9.1 Yellow, February 1922
9.2 Blue, July 1922
9.3 Red, October 1922
9.4 White, January 1924
The four issues of *Mécano* are a particularly interesting instance of the Dada-Constructivist axis in post-war Europe. Published in Leiden, Holland, the review was fully international in scope with the collaboration of Dadaists in Germany and France.

*Mécano* announced on its cover that its literary editor was I.K. Bonset and its 'visual arts technician' (*mécanicien plastique*) Theo van Doesburg. The latter was well known as the editor of the magazine *De Stijl*, that they were one and the same person was a surprise to many of his colleagues. It was at the International Congress in Weimar, where Van Doesburg had gone in 1922 hoping to orient the Bauhaus towards Constructivism and away from Expressionism that his double identity was revealed. The Congress was reported in *Mécano*: 'Injection of the dada virgin microbe to Weimar and to the Bauhausians."

Van Doesburg began planning a Dada review as early as 1920, and was in correspondence with Tristan Tzara. *Mécano* described itself as an 'ultraindividualistic, irregular international review for the diffusion of neo-Dada ideas and mental hygiene'. Four perfectly choreographed issues appeared: the first three were single large folded sheets, each distinguished by a primary colour – Yellow (February 1922), Blue (July 1922) and Red (October 1922). Issues 4–5 (winter 1923), was white and had a more conventional magazine format.

*Mécano*’s title encapsulates its dual allegiances. The reference could be to Francis Picabia’s machine paintings and drawings, an example of which is reproduced in the Yellow issue (*Les dents viennent aux yeux comme des larmes* – Teeth come to the eyes like tears) as well as to Constructivism – not to forget the children’s construction game, Meccano. The congruence is emphasised by Bonset’s choice of illustrations, with for example Man Ray’s *Danger/Dancer* (1920), a glass painting dominated by cogs, and Raoul Hausmann’s *Tatlin at Home* (1920) and *Mechanical Head* (1919; here reproduced simply as ‘Plastique’) as well as Moholy-Nagy’s *Nickel-Construction* (1921). Poems, manifestos and texts speak to the common interest in experiments with language, and the final issue includes a fragment of Kurt Schwitters’s *Ursonata* (Fig No. 61).
Dedicated to the uneven, floating temperature of Dada

find on your pillow each morning. And now that we have spoken the truth to each other, from anus to anus, I would like you to accept these small daggers from me as presents (I bought them in CALICANOURO). Do not strike the rivets of your soul with them. Rather slide them under the nail of your right index finger, like a bayonet in its sheath. You lick your lips in anticipation of a pornographic double entendre (what do you take me for?) that you thought you spotted and you carry off the well-packed rotten mackerel under your coat, already pleased with your imaginary catch. The rosy STUBBLEHEATHERBLOSSOMJAWBONE, which you have given a crystal clear humble thrashing for 20 centuries, sticks so far out over your flat chest that in future I will allow myself to use you as Dada's walking-stick.

Holland 31.1.1921

Blue, July 1922
I.K. Bonset
Dada Holland: Manifesto 0,96013

Translated from the Dutch by Michael White

I am without name without trunk without importance
I am everything and nothing without sex and without any ambition
I am Rasta-failure Bandit and isolated
With my feet my pipe and my cigar and my shoes
I spit on all the youths who are imbecilic enough to Believe in love art or science I hate these dimensions of stupidity of vacant worlds and precocious children with their celluloid skulls
I spit on all the phylosophers these syphilosophers
I spit on God-Jesus-Marx with their prayers the bamboo eunuchs more irritating than the small corpses of cats in the Dutch canals
I spit on all moralists Christianity's urinals
I spit on artists papier-maché trinkets who want to make a world of soft chocolate and of perfumed shit
I spit I spit I spit on all the revolutionary cockatoos with their nickel brains

The World is a small Sperm Machine
Life – a venereal disease
All my prayers are dedicated
To Saint Venerica
Archachitektonica

(Inscription for the museum of Dr Berlage in The Hague)

(very fast) hear hear how the architectonic swans sing their song in the ponds on which floats the debris of Moorish Romanesque gothic baroquerococostyles nesting the rainbowrudiments (with and without tail) not already the monstered of the spoutknittingmachine of the spoutknittingmachine in the Capital of the capital of the hotchpotcherlagestyle? The unwashed lousysnouts of unsurprisingly sensitive snotnoses (hey hey where is the toilet!) stick out of the Peekaboo hatches bookapeephatches of this Moorish charnelhouse institute (echo: charnelhouse institute) the stockingbremmermaidens (hirsute, bearded echo: tail) walk without winking blinking amidst this entrenched stupidity pretentious of impotence sleekly combed and weighty of paving slabs which they find behind their small barren skulls (hey hey where is the toilet then!).

Oh architectonic skunks who grub your noses between the pylons of petrified waterlilies and the camouflaged font spouts architectonic firewater into the hall from which exudes the smell of the male Vagina.

Oh who here does not long for a buffet in this temple space (Café-Expresse!) a mammoth hollow where every conceivable insanity of human artliverpaté lies heaped, around which are grouped the architectonic horsedroppings the architectonic horsedroppings because this is holland’s great stone tombharmonica

JAZZ

A

D

tick-tock - tick-tock

this is Holland’s petrified cheesegable (one is requested before leaving to take this opportunity to put one’s clothes in order) inflated and closed up tight edammer interrupted by the Windowpanecurrantloaf of Widow of De Jong and Co.

Oh! The hall hall hall hole hole cheesehole cheese hat St Peter in which tactile hermaphrodites go pining for van Goghles.

Oh tropical corpse composed of skeletons and mummies of every bagpipe pasted bags. BAG

Nothing, apart from Dada, is strong enough to stamp this sleepy cucumberarchitecture into the ground.

Yes Yes

DADA
Red, October 1922

Chroniek — Mécano

Cablogramme

Weimar — Paris — Zurich — Budapest — Moscow
International Congress of Constructivists and Dadaists in Weimar 1922

21. Sept. Tzara visits the house of sick artists 'Bauhaus' (Many sick with the pip of Mazdaznan² and wireless expressionism) —
observation: Of the direction of 'De Stijl' in all creative domains. Observations of the absolute impotence of the 'Masters'
(exclusively the director, ³ poor baby of his catastrophic impulses!)
— The students more endowed than their 'masters' — 22. Drink — drink — drink — drunk — 23. Schwitters's arrival — buys a postcard at the Bauhaus and disappears up the chimney — In the Residenz Café Kuwitter⁴ is christened 'Sonniermerz' — In the evening a
general storming of Van Doesburg's studio. - Arp is still floating - somewhere 24. Arp arrives in Jena - Great move cross-country - Extra train with food and drink wagons. - Great expectation at the station The Jenarites have taken up position under the command of Dr Dexel5 - Greeting from Jazz-band-Arp. Procession through the city. - 25. Return to Weimar. Injection of the virgin microbe dada in Weimar and in the Bauhausians.6 - Bortniyk7 has struggled for Dadaism in Hungary. Lissitzky-Moscow says to Dadaism: 'You have cut the bellybrain of the bourgeoisie from the inside.' - Rain of champagne. Madame - madame - madame - madame - madame - madame - madame - madame - madame - madame - madame - madame - Arp has lost his flute in the Chat-noir - 26. After much pressure, the first Constructivist egg is laid by the international chicken. Moholy's dynamic egg is simultaneously a chicken. - 27. Pétro9 is unanimously declared Europe's unmistakeable Dadaistic musical instrument. - Military march for a crocodile10 in front of the museum. - Jena-hygiene-hyena-dada. Destruction of Jena by Kuwitter's scarf11 - 28. dada tour of Germany from Munich to Hanover - The great Pra12 travels back to Zurich on his flute.

Transcribed from the French
by Ian Monk

Red, October 1922
Benjamin Péret

The child with the blond belly

It is when he discovers America and slips road signs and nuns
It is because all these woes support one another around his sunny greatness

The president of purchases buys 13 for 15 wears out his whiskers like glass eats like a cat pisses like a hotel

at the time when the youngest carburettor uses the last bulrushes for the last cake The female hides in a flag around a belly beneath spectacles.
SAVANTS

Celui qui mange une purée d'yeux bleus pour voir plus loin dans le ciel

Celui qui nourrit ses poissons rouges avec du guano de perroquet et comprend leur langage

La sueur de cheval a la vertu du beurre pour frire des gardenias

Celui qui se nourrit de verge de souteneur pour s'occuper de balistique

Les araignées et les abeilles utilisant les artistes

Les artistes modernes et les artistes modernes

GEORGES RIBEMONT-DESSAIGNES

Raoul Hausmann
Tatlin lebt zu Hause
Et je trouve qu'on a en tort de dire que le Dadaïsme, le Cubisme, le Futurisme, repose sur un fond commun. Le deux dernières tendances étaient surtout basées sur un principe de perfectionnement technique ou intellectuel tandis que le Dadaïsme n'a jamais reposé sur aucune théorie et n'a été qu'une

**Protestation**

*(Tristan Tzara)*

Dada est la force désintéressée, ce n'est pas une maladie, pas une énergie pas une vérité.

**Evola**

Waar het hart leeg van is loopt de neus van over.

**Bonset**
It was cream, as Amalia, a 'smoking forbidden'... in every respect: a teetotaller. Why should there be any hesitation.

Amalia suffered sauerkraut. Like burping strawberry lemonade. Despite that, the tablecloth was scoured white. It could and should not go any further. Amalia was certain of that.

Finally, the saving thought rose up in her...she bought some black lacquer. A small, empty bottle full. Suddenly she took a hatchet in her hand and hacked the bottle open with it. She now had no time to lose. So she left the tablecloth white and took the bust of Venus in her hand. It was a beauty of a bust. Covered in marble. Naked. A real beauty.

Amalia lacquered it – for the hell of it – black. Then the canary was lacquered black and, once Amalia had put the canary back in its cage, the dear little bird sang nothing but Negro songs.² It was downright amazing how much comfort the lacquer appear to provide!

The whole family was hypnotised by the black lacquer. Then the man of the house was lacquered. First his fingers were lacquered black. However his feet were convulsively turned inwards. His fingernails were pulled out. That made such a funny impression that mother had to laugh out loud.

Then Amalia took the brush in her hand again and lacquered his earlobes.

The ears themselves were painted cherry red.

I make particular note of this although it was only a temporary measure.
SONATE

Grim glim gnim bimbim
grim glim gnim bimbim
grim glim gnim bimbim
grim glim gnim bimbim
grim glim gnim bimbim
grim glim gnim bimbim
grim glim gnim bimbim
bum bimbim bim bimbim
bum bimbim bim bimbim
bum bimbim bim bimbim
bum bimbim bim bimbim
bum bimbim bim bimbim
grin glim gnim bimbim
grin glim gnim bimbim
Tata tata tui E tui E
tata tata tui E tui E
tata tata tui E tui E
Tillalala tillalala
tillalala tillalala.
Tata tata tui E tui E
tata tata tui E tui E.
Tillalala tillalala
tillalala tillalala.

Tui tui tui tui tui tui tui tui
te te te te te te te te
tui tui tui tui tui tui tui
te te te te te te te.
Tata tata tui E tui E
tata tata tui E tui E.
Tillalala Tilla lala
tillalala tilla lala

KURT SCHWITIERS

61
Kurt Schwitters 'Sonate'
Mécano, White, Nos. 4-5
1923
4 Presumably baseball. In
12 The tour Nesle, which stood in
9 Dr Walter
10 Pierre
7 The French. feux
6 Jean
5 Pere
The stage name of Harry of Alfred Gruenwald, son of a originally planned to call his refers to the decorative top of a
Colique
doctor of law. who was active Ozenfant were editors of
waxworks museum in
scandalous 'orgasmic' statue
en boule ,
Musee
a man squatting with his
trousers down.

1 Celine Arnauld, the only female writer represented in this edition of Littérature, was a member of the Paris Dada movement. She was married to
Paul Dermée.

1 Rene Hilsuam, director of the bookshop Au sans pareil.

1 Protected
Habitation Reform
1 Pseudonym evoking "small-town cousin".

LITTERATURE NEW SERIES
No. 7 'Rrose Sélavy'
1 Marcel Duchamp invented Rrose Sélavy as a female alter ego and credited her with his first intricate, spooneristic, poetic tongue-twisters. From October 1922, Desnos wrote or uttered two hundred more, evidently in some kind of trance also invoking self-hypnosis. The periodical Littérature published 174 sentences in December 1922. A few omissions are indicated by dots ... The translations have been done very freely in the hope of catching the peculiar originality and mystery of the original.

No. 9 'What Lovely Weather!'
1 This is a classic problem pun. In French, voler can mean to win all the tricks in a card game, as well as to fly.
2 In French, sauter les plombs can also mean to blow the fuses.

DIE SCHAMMADIE
Die Schammadie by
Emily Hage
1 Haagelke bedeutet "cash" in German was the pseudonym of Alfred Gruenwald, son of a banker and a leading member of the International Socialist Party in Germany.

'Supérieur Cockato'
1 In the original German the title 'Supérieur Cockato' was in French. Arp was bilingual and often translated his own work between French and German.

PROJECTEUR
Particuliers
1 'Draulie' is 'Eluard' opposed to Dada. 6 Ironically the

1 Reference to Hendrik Bremmer (1871–1956), an artist, critic and collector who gave lessons in art appreciation to the well-to-do, including Hélène Kröller-Müller, the most important collector of modern art in the Netherlands.

1 The famous nineteenth-century Dutch novel, Max Havelaar, written by Multatuli in 1860, which contains an indictment of Dutch colonial policy.

'Dada Holland'
1 A reference to Francis Picabia's Jésus-Christ rastoyerqu gouë (Paris 1920).

'A Barbe Bizarre'
1 The untranslatable title inserts 'ach' meaning 'oh!' or 'alas!' into architectonic.

2 Between 1919 and 1924 the celebrated Dutch architect H.P. Berlage (1856–1934) drew up plans for a new municipal museum in The Hague. His first design was never realised but a second plan devised in 1927 was eventually built and opened in the 1935 as the Gemeentemuseum.

3 There are two ponds in front of Gemeentmuseum, when it gave lessons in art appreciation to the well-to-do, including Hélène Kröller- Müller, the most important collector of modern art in the Netherlands.

4 Ironically the Gemeentemuseum, when it opened in 1935, was ahead of its time by including a purpose-designed café space.

'Chroniek-Mécano'
1 Hans Arp (1887–1966). Segonzac does not mean anything but may be a Germanised version of Segonzac (capital of the Grande Champagne district in France), making a pun on Arp's Alsatin origins and Franco-German identity. He
2 Eastern religion followed by Johannes Itten, who taught at the Bauhaus between 1919 and 1913 with particular responsibility for establishing the preliminary course. Theo van Doesburg, who probably wrote this chronicle, savagely criticised the mystical tendencies he detected among students. The blue issue of Mécano included a satirical drawing of Van Doesburg and Itten confronting each other as a 'mechanical' and 'natural' man respectively.

Walter Gropius (1883–1969). Van Doesburg was supported in his stay in Weimar by the partner in Gropius' architectural firm, Adolf Meyer. There had always been the suggestion that Van Doesburg expected to be offered a post at the Bauhaus but it never happened and he felt a great deal of resentment towards Gropius thereafter.

One of Kurt Schwitters many versions of his name.

5 Walter Gropius (1883–1969). An artist and art historian who was at the time exhibition organiser at the Kunstein in Jena, where he staged several significant constructivist exhibitions and also the Bauhaus. Kurt Schwitters referred to Van Doesburg's 'Der Wille zum Stil' ('The Will to Style) in March 1922. 

6 Tristan Tzaras lecture, given in Weimar at the congress, ended with the sentence: 'Perhaps you will understand me better when I tell you that Dada is a virgin microbe that penetrates with the insistence of air into all the spaces that reason has not been able to fill with words or conventions.'

7 Sandor Bortnyik (1893–1976) was a Hungarian artist associated with the journal MA, like Moholy-Nagy. He spent the years from 1922 to 1925 in Weimar, where he met Van Doesburg.

8 Tristan Tzaras poem 'An Petroto' (Nelly van Doesburg) is simply the repetition of the word 'madame'. See Merz No. 7, January 1924, p.71.

9 Nelly van Doesburg (1899–1975), an accomplished pianist.

10 Piano composition by Vittorio Rietti probably played by Nelly van Doesburg at the Dada Soiree in Weimar. Rietti's piano pieces were a standard feature of the Dada tour of Holland in 1923.

11 Some photographs of the Congress of Dadaists and Constructivists show Schwitters wearing a very large, striped scarf.

12 Schwitters frequently refers to Arp in this way.

'The White Lacquered Little Black Paper Bag'

1 Theo van Doesburg's translation of Schwitters 'text Die Weisslackierte Schwarzefigur' in 1923.

2 The German version published in Merz 1: Holland Dada, January 1923. pp.14–15 has an additional sentence at this point, missing in the Dutch version, that says: 'Emile's mother glowed with enthusiasm like fat.'

DADA-TANK, DADA JAZZ AND DADA-JOK

1 The cost of this single issue, eight-page journal is given only in Croatian currency (five dinar) and texts are primarily in Serbo-Croatian, indicating that it was intended for a local audience.

2 The texts by Tzaras were 'Comment je suis devenu charmant, sympathique et délicieux', the beginning of 'Manifeste de Monsieur A l'antiphilosophe' and 'Sillogisme colonial'.

3 'Jok' means 'no' in Turkish, so the title of the journal can be translated to mean 'Dada no' or, using the Serbo-Croatian translation of 'Dada', 'yes, yes, no'.

'Dadaism (club dada bluf) in Dada Jazz

2 Nervener refers to Zurich Dada, to Walter Nern and Lugano, where Ball lived.

MERZ

1 Merz by Emily Hage

2 Published in Hanover. Merz was distributed in over sixteen countries, including Germany, France, Norway, the United States and Japan, indicating Schwitters' international ambitions.

No. 1 'Dadaism in Holland'

1 The italicised phrase 'vulgar' in Dutch in the original. The reference is probably to the Dada tour of Holland in January 1923 by Schwitters and Van Doesburg. In Utrecht the audience invaded the stage.

2 A new estate in The Hague built by De Stijl architect.

3 Address in The Hague where Van Doesburg's second wife, Nelly van Doesburg, lived. She was the agent for De Stijl and assisted at the 1923 Dada tour of Holland.

No. 2 'Manifesto Prole Art'

1 Synthesis of the arts.

No. 6 'Watch Your Step!'

1 The first two issues of Hans Richter magazine G appeared in July and September 1923.

G

G by Dawn Ades

1 Frederick Kiesler (1890–1965) was an architect and radical exhibition designer. He moved to New York in 1926 and was closely associated with the Surrealist refugees during the war, and with Peggy Guggenheim, whose Art of this Century Gallery, New York, he designed in 1942.

2 Wieland Herzfelde (1896–1988), the writer and exhibition designer. He moved to New York in 1926, where he designed in 1942.

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