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Paper Proposal

“Issues of presence and absence of the female figure in the artistic and filmic portrait”

The Greek translation of the word truth is *aletheia*, which means the opposite of forgetfulness. On the other side, in different versions of artistic portraits, we can see that it reminds us of a known face, as its imprint or its double, so that it can remain alive over the years. However, although the portrait may resemble a man or a woman, at the same time, it may adduce both his and her presence in the past and his or her absence in the present. As the presence or the absence of a depicted person is respectively connected with a present or a past narration, their relation is interdependent, because the one does not cancel the other. It is also interesting that the link between the two subjects, the depicted man or woman and the viewer, is determined by the space-time of the presence and absence, especially if it is characterized by strong emotional bonds.

In the context of a wider research, which examines the dipole of love and death, this paper is focusing on both different aspects of women's portraits and the issues of presence or absence, which emerge from women's representation. More precisely, I am considering Céline Sciamma's film, *Portrait de la jeune fille en feu*, in parallel with Froso Efthimiadi-Menegaki's sculpture, *Lot's wife*. The French director's film tells the story of a forbidden affair between an aristocrat young lady and a painter commissioned to paint her portrait in France in the late 18th century. At the same time, it begins a dialogue with the ancient Greek myth about Orpheus and Eurydice, in which Eurydice could not come back to life from Hades. On the other hand, *Lot's wife*, who is depicted on the Greek sculptor's artwork in a special way, could not leave Sodom as her husband did, but she stayed and became a pillar of salt, according to the Holy Bible. In both cases, the woman functions as a reflection of herself. However, the question is whether that self is absent both in the woman's presence and absence. In other words, whether the woman in these portraits is self-defined or hetero-defined. This issue will be approached by both Jacques Lacan's mirror theory and John Macionis' theory about the relationship between masculinity and femininity.

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Brief CV

Evaguelia Diamantopoulou is an assistant professor at the Department of Communication and Media Studies of the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens. She is a member of the Hellenic Section of the International Union Art Critics AICA GREECE and of the Association of Greek Artist Historians. Her BA and MA courses are related to issues such as History of Art, Visual Arts and Communication, Image Dialectics, Issues of European Art, Issues of Modern and Contemporary Greek Art, Artistic Portraits, Issues of Artistic Creation. Her academic interests focus on Art and Communication, Art and Society, Issues of Identity in Art, Symbolic and Experienced Space in Visual Arts, Art and Play, Art and Historical Memory. Her published academic work includes 4 books, as well as many research projects in Greek and International interdisciplinary journals concerning matters of Art and Culture.