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Active Thought and Future Perfect: The Belgrade Surrealist Circle

This talk examines the ideas of a perpetually transformative, mutually corrective interaction of thought and matter, and of the capacity to anticipate – through – irrational/not yet rational, as proposed in *Outline for a Phenomenology of the Irrational* (Nacrt za jednu fenomenologiju iracionalnog, 1931), written by Belgrade surrealists Koča Popović and Marko Ristić. These dynamics being intrinsic to art production and reception, according to Popović and Ristić, “real art” is always future – oriented, and it gestures specific moments in the future. I am keen to revisit the Belgrade Surrealist Circle’s avant – garde practice of “active thought” in its global context of the day but also through its own future perfect—which includes, among other accomplishments, Popović’s and Ristić’s vital work in the establishment of Non – aligned Movement and witnessing of the birth, life, and death of the state and community for which they fought as artists and activists. Such rereading, my hope is, will allow me to assess wider questions: how the belief in the interaction of thought and matter can be used non – teleologically (*pace* Hegel) and how it relates to various modernities, relationships between the so – called “centres” and so – called “peripheries,” retrograde and prograde temporal moves, questions of legacies and projects, anti – modernist and over – modernist modernisms, and cultural colonisation and decolonisation. These are all dynamics and questions of primary significance for the examination of fringe modernist avant – gardes as well as the fine – tuning of the hermeneutic tools and practices we use to assess and describe global communities, diachronically and synchronically.