

THE NEW ANTIGONES OF THE
MEDITERRANEAN

A PROJET BY SUBLIMES PORTES

PRESENTATION

Sublimes Portes aims to focus on the voices of women in the Mediterranean, and especially on those of bloggers on both shores. In recent years new places of expression have appeared in public spaces - real or virtual - , especially during the Arab revolutions. These voices of a new generation of women are far from being ephemeral. They are the result of ongoing changes in the Mediterranean, which have awakened in some the need to speak out, to denounce and to engage politically. We are convinced that these women's voices need to be supported, amplified and passed from one side of the Mediterranean to the other, in times where political, religious or/and military obscurantism seek to silence these new voices, these new Antigones of the Mediterranean.

THE NEW ANTIGONES

New Antigones is an original project, focusing on the "power of speech" of women bloggers in the Mediterranean of the XXI century. The aim is to forge links between the writings of these bloggers, via the creation of a common online space, which will be shared between Sublimes Portes' and the web site of our media partner Babelmed Net based in Rome.

The uniqueness of this digital common space is that it links the issues of citizenship and artistic creativity as expressed in the writings of these women. New Antigones wants to create a resonating space that addresses in particular the "connected" generation. For many young people of the Mediterranean, the voice of these women, mostly between 20 and 30 years of age, is an echo of their desires and their outrage. But beyond the role of a "media" for citizens, our wish is to create a network that will grow over the years and give greater visibility to these female voices. Within this digital platform, bloggers will no longer be isolated: they can discover other female voices, and other contemporary writings beyond the borders and barriers of language. They will be able to chat with other " Antigones " and then draw strength and new inspiration.

THE PROJECT

A MODERN MYTH: WHY BRING UP ANTIGONE AGAIN TODAY IN THE MEDITERRANEAN?

"I do not think your decrees are strong enough for you, mortal, to override the unwritten and immutable laws of the gods," Antigone answers to Creon, who had forbidden her to bury her brother. This ancient Greek character defies the established order to maintain tradition, but above all to support a sense of humanity. The more we delve into the fate of Antigone, the more we realize its relevance for our own times. Like no other theatrical character, Antigone represents "a radiant and timeless being" that rises up against a despotic power.

Wife, sister and a simple citizen of Thebes: the legend of Antigone speaks of the interconnectedness of the intimate and public, of private life and history. As a symbol of individual resistance, it demonstrates an existential cry for freedom.

This woman who faces arbitrary power continues to inspire contemporary thinking. Antigone is a literary myth that resonates strongly today, at the beginning of the XXI century facing the ravages of the economic crisis and wars. Where the violence of political and military repression imprison many people in the south of the Mediterranean. The figure of the blogger, who defies the oppressor with the verb, whether dictatorial power, an economical system or a society in which he lives, strangely echoes the Antigone of Sophocles.

Today, it is these bloggers who "are illuminating the night" of all kinds of obscurantism by their words launched onto the Internet to awaken their fellow citizens.

DIGITAL RESISTANCE

New Antigones is a project for citizens and it intense to raise democratic spaces in the Mediterranean, through the words of women. They should no longer be regarded as mere victims subjected to an imposed order. They are becoming more and more the actors of their own history and they are taking their place in public spaces. This was the case during the Arab revolutions in Tunisia, Egypt and Libya,

but also in the “occupy” protests in Spain, Greece or Italy. In their respective countries, they represent often the voice of a large part of the population, especially those of women. Whether in the fight against evictions, or the right to abortion in Spain, maintaining revolutionary hope in Syria, or the fight against sexual harassment in Egypt, Mediterranean women need to come together, to be supported, and to assure that their words are heard. In Tunisia and Egypt, women have participated in the front line alongside men, to challenge the authoritarian powers. Since then, some have managed to use social networks to unite against political, cultural or social oppression, like the Facebook page “The Uprising of Women in the Arab World “, which in a few months became a vital space of free expression for women. A new form of resistance of Mediterranean women is taking shape: through internet, they share their daily lives, their thoughts and creations from Greece to Spain, Lebanon, Morocco, from Egypt to France. These are modern Antigones. They are bloggers, writers or engaged artists and have an individual awareness of writing and making history.

They switch often from their mission as a citizen journalist to a personal diary keeper. When bloggers talk about social phenomena and denounce domestic violence in Spain or recurring rape against protesters in Egypt, they have a direct impact on individuals, throughout the Mediterranean and they connect the private to public. Through their eyes, they offer a different perspective of public life.

Yet these areas of expression are fragmented, fragile and often repressed. These democratic voices need to be strengthened, to be gathered and have greater visibility. This is the purpose of the project New Antigones.

THE FORM OF THE PROJECT

A UNIQUE CONSTELLATION OF BLOGGERS IN THE MEDITERRANEAN.

The common digital space intends to give an overview of women's voices that are influential today in the digital world of the Mediterranean. The website will work as a constellation of these modern Antigones, who will be linked to each other and whose writings will be accessible to readers with a single "click". In Madrid, Beirut, Cairo, Algiers and Istanbul, many bloggers write regularly, sometimes in spite of the danger to which they are exposed. They are often under pressure, threatened for denouncing injustices or going against taboos in their country. Censorship and pressure threaten their

families. Citizen journalists are arrested or even killed. Our project aims to bring to life this network, and provide both support and greater visibility to this digital space.

EDITORIAL AND TRANSLATION BOARD

A real editorial board led by a professional journalist will be created. With our web partner Babelmed Net in Rome, it will be constantly fed with the posts from bloggers. This board will select the articles and coordinate the translations (at first into French). The editorial board will also build on our partnership with the social science researchers TELEMME digital lab and digital hub of the Mediterranean House of Human Sciences (MMSH) the University of Aix-en-Provence/ France.

The translations will aim to promote the "power of speech" beyond language barriers. If bloggers do not write in English, they remain inaccessible for many people in the Mediterranean area. Translation becomes a central issue: it is not simply a translation between languages, but a translation between cultures. In order to understand each other from one side to the other of the Mediterranean and to overcome tensions, reading the writings of the Egyptian, Spanish, Turkish or Syrian Antigones seems essential today. A few languages will be privileged to be translated into French: Arabic, Italian, Spanish, English, with entries also from Turkish and Greek.

APRIL 2015, CULTURAL EVENT WITH A DEBATE AND A MEETING IN MARSEILLE

Sublimes Portes will organize a cultural event at the Villa Méditerranée in spring 2015. This public event will bring together the most famous and influential bloggers in the Mediterranean, such as Amira Yahyaoui- Tunisia, Abir Ghattas -Lebanon, Cristina Fallarás- Spain, Shahinaz Abdel Salam- Egypt, Abir Kopty- Palestine, Kübra Gümüşay- Germany, Razan Ghazzawi- Syria...

For the first time, these new Antigones will meet in Marseille to discuss their blogging experience, the challenges they face in their respective countries, and current issues of women bloggers in the Mediterranean.

The meeting will end with a great musical evening bringing together artists from France and also international artists such as the famous DJ Ipek from Berlin.

THE TEAM

NIL DENIZ

After her Middle East Studies at the University of Hamburg, Nil Deniz worked at the Orient-Institut Hamburg and the French-German Youth Office of Lyon to develop cultural exchange projects between France and Germany. She translated films by Fatih Akin (Head On, Crossing the Bridge) or Nuri Bilge Ceylan's Three Monkeys and had made a study of translation in the Turkish publishing world for the revue Trans-européennes. Nil Deniz speaks German, Turkish, Arabic, French and English and has worked for two years on the cultural event Les Rencontres d'Averroes in Marseille. She created in 2009 the association Sublimes Portes that initiates artistic residencies in the Mediterranean.

ABIR GHATTAS

Blogger and human rights activist Abir Ghattas writes about the situation of women in Lebanon since 2008. Her blog is considered to be one of the most influential blogs in the country. She has over five years experience in the field of digital communication and marketing. She is also involved in research on Internet rights, especially on topics related to privacy, data and censorship. She created several campaigns online with "The Uprising of Women in The Arab World", and Delete Nasawiya 522 Ontoronet. She is also a passionate photographer and currently lives and studies in Marseille.

NINA HUBINET

Nina Hubinet is a French journalist who moved to Cairo in 2009, where she worked for La Croix, l'Express and Le Temps. Speaking Arabic, she covered the Egyptian revolution and its aftermath, criss-crossing the country for her reports. In 2011 she wrote from Benghazi in the early days of the uprising in Libya. She is co-author, along with three other journalists, of the web documentary Sout El Shabab / the voice of the youth which was broadcasted by France Culture in January 2013, and which tells the story how the revolution has changed the lives of five young Egyptians. She also co-directed a radio documentary for the radio programme Sur les Docks, entitled; Egypt, Diaries of a revolution. Back in France since 2013, she has worked mainly for the website of France 24 and Causette magazine.

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