

Greek Modernism

This two week intensive seminar (ten 2-hours sessions) explores Greek modernism in literature and art as a current that negotiated both a place for Greece in the modern global cultural scene and Greece's loaded historical capital. More specifically, we will discuss poetry, fiction, and painting along with theoretical texts from the period of 1920s-1940s, that signaled affinities with trends, movements, and genres in Europe – futurism, surrealism, cubism, abstraction, stream of consciousness, the long poem, among others – while reworking and redefining Greek tradition. The formidable “generation of the 1930s” re-signified tradition not only to make it fit in the modernist aesthetic – “Make it new!” according to Pound, “One must be absolutely Modern!” according to Rimbaud – but also to change the outward face of Greece: this was a resignification that had everlasting effects on the Greek culture and imaginary. Greek modernism will be discussed in its historical context, Greek, European, and global, and we will address questions such as: How did Greek modernism relate with European but also global developments of the time? What has been excluded from the narrative of the “generation of the 1930s”? Who were the misfits and how did they fertilize Greek culture? How do we understand Greek modernism now as part of a global movement? We will read works by Cavafy, Seferis, Elytis, Theotokas, Engonopoulos, Gatsos, Calas, Axioti, as well as theoretical works on modernism as a global phenomenon. The seminar will be complemented by visits to the Ghika Gallery in Athens and the Goulandri Museum.

NB. All works will be provided in English translation, the Greek original will also be available. The exact readings may change.

Sessions

- 1. Eccentric modernism**
C. P. Cavafy, Selection of poems
- 2. Loud voices/intimate voices**
A. Sikelianos, Selection of poems
K. Karyotakis, *Battered Guitars: Poems and Prose*
S. Doukas, *A Prisoner of War's Story*
- 3. Modernism: looking for the new**
G. Theotokas, “Free Spirit”
K. Politis, *Eroica*
- 4. Antiquity and/as memory**
G. Seferis, Selection of poems
- 5. Visit to the Benaki-Ghika Museum**
- 6. Greek landscape**
O. Elytis, Selection of poems
- 7. Surrealism**

Surrealism in Greece: An Anthology, selection
N. Engonopoulos, *Acropolis and Tram*
N. Calas, Selection of poems and writings

8. The modernist long poem

N. Gatsos, *Amorgos*
N. Engonopoulos, *Bolivar*

9. On the fringes of the generation of the 1930a

Y. Skaribas, *Mariambas*
M. Axioti, Selections

10. Visit to the Goulandri Museum