



## PRESS RELEASE

Essen, 02.11.2022

### **Auerbach's *Mimesis* as an Anthropology of Violence Lecture by Marta Figlerowicz**

**14 November 2022, 16:00 (CET), Online (Zoom)  
Institute for Advanced Study in the Humanities Essen (KWI), Gartensaal  
Goethestraße 31, 45128 Essen**

**In this lecture, Marta Figlerowicz (Yale University) approaches Auerbach's *Mimesis* through a new lens: She argues Auerbach's text depicts figural thinking and ritual violence perpetuated against vulnerable populations as inextricable from each other. To an extent that has been underappreciated, she proposes, *Mimesis* also reflects on Auerbach's own complicity with anti-Semitic Western ethnocentrism. To make this point, Figlerowicz takes a closer look at the book's second chapter, "Fortunata".**

Central to the lecture is the uncovering of an unexpected intertext of this chapter, in which Auerbach focusses on the birth of figural thinking. The intertext is a then-recent bestseller about Nero's persecution of the Christian, *Quo Vadis?* (1896) by Polish Nobel Prize winner Henryk Sienkiewicz. The novel features Peter and Petronius as major characters and as each other's doubles. Reading the chapter alongside this novel helps one see that *Mimesis* constructs, around such spectacles of violence, a Vichian account of Western culture's foundational, recurrent brutality.

#### **SPEAKER**

Marta Figlerowicz, Yale University

#### **MODERATOR**

Hanna Engelmeier, KWI

#### **PARTICIPATION**

Participation online via Zoom. Register with Emily Beyer via [emily.beyer@kwi-nrw.de](mailto:emily.beyer@kwi-nrw.de) with subject line „Participation via Zoom – 14.11.2022“ by 13 November, 2022.

#### **ORGANISATION**

The event is organized by the Institute for Advanced Study in the Humanities Essen (KWI).

#### PRESS CONTACT

Helena Rose (KWI) | +49 201 183-8106 | [helena.rose@kwi-nrw.de](mailto:helena.rose@kwi-nrw.de)  
Miriam Wienhold (KWI) | +49 201 183-8106 | [miriam.wienhold@kwi-nrw.de](mailto:miriam.wienhold@kwi-nrw.de)

## FURTHER INFORMATION

[Event on the KWI website](#)

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### PRESS CONTACT

Helena Rose (KWI) | +49 201 183-8106 | [helena.rose@kwi-nrw.de](mailto:helena.rose@kwi-nrw.de)  
Miriam Wienhold (KWI) | +49 201 183-8106 | [miriam.wienhold@kwi-nrw.de](mailto:miriam.wienhold@kwi-nrw.de)

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