THE CULTURE OF POST-SOCIALISM
BLACK SEA HORIZONS

April 13, 2018 | Columbia University

Morning Session | 9:15 AM – 12:45 PM | 328 Millbank Hall
Afternoon Session | 2:30 PM – 6:30 PM | 1219 IAB

The event is organized under the umbrella of the Black Sea Networks Initiative
(http://blackseanetworks.org/)
Co-sponsors: The President's Global Innovation Fund, The Harriman Institute, and Ulbandus:
The Slavic Review of Columbia University
PROGRAM

Morning Session
Barnard College, Millbank Hall 328

9:15 - 9:30 AM | Coffee break

9:30 - 9:45 AM | Opening Remarks, Valentina Izmirlieva (Columbia University)

9:45 - 11:00 AM | “Images of Exclusion: Ethno-Nationalist Graffiti in The Balkans”
Keynote address by Mitja Velikonja (University of Ljubljana/NYU)

11:15 AM - 12:45 PM | Round Table: Black Sea Film After Socialism
Marijeta Bozovic (Yale University)
Marta Figlerowicz (Yale University)
Masha Shpolberg (Yale University)
Moderator: Aleksanadar Boskovic (Columbia University)

1:00 - 2:15 PM | Lunch break

Afternoon Session
1219 International Affairs Building

2:30 - 4:30 PM | Panel: Cultural Institutions in Post-Socialist Ukraine
Dirk Uffelmann (University of Passau), “Facebook Poetry for Russophone Ukraine: Boris Khersonskii’s Media Strategy”
Mayhill Fowler (Stetson University), “Soviet Ghosts: The Former Theater of the Red Army in Lviv and Post-Socialism as a Cultural Crisis”
Moderator: Markian Dobczansky (Harriman Institute)

4:30 - 5:00 PM | Coffee break

5:00 - 6:30 PM | The Post-Socialist Literary Scene: A Writer’s Perspective
Bulgarian writer Georgi Gospodinov (Cullman Center, NYPL)
in conversation with Valentina Izmirlieva (Columbia University)

6:30 - 7:00 PM | Reception
PARTICIPANTS

Marijeta Bozovic is Assistant Professor of Slavic Languages and Literatures, affiliated with Film and Media Studies and Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies at Yale University. A specialist in 20th- and 21st-century Russian and East European cultures with broad comparative interests, she is the author of Nabokov’s Canon: From Onegin to Ada (Northwestern University Press, 2016), and the co-editor (with Matthew Miller) of Watersheds: Poetics and Politics of the Danube River (Academic Studies Press, 2016) and (with Brian Boyd) of Nabokov Upside Down (Northwestern University Press, 2017). She is currently working on her second monograph, Avant-Garde Post—Radical Poetics After the Soviet Union. Bozovic is co-editor of the academic journal Russian Literature; co-curator of the “Poetry after Language colloquy for Stanford University’s ARCADE digital salon; and a contemporary film and literature reviewer for The Los Angeles Review of Books.

Aleksandar Bošković is a Lecturer in Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian in the Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures at Columbia University, where he teaches courses on Yugoslav and post-Yugoslav cinema and literature, as well as on the intersection of literature and visual culture in Slavic avant-gardes. He has published essays on issues of digital mnemonics, Yugonostalgia and cultural memory, avant-garde photobooks, Serbian poetry and post-Yugoslav fiction, history of European Küntstlerroman, and the theory of possible worlds. He is the author of The Poetic Humor in Vasko Popa’s Oeuvre (Institute for Literature and Art in Belgrade, 2008) and a co-editor (with Tatjana Aleksić) of Mediated Resistance: The Struggle of Independent Mediascapes During the Yugoslav Dissolution (Brill, 2017). He is currently working on several projects, including the anthology of Yugoslav modernism and the book manuscript, Slavic Avant-Garde Cinepoetry, a cross-cultural and interdisciplinary exploration of photopoetry and bioscopic books within Slavic avant-gardes.

Markian Dobczansky, currently a Harriman Postdoctoral Research Scholar at the Harriman Institute, is a historian specializing in Soviet urban history, the politics of culture, and Russian-Ukrainian relations. He received a Ph.D. in Soviet history from Stanford University in September 2016. His book project, Between Moscow and Kyiv: The Politics of Culture in Twentieth Century Kharkiv, examines local identity in Kharkiv, the largest metropolis of the Ukrainian-Russian cultural borderland, from 1917 to the 1990s. Prior to coming to Columbia, he has held fellowships at The George Washington University and at the University of Toronto, where he was the Petro Jacyk Post-Doctoral Fellow in Ukrainian Politics, Culture, and Society.

Marta Figlerowicz is Assistant Professor of Comparative Literature and English at Yale University, where she teaches courses on philosophies of the self, modernism, literary and critical theory, and contemporary cinema. She is a co-organizer of Utopia after Utopia, a research initiative on contemporary post-socialist critical theory and art practice. Her first book, Flat Protagonists: A Theory of Novel Character (Oxford UP, 2016), discusses an odd group of characters—found across the long history of the French and British novel—that simplify in the course of a narrative, instead of deepening and expanding. Her second book, entitled Spaces of Feeling: Affect and Awareness in Modernist Literature (Cornell UP, 2017) studies representations of intersubjective affective awareness in American, British, and French fiction and poetry. She is currently at work on a new project on the phenomenology of contemporary media culture, called Myths of the Millennials. She is a member of the Harvard Society of Fellows, which she joined as a Junior Fellow in 2013.
Mayhill C. Fowler is Assistant Professor of history at Stetson University, where she also directs the program in Russian, East European, and Eurasian Studies. She teaches and researches the cultural history of Russia and Eastern Europe, with a focus on Ukraine. She publishes widely on Soviet theater, and her first book, *Beau Monde at Empire's Edge: State and Stage in Soviet Ukraine* (Toronto, 2017), tells the story of how a rich cultural center became a cultural periphery through a collective biography of young artists and officials in the 1920s and 1930s. Her second project, *The Military-Entertainment Complex in the USSR: Theater on the Frontlines of Socialism*, investigates how we entertain soldiers, through the lens of the former Red Army Theater in Lviv. She also works on Soviet actresses and 19th century itinerant theater troupes. She was a postdoctoral fellow at Harvard and the University of Toronto, and holds an MFA from the National Theater Conservatory.

Bradley Gorski is Term Assistant Professor in Slavic at Barnard College where he teaches a range of Russian and comparative literature and culture courses. His dissertation, “Authors of Success: Cultural Capitalism and Literary Evolution in Contemporary Russia,” examines various technologies of literary prominence in post-Soviet Russia—from mass literature to social media—and their attendant effects on the development of contemporary literature. His secondary interests include postwar Soviet literature and culture, the Soviet and post-Soviet peripheries, and digital approaches to the humanities. He will assume a position as Assistant Professor In Russia Literature at Vanderbilt University in Fall 2018.

The poet, writer, and playwright Georgi Gospodinov is one of the most translated and decorated authors of post-Socialist Bulgaria. His novelistic debut, *Natural novel* (1999), now available in 21 languages, brought him almost instant international acclaim. Yet it was his second novel, *The Physics of Sorrow* (2012), which catapulted him into national and international stardom. A literary sensation in Bulgaria—its first printing sold out in a day and it went on to become the country’s best-selling book of 2012—the novel swept the national literary prizes, and, in translation, was shortlisted for several major European awards, winning the Jan Michalski Prize for Literature in 2016. “With Physics of Sorrow,” wrote Neue Zircher Zeitung, “Gospodinov launches not only the Bulgarian literature but also himself in the European writers’ first league.” An animated short film based on Gospodinov’s short story “Blind Vaysha” (from *And Other Stories*, 2001), was nominated for a 2017 Academy Award. He has written also four poetry books, two plays, screenplays for short feature films, and has co-authored an art graphic novel, *The Eternal Fly* (2010, with the artist N. Toromanov). Currently, Gospodinov is a Fellow at the Cullman Center for Scholars and Writers at the NYPL, where he is working on a novel about the childhood fears of different generations.

Valentina Izmirlieva is a historian of Balkan and Russian religious cultures. She holds an appointment as Professor in the Slavic Department of Columbia University, where she currently serves as Department Chair. She is also the Faculty Director of the Columbia Summer Program in Balkan Transcultural Studies, hosted by Boğaziçi University, and leads the global Black Sea Networks Initiative the recipient of the President’s Global Innovation Fund grant. Much of Izmirlieva’s work addresses cultural exchanges among Christians, Jews, and Muslims in the context of multi-ethnic, multi-religious empires and their successor states. She is the author of *All the Names of The Lord: Lists, Mysticism and Magic* (University of Chicago, 2008) and co-editor (with Boris Gasparov) of the volume *Translation and Tradition in Slavia Orthodoxa* (2012). Her current projects include a monograph about Christian pilgrims to Jerusalem who took as their model the Muslim Hajj to Mecca and a study of state hagiography at the age of Putin.
Masha Shpolberg is a Ph.D. Candidate in Comparative Literature and Film & Media Studies at Yale University. Her dissertation focuses on the representation of labor in Polish cinema between 1968 and 1989, a time of massive workers’ strikes and opposition to the communist government. Masha is particularly interested in the way filmmakers were able to draw on the experiments of the interwar avant-garde in order to deconstruct the vocabulary and syntax of Socialist Realism, circumvent censorship, and contribute to the growing national consciousness that eventually gave birth to the Solidarity movement. Masha's broader research interests include the history of Eastern European cinema and the evolution of documentary film form. Her writing has appeared in NECSUS: The European Journal of Media Studies, Film Quarterly, Senses of Cinema, and The Los Angeles Review of Books.

Dirk Uffelmann studied Russian, Polish, Czech, and German literatures at the Universities of Tübingen, Vienna, Warsaw, and Konstanz. He obtained his PhD from the University of Konstanz in 1999 and defended his second thesis (Habilitation) at the University of Bremen in 2005 before teaching as Lecturer in Russian at the University of Edinburgh. He also was a visiting professor at the University of Bergen, Norway, Western Michigan University, and the University of Puget Sound, USA, and visiting fellow at the University of Cambridge and the University of Munich. At present, he is professor of Slavic Literatures and Cultures at the University of Passau. From 2011 to 2014 he served as Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs. Since 2017 he is Vice President of the German Slavists’ Association. His research interests are Russian, Polish, Czech, Ukrainian, and Central Asian literatures, philosophy, religion, migration, masculinity and internet studies. Dirk Uffelmann has authored 2 monographs and co-edited 14 volumes, most recently: Tam, vnutri. Praktiki vnutrennei kolonizatsii v kul'turnoi istorii Rossii [There within: Practices of Internal Colonization in Russia’s Cultural History] (2012), Vladimir Sorokin’s Languages (2013), Postcolonial Slavic Literatures After Communism (2016).

The Monument to the Soviet Army in Sofia, Bulgaria, reinvented with Marvel Comics characters in 2011, photo Anatoliy Ivanov

The cover image—of a Balkan post-socialist graffiti—is adapted from a photo by Mitja Velikonja