

Le Groupe d'Études Orientales, Slaves et Néo-helléniques (G.E.O. – UR 1340)
et le Département d'études néo-helléniques

vous invitent

à la conférence de

Maria Boletsi

Endowed Professor of Modern Greek Studies
University of Amsterdam

mardi 6 avril 2021

à 17h

Sur BBB

<https://bbb.unistra.fr/b/biz-3d2-06j-5rw> (code d'accès : 263389). La conférence sera retransmise en direct à l'amphithéâtre du collège doctoral. Vous y êtes les bienvenus dans la limite des places disponibles.

The Poetics and Politics of the Middle Voice in Recent Greek Literature and Art

The international attention that recent Greek art and literature have received was until very recently framed by reference to the 'crisis' – the financial crisis, topped by the refugee situation, to which the covid-19 crisis has now been added. 'Crisis' forms a discursive and experiential framework that legitimizes specific narratives of the present while foreclosing others, and delimits the space of agency and alternative futures. Within and against this framework, recent works of literature and (street) art in Greece mobilize alternative 'grammars': modes of speaking, looking or being. This talk turns to Greek literature and public art from the past decade that mobilize aspects of the 'middle voice' – not only as a grammatical category but as a broader expressive mode in language and other media – to resist conditions of isolation, suffering, and social disposability in crisis-stricken Greece and elsewhere.

How does private suffering, vulnerability, and isolation become politicized and even potential resources for new subjectivities and collectivities? How can forms of *stasis* or glimpses of utopianism emerge from the boredom, alienation, and dispossession of unemployment or an indebted life? How can one challenge neoliberal imperatives of acquiescence, normalization or 'moving forward' from within a totalizing neoliberal now? How can we disengage from conceptions of the subject as either *active* or *passive*—either an acquiescent victim or a revolutionary hero? This talk traces how the middle voice is involved in artistic and literary attempts to broach these questions and enable alternative configurations of subjectivity, agency, and futurity.

Maria Boletsi is Endowed Professor of Modern Greek Studies at the University of Amsterdam (Marilena Laskaridis Chair) and Assistant Professor in Film and Comparative Literature at Leiden University. She works in comparative literature, literary and cultural theory, Modern Greek literature and culture, and conceptual history. She is the author of *Barbarism and Its Discontents* (Stanford UP 2013) and co-author of *Barbarian: Explorations of a Western Concept in Theory, Literature and the Art*, vol. 1 (Metzler 2018). She recently co-edited the books (Un)timely Crises: Chronotopes and Critique (forthcoming Palgrave 2021), Languages of Resistance, Transformation, and Futurity in Mediterranean Crisis-Scapes: From Crisis to Critique (Palgrave 2020), Subjects Barbarian, Monstrous, and Wild (Brill 2018), and *Barbarism Revisited* (Brill 2015). She has published on various topics, including the concept of barbarism, C.P. Cavafy, functions of the "middle voice" in the context of crisis in Greece and beyond, and fictionality in protest and public art in relation to populism and post-truth.