

Panel: *Russian Metaphysical Poetry at the End of the 20th Century*

**Sun, November 24, 2:30 to 4:15pm, San Francisco Marriott Marquis,
Floor: 5, Sierra G**

Keywords: *lyric poetry, metaphysics, religion, inspiration, death; Elena Shvarts, Olga Sedakova, Vera Pavlova*

Organizer: Prof. Dr. Henrieke Stahl (Trier)

Chair: Jacob Edmond (Otago)

Presenters:

Rainer Grübel (Oldenburg): *The Poetic Works of Ol'ga Sedakova and Vera Pavlova – the Art of Religion or the Religion of Art?*

Angelika Schmitt (Trier): *Metaphysical Perception and the Formation of Lyric Structures in the Poetry of Elena Shvarts and Ol'ga Sedakova*

Katina Baharova (Trier): *Depiction of Angels in the Works of Elena Shvarts and Olga Sedakova*

Henrieke Stahl (Trier): *Death in the Poetry of Shvarts and Sedakova*

Discussants: Kirill Korchagin (Moscow)

Estimated attendance: 20 persons

Abstract

A thread of metaphysical poetry emerged in the Soviet underground with classical authors such as Gennadij Ajgi, Olga Sedakova, Elena Shvarts and others, which has continued to the present day. Poetry has offered a way of compensating for the spiritual and religious vacuum of the official materialist and atheist Soviet society and the creation of counter-worlds that provided a space for escape, opposition and individual imagination at the same time. The poetic language and composition allow to express both the unspeakable of suprasensory dimensions and the experience of the subject's existential contradictions. The panel focuses on Olga Sedakova, Elena Shvarts and Vera Pavlova. Using selected thematic key aspects, the panel compares how they grasp the relationship between forms of access to transcendence and poetic composition.

Rainer Grübel (Oldenburg, Germany):

The Poetic Works of Olga Sedakova and Vera Pavlova – the Art of Religion or the Religion of Art?

The paper compares the poetic works of Ol'ga Sedakova and Vera Pavlova under the aspect of the interrelation of art and religion. It also considers the role of this relation in their poetics, framing it with its historical background and its cultural context. If Olga Sedakova's poetry is closer related

with the art of religion (sensu 'Religionskunst') and the poetry of Vera Pavlova with the religion of art (sensu 'Kunstreligion'), what does this mean for their place in the Russian culture of the early 21st century?

Angelika Schmitt (Trier, Germany):

Metaphysical Perception and the Formation of Lyric Structures in the Poetry of Elena Shvarts and Olga Sedakova

The poetics of Elena Shvarts and Olga Sedakova are founded in the conviction that inspiration is based on a genuine spiritual experience and that poetry serves to gain and convey metaphysical insights. The paper aims to examine the relationship between extrasensory perception and its implementation into the formation of poetic structures. It focuses on the links of both poets to Pushkin's "Prorok", where inspiration was prominently staged as an initiation process, resulting in the extension of perceptive abilities.

Katina Baharova (Trier, Germany):

Depiction of Angels in the Works of Elena Shvarts and Olga Sedakova

Angels as an element of the Divine show different expressions in the works of Elena Shvarts and Olga Sedakova. Shvarts uses the angel symbolic in her poems and her prose in a very ambiguous way: angels can be both positively or negatively connotated, and often exist as active participators in the texts. Sedakova, on the other hand, depicts angels in a more traditional way, where angels have a marginal function. They are dealing with the motive in different ways, provoked by the individual religious understanding of both poets: multilateral and multid denominational by Shvarts, where angels express a further aspect of a complicated relation with the Divine, and God-centred by Sedakova.

Henrieke Stahl (Trier, Germany):

Death in the Poetry of Shvarts and Sedakova

Death plays an important role in the poetry of both Elena Shvarts and Olga Sedakova. The poets are less concerned with its existential dimension than with its function as a gateway to transcendence. However, the authors conceive this function differently: Sedakova pursues a poetics of the immanence of transcendence, while Shvarts aims at a transcendence of immanence.