

**The Subversive Pedagogy of  
Belgrade Surrealism:  
Aleksandar Vučo and Dušan Matić's  
The Fine Feats of the "Five Cockerels" Gang**



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**Institut für Slawistik, Campus**  
**Spitalgasse 2, Hof 3, Seminarraum 1**  
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The 1933 collaborative surrealist book *The Fine Feats of the "Five Cockerels" Gang* marks the end of the historical avant-gardes in Yugoslavia. Created by two prominent Belgrade Surrealists – Aleksandar Vučo, who wrote the verses, and Dušan Matić, who authored the foreword and created collages and the accompanying prose texts which “explain” them—*The Fine Feats* is one of the examples of avant-garde photopoetry books for children, and a rare example of the surrealist “novel in verse” accompanied by photomontages. The lecture introduces the lesser-known practices of the Belgrade Surrealists, explains their inclination towards the renewal of children’s literature focusing particularly on *The Fine Feats*, and discusses the aesthetic and ideological concepts that the Belgrade Surrealists developed and put in service to the Revolution. Examining these surrealist concepts—the wall, the marvelous, spacing/doubling, and the interval—the lecture unpacks the latent meanings and emancipatory potential of this societally meaningful pedagogical project. Finally, the author offers a close inspection of few of Matić’s collages and accompanying prose captions from the book and their subversive, “Aesopian” role within the symbolic economies of contemporary Yugoslav society. The lecture concludes by delineating the historical trajectory of the Belgrade surrealist circle and subsequent editions of *The Fine Feats* in socialist Yugoslavia.

**Aleksandar Bošković** teaches in the Slavic Department at Columbia University and specializes in avant-garde literature and experimental art practices explored through the lenses of comparative media. He is the author of *The Poetic Humor* in Vasko Pope’s *Oeuvre* (2008), and co-editor of *The Fine Feats of 'Five Cockerel's Gang'* with Ainsley Morse (Brill, 2022) and *Zenithism: A Yugoslav Avant-Garde Anthology* with Steven Teref (forthcoming at Academic Studies Press). His articles have appeared in scholarly journals (*Apparatus*, *Cultural Critique*, *Digital Icons*, *Književna istorija*, *Russian Review*, *SEJ*, *Slavic Review*) as well as in various edited collections. He is the recipient of several grants and fellowships, including Collegium de Lyon Fellowship (2019-2020).