paris, for instance, interpreted the Parisian centrality as a “purely geographical matter,” a material fact that could not have been constructed and that could not be seen differently from different points of view:

Paris, on the road to that South whence comes all that we know of civilisation is the hub of a great wheel of communications. She is, for instance [...] equi-distant from every point of the Rhine [...]. This means—apart from its strategic significance—that the influence of Paris is about equally diffused in spheres up to the Rhine and for a certain distance beyond that stream.⁴⁷

However, many foreign artists who had initially been attracted by the centrality of Paris, and still

were in 1918, changed their mind in the early 1920s, as did Dutch abstract artist and architect Theo Van Doesburg. “It is impossible to take in new life in Holland. This is why I am particularly interested in other countries,” Van Doesburg wrote in 1920, explaining why he was interested in Paris.⁴⁸ In 1917, Van Doesburg had founded the magazine *De Stijl* in Holland, hoping to play a significant role in the international avant-garde. He was sure at this time that Paris was the centre of this international movement. By 1923, however, he changed his mind: “In Paris everything is completely dead [...]. For me it is certain that the new cultural zone is the North.”⁴⁹

⁴⁷ “Il est impossible de respirer de nouvelle vie en Hollande. C’est la raison pour laquelle je m’intéresse particulièrement à d’autres pays”, Letter to J.J.P. Oud, April 1920, quoted in Gladys Fabre and Doris Wintgens Hötte ed., *Van Doesburg & the International Avant-Garde: Constructing a New World*, (London: Tate Publishing, 2009), 14.

⁴⁹ “À Paris tout est totalement mort, [...] C’est pour moi un fait certain que la nouvelle zone de culture est le Nord.” Theo Van Doesburg, letter to a friend. Michel Seuphor, *Piet Mondrian*, (Paris: Séguier, 1987), 127.

⁴⁷ *The Transatlantic Review*, 1924, 1, 78-79.

Therefore, why not evaluate how the animators of modernist magazines decided where it was important to be in order to be at the core of modernist activism? In order to do so, one can analyse how the international avant-gardes “voted with their feet.” Van Doesburg’s travels around Europe are especially relevant. After February 1920, the artist began to travel to expand the ideas of *De Stijl* and to develop his own international network.⁵⁰ He went first to Paris to attend to Dadaist performances and to seasonal exhibitions, as well as to meet Cubist colleagues. But the architectural program of *De Stijl* did not find in Paris the response Van Doesburg was waiting for. The artist realized that his Cubist colleagues in Paris were not interested in his aesthetic contribution, but rather in his networks, which could help export their own exhibitions in The Netherlands. On the contrary, *De Stijl*’s propositions found a favourable milieu in Germany. The critic Adolph Behne invited Van Doesburg to Berlin in December 1920. There, the Dutch architect encountered constructive tendencies similar to those of *De Stijl*. The Bauhaus, a school of applied arts founded 1919 by Walter Gropius, was in full development. In April 1921 Van Doesburg went to Weimar, after one month of travels in Belgium, France, Italy, Switzerland, Austria, and Germany. Having met the Bauhaus professors, he decided to stay in Weimar. Van Doesburg’s travels at that time gradually grew away from Paris. From 1922 to 1924, the artist always came back to Weimar. In the Bauhaus, *De Stijl* found an interesting opponent. Artistic debate was real and alive. Van Doesburg found a studio, opened a school, attracted followers and recruited new contributors for his magazine. After 1924, his activism became more oriented toward Berlin, Hannover and Central Europe. In Berlin, since 1922, Van Doesburg had been taking part in Constructivist gatherings with the painter Gert Caden, the painter and film-experimenter Hans Richter, the Russian constructivist and graphic designer El Lissitzky, the Russian architect and painter Naum Gabo and his brother the sculptor

Anton Pevsner, the Russian painter Nathan Altmann, as well as the art critic Alfred Kemény, graphic designer Laszlo Moholy-Nagy, painter Laszlo Péri, art critic Ernő Kállai—all Hungarian—the Swiss painter Hans Arp, the German painter Willi Baumeister, the Swedish moviemaker Viking Eggeling, the German sculptor Werner Graeff, and finally the German architect Ludwig Mies van der Rohe. In Hannover, he also met Kurt Schwitters who was in close contact with the Central European avant-gardes. Van Doesburg did not find such dynamic and transnational networks in Paris.

The study could extend to other important actors of the international avant-garde in the Interwar period such as Hans Arp, El Lissitzky, Lajos Kassák, or Alexander Archipenko, among others, who left Paris for better destinations in the 1920s.

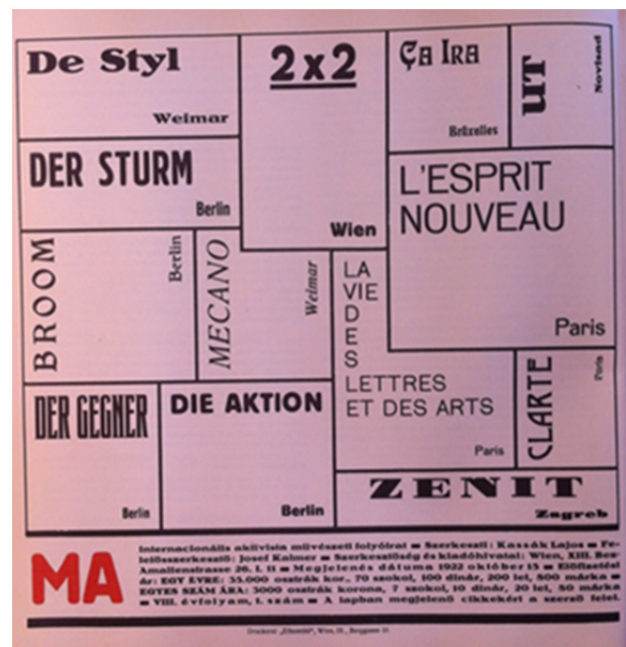


Figure 10. *MA*, Vienna, 1922-VIII - 1, cover p. 4.

Brother-magazines

A further approach to the geopolitics of Modernism, as it could be experienced by the international avant-gardes, consists in analysing the content of modernist magazines. This method confirms the idea that for numerous artists living outside Paris, the French capital was indeed not

⁵⁰ Van Doesburg & the International Avant-Garde: Constructing a New World.

the centre of innovation in the 1920s. It also gives a more precise idea of possible hierarchies between centres of artistic activity.

To keep in line with major international trends, magazine founders read other magazines, translated articles, and tried to recruit international contributors. A majority of them regularly provided the lists of their “brother-magazines” with whom they wanted to be allied. This is the case for the Parisian magazine *Esprit nouveau* (for example, n. 22, April 1924) whose editors Amédée Ozenfant and Le Corbusier quoted, among others, the Hungarian magazine *Ma* that Lajos Kassak published in Vienna. Reciprocally, *Ma* also quoted *Esprit nouveau*. These quotations reveal interesting networks of both references and preferences. They always included the mention of cities: Paris, Vienna, Berlin, Leiden, Brno, among others. Sometimes, the layout of the list suggested a geometrical mapping, e.g. in *Ma*, 1922, 1923, and 1924 (Fig. 10).⁵¹ Those virtual maps mirrored the changing geopolitics of avant-gardism. In the example of *Ma*, there was competition between referring to Paris and Berlin or Weimar. Dutch magazine *De Stijl* gave lists of magazines that the editors encouraged their own followers to read. Certain appreciated magazines were marked with a special cross when considered better than the others.⁵² From 1924 to 1926, the lists evolved substantially, with the prevailing importance of Central Europe at the expense of French-speaking centres (Paris, Brussels): Germany rose to the top.⁵³

Social Networks

The content of magazines’ and their geopolitics can be studied through network-analysis. The authors, artists and illustrations they share or not, as well as their mapping, reveals the polycentric organization of the international social field of avant-garde art, in which Paris was not the only centre.

⁵¹ *MA*, VIII – 1 (1922); IX -1 (1923) and IX-6, 7 (1924).

⁵² *De Stijl*, VI; 8, 1924, 413-414.

⁵³ *De Stijl*, VII 75/76 1926, 47-50.

This is the result of a study of 27 modernist magazines available at the Centre Pompidou Library, concentrating on three important years, 1924-26 (Table 2). Generating visualization of the relationships between different magazines, the idea was to check how the relationships between the Parisian modernist milieu and its supposed “peripheries” were structured.⁵⁴ For this study, I mixed a representative selection of magazines from very different languages, places, networks, and aesthetic positions. The geographic distribution of the 27 magazines chosen for the study matches that of the 117 magazines from the whole database that were active in 1924-26 and includes Central Europe, France, and Germany: one third of the magazines of both datasets were active in Paris, one third in Central Europe, around 10-15 % in Germany, and 6-7 % in Southern Europe.

After gathering data and processing it into a database, one can compute it with network analysis software, and provide a visualization of related titles, according to the “names” magazine shared. Each magazine is represented by a point in the graph. A central position in the graph indicates a central position in the network. The more two any given magazines share contributors and references, the more lines will exist between them (Fig. 11); or the darker the line between them will be in the network graph (Figs. 12, 13, and 14). The different colors and sizes of the dots on the figures 12, 13, and 14, indicate five categories of magazines, according to the way they share contributors and artistic references. The bigger the dots, the more often an item is represented in the database (more articles published for a magazine, more mentions of an artist, or more presence of an author, as seen on figure 11, for instance).

From this network analysis, three conclusions can be made:

⁵⁴ Lea Saint-Raymond helped me collect the names of contributors and artists illustrated, and produced the network analysis. I thank her a lot.

<i>France</i>	<i>Le Bulletin de l'Effort moderne</i> (Paris, 1924-1927) <i>Cahiers d'Art</i> (Paris, 1924-1927) <i>Littérature</i> (Paris, 1919-1924) <i>La Révolution surréaliste</i> (Paris, 1924-1929) <i>L'Art d'Aujourd'hui</i> (Paris, 1924-1929) <i>Le Mouvement accéléré</i> (Paris, 1924) <i>L'Esprit nouveau</i> (Paris, 1920-1925) <i>Manomètre</i> (Lyon, France, 1922-1928) <i>The Transatlantic Review</i> (Paris, 1924)
<i>USA</i>	<i>Fire!! Devoted to Younger Negro Artists</i> (New York, 1926) <i>The Little Review</i> (Chicago, 1914-1929)
<i>Southern Europe</i>	<i>L'Amic de les Arts</i> (Sitgès, 1926-1929) <i>Noi, Revista d'Arte futurista</i> (Roma, 1917-1925)
<i>Central Europe</i>	<i>75 HP</i> (Bucharest, 1924) <i>Blok</i> (Warsaw, 1924-1925) <i>Integral</i> (Bucharest, 1925-1928) <i>Ma</i> (Budapest/Vienna, 1916-1925) <i>Pásmo</i> (Brno, 1924-1926) <i>Praesens</i> (Varsaw, 1926-1930) <i>Punct</i> (Bucharest, 1924-1925) <i>Zenit</i> (Zagreb, 1921-1926).
<i>Russia</i>	<i>LEF</i> (Moscow, 1923-1925)
<i>Northern Europe</i>	<i>De Stijl</i> (Leiden/Weimar/Meudon, 1917-1932)
<i>Germany</i>	<i>Der Querschnitt</i> (Düsseldorf, 1921-1933) <i>Der Sturm</i> (Berlin, 1910-1932) <i>G. Material zur Elementaren Gestaltung</i> (Berlin, 1923-1926) <i>Merz</i> (Hannover, 1923-1932)

Table 2. Magazines Used for the Study, Active in 1924, 1925, and 1926 (in Parenthesis: Dates of Activity)

First, the magazines that are central in the international network of modernist magazines, that is to say, that are more connected to the others than their counterparts, these central and connected magazines are located mainly in geographical “peripheries,” as it is the case for *Ma*, *Integral*, *Zenit*, and *Pasmo*, or *De Stijl*, even if these magazines published less articles than the others (their dots are smaller than the dots of bigger magazines like *Esprit Nouveau*, *Der Sturm*, or *L'Art d'Aujourd'hui*) (Fig. 11).

The second conclusion is that some magazines had more contributors in common than others, which only shared a few, if any at all. This reveals very limited networks (i.e. “cliques” that are represented by the dark blue lines on the figures 12 and 13). Parisian magazines built a strong clique, and by so doing, isolated themselves from the others. *L'Art d'Aujourd'hui*, *Esprit Nouveau*, and to a lesser extent, *Bulletin de l'Effort moderne*, the

Transatlantic Review, as well as *Cahiers d'Art*, built such cliques. This conclusion is not positive about the openness of the Parisian modernist networks. Whereas there is no specific differentiation in the artists quoted and illustrated by our magazines (Fig. 14), this is not the case for their contributors (Fig. 13). The modernist magazines of the study do share a kind of common idea of what is modernist art and which artists must be referred to (Picasso, Braque, Léger, and Van Doesburg being the most represented artists, as shown by figure 11). But they do not share the same contributors, the Parisian being the most exclusive magazines of our collection.

Thirdly, some magazines had very similar profiles—especially the magazines that network analysis distinguishes by similar dots on figure 13. If we concentrate on the author published category indeed (Fig. 13), the differentiation of networks is striking. *Der Sturm* and *L'Esprit nouveau* take the

centre, and share many authors—their pool of authors was very international, and numerous. *Integral*, *Punct*, *Zenit*, *de Stijl*, *Ma*, and *G*, that is to say “hard” Constructivist magazines, built a coherent network that was separated from the Parisian cliques, even if they published in different languages.

To summarize the situation of the mid-1920s, there was an international avant-gardism, made of different social networks that were dynamic and productive. Parisian modernist networks were completely isolated from these international networks, except for *Esprit nouveau*. Until they disappeared at the turn of the 1930s, Constructivist networks represented a polycentric scene for the international avant-garde, a scene whose centre was definitely not Paris. The Constructivists wanted to foster artistic progress in contemporary society—architecture, decoration, functionalism, and academic institutions to teach and spread Modernism, such as the Bauhaus. This alternative model of avant-garde, which was anti-individualist, social (we might even say socialist), and according to which Modernism was to be transmitted, did not correspond to the elitist tradition marketed in Paris.

In their references as well, in Berlin, Weimar, Cologne, Prague, Vienna, Budapest, Milan, etc., modernist painters were not inspired at first by Parisian names and styles, but by Italian *Pittura Metafisica*, by Russian Constructivism, by the Bauhaus’s geometrical abstraction, and by the German *Neue Sachlichkeit*.⁵⁵ Even Salvador Dalí exemplifies such plural inspirations until the end of the 1920s.⁵⁶ Moreover, the Constructivists were more interested in collective anonymous works (the airplane, the transatlantic boat, or the modern building), than in individualist artworks. This was not the case of the Parisians.

Parisian centrality developed later. In Central Europe and Germany, the early integration of

Constructivist artists into professions (such as architecture, decoration, design, and teaching) contributed to their departure with modernist polemics, to the benefit of international surrealism at the end of the 1920s. In Paris, the Surrealists had succeeded in monopolizing the modernist scene. In Europe, they appeared as the only avant-gardes in Europe, all the more since their efficient international marketing strategy attracted abstract artists in need of a market.⁵⁷ Modernist emigration towards the West, especially after 1933, gave Paris another centrality, even if avant-gardes also flew to London, Brussels, and Amsterdam. Even, the idea that everything modernist happened in Paris remains false for the last 1930s. Constructivist and abstract artists who managed to escape persecution in Germany, Russia, and Central Europe, and did not want to play the Surrealist game, crossed the Atlantic. They were scattered, without a clear idea of their belonging. Does this explain their failure in the game of art history?

The (Parisian) Surrealists managed the modernist rhetoric so well and imposed it also so strongly in New York during their exile after 1940, that they erased the groups that had still been at the very core of Modernism until the late 1920s.

Conclusion

This geographical reassessment of Modernism during the Interwar period can be concluded by a quantitative, mainly digital and distant approach that goes to the local scale only *after* an initial distant reading of sources, and, furthermore, that checks information from sources other than exclusively Parisian ones. A multiscale approach allows us to question the idea of a Parisian centrality in Modernism from the 1850s to the 1940s.

⁵⁵ See for instance Dennis Crockett, *German Post-Expressionism: the Art of the Great Disorder, 1918-1924*, (University Park, Pa.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1999); and François Livi, ed., *Futurisme et Surréalisme*, (Lausanne, Paris: L’Âge d’Homme, 2008).

⁵⁶ Ian Gibson, *The Shameful Life of Salvador Dalí*, (New York: W.W. Norton, 1998).

⁵⁷ I summarize here the results of a transnational study of the avant-garde market. The story of the marketing of Surrealism had not been done before. See *Géopolitique des avant-gardes 1918-1939*. The book will be published in a revised and extended version under the title *Les avant-gardes artistiques. Une histoire transnationale, vol. 2 (1918-1945)*, (Paris: Gallimard, forthcoming 2016).

In art history, the centre/periphery model is the product of narratives that always study the same centres and the same people working in or attracted by these centres.⁵⁸ Focusing on the same places prevents us from knowing what happens elsewhere. It obscures what circulates between the so-called centres and their peripheries, and what circulates between these so-called peripheries, independently from the centre. The idea that Paris dominated modern art, followed by New York after 1945, is fed by methodological biases that art history should seriously look at. How will we get out of this binary framework if art history stands on its monographic and nationalist tropism? PhD students are encouraged to work on precise case studies, be it an artist, a trend, a movement, or a place. The national orientation of the job market and the importance of area studies does not encourage scholars to think differently. Although transnational research is recognized as a very promising field, it has not materialised into teaching positions in transnational art history, but in the creation of a few positions in “Global Art History” that are in fact still linked to area studies (be it African Art, Asian Art, or Art from the Middle East, etc.). As specialists of Modernism we need to reconsider non-Northern-Atlantic regions and different artistic traditions; but we also need general alternatives to contextualize the usual narrative and its geopolitics differently.

The fact that the use of the quantitative approach is quite rare in art history slows down the revision of this centralized narrative. Very few art historians have been trained in digital methods because of the absence of quantitative training in academic curricula. The reluctance of art historians to adopt quantitative approaches can be linked to a laudable resistance to the symbolic violence of numbers. Yet, the quantitative approach is often reduced to a sociological or even Marxist blur, which is less convincing, as if

working with numbers were a threat for the Arts, the Artists, and for their aura.⁵⁹

Studies over long periods of time, on several articulated scales that link the microstorial and the macrostorial, using the tools of transnational and comparative social history, can help provide a different idea of the geopolitics of Modernism—an idea that escapes any preconceived notion of centrality. The theories of Cultural Transfers⁶⁰ and Connected Histories⁶¹ encourage a growing number of art historians to agree that the national construction of our disciplines no longer makes sense. We should deconstruct the national formation of our archives and collections, and let the sources speak at an international level. We should also *let the numbers speak*—since the dominated and the peripheral are usually the most numerous. Art historians have at their disposal enormous amounts of data they do not use in a quantitative and transnational way, such as exhibition catalogues, auction catalogues, museum repertoires, lists of artists from academies, magazines, etc. So they have, already, the big data, and they should take the first step towards “total history” more often. The challenge of postcolonial approaches and the call for a global history of art makes it critical to foster a “distant reading” of this discipline⁶² that measures what happens from one place to the other, that compares artistic *facts* between different artistic areas before listening to theories about the hierarchies between these areas. Abandoning neither case studies and detailed surveys, nor archival research, and even close analysis of works of art, we need an international and contextualized frame for modern art history, a frame that helps think of art history in a horizontal collective way before doing so in a vertical and monographic one.⁶³

⁵⁹ B. Joyeux-Prunel, “L’art et les chiffres. Une mésentente historique? Généalogie critique et tentatives de conciliation.” In *L’Art et la Mesure. Histoire de l’art et méthodes quantitatives*, ed. Béatrice Joyeux-Prunel (Paris: Éditions rue d’Ulm, 2010), 17-58.

⁶⁰ Michel Espagne, *Les transferts culturels franco-allemands* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1999).

⁶¹ See for instance Sanjay Subrahmanyam, “Holding the World in Balance: The Connected Histories of the Iberian Overseas Empires, 1500-1640,” *The American Historical Review* 112, no. 5 (December, 2007): 1359-85.

⁶² Franco Moretti, *Atlas of the European Novel, 1800-1900* (London: Verso, 1999).

⁶³ Piotr Piotrowski, « Towards Horizontal Art History », in Jaynie Anderson (ed.), *Crossing Cultures. Conflict, Migration, and Convergence*, (Melbourne: The Miegunyah Press, 2009), 82-85; and Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann, Catherine Dossin, and Béatrice

⁵⁸ Which is the case for instance for the famous textbook edited by Benjamin Buchloh, Hal Foster, and Rosalind Krauss, *Art Since 1900: Modernism, Antimodernism, Postmodernism*, (Londres: Thames & Hudson, 2005).

Very pragmatic methods open the path. Instead of searching for originality, influence, independence, or subversion and deconstruction while working on an artist or an artwork, the questions asked are realistic, even materialist. Where did Modernism happen, where was it exhibited? Where did the artist or the work circulate? Where did people want to be known, bought, recognized, where did they prefer to produce? What individual and collective artistic and social paths do the answers to these questions indicate? Were the rules of art and Modernism really the same everywhere? Did people really think there was only one centre for Modernism? How did reputations forge from one scene to the other? Who were the actors--artists, dealers, critics, curators, collectors, institutions etc., of these cultural transfers, and how did these mediators contribute to the success of certain artists and movements, and of the place associated with them, as well as to the failure of others?

Articulating the local, the regional, and the international, and focusing on transnational circulations more than on events, productions, and cases studies located in just one place, leads us to undergo a socio-historical questioning about the ways that cultural and artistic hierarchies were both produced for Modernism (institutionally, economically, diplomatically, etc.) and constructed for it (in practices, habits, representations, and discourse). It helps realize that these hierarchies were indeed the objects of desire, of concurrence and jealousy, but were also negotiated, and could change, according to conscious or unconscious strategies constructing what Gilles Deleuze called "agencements."⁶⁴ Modern and vanguard art history can thus be reconstructed as an international scene, or even better, as a sociological field made of many subfields crossing and sometimes competing, which did imply international horizons of desire. According to this approach, centres are no longer seen as mere places but also as labels

that were, and still are, objects of rivalry and desire.

What are the consequences of such reassessments of the Parisian centrality from the 19th century to the Second World War, for our general idea of Modernism? Provincializing Paris until the 1930s, forces us to rethink the way we analyse the so-called centrality of New York after 1945. Not only could New York not "steal" a centrality that Paris did not really have, but also it helps us to realize that the sources used to write this success-story are American, not transnational, and monographic, neither numerous nor serially studied. Recent transnational studies on the reception of American art in Europe confirm this: US art was not known, nor was it bought by Europeans until the beginning of the 1960s.⁶⁵

Similarly, international approaches on how the avant-garde tried to be at what they thought was the centre of Modernism in the 1950s and 1960s demonstrate that New York was not a centre, that Paris was a strong reference, but also that new references had appeared, with the important work made by local elites to equip their own countries with institutions open to *local* modernist groups.⁶⁶ It is time to further explore these directions. If we want to provincialize our centres, let us take credible means to do what cannot only remain a political wish.

Joyeux-Prunel, eds., *Global Artistic Circulations and the History of Art*, (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2015).

⁶⁴ See *L'Abécédaire de Gilles Deleuze*, Claire Parnet and Pierre-André Boutang ed., (Paris: Editions Montparnasse, 2004). Lettre D: Désir. English translation by Charles J. Stivale : *Gilles Deleuze from A to Z* (Chicago: The MIT Press, 2011).

⁶⁵ Hiroko Ikegami, *The Great Migrator: Robert Rauschenberg and the Global Rise of American Art*, (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2010); Catherine Dossin, "To Drip or to Pop? The European Triumph of American Art," *The ARTL@S Bulletin* 3, no. 1 (Spring 2014): 79-103; <http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/artlas/vol3/iss1/8/>

⁶⁶ Andra Giunta, *Avant-Garde, Internationalism, and Politics*, (Durham & Londres : Duke University Press, 2007); Antje Kramer, *L'Aventure allemande du Nouveau Réalisme – Réalités et Fantômes d'une Néo-Avant-garde européenne (1957-1963)*, (Dijon : les Presses du Réel, 2012) ; Dossin, *Rise and Fall of American Art*.

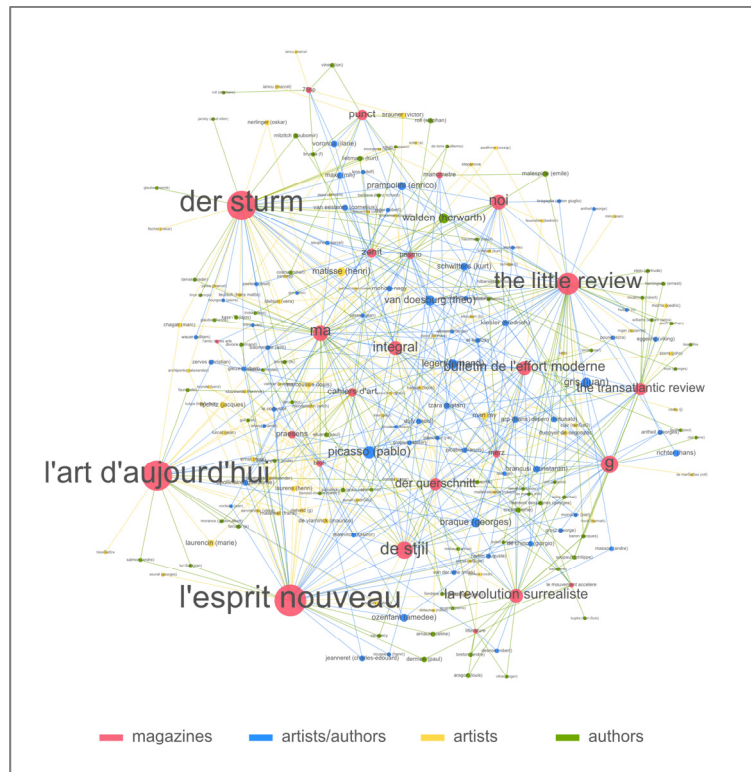


Figure 11. Network Analysis of the content of 27 Modernist Magazines from 1924 to 1926. Sharing Names (artists illustrated, and authors of articles published in the magazines). The bigger the dot representing a magazine, the more articles published by the magazine. Powered with Gephi, with the help of Léa Saint-Raymond, the ARTL@S Project.

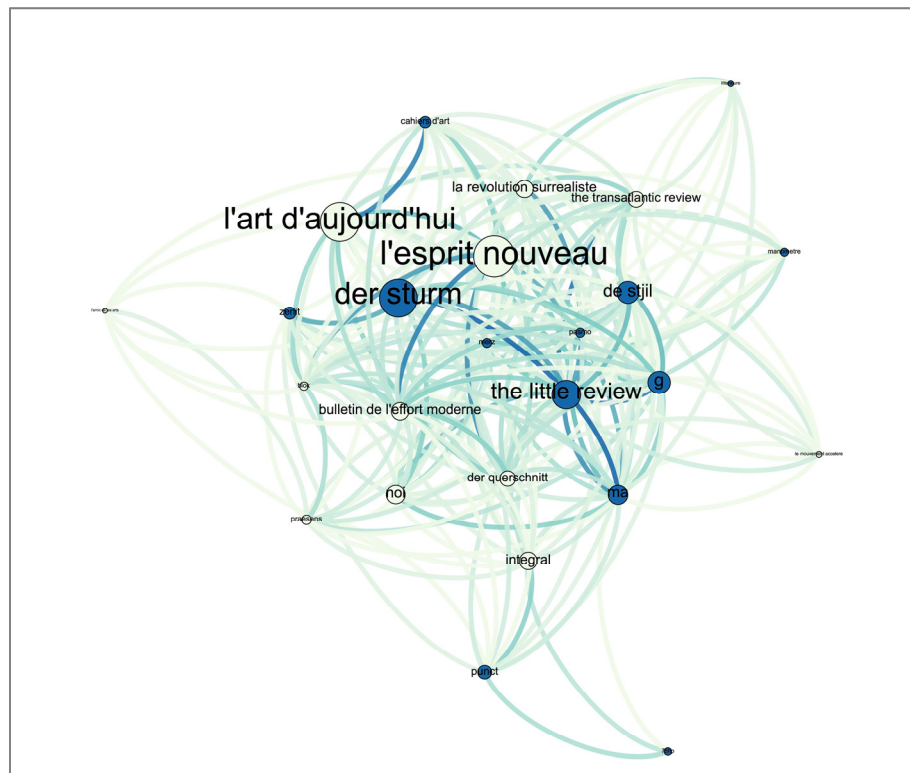


Figure 12. Network Analysis of the content of 27 Modernist Magazines from 1924 to 1926. Sharing Names (artists illustrated, and authors of articles published in these Magazines), without mention of the names of authors and artists. The darker the lines between two magazines, the more authors and artists they have in common. Powered with Gephi, with the help of Léa Saint-Raymond, the ARTL@S Project.

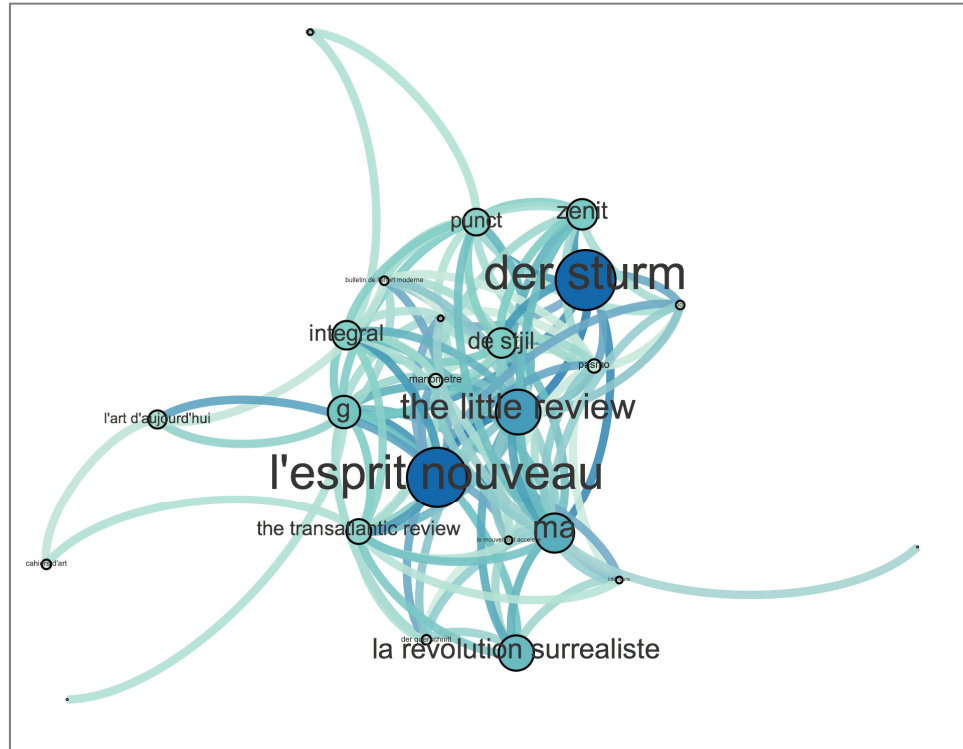


Figure 13. Network Analysis of the content of 27 Modernist Magazines from 1924 to 1926. Sharing authors of articles. The darker the lines between two magazines, the more authors they have in common. The bigger a dot representing a magazine, the more authors the magazine publishes. Powered with Gephi, with the help of Léa Saint-Raymond, the ARTL@S Project.

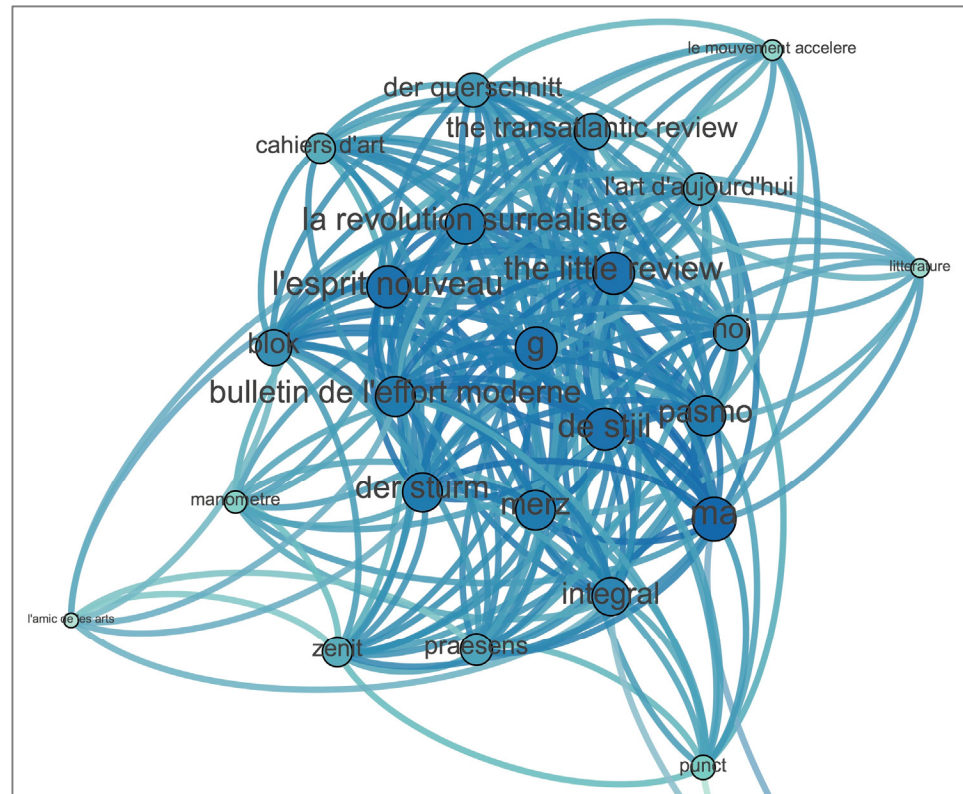


Figure 14. Network Analysis of the content of 27 Modernist Magazines from 1924 to 1926. Sharing artists published or illustrated. The bigger a dot representing a magazine, the more artists are illustrated or published by the magazine (hence the little size, for instance, of *Littérature*). The mess of the graph indicates that the magazines share a common list of artistic references, even if some magazines are marginal (like the Dadaist *Mouvement accéléré*, *Littérature*, and *Manomètre* or the hard Constructivist *Punct*, *Zenit*, and *Blok*). The homogeneity of the graph questions the idea of very differentiated esthetic references among these magazines. Let's underline, however, that the publication of photographs (that are not signed) is not taken into account. This would clearly distinguish constructivist magazines from the others. Powered with Gephi, with the help of Léa Saint-Raymond, the ARTL@S Project.