



## **Thanatic Ethics: The Circulation of Bodies in Migratory Spaces**

### **Workshop #5: Art and Representations in/of Exile: Marseille and Lampedusa**

A partnership between International Research Centre for Cultural Studies (The Education University of Hong Kong), EMMA (Université de Montpellier Paul Valéry), CERI (Sciences-Po Paris) and The American College of the Mediterranean (ACM, Aix-en-Provence)

**Venue:** The American College of the Mediterranean, Aix-en-Provence

**Dates:** October 9-10, 2025

**Language:** English

**Deadline for submitting proposals:** 1 May 2025

**Notification of acceptance:** 1 June 2025

“Thanatic Ethics: The Circulation of Bodies in Migratory Spaces” explores themes related to death in migration. After several series of webinars, four workshops, and four international conferences in Oxford, Kolkata, Hong Kong and Paris, between October 2020 and October 2024, this international, transdisciplinary project is now seeking proposals for Workshop #5, to be held at The American College of the Mediterranean (ACM) in Aix-en-Provence, titled “Art and Representations in/of Exile: Marseille and Lampedusa”. Workshop #5 focuses on exploring art as a lens for understanding the experiences of migration, death in migration, and exile, approached from both interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary perspectives encompassing the social sciences, humanities, and the arts.

The experience of migration and exile is shaped not only by physical and emotional movement in space and in time, but also by the narratives, policies, and artistic expressions that define how displacement is experienced, understood, and represented. Artists, journalists, activists, researchers, and policymakers play a crucial role in documenting, interrogating, and shaping these narratives. While some of them portray a stereotypical picture of migration and exile, others offer alternative perspectives to these dominant discourses. Artistic practices are particularly fit to illustrate the tensions between displacement and belonging, loss and resilience, movement and containment. Increasingly, social scientists collaborate and build partnerships with creative practitioners to disseminate their research through artistic media and achieve a broader impact. Likewise, putting the voices of migrants and refugees at the fore of academic production and policymaking has been instrumental to produce alternative meanings and representations that challenge dehumanizing narratives. In this context, the condition of the possibility and impossibility of return becomes a central concern—not only in the lived realities of migrants but also in the ways these experiences are mediated and communicated, shaping the narrative of migration.

Workshop #5 will explore how artistic practices engage with migration and exile, with the witnessing of death in migration, and its diverse representations. Beyond discussing the role of art and artists in migration and exile, this workshop investigates how activists, scholars, researchers, and other

actors engage with artistic practices in this field. For instance, this includes academic inquiries on the representation of migration and exile in mainstream media and online fora, political discourse, and policymaking. Concurrently, this workshop explores how community organizations and advocacy groups rely on art and collaborate with artists in their activism, while also creating a space to discuss how artists in exile transpose their experiences into artistic practices.

The focus on two specific sites, Lampedusa and Marseille, is deliberate. Lampedusa, as a key point of arrival and humanitarian crisis, has become symbolic of both the hope and tragedy of migration, raising questions about representation, witnessing, and accountability. Not only did this small island become a common element in the trajectory of many migrants and refugees that reached Europe's shores, but it also produced a wealth of images that framed mainstream social and political debates on migration and exile. Meanwhile, Marseille—a city that upholds migration as a core part of its founding identity— provides numerous opportunities to observe the contradictions around migration and exile. Its population has been shaped by centuries of migration, which exponentially increased as Marseille became a pivotal point in France's colonial empire in the Mediterranean. As a city that is either represented as an exemplary case of multiculturalism and integration, capable of welcoming migrants and refugees regardless of their origin, or a place of segregation and intractable socio-economic divisions, Marseille provides the invaluable opportunity of investigating how cultural production documents, challenges, and influences the experiences of exile and settlement.

This workshop invites discussion on how art interacts with policy, representation, and engagement, and how creative practices contribute to public discourse, activism, artivism (Pulitano, 2022), and historical memory of migration. We seek discussions addressing (but not limited to) the following topics:

- **Death in/and Migration:** How representations of mortality and migration intersect, and what these intersections reveal about the circulation of bodies in migratory spaces.
- **Representation:** The visual, performative, and narrative modalities through which migrant experiences and the realities of exile are articulated.
- **Policy:** The interplay between grassroots practices and the political frameworks that shape, regulate, and police the representation of migration and exile.
- **Engagement:** Strategies of social, cultural, and political engagement through art, highlighting community-based and activist approaches.
- **Art Practice/Creation:** Innovative practices that challenge conventional notions of art and engage with lived experiences in transformative ways.
- **Education/Pedagogy:** How artistic and educational practices contribute to understanding migration and exile, including teaching methods, community-based learning, and public programming.

We invite contributions from artists/filmmakers, individuals with lived experiences, academics, researchers, community organizations, and educators to **send their proposals** (a 250-word abstract, title, author's name, a 150-word bio, and contact information) to the workshop email address: [thanaticethics@gmail.com](mailto:thanaticethics@gmail.com).

Speakers can explore alternative ways of presenting their work and/or research that would be more sharing than presenting, adopting non-traditional modes of involving the participants. It may include open mic interventions, open discussions, artistic or staged presentations, creative workshops,

performed talks, interactive and/or multilingual conversations, etc. In this case, a time requirement for consideration should be included in the proposal.

Proposals for group panels with participants coming from different disciplines who plan to prepare their panel collectively, are also welcome, including panels that would offer a follow up on papers/panels presented at previous Thanatic Ethic events. A selection of papers will be considered for publication.

**Workshop Organizers:**

- Dr. Yumna Masarwa, The American College of the Mediterranean (ACM, Aix-en-Provence)
- Dr. Erin Yunes, The American College of the Mediterranean (ACM, Aix-en-Provence)
- Dr. Francesco Colin, The American College of the Mediterranean (ACM, Aix-en-Provence)
- Mr. Matthew Gernt, The American College of the Mediterranean (ACM, Aix-en-Provence)

**Project Co-convenors:**

- Dr Bidisha Banerjee, International Research Centre for Cultural Studies, the Education University of Hong Kong
- Dr Thomas Lacroix, CERI, Sciences-Po Paris
- Prof Judith Misrahi-Barak, EMMA, Université de Montpellier Paul Valéry

