Christina E. Kramer Receives Literature Translation Fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts

Fellowship will support the translation into English of Grandma Non-Oui a novel by Lidija Dimkovska

Today, the National Endowment for the Arts announced that Christina E. Kramer will receive an NEA Literature Translation Fellowship of $12,500 [US]. Kramer is one of 25 Literature Translation Fellows for fiscal year 2019. In total, the NEA is recommending $325,000 in grants this round to support the new translation of poetry and prose from 17 countries into English.

Grandma Non-Oui is a biographical novel that tells the story of a woman from Split, Croatia. Grandma Nedjeljka, or Non-Oui, as she was called (a literal French translation of the syllables of her nickname Ne-Da) falls in love with an Italian soldier, Carlo, at the end of the second World War and moves to Sicily to marry him. The short novel is written in the form of a diary, an exchange between Grandma Nedjeljka and young Nedjeljka, her granddaughter and namesake. Their conversation in Croatian, Grandma’s mother tongue, unfolds in a non-linear structure, encompassing a broad range of times and places between 1938 to 2016, moving back and forth from past to present, and between Castellammare del Golfo in Sicily and Split, Croatia. Their imagined conversation reveals the lives of these two different women, and the deep cross-generational bond between them, as they discuss cross-cultural love, private life, and family, as well as the public sphere of war, politics, and migration.

Christina E. Kramer is a professor in the Department of Slavic Languages and Literature at the University of Toronto, Canada. Her translations of novels include (from the Macedonian) Freud’s Sister by Goce Smilevski (MLA-Roth Award, Honorable Mention, 2014), A Spare Life by Lidija Dimkovska (long list, best translated book award, 2017) and My Father’s Books, The Time of the Goats, and The Path of the Eels (for which she received an NEA translation grant in 2014) by Luan Starova. She was also a member of the group of translators of the 19th-century classic (from the Bulgarian) Bai Ganyo by Aleko Konstantinov. In addition, she has published translations of poetry by Vladimir Martinovski that appeared in International Poetry Review and the short story The City by Branislav Gjorgjevski in M—Dash.
“The National Endowment for the Arts is proud to support these 25 new projects, building on more than 35 years of funding literature translation,” said NEA Acting Chairman Mary Anne Carter. “Translation not only provides American readers with access to many of the world’s most talented and respected writers, but through the skill and creativity of the authors and translators, readers can explore new and often unique perspectives and experiences.”

Since 1981, the NEA has awarded 480 fellowships to 425 literary translators, with translations representing 69 languages and 83 countries. The review criteria for these projects consist not only of the translators’ skill, but also the importance of a particular book to English-speaking audiences, including those authors and languages that are often underrepresented.

Click here for the full list of fiscal year 2019 Literature Translation Fellowships, along with information about the translators and their projects. (Please note these awards are pending Congressional approval of the NEA’s fiscal year 2019 budget.)

Established by Congress in 1965, the National Endowment for the Arts is the independent federal agency whose funding and support gives Americans the opportunity to participate in the arts, exercise their imaginations, and develop their creative capacities. Through partnerships with state arts agencies, local leaders, other federal agencies, and the philanthropic sector, the NEA supports arts learning, affirms and celebrates America’s rich and diverse cultural heritage, and extends its work to promote equal access to the arts in every community across America. For more information, visit the NEA at arts.gov.

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