Putin, Russia and Ukraine: How to Make Sense of the Questions

NYU: October 1
Irina Vukosavic

O n October 1st Joshua Tucker, Professor of Comparative Politics at NYU, presented his talk “Putin, Russia, and Ukraine: How to Make Sense of the Questions?” at the Center for European and Mediterranean Studies at NYU.

Tucker led a discussion about the current crisis involving Ukraine and Russia. He outlined a framework for thinking about Putin’s motivations and a way of thinking about some general big picture issues.

“It’ll be a two-by-two intersection of two different concepts and they’ll have different sets of explanations for what’s happening, different implications for the best policy response and different implications for the end game,” he said, introducing his talk.

“I want to talk about what’s the puzzle in all of this. I’m going to start off by saying why I think it’s really stunningly surprising that Putin has embarked on this path at all. And I’m going to try and make a case for why that’s puzzling.”

Tucker outlined this puzzle in his article on Monkey Cage, “5 reasons I am surprised the crisis in Crimea is escalating so quickly,” published on February 28. In this piece, Professor Tucker explained reasons why he thought it was not in Russia’s interest to have the conflict in Crimea develop similarly to the 2008 conflict in Georgia.

He argued that, logically, it made no sense for Putin to go into Crimea. He said there was a difference between thinking about Russia invading Georgia, and Russia invading Ukraine - the Ukrainian army is much stronger than the Georgian army, and he believed that invading Crimea would isolate Russia internationally. He also pointed out that Crimea isn’t only inhabited by Ukrainians and Russians, but also by Crimean Tatars who are not likely to welcome Russian rule for either historical or contemporary reasons. He thought that this could prove a dangerous situation for Russia at home, and that the consequences for Russian and Ukrainian politics would be dire.

Yet Putin did take Crimea a month later, and Tucker wrestled with understanding the reasons why. In terms of what Putin was thinking, Tucker outlined a useful way of viewing his motivations. He said there are two big picture questions that can be asked that narrow into different sets of motivations and explanations.

The first question, Tucker said, is to ask whether this is a story motivated by security concerns, international concerns or

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concerns about Russian domestic politics — is Putin acting out of response to security or international objectives or is this about Russian domestic politics?

The second question to investigate is whether Putin is acting from a position of strength or a position of weakness — in terms of reacting to events as they come or strength, as in planning ahead of time.

“These are two different views of what could be motivating Putin but they have very different implications for how things play out and very different implications for what’s the best response from the West.”

Tucker first examined Putin’s weaknesses from an international and security perspective. He spoke about Russia’s fear of losing the Black Sea Fleet and Russia’s anxiety over the “next step” in NATO encroachment, as other scholars have pointed it out.

Another way of looking at Putin’s motivations, Tucker said, was from the point of view of weak domestic politics. He cited the protests following allegations of fraud during the 2011 Duma elections and Euromaiden as a challenge to the “Putin Model.”

But another explanation of Putin’s behavior is to look at Russia coming from a position of strength. Tucker pointed out that this may not be “weak Russia” responding out of fear that Ukraine has fallen to the West, but that this could be a “strong Russia” trying to exert its authority on the international stage.

Lastly, Tucker pointed out that Putin may be thinking in the context of strong Russian domestic politics. He talked about Putin making a long-term decision that moves towards more openness. Post-2012, Tucker pointed out, Putin may have been mainly focused on keeping the regime in power. Therefore, Putin may be thinking of the Euromaidan as a challenge to the “Putin Model” that needs to be “crushed,” he said.

Tucker also suggested that, post-Olympics, Crimea may provide an opportunity for Putin to improve his popularity and “flush out” opposition from the system.

“These are some ways of thinking about it. You can disagree with policy implications but my hope is that this provides a useful framework for thinking about this, in terms of what the various sources of motivation could be, whether they are international security concerns or domestic politics and whether you think this is a strong Putin or this is a reacting weaker Russian regime,” he concluded.

Anne Sinclair Discusses Her Grandfather’s Gallery at NYU

NYU: September 23
Kavitha Surana

Anne Sinclair, an esteemed television and radio journalist in France, had never spent much time pondering her own family’s history — chasing the news was too all-consuming. “I wanted to be a journalist and it was my life,” she said, speaking at an event hosted by NYU’s Maison Française on September 23. “I didn’t want to be part of family tradition.”

But that family tradition was significant and rich with stories. Her maternal grandfather, Paul Rosenberg, was among the best dealers of impressionist and modern art and had close relationships with vanguard artists of the time like Pablo Picasso, Georges Braque and Henri Matisse. A French Jew, Rosenberg fled to New York with his family in 1940 to escape the Vichy government and he continued to live and work in his adopted home until his death in 1959.

After reaching 60, Sinclair finally resolved to turn her perceptive eye back towards her family’s remarkable legacy with My Grandfather’s Gallery, a book exploring Rosenberg’s illustrious career as an art gallerist in France and New York in the shadow of World War II.

Sinclair was joined in discussion at NYU by another well-known journalist, Kati Marton, a Hungarian-American journalist and author of Paris: A Love Story and The Great Escape: Nine Jews Who Fled Hitler and Changed the World.

Sinclair told Marton that she was triggered to re-examine her family’s past by a simple question. Renewing her French identity card, she was asked, “Are your four grandparents French?”

“It reminded me of the days when it was not so easy to prove Frenchness,”
Sinclair said. “The times when this type of question was usually asked were not the good old days.”

Then, after her mother died, she was overcome with the desire to look back and reconstruct her origins. “You realize you are different pieces of your life, and I am also his granddaughter,” she said.

Rosenberg came from a family of Hungarian Jewish émigrés, and Marton commented that it must have been unusual for a foreign family to assimilate and rise so rapidly in French society in the early 1900s.

But Sinclair didn’t seem to think so. “At that time France could integrate and assimilate more easily than now,” she said. It was only after the war that her father changed the family’s name from Schwartz to Sinclair, choosing the name by flipping through a phonebook.

Sinclair said that she was concerned with the recent rise of anti-Semitism in France. “I feel that French people are not anti-Semitic, and it’s not an anti-Semitism of the state,” she said. Yet, she continued, anti-Semitism still exists in many sectors of French society and is becoming more open.

She said that, while it has long been taboo for the extreme right and neo-Nazis to display outright anti-Semitism, “now you can express what you think.” She added that another part of the anti-Semitism “is coming from the left,” including pro-Palestinians, anti-Zionists and new Muslim immigrants.

Marton brought up Sinclair’s recent divorce from Dominique Strauss-Kahn, a prominent member of the French Socialist Party who resigned as managing director of the International Monetary Fund in 2011 after he was accused of sexually assaulting a hotel employee in New York. Other reports of sexual harassment surfaced at the time.

But Sinclair demurred to delve back into that past. When she coolly responded, “these are private affairs and should remain private,” members of the audience clapped vigorously. “I didn’t want to be in the headlines,” she continued. “I think this incident is behind me.”

A Closer Look at Stalin

NYU: September 26
Adrija Roychowdhury

NEW York University’s Jordan Center for the advanced study of Russia organised a lecture by Professor Stephen Kotkin of Princeton University on “Stalin: Geopolitics, Ideas, Power.” The lecture concentrated on the content of Kotkin’s upcoming book, *Stalin: Volume 1: Paradoxes of Power, 1878-1928* and was held on September 26 at the NYU’s Jürow Lecture Hall.

Kotkin has been teaching history at Princeton University since 1989, and his area of study focuses on power, authoritarianism, geopolitics, Russian Empire and the Soviet Union. Recently he has been researching Stalin and how the Russian leader rose to capture unbelievable power from the mid-1920s onwards.

Introducing his forthcoming book, he said that it was a result of a recent outpouring of intelligence and secret police documents which were not available earlier. This availability of previously untouched materials led him to conclude that much of what is written about Stalin is not true. For instance, facts about his early life have been considered inconsequential. Hence, historians have either shortened them or invented them. So, in order to understand the significance of Stalin’s early life in his rise to power, Kotkin worked to dig up details corresponding to his early life.

Kotkin’s first argument was that geopolitics played a major role in bringing Stalin to the center stage of the USSR and investing him with such exceptional power. Stalin was born in a decade when two major historical events took place— the unification of Germany under Bismarck and the Meiji restoration. This was further complicated by the fact that Britain was the dominant power in the world at that time.

Kotkin went on to suggest that certain characteristics that we associate
with modernity were present in the large powers and they forced all other countries to have them. Russia, at that moment, was engaged in this struggle for modernity and the Russian state succeeded to emerge as a great power. However, the one flaw of this new “modern” state was the continuing presence of the Czarist autocracy.

Stalin did nothing during this time. His power was not foreseeable. But Kotkin reminded his audience that history is made by those who can seize an opportunity. By 1922, when Lenin had his first stroke, Stalin had already seized the opportunity, setting up agents with the secret police on his behalf and working upon the psychology of the party members.

Kotkin offers a very convincing portrayal of Stalin’s monstrous power in his book. It is through mass mobilization against any kind of sabotage of the regime that he realised the power to change the socio-economic base of an entire society. He said that the book is an analytical narrative. “This is the story of the power of the regime in terms of the regime as a society,” said Kotkin.

**Professor Claudia Benthien Talks Literature and Media Art**

NYU: September 16
Irina Vukocevic

On September 16 Professor Claudia Benthien presented a talk on Literature and Media Art at NYU’s Deutsches Haus. She spoke about her latest project, which analyzes the aesthetics of language in emerging forms of artistic expression.

“The project investigates the possibilities for an analysis of media art from the perspective of literary studies. Media art possesses the potential for analysis from the point of view of literary studies,” Benthien said.

Benthien is a professor of German literature and cultural theory at the University of Hamburg. Her most recent book examines the intersection of notions of shame and guilt cultures in German tragedy around 1800.

For her talk, she used two examples of audiovisual writings of disaster.

The first was Gary Hill’s Incidence of Catastrophe, a single-channel 80’s video based on Maurice Blanchot’s novel *Thomas the Obscure*. The video is Hill’s in depth and personal examination of the novel.

In the 43 minutes of the video, Hill plays the main protagonist who is being engulfed by the novel.

There is the theme of water streaming onto a deserted beach. This is juxtaposed with shots of text, bluntly fading in and out as a hand turns the page and background noise of pages turning.

As the video progresses, the main protagonist essentially drowns in the text. He is bent over the book, then falls asleep on it. He attends a dinner party where all of the guests go into slow motion and start making indecipherable noises. At one point he is on the floor reading the book with shattered plates around him. Water is flowing over the dirty table cloth. The video gets blurrier, slower and slower.

He is tossing and turning in his bed naked, throwing up over the side of the bed, panting and breathing heavily. He looks at himself in the mirror with wide eyes and starts repeatedly stroking his face. He clutches the bathroom sink, gasping for air.

The video concludes with Hill on the bathroom floor in his own feces, naked. He is making indecipherable baby sounds and there is a stick poking at his body, curled in the fetal position. There is text surrounding him, replacing the walls.

“The crisis and collapse of the protagonist is contrasted with the evocation of something like a natural disaster,” Benthien said. “The disaster of a tremendous flood. This reference seems to be so much related to contemporary real catastrophes, such as global warming. The natural catastrophe is taking place only for one singular individual—or perhaps even in his imagination.”

The other work she used as an audiovisual writing of disaster was Nalini Malani’s *In Search of Vanquished Blood*, a work loosely
based on the 1984 novel *Cassandra* by Christa Wolf.

Malani’s 11 minute installation consists of 6 video projections and a shadow play of 5 huge rotating and hanging solid cylinders. The images include animals, botanical illustrations, Hindu and western icons and other motifs, with East Asian music in the background. In this work, Malani captures the tenuous state of widows in India and the Indo pogroms against Muslims in the early 1990s.

The poem “In Search of Vanished Blood” was written after the Indo-Pakistani war of 1965. It is projected in English translations onto the walls of Malani’s installation and mediated by the veiled face of a woman.

After presenting these two examples, Benthien concluded that these transformations of literary texts into time-based audio visual art create something fundamentally new and other that cannot only be viewed as something like a technical adaptation. Instead, she argued, it has to be considered as an autonomous artwork that establishes only loose and intertextual media ties to the pre-existing literary works.

Both works, Benthien said, engender their own audio visual literariness and should not be considered audio-visual adaptations or translations of literature but rather "trans-creations."

Public Memory of World War II as a Form of Social Protest in Greece

NYU: September 25
Adrija Roychowdhury

THE theme of the Hellenic lecture series for the year 2014-15 is identities. As part of its first event, Elena Mamoulaki spoke about how collective memory in Greece connects the present Greek crisis to World War II. Making use of a large number of visual representations, Mamoulaki showed how historical memory plays a significant role in the formulation of the political identity of a nation.

In 2012, a documentary called “Crossed Lives” was released in Greece. The film compares the present economic crisis in Greece to the economic crisis of the Third Reich. In the last few years, a large number of films, theatre, books and other forms of media representations have been drawing similarities between the years of the occupation and the present crisis. The discussion of the memory representations of the 1940s has come to the fore in the academic life of Greece. According to Mamoulaki, people talk about the current crisis as an analogy to the past, both the political elite and at a grass roots level.

Mamoulaki suggested that knowledge of history is not just understood as our engagement with facts. It is understood more through our interactions with people close to us. It is about imaginations and feelings as well. In this sense, she tries to understand how the current historical knowledge in Greece about World War II is shaping its political identity.

She said that every year in October, Greece celebrates Xuci day as a day of national pride against measures of exploitation. Parades are held to uphold Greek nationalism.

But in 2011, there was an unprecedented shift in the nature of the celebrations. It turned into a protest against the government. Ordinary citizens and students came out on the streets with anti-government chants and slogans.

“We commemorate not just soldiers who died in the World War II, but also our own compatriots, students who die daily,” said one of the students. Thus, Mamoulaki said, the people remember the Nazi period as a period of injustice and compare it to the present times. Parades are no longer open to public and this creates new analogies between the historical past and the present times.

The seminar ended on the thought that every time and place spins a certain historical memory in a way that suits the immediate context.
Memory, Commemoration and Post-Communism in Eastern Europe

NYU: September 17
Adrija Roychowdhury

The production of souls is more important than the production of tanks...and therefore I raise my glass to you writers, the engineers of human soul,” Professor Jan Kubik began his lecture with this famous quote from Joseph Stalin. As part of the Eastern European workshop, held at CEMS he set out to analyze how the fall of communism is celebrated in the Eastern European countries. He has just edited a new volume on the topic, Twenty Years After Communism: The Politics of Memory and Commemoration.

Kubik made a scientific analysis of seventeen countries of Eastern Europe and reached the conclusion that there are different patterns in the way certain countries commemorate the fall of communism. This is evident from the way 1989 is celebrated across the countries. For instance, in Poland in 2009, there was a whirl of celebrations commemorating the fall of communism as a total success or a total failure. The celebrations were mainly a symbolic portrayal, which was very dramatic. On the other hand, in the Czech Republic students were very critical of the twenty years of transformation and this was expressed through the celebrations.

Kubik quoted Kolakowski saying, “what is a nation? It is a collective memory, which in one way or another extends to all of us, through schools and also through a variety of common traditions?” In this regard, Kubik was interested to understand the types of mnemonic actors and the memory regimes that emerge as a result of the actors’ interactions.

He came to the conclusion that there are four kinds of actors in any nation: mnemonic warriors, mnemonic pluralists, mnemonic abnegators and mnemonic prospectives. The interactions of these actors lead to the formation of three kinds of mnemonic regimes: fractured regime, pillarized regime or the unified regime.

On applying this analysis to the seventeen countries of Eastern Europe, he recorded a computer generated pattern based on the way they commemorate the fall of communism. Thus, there are countries which negotiated extraction from communism: Poland, Hungary, Slovenia.

In other countries a political polarization happens in a murky sort of a way: Lithuania, Latvia, Romania, Slovakia. Then there is the case of Yugoslavia where the politicians and the public distanced themselves from the memory of communism. There are a few other countries where the fall of communism is commemorated through de-politization: Bulgaria, Germany, and Czech Republic.

Kubik ended his seminar on the thought that it is the collective political memory, rather than individual memory, that builds a nation. This collective memory is more sociological rather than psychological.

Investigating Social Order and Police Tactics in Public-Private Spaces

NYU: September 16
Kavitha Surana

In a busy shopping mall or a hectic train station, how is social order achieved and maintained? François Bonnet, a Sociologist at Pact (Grenoble), set out to answer this question, drawing upon research in three different countries. On September 16 he presented “Investigating Social Order: Welfare and Policing in France, Italy and the United States” at NYU’s Maison Française.

Bonnet situated his work in the tradition of intellectuals such as Durkheim, Hobbes, Marx and Weber, suggesting that social order is produced through three themes: economic well-being, because there is little need to implement social order regimes when inequality is low; unified norms and culture, because members of a group share social values; and violence, because order belongs to those who can exert violence.

Bonnet’s main research took place in Lyon, France and Milan, Italy. He decided to look at social order in train stations and urban malls because they are like “miniature cities,” filled with people from all walks of life. He looked at different actors who were concerned with security in the malls and train stations,
including the management companies and the local police and learned that different actors have different conceptions of security in the same space – and often their interests are conflicting.

Surprisingly, Bonnet found that the private management companies were more likely to work to provide a “social-minded” style of security, while the public authorities used a harsher, repressive style of policing. Bonnet said that this is because private security guards are just one component of a larger commercial enterprise. “They [the private companies] need to maintain profitability, so their definition of security is very close to the definition of security of the mainstream customer,” he said. “For these companies security measures are not just a tradeoff between cost and protection, but it’s also a tradeoff between protection and not annoying the customers too much.”

So for instance, though shops at a mall could easily prevent theft by checking everyone’s bag before they leave the store, private companies want to avoid this tactic because it’s intrusive and deters customers.

Bonnet also used the example of disruptive teenagers to illustrate his point. He said that kids and teenagers can often cause problems in shopping malls, but private enterprises are aware that their parents may be customers and that children themselves also spend money or grow up to be customers, so they try to find friendly ways to deal with their antics.

In contrast, Bonnet said that public authority tactics might fit into a legal framework of rules, but not necessarily correspond with what the public thinks of as a problem. Thus, the police might spend their time looking for wanted people or checking for undocumented migrants, which doesn’t do any good for private shopping malls and their customers.

At train stations too, Bonnet saw a clear difference in tactics. He said that the police were quick to use violence and force to evict homeless people who spent their days at the stations. Instead, the private management companies wished to avoid violent spectacles or other disturbances and tried to employ social tactics.

“So you start to contract a few non-profits to mitigate the negative effect of homeless people.” Bonnet said. “You basically buy social work with these non-profits. And you provide a bit of food, drug treatment, shelter, to avoid a too dramatic situation.” Then, with the police nearby in case of an emergency, the train companies could keep a delicate equilibrium in place.

“It’s the idea that you mange disorder instead of impose order,” Bonnet said.

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**Thesis Research Begins! CEMS Student Heads to Boston to Investigate Greek Protest Art**

**Boston: September 24**

*Katie Whittaker*

**Contemporary** art’s tendency to push boundaries and test the limits of both the artist and the viewer has become a more prominent aspect of the art world recently. As forms such as graffiti, video art and performance broaden the spectrum of artistic expression, they also permit a new motive for creation – political and social protest. Protest art, while far from a recent invention, is gaining prominence and international recognition in countries undergoing intense and serious structural changes, such as Greece and Spain. I am investigating these revolutionary and inspiring artistic choices as part of my thesis research in the European and Mediterranean studies department.

Upon the recommendation of Professor Konstantinos Kornetis of New York University’s Hellenic Studies Department, I attended “Reverb: New Art from Greece,” an exhibition in the School of the Museum of Fine Arts’ Barbara and Steven Grossman Gallery in Boston. Curated by Evita Tsiokanta and SMFA alum Eirene Efstathiou, the exhibition included works by artists Nana Sachini, Loukia Alavanou, Anastasia Douka, Andreas Kassapis, Efthini Petsourakis, Yorgos Sapountzis, Vangelis Vlahos, Dimitris Papoutsakis, Paky Vlassopoulou, and Myrto Xanthopoulou.

When entering the exhibition for the first time, the art is not what immediately stands out. It is the noise. There are two video installations running simultaneously (“Ducktales” by Loukia Alavanou and “Knock Knock Monument” by Yorgos Sapountzis), both with loud and distinctive soundtracks. Then there is Dimitris Papoutsakis’ “Ore Bounce,” a work that features a constant rhythm immediately reminiscent of a heartbeat. These sounds, particularly the heartbeat, create a sense of urgency and desperation, immersing the viewer in the exhibition as a whole.
The pieces range from sculpture to mixed media installations and found-object compilations, showcasing the incredible range of artistic expression occurring in Greece’s contemporary art world. “Bad Blood: sentiments of a giant,” by Anastasia Douka, manages to divide the gallery space with a multi-colored fishing net that hangs from the ceiling and contains multiple found objects, such as pencils and Euro coins. “Evidence of Casualties” also features re-appropriation, using photographs taken by amateur photographers. They are presented in five sets of two, and although they come from different origins, they seem to show a before-and-after sequence, going from a familiar personal scene (people at the beach) to a more barren setting (dead tree branches in water).

Each artist works to convey the gravity of corruption and unrest throughout the country. Eirene Efstatios’s “A Partial Map of the Social Unrest in Athens” presents a map of Athens and a startling representation of the protests and events that have occurred in the city. The map’s key shows the exact locations of demonstration routes, barricades, banners, occupied spaces, and attacks on civilians, ranging from “Civilian death – police perpetrator,” “Racist attack on civilian,” and “Civilian death – civilian perpetrator.”

Equally strong, curator Efstatios’s piece “We Are Not (Just) an Image on T.V.” refers to the infamous police invasion of the National Technical University, and takes on issues such as public memory and the media.

Memory, public space and an event’s representation (or misrepresentation) in the media are issues that transcend Greece, and are truly indicative of art’s intention in the public sphere. The work is meant to appeal to a wide public, and it places attention on current events from a non-government perspective. I hope to expand on the effect this genre of art has, and how it compares from region to region in Europe and the Mediterranean.

The exhibition will run at the School of the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston until October 18, 2014. There is no charge for entry.

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**The Iberian World Through Portuguese Lens**

NYU: September 30
Kavitha Surana

NYU’s King Juan Carlos I of Spain Pedro Center began a fresh year with a new guest. Professor Pedro Cardim, Associate Professor at the School of Humanities and Social Sciences at Universidade Nova de Lisboa, Portugal, became the first Portuguese professor to hold the King Juan Carlos I Chair in Spanish Civilization. On September 30 he spoke at the center about his work on political integration and juridical pluralism across the early-modern Iberian world.

Cardim approaches Iberian history with unique and sometimes controversial views. “Portugal is, from my perspective, definitely part of the story, the story of the Hispanic world,” he said. “And without taking into account the Portuguese case, a lot will be missed when taking into account the whole Hispanic world.”

His talk gave an overview of some of his extensive research on the subject, including his in-depth study on the territorial union within the Spanish and Portuguese expansion processes in Europe and outside it and his work on imperial ideologies and the imperial imagination generated by the debates taking place across the Iberian world.

“It is clear that a lot of the imperial imagination that developed within the Iberian world throughout the 16th and 17th centuries is directly connected with all these arrangements and territorial unions and articulations of several juridical spheres,” Cardim said.

This research led him to conduct an in-depth study of the historicity and contemporary uses of key words like “kingdom,” “crown,” “conquest,” “monarchy” and “colony.”

He said he was particularly interested in the way contemporaries used these words and the meaning they ascribed to them. Surveying the uses of words like “kingdom,” “crown,” and “monarchy” gives insight into how people expressed different ranks of political units and different ways of conceiving of juridical political entities.

He highlighted the word “monarchy,” which was the word used by contemporaries to express political entities with a very extreme internal diversity but also a kind of polity with some kind of divine inspiration and global ambition.

He also focused on the way European territories were named and compared them with the words used to classify non-European lands ruled by the Iberians. He said that words like “peninsular” and “criollo” involved not just a qualitative assessment but also various juridical implications.

“In the case of the Iberian world, my aim is to contribute to explain why it evolved from a plural notion of Hispania or Hispanics, to a more unequivocal and singular concept of Spain,” he said. “On a related front I am placing Portugal within Iberian history, which means stressing its condition as part of the Hispanic world. And also aligning its participation in the process that led to a more rigid and exclusive notion of national identity within the Iberian world.”

Not that this wouldn't draw criticism, he added. “What I’ve just said would generate reactions in Portugal because people would start saying I’m for the Iberian union or I don’t care for Portuguese national identity,” he said. “I’m trying to be accurate and put things in their historical context and recognize that Portuguese history is deeply rooted in the whole Hispanic or Iberian...past”
An Evening with the “Voice of Madness”

NYU: September 10
Irina Vuokasovic

OVER Radeberger and pretzels, a sizeable crowd sat in black chairs waiting to see what the woman in the red dress was doing in front of a loudspeaker equipped with two metal antennas.

She stood behind the instrument and started moving her hands. Her left palm stayed open and moved around the upright antenna. Her right hand hovered over the loop antenna.

These hand movements produced violin like sounds that were both high pitched and eerie. The more she moved her hands, the more high pitched notes came together to form a melody belonging in a Tim Burton movie.

As the melody took shape, she started to sing. It was a combination of low-pitched whispering and higher pitched singing. Her voice melded into the high and low frequencies that she was making by moving her hands around the two antennas.

She moved her hands a lot and sang a bit. Onlookers continued eating their pretzels.

This night, on September 10th, marked Deutches Haus’ 37th Haus-Fest and the woman in the red dress was Dorit Chrysler. The peculiar loudspeaker and antenna instrument she was standing behind was the Theremin.

Best known for her Theremin style, Chrysler is a composer who also has a recording and performing career as a vocalist, guitarist, keyboardist, producer and engineer. She made her professional vocal debut at Austria’s Opera House Graz at the age of seven, created her first rock band at thirteen and began a Master’s Degree in Music when she was eighteen.

After the show, Chrysler had a few things to say about the Theremin.

Why the Theremin?
Because it really is a very expressive instrument, it has like five octaves and so many tone colors.

What was your first contact with it?
I saw it at a friend’s house and I said, what the hell is this? I was in a rock n roll band at the time and I was completely smitten. It was really love at first sight. When you see it for the first time it is especially nice, I call it the Houdini Effect.

For someone going through the “Houdini Effect”, how would you describe is the Thereminist sound?
It is the voice of madness. It is the subconscious inside of you. It’s the most literal translation of the slightest movement of your body turning into a sound. It can feel like tickling butterflies and it also can sound very vicious and violent.

Do you compose your own music?
Yes, a lot of what you heard were my own compositions.

So how does it go? You’re sitting in your living room, eating cereal, and you’re like, I’m going to make a Thereminist sound. How do you come up with it, what is your creative process?
I wish it was like that—sitting in my pajamas composing [laughs].

Is there a technique? The way that you move your hands, is that called something?
There are techniques to play it, I have a very loose one.

So what is your technique?
Well, I cannot describe it but you can attend one of our workshops and learn!

I noticed that your left and right hands act kind of different.
Yes.

So is there a conducting hand or…?
It is kind of like being a speed metal drummer while you split your brain in two because one hand does something completely different than the other, so you have to really split your brain in two. But I’m a lefty so actually I play the wrong way around and I have a specific left handed Theremin.

If you could describe to someone in a minute how to play the Theremin what would you say?
Well, you first learn to control the volume and then you close your eyes and try to hold one note.

And the way that you are moving your hand, are you pushing into vibrations?
No, you are in an invisible electromagnetic field that your body enters.

And then what are your hands doing?
The closer you go to the pitch antenna, the higher the note. The other hand controls the volume.

And the pitch antenna is the thing that’s standing up.
Yes, that’s the rod.

So the closer that you get to it…
The higher the note. The further away, the lower.

So then are you improvising while you’re doing it?
Well, I cannot ever really fully control the instrument so there has to be an improvisational element at all times. And that’s kind of the fun of it. It takes so much concentration to hit the pitch but it’s the perfect mix of complete control and complete mayhem. And I kind of like this organized chaos.
UPCOMING EVENTS

---New York University---

CENTER FOR EUROPEAN AND MEDITERRANEAN STUDIES
285 Mercer St., 7th floor
All events take place at the center unless otherwise noted
212.998.3838
cems.as.nyu.edu

FRIDAY, October 10 at 4:30 PM
Workshop: Gender and Transformation with Aleksandr Berezkin.

LA MAISON FRANÇAISE
16 Washington Mews
All events take place at the Maison unless otherwise noted
212.998.8750
nyu.edu/maisonfrancaise

WEDNESDAY, October 1 at 7:00 PM
Book Event: Citizenship between Empire and Nation with Frederick Cooper.

THURSDAY, October 2 at 7:00 PM

SATURDAY, October 11 at 4:00 PM
Concert: "Fontainebleau Contemporain," contemporary music from the Conservatoire Américain with works by Henri Dutilleaux, Mahir Cetiz, and David Bird. Performed by Clara Lyon and Elizabeth Derham, Jessica Garand, Sofia Nowik. General admission, $20. $10 for Fontainebleau alumni and students with ID. RSVP at 212-998-8750; maison.francaise@nyu.edu.

MONDAY, October 13 at 7:00 PM
Lecture: "Parcours d'écritain," by Alain Veinstein.

TUESDAY, WEDNESDAY, October 14 and October 15
Conference: "Les Registres de la Comédie Française à l'épreuve de la pratique." All sessions in French.

---KING JUAN CARLOS I OF SPAIN CENTER---
53 Washington Square South
All events take place at the Center unless otherwise noted.
212.998.3650
nyu.edu/pages/kjc

THURSDAY, October 23 at 7:00PM
Reading: "KJCC Poetry Series," Mercedes Riffé and Rodolfo Hässler. This event is in Spanish. Reception to follow.

---DEUTSCHE HAUS---
42 Washington Mews
All events take place at the Haus unless otherwise noted
212.998.8660
nyu.edu/deutscheshaus

WEDNESDAY, October 1 at 3:30PM
Lecture: "Einst Osterkamp: Goethes Psychologie der Sorge. Über einige Gedichte des ersten Weimarer Jahrzehnts." This event will be in German. RSVP at deutscheshaus.rsvp@nyu.edu.

FRIDAY, October 3 at 6:30PM
Discussion: "Pieces of Berlin," by Florian Reischauer (photographer), in conversation with JM Stin (author and journalist), moderated by Eric Jarosinski (photographer). RSVP at deutscheshaus.rsvp@nyu.edu.

WEDNESDAY, October 1 at 3:30PM
Lecture: "Einst Osterkamp: Goethes Psychologie der Sorge. Über einige Gedichte des ersten Weimarer Jahrzehnts." This event will be in German. RSVP at deutscheshaus.rsvp@nyu.edu.

FRIDAY, October 10 at 6:30PM
Reading: "Swiss Talk: A Conversation among Arno Camenisch, Daniel Kaufman and Thomas Schneider about "The Alp,"" with Arno Camenisch (author), Daniel Kaufman (Endangered Language Alliance), Thomas Schneider (Consulate General of Switzerland).

TUESDAY, October 14 at 6:30PM
Reading: "Den Holocaust erinnern. Olga Berario – Luis Carlos Prestes: Bräuchen wir die KZ,“ with Robert Cohen (New York University), Ute Kaiser (Ulm University). This event will be in German.

TUESDAY, October 21 at 6:30PM
Reading: "Kaldeidoscope of Memory: Ulrike Draesner's Seven Springs," with Ulrike Draesner (author), subsequent conversation with Andrea Köhler (journalist), introduced by Alya George (New York University).

FRIDAY, October 24 at 6:30PM
Film: "Usula Mamlok Movements: A Screening and Conversation with the Composer Usula Mamlok," with Anne Berrini (director), followed by conversation with Usula Mamlok (composer) and Robert Sherman (broadcaster and writer).
**CASA ITALIANA**

24 West 12th Street

All events take place at the Casa unless otherwise noted

212.995.4012

nyu.edu/pages/casaitaliana

**GLUCKSMAN IRELAND HOUSE**

1 Washington Mews

All events take place at the House unless otherwise noted

212.998.3950

www.irelandhouse.fas.nyu.edu

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**EUROPE • NYC • 11**

**THURSDAY, October 2 at 5:00PM**

**Panel:** "The Post-Western World: Is There a Future for the Liberal Order?" with Jan-Werner Müller (Princeton University), May-Britt Starmo (Free University of Berlin), Bruce Kogut (Columbia University), Michael Leigh (Transatlantic Academy), Christina Lin (Johns Hopkins University), Kateryna Pshchikova (Cornell University), Cynthia Roberts (Columbia University), Jack Snyder (Columbia University), chaired by Victoria de Grazia (Columbia University). This event will be held in the International Affairs Building, room 1512. Register online.

**THURSDAY, October 2 at 6:00PM**


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**Columbia University**

**THE BLINKEN EUROPEAN INSTITUTE**

420 West 118th Street, International Affairs Building (IAB), Room 1205

All events take place at the Institute unless otherwise noted

212.854.4618

bei.columbia.edu

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**THE HARRIMAN INSTITUTE**

420 West 118th Street, International Affairs Building (IAB), Room 1219

All events take place at the Institute unless otherwise noted

212.854.4623

www.harrimaninstitute.org
THURSDAY, October 2 at 12:00PM
This event will be held at the Marshall D. Shulman Seminar Room, 1219 IAB.

MONDAY, October 6 at 1:00PM
Talk: “The Turks Were Killing the Body, the Austrians Kill the Soul: Suffering as a Patriotic Sentiment in Bosnia, 1840-1914,” with Edin Hajdarpašić (Loyola University Chicago).

WEDNESDAY, October 8 at 7:30 PM
Talk: “A literary evening with Czech Poet and Prose Writer Syvilia Fischeraová.”

LA MAISON FRANÇAISE

Broadway at West 116th Street, Buell Hall, 2nd Floor
All events take place at Buell Hall unless otherwise noted
212.854.4482
maisonfrancaise.org

WEDNESDAY, October 1 at 6:00PM

THURSDAY, October 2 at 7:30PM
Film: “La Grande Illusion,” presented by Antoine Campagnon (Columbia University). Film is in French with English subtitles.

WEDNESDAY, October 8 at 6:00PM
Lecture: “La littérature française respire-t-elle encore?” with Pierre Jourde (Columbia University and College de France), in conversation with Elisabeth Landenson (Columbia University) and Antoine Campagnon (Columbia University). The conversation will be in French.

THURSDAY, October 9 at 7:30PM

THURSDAY, October 15 at 6:00PM
Lecture: “What We Talk About When We Talk About Food,” with Priscilla Ferguson (Columbia University). Following the talk, Culinary Historians of New York will present its Amelia Award for excellence in the field of culinary history to Nahum (‘Nach’) Waxman, founder of the world renowned gastronomic bookstore, Kitchen Arts and Letters. Register for this event online.

THE ITALIAN ACADEMY FOR ADVANCED STUDIES IN AMERICA

1161 Amsterdam Avenue
All events take place at the Academy unless otherwise noted
212.854.2306
www.italianacademy.columbia.edu

FRIDAY, October 3 at 6:00PM
Symposium: “Emmanuel Carnevali in Italy and America,” with Barbara Faemma (Italian Academy), Robert Visca( (Brooklyn College), Barbara Carnevali (Ecole des Hautes Etudes En Sciences Sociales), Franco Buonin (Università di Cassino), Achille Varzi (Columbia).

TUESDAY, October 21 at 6:00PM
Film Series: “Knowledge is the Beginning: Barenboim, Said, and young Middle Eastern musicians,” followed by discussion with Mariam Said (Barenboim-Said Foundation), Fiamma Arditi (Senza Frontiere Film Festival) and several musicians from the West-Eastern Divan orchestra.

WEDNESDAY, October 22 at 7:00PM

WEDNESDAY, October 29 at 6:00PM

THURSDAY, October 30 at 7:00PM

THE EUROPEAN UNION STUDIES CENTER

365 Fifth Avenue
All events take place at the Center unless otherwise noted
212.817.2051
euromatters.org/center

WEDNESDAY, October 15 at 6:00PM
Panel: “The Future of Migration into Europe,” with H.E. Inigo Lambertini (United Nations), H.E. Ronald Jumeau of the Seychelles (United Nations), Martin Schain (New York University), Urszula Mojkowska (European Parliament), Fabio Costas Morosini (UFRGS) AND Laura Sartoretto (UFRGS). This event will take place at The Great Hall of the New York City Bar Association, 42 West 44th Street. RSVP by emailing Patrizia Nobbe pnobbe@ge.cuny.edu or the European Union Studies Center. (c) 2015 ge.cuny.edu.

DEUTSCHES HAUS

420 West 116th Street
All events take place at the Haus unless otherwise noted
212.854.1858
www.columbia.edu/cu/german/thaus

WEDNESDAY, October 22 at 6:00PM
Lecture: “No U.S. Class Actions in Europe: New EU Policy on Public and Private Enforcement and ADR,” with Christopher Hodges (University of Oxford). This event will take place in room 9206. RSVP online.
EUROPE IN SEPTEMBER

September 4: At the NATO summit in Wales, Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko affirmed his desire to combat “Russian aggression.”

September 5: After talks in Belarus, the Ukraine government and separatist leaders signed a ceasefire deal on the order of Petro Poroshenko.

September 7: Shelling hit Mariupol and Donetsk, two strategic cities in eastern Ukraine.

September 8: Buckingham Palace announced that Britain’s Duke and Duchess of Cambridge are expecting their second baby.

September 9: A report released by Dutch aviation investigators outlined that Malaysia Airlines Flight 17 broke apart after it was hit by a burst of “high energy objects.”

September 10: UK Prime Minister David Cameron campaigned in Scotland in a bid to try and persuade voters to stay with the United Kingdom.

September 12: Ian Paisley, Northern Ireland’s former first minister and former Democratic Unionist Party leader, died at age 88.

September 14: Pro-Russian rebels, as part of a ceasefire deal, released dozens of captive Ukrainian troops.

September 15: A World War II era bomb was discovered in London’s Olympic Park after a sporting competition for wounded and ill veterans.

September 16: Ukraine and the European Union ratified the EU Association Agreement, which would include free-trade provisions that would not be in effect until January 1, 2016.

September 17: A 93-year-old man from Lower Saxony was charged by German prosecutors for being an accessory to murder in at least 300,000 cases while working in an Auschwitz concentration camp.

September 19: In a referendum vote in Scotland, the majority of voters rejected the choice to become an independent nation and elected to stay part of the United Kingdom.

September 20: A group of 150 Iraqi refugees arrived in Paris aboard a French aircraft that had taken 10 tons of humanitarian aid to Iraq.

September 21: Several thousand people in Moscow headed to the streets to protest against the war in Ukraine and the way the Russian government was handling it.

September 25: Five men were arrested in the United Kingdom based on suspicion of terror offences, according to Metropolitan Police.

September 26: In an emergency session, British lawmakers approved a motion to participate in airstrikes against ISIS targets in Iraq.

September 29: At the airport in Donetsk, nine Ukrainian soldiers were killed by tank fire.
EUROPE•NYC provides information on upcoming events sponsored individually and collectively by the member institutions of the New York Consortium for European Studies.

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