

ART AND REPRESENTATIONS IN/OF EXILE: MARSEILLE AND LAMPEDUSA



Ai Weiwei – Remains, 2015 (Courtesy Neugerriemschneider and the artist)

ABSTRACTS AND BIOS

OCTOBER 9-10, 2025

AMERICAN COLLEGE OF THE MEDITERRANEAN
AIX-EN-PROVENCE, FRANCE

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, IRCCS, the Education University of Hong Kong
Dr Thomas Lacroix, CERI, Sciences-Po Paris
Prof Judith Misrahi-Barak, EMMA, Université de Montpellier Paul Valéry

About
Thanatic Ethics

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WORKSHOP ORGANIZERS

Yumna Masarwa (PhD, Princeton University) is the Dean of the School of Art at the American College of the Mediterranean (ACM-IAU) in Aix-en-Provence (France), a Visiting Research Fellow at the Centre for Death and Society (CDAS) at the University of Bath (UK), and a Project Team Member of the Thanatic Ethics research projects on The Circulation of Bodies in Migratory Spaces.

Her art-historical research, which combines primary sources with material culture, focuses on artistic encounters in the Mediterranean and explores artistic exchanges between the Islamic World and Europe. Her work has been published in *Antiquité Tardive*, *Al-Usur al-Wusta: The Bulletin of Middle East Medievalists*, *Excavations and Surveys in Israel* and in edited volumes such as *Housing the Holy: Shrines in Ritual Architecture*, and *A Cultural History of the Middle East and North Africa in Late Antiquity* (Bloomsbury, forthcoming).

Since 2018, she has been conducting a multi-sited ethnographic research in Marseille focusing on burial and body repatriation among Algerians, the role of French Muslim women in organizing funerals and burials (feminizing funeral activities), and Muslim tombs in French cemeteries. In addition, she has been working on Death in Gaza since the war started in October 2023. Some of her research has been published in *Nouvelles Etudes Francophones*, *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* (CSSAAME), *Etudes sur la Mort*, and *Death Studies* (forthcoming).

Erin Yunes is a Department Coordinator and Professor in the School of Art at the American College of the Mediterranean (ACM-IAU) in Aix-en-Provence, France. Her work centers on modern and contemporary art, community-engaged practices, and equitable access to digital cultural heritage. She recently completed a CLIR Postdoctoral Fellowship in Community Data with the Rematriation Project at Virginia Tech, supporting Indigenous-led approaches to digitization, knowledge sharing, and archival design. Dr. Yunes holds a PhD in Visual Culture and Art History from York University in Toronto, where her research examined how Indigenous-first, community-owned information and communication technologies in Nunavut, Canada can strengthen Inuit autonomy in the arts economy. Her research and teaching revolve around contemporary art, broadband equality, and expanding access to digital cultural resources through community-led and inclusive practices.

Francesco Colin is a lecturer at the American College of the Mediterranean (France) and a visiting research fellow at the International Institute of Social Studies of Erasmus University Rotterdam (the Netherlands). His research focuses on citizens and civil society engagement at the intersection of local, national, and international governance, with a focus on Morocco and the broader Mediterranean. He published his research in different peer-reviewed journals, including *Democratization* and *Mediterranean Politics*, as well as various book chapters. He is also a senior fellow with the Moroccan Institute of Policy Analysis (MIPA) in Rabat and a contributor to the Arab Reform Initiative.

Francesco obtained his PhD in Development Studies at the ISS in September 2024. Previously, he graduated from the Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degree "Crossing the Mediterranean: Towards Investment and Integration" (MIM; Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Ca' Foscari University of Venice, and Université Paul Valéry Montpellier) and has obtained his Bachelor's degree on International Relations and Diplomatic Studies from the University of Bologna. He also collaborated with the Heinrich Böll Foundation in Rabat as a junior expert, and worked as a consultant for local and international NGOs in Morocco.

Matthew Gernt is an artist and educator based in Marseille, France. His work draws inspiration from both moving and still images, exploring their ability to convey meaning and their role in storytelling. Working across multiple media, Gernt's interdisciplinary practice examines landscape and its connection to power. For him, landscapes act as vessels that carry history, memory, and narrative—where social, ecological, and political issues intersect. More recently, his work addresses themes of displacement, movement, and migration in the Mediterranean.

Gernt holds an MFA in Visual Art from Vermont College of Fine Arts and a BFA in Studio Art from the School of the Museum of Fine Arts at Tufts University. His recent exhibitions, residencies, and grants include PAC OFF at Fuite Atelier (2023), the Artspace New Haven Artist-in-Residence (2022), Murmurations at La Friche Belle de Mai (2022), the Puffin Grant (2022), and La Nuit Étoilée at Polygone Étoilé (2021).

PROJECT CO-CONVENORS

Bidisha Banerjee is Associate Professor of English in the Literature and Cultural Studies Department and Associate Director of the International Research Centre for Cultural Studies (IRCCS) at the Education University of Hong Kong. She has published widely on South Asian diasporic literature and film, visual culture and the refugee graphic novel. She leads the international, transdisciplinary project *Thanatic Ethics: The Circulation of Bodies in Migratory Spaces*. She has co-edited special issues of journals like *Interventions: A Journal of Postcolonial Studies*, *Cultural Studies* (forthcoming) and *Journal of Graphic Novel and Comics* (forthcoming). She recently published her monograph *Traces of the Real: The Absent Presence of Photography in South Asian Literature* (Liverpool University Press, 2025).

Thomas Lacroix is a geographer, CNRS director of research at the Centre for International Research of Sciences Po Paris and a fellow of the Institut Convergence Migrations. Thomas Lacroix works on the social and spatial aspects of transnational migratory worlds and the way they affect states, territories and subjectivities. He has published some fifteen books and special issues of journals, including *The Transnational Society* (Palgrave 2023), *The Transnational State* (Palgrave 2024), with Paolo Boccagni, *Death in Migration: Foregrounding loss, grieving and memory out of place* (Forthcoming, Bristol University Press).

Judith Misrahi-Barak, a former student at the Ecole Normale Supérieure (Fontenay-aux-Roses), is Professor in Postcolonial Studies at the English Department, University Paul Valéry Montpellier 3, France, where she teaches Postcolonial literatures. She is a member of the research centre EMMA, and her prime areas of specialization are Caribbean and Indo- and Sino-Caribbean literatures in English, diaspora and migrant writing, as well as Dalit literatures. She is General Editor of the series *PoCoPages* (Pulm, Montpellier). Her monograph in French entitled *Entre Atlantique et océan Indien: les voix de la Caraïbe Anglophone* was published with Classiques Garnier (2021).

Besides her academic articles published in international journals, she has also co-edited Special Issues on Dalit Literature (*The Journal of Commonwealth Literature*, 2019) and on Thanatic Ethics (*Interventions: International Journal of Postcolonial Studies*, 2023; *Cultural Studies*, forthcoming 2026), as well as co-edited volumes among which the recent *Kala pani Crossings: Revisiting 19th century Migrations from India's Perspective* (Routledge, 2021), *The Routledge Companion to Caste and Cinema in India* (Routledge, 2022) and *Kala pani Crossings, Gender and Diaspora: Indian Perspectives* (Routledge, 2023).

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DAY #1 - OCTOBER 9th, THURSDAY

PANEL 1 (9:00-10:45)

Artistic Research on Death and Migration

Chair: *Dr Thomas Lacroix (Sciences Po CERI)*

- **Anja Simonsen and Gül Üret (University of Copenhagen)**
Naming the Lost: Identification, Motives, and Public Narratives in Post-Shipwreck Representation
- **Marianna Karakoulaki (University of Birmingham)**
The Visuals of Haunting: Photographing Refugee Graves and Moria's Burnt Remnants in Lesbos, Greece
- **Melissa Moralli (University of Bologna)**
Frontières (In)visibles: researching (in)visible borders and activism in the city of Marseille
- **Freya Powell (Parsons, The New School)**
Vocal Witness: Embodied Sound

Naming the Lost: Identification, Motives, and Public Narratives in Post-Shipwreck Representation

Anja Simonsen and Gül Üret (University of Copenhagen)

This presentation focuses on public identification initiatives after tragedies of shipwrecks in the context of migration in Italy, more specifically in Lampedusa and Milan. Through the analytical lens of ‘social anatomy’ (Simonsen, upcoming), we argue that the social life around deceased migrants’ bodies is used to educate the public speaking to and against public political narratives of irregular migration. Case one is in Lampedusa by a volunteer solidarity group and artists who decorate and arrange mourning ceremonies at the graves of the unknown and in this way seek to provide a face and a place in society for the deceased. Case two is in Milan by forensic scientists in collaboration with the authors and local civil society in the form of a ‘mobile exhibition’ portraying the forensic work conducted after retrieving bodies from one of the worst migrant-crossing disasters in the Mediterranean: the Augusta shipwreck from 2015. To educate the public, this mobile exhibition travels across borders showcasing the forensic work during the Augusta Shipwreck.

Both cases humanize deceased migrants. The artistic and communal mourning practices in Lampedusa re-aestheticize and make use of symbolic gestures and materialities while the forensic work showcased in Milan through a mobile exhibition brings a scientific and documentary perspective to the same issue. Both approaches, though distinct, share the same fundamental message: that the deceased are individuals with names, histories, and identities— not just statistics.

Anja Simonsen is an Associate Professor in the Department of Anthropology at the University of Copenhagen, Denmark. Her PhD explores the whole Somali migration experience. Her postdoctoral studies in Italy continued this work with a special focus on migrant experiences of being biometrically registered at border sites in Europe. She received a Carlsberg Foundation internalization grant to study the criminalization of humanitarian workers on search and rescue operations in Italy. She is the author of the monograph *Tahriib – Journeys into the Unknown: An Ethnography of Uncertainty in Migration*. In 2024, she was awarded an ERC Starting Grant for the project “The Social Life of Dead Bodies—A new

ethnographic approach to migrant deaths in and around the Mediterranean Sea” (SOLID 101163777).

Gül Üret is a Postdoc (2025-2028) at the ERC project SOLID, “The Social Life of Dead Bodies – A new ethnographic approach to migrant deaths in and around the Mediterranean Sea,” in the Department of Anthropology at the University of Copenhagen, Denmark. She holds a PhD (2025) in Law and Politics from the University of Graz, Austria. Her doctoral thesis explored a ‘new wave’ of migration from Turkey to Greece with a focus on the meetings between Greek and Turkish nationals. Based on extensive fieldwork among four migrant communities, she studied the meanings of Turkishness and migrant- and refugeehood in Athens. Gül’s research interests include the politics, history, and modern societies of Greece and Turkey, and broadly span the topics of migration, nationalism, identity politics, and belongings in the transnational space between the two countries.

The Visuals of Haunting: Photographing Refugee Graves and Moria's Burnt Remnants in Lesbos, Greece

Marianna Karakoulaki (University of Birmingham)

Greece is a significant part of the Eastern Mediterranean migratory route and has been at the forefront of the border crisis for years. The island of Lesbos was at the centre of it as thousands of people crossed while hundreds perished. At the same time Moria, the notorious refugee camp was described by many as a ‘living hell’. In September 2020 a fire burnt the camp to the ground leaving asylum seekers homeless for days. For the thousands of asylum seekers who lived in Moria, the camp was both a convivial place of belonging and a state of exception where hope and suffering clashed on a daily basis. Researching those liminal spaces of life, and more particularly death can prove a challenging task for any researcher.

This paper looks at the way research takes place at the ‘deathscape’ of the island of Lesbos in Greece. Not only does it discuss the way documentary photography can contribute to the wider field of IR, but also what IR’s approaches to the border could learn from the visual research of death. This paper will draw on Jessica Aughter’s politics of haunting and will take the reader on a walk through Lesbos. The way this is achieved is by walking the reader through the refugee cemetery of Lesbos; a rough piece of land where people on the move perished in the Aegean Sea end up and the burnt camp of Moria where people’s mark still haunts the island.

Marianna Karakoulaki is a PhD Researcher in Political Science and International Studies at the University of Birmingham, UK. Her research focuses on critical border studies, border violence and death. She is an award winning journalist and photojournalist with a focus on migration and the far right in Europe. Her work can be found at: www.mariannakarakoulaki.com

Frontières (In)visibles: Researching (In)visible Borders and Artivism in the City of Marseille

Melissa Moralli (University of Bologna)

The term artivism refers to those practices and projects created by artists, activists and scholars that aim to respond to and critically reflect on the challenges of our time by using different languages and forms of creative expression. By combining the aesthetic dimension with ethical and political issues, artivism represents an important form of dissent and a powerful expressive device to counter hegemonic discourses such as those surrounding migration and borders. In front of an excessive spectacularisation sustained by media and

political discourses that portray migrants as “impossible citizens” or criminals, the need to build a “third imaginary” of human mobility emerges strongly.

This contribution proposes to start from the concept of activism to present "Frontières (In)visibles" (Melissa Moralli and Ali Zareghanatnowi), a visual research project conceived at the intersection of gazes between cultural studies and experimental artistic production. The visual research has been conducted by a cultural sociologist and an Iranian filmmaker and has focused on a particular right, defined here as the "right to the discourse". Drawing upon the concept of the "right to the city", the “right to the discourse” is conceived as the right to participate in and re-appropriate narratives by people on the move. How do artists deal with social injustices associated with exile, and how can art redefine these social, political, and narrative inequalities? How does artistic creation recreate alternative forms of “feeling at home”? The outcome is a short documentary co-created with four artists “in exile” in Marseille, divided into four chapters: Resistances, Baggage, Crossings and Bodies.

Melissa Moralli is Assistant Professor at the Department of Sociology and Business Law at the University of Bologna and Research Associate at MESOPOLHIS (Aix-Marseille University, Sciences Po Aix, CNRS). She holds a Phd in Sociology and Social Research and was visiting scholar at CRISES (Centre de Recherche sur les Innovations Sociales, Montréal), IPK (Institute for Public Knowledge, New York University), CRISES Redefined (University of Jyväskylä, Finland), and MUCEM (Museum of the Mediterranean, Marseille). She is PI of the international project “Collaborative imaginaries on territories in change across Europe”. Moreover, she is the co-founder of the research collective « Reimagining Mobilities » on migration and climate change (<https://reimaginingmobilities.org/>) and worked in many European projects on arts, migration and socioenvironmental justice. She is the author of many books and articles on migration, artistic production, social innovation, and creative methods, and editor of the “Elgar Encyclopedia of Global Migration: New Mobilities and Activism” (2025).

Vocal Witness: Embodied Sound **Freya Powell (Parsons, The New School)**

This multimedia talk explores how the voice's political power works beyond words—through non-verbal qualities, bodily utterances, and vocal intensity—to penetrate listeners' defenses and disrupt denial. By placing voice at the center of my work, I create ensemble performances and sound installations that immerse audiences in political realities they might otherwise overlook or suppress. In these works, voice functions not merely as communication but as a physical experience that embodies and amplifies emotional and political undercurrents of our present and past.

My project "A Maritime Haunting" exemplifies this approach as a multi-channel sound installation using voice to convey the ambiguous grief resulting from Mediterranean border policies. Through speech and song, performers incorporate sounds of the sea—waves, tides, and surges—depicting it as both passageway and grave, and in migration contexts, as a "space of exception" outside normal protections.

The performers function as an ancient Greek chorus, creating a collective voice of mourning that explores the experience of ambiguous loss—grief for those presumed dead at sea without confirmation. Their voices merge and separate, experimenting with pitch, breath, pacing, and silence, moving between operatic singing and theatrical expression to communicate the realities of this contemporary tragedy.

Freya Powell creates ensemble performances, immersive sound installations, and essay videos. Drawing on fields such as forensic anthropology, feminist and affect theory, and

literature her projects make connections between the individual and collective, and addresses issues of ambiguous loss and grievability. She creates opportunities for her audience to vicariously witness lesser known political events or ideas such as a mass grave of undocumented migrants or Prevention Through Deterrence, the US border policy. Collaborating with actors and singers, she explores the expressive capacities of the voice. She has performed, screened, and exhibited her work nationally and internationally at institutions including, MoMA PS1, Videotage, Art in General, Queens Museum, Arts Santa Monica, and Socrates Sculpture Park, among others. She has received grants from NYSCA, Queens Council on the Arts, and NYFA. Her work is in the collections of the Los Angeles Contemporary Archive, the Smithsonian Institution Libraries, and the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. Powell holds an MFA in Combined Media from Hunter College and a BA from Bard College. She holds the position of Assistant Professor of Contemporary Art Practice at Parsons, The New School.

PERFORMATIVE AND PARTICIPATORY WORKSHOP (11:00-12:30)

Where Grief Floats: Bottled Testimonies from the Border

Chair: Dr Yumna Masarwa (American College of the Mediterranean)

Séverine Sajous and Ludovica Gualandi (University of Palermo)

This performative and participatory workshop explores how artistic and community-based practices bear witness to migrant deaths and disappearances at sea between Tunisia and Sicily. Presented by Ludovica Gualandi (Mem.Med – Memoria Mediterranea) and Séverine Sajous (Bouteilles à la mer), the session invites a collective reflection through archives, testimonies, and narrative fragments co created with families of the missing.

To adapt the workshop to the context of Aix-en-Provence, we propose to actively engage with perspectives from Marseille—a city shaped by generations of migration from North Africa and deeply marked by the effects of structural racism. Extending the notion of death beyond the sea, we will also reflect on the lives lost to police violence, institutional neglect, and everyday forms of racism that disproportionately affect racialized youth and communities with migration backgrounds in Marseille’s peripheries.

In the migratory experience, the trauma of death is omnipresent. Beyond physical deaths at sea or in custody, there is the death of fellow travelers along the route; the symbolic death of a possible return home for undocumented persons living in legal and existential limbo; the death of a future in the country of origin that forced departure in the first place; and the death of loved ones, whether as a consequence of exile, administrative violence, or racism. These layers of loss, both visible and invisible, haunt the lives of migrants long after their journeys. These losses, often silenced or denied recognition, call for practices of remembrance, resistance, and justice. In this spirit, the workshop will center not only Tunisian families but also create space for the voices and memories of communities in Marseille, where mourning and survival remain deeply entangled.

In the lead-up to the workshop, we propose to collaborate with local networks (e.g. migrants or people with migratory background, migrant associations, solidarity groups, artists with lived experience of exile) to collect new symbolic “bottles”—images, texts, messages, objects—which will be included in the session as part of a collective installation. This grounding in local memory and testimony will allow participants to situate the Tunisian-Sicilian experience within broader trans-Mediterranean dynamics of loss, resistance, and belonging.

Séverine Sajous is a photojournalist and educator based in Tunisia since 2021. As a correspondent for *El Español* and contributor to *El País* and *Libération*, she documents migration and refugee experiences through visual media. In 2015, she co-founded the Jungleeye Association (jungleeye.org), leading participatory photography projects with exiled communities across Europe, the Maghreb, and the Middle East. Her work spans photography, film, and education, with a focus on amplifying marginalized voices. Since 2016, she has directed a trilogy of short films on the invented languages of migration, including the award-winning *Password: Fajara* and *#boza*. Her first web documentary, *Bouteilles à la Mer*, documents the stories of Tunisian families whose relatives disappeared at sea. In 2024, she was selected by the Musée de l'Homme in Paris to produce the interactive installation *Les Selfies de la Migration*, launched as part of the major exhibition "Migration" on November 27.

Ludovica Gualandi is a first-year PhD student at the University of Palermo in Migration, Differences, and Social Justice. Her thesis, *Mediterranean Migrations: Legal Frameworks and Familial Struggles for Recognition and Justice*, explores Mediterranean migration through a multi-sited ethnographic study between Sicily and Tunisia, bridging legal analysis and family narratives. With three years of research in Tunisia, she focuses on racism, gender violence, and intersectionality in migration. Ludovica is one of the coordinators of the Mem. Med: Memoria Mediterranea project, supporting families of migrants who have died or disappeared at sea, collecting stories to build a historical memory archive. She is also a freelance journalist for *Melting Pot Europa*, covering migration issues. Passionate about analog photography and inclusive art, she uses these mediums to explore migration, border violence, and loss. Ludovica is a committed activist, amplifying marginalized voices and advocating for migrants' rights through academic and artistic work.

PANEL 2 (14:00-15:45)

Deaths Questioning Borders

Chair: Dr Yumna Masarwa (American College of the Mediterranean)

- **Olga Michael (University of Cyprus)**
The Refugee Boat as Crisis Heterotopia
- **Lisa Senecal (Institute of Social Sciences, University of Lisbon)**
“Nothing Different” – On Narratives and the Multiplicity of Borders
- **Ahlam Chemlali (Aalborg University)**
Visualizing Death, Resistance, and Survival in the Tunisian-Libyan Borderlands
- **Syd Bolton and Catriona Jarvis (Methoria - Last Rights Project)**
The Forgotten Frontier – Death on the Mediterranean Eastern Pyrenees Border

The Refugee Boat as Crisis Heterotopia

Olga Michael (University of Cyprus)

In this presentation I propose an interpretation of boat imagery in aquatic refugee border crossings in the Mediterranean through the lens of Michel Foucault's conceptualisation of heterotopias and heterochronies (1986). I examine Massimo Sestini's award-winning photograph *Operation Mare Nostrum* (2014) that shows refugees saved via the search and rescue operation by the same name near Lampedusa. I connect this analysis with boat representations in Morten Dürre and Lars Horneman's graphic novel, *Zenobia* (2018), which

accounts for the sea journey of a Syrian girl, Amina, who fled her country with her uncle. I further draw parallels between the optic depictions of the refugee boat in the above and those found in Safdar Ahmed's graphic novel, *Still Alive: Graphic Reportage from Australia's Immigration and Detention System* (2021), as well as with J. M. W. Turner's painting *The Slave Ship* (1840) and with images of the Brookes slave ship (1788). I propose that photo/graphic depictions of refugee boats highlight their function as heterotopias and heterochronies that foreground neo-colonial temporal and spatial links showcasing the ongoing violation of racialized bodies on the move. These images, I suggest, demonstrate how racialized people on the move experience specific aquatic locations as lethal, as opposed others that experience them as ones of leisure in the same temporal context, thus configuring them as crisis heterotopias. Such boat imagery also evokes the dehumanisation of othered people at sea across different temporal and spatial points, linking events and practices spanning from the middle passage to the contemporary policing of aquatic borders in Australia and Europe.

Olga Michael is an adjunct lecturer in Anglophone literature at the University of Cyprus. Her research interests include postcolonial trauma, human rights, perpetrator representations and border-crossings in graphic life narrative, inter alia. Her most recent publications include her monograph, *Human Rights in Graphic Life Narrative: Reading and Witnessing Violations of the 'Other' in Anglophone Works* (Bloomsbury Academic, 2023), and chapters for the edited volumes *Temporalities and Subjectivities in Migration Literature in Europe* (Lexington, 2024), *The Palgrave Handbook of Testimony and Culture* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2023), and *Representations of 21st Century Migration into Europe* (Berghahn, 2022). Her articles have appeared in journals such as *The Journal of Perpetrator Research*, *Studies in Twentieth and Twenty-First-Century Literature, Biography: An Interdisciplinary Quarterly*, *a/b: Auto/Biography Studies*, *Life Writing*, *Journal of Graphic Novels and Comics* and *ImageText*.

“Nothing Different” – On Narratives and the Multiplicity of Borders

Lisa Senecal (Institute of Social Sciences, University of Lisbon)

The *multiplicity of borders* is an observation about borders, which deconstructs the story of a singular, unified border (just one), which I have concluded cannot exist after comparing the *experiential borders* of a diverse group of borders-crossers in Malta. This is one of the thematic clusters or analytical outcomes of border ethnography conducted between 2021 and 2023 in Malta.

Border multiplicity is the only possible answer to the question “where can borders be found?” since it signifies there are a variety, an abundance, a multitude, myriad borders that border-crossers might either opt, prefer or need to cross or approach the borders they intend to cross. Border multiplicity speaks to the reality that there are various borders for various border-crossers. More than this, border multiplicity signifies how borders are segregated – inherently separate and unequal, actively promoting and maintaining segregation.

Borders filter border-crossers in ways that ensure from the very start (before mobility is ever enacted) that border-crossers *think borders - and mobility - differently, prepare differently, and sense the regulation and control of borders within their countries of origin*. The borders, its agents, practices of the border *think these border crossers differently*, think their mobility differently and approach and regulate it differently, accordingly.

Aside from representing a thematic cluster in the monograph I am (still) writing but will soon finish, I am collaborating with a Maltese digital/visual artist to create a *moving map* from the data collection. This map will provide a visual distillation of the multiplicity of borders, it

will represent the external impact of borders, why we should not think of borders as simply “lines on maps”, “facts” or “edges of space” but rather *physical, institutional, cognitive and emotional – physical and metaphysical – spaces of engagement*, which acknowledges the ways in which borders are nonvisible and often inside all of us.

Lisa Ann Senecal is a PhD Candidate (Migrations, Anthropology) at ICS-ULisboa. Her research centers around the intersection of race, class, and migratory spaces. Her research focuses on antiracism, inequality, noncitizenship, representations, cultural transformation, and mobility justice as these concepts intersect within a regime of borders and/or in border spaces. By centering the Mediterranean/European/North-South continuum, her project aims to counter-map the Maltese border by teasing apart structural aspects of the border from its embodied aspects with an emphasis on noncitizen subjectivities – that is the actual experience of borders.

Visualizing Death, Resistance, and Survival in the Tunisian-Libyan Borderlands **Ahlam Chemlali (Aalborg University)**

This contribution draws on ethnographic and visual research conducted in the Tunisian-Libyan borderlands to explore how border deaths are represented, resisted, and remembered through everyday narratives, images, and locally embedded artistic practices. The research examines the effects of European border externalisation in North Africa, where containment and abandonment have turned transit zones into zones of prolonged exile, disappearance, and death. While much of the visual economy surrounding migration focuses on spectacle or humanitarian imagery, this work seeks to challenge and complicate dominant narratives by foregrounding gendered and localized modes of witnessing. Through collaborative engagements with activists, survivors, and local artists, the project investigates how creative practices become tools of resistance and memory-making in contexts of extreme precarity. Particular attention is given to how the absence of the body, through death, disappearance, or bureaucratic erasure, shapes both mourning and political mobilization. By placing Marseille and Lampedusa in conversation with less visible geographies like the Tunisian-Libyan border, the presentation offers a decolonial counterpoint to Eurocentric discourses of exile, highlighting the role of art in reclaiming agency and voice amid systemic silence. This interdisciplinary contribution bridges ethnography, critical border studies, and visual anthropology, proposing artistic representation as both a method and a form of political action in the face of migratory violence.

Ahlam Chemlali, PhD, is a Postdoctoral Fellow at Aalborg University. Her research explores the politics of life and death in transit, focusing on the local and gendered effects of European border externalisation in North Africa, particularly in the Tunisian-Libyan borderlands. Before her academic career, she spent nearly a decade at DIGNITY – Danish Institute Against Torture, working on issues related to migration, human rights, and violence. Her interdisciplinary work combines ethnography, visual methods, and critical theory, and she has published in *Geopolitics*, *Trends in Organized Crime*, *JEMS*, *Forced Migration Review*, and *Revue Tunisienne de Science Politique*.

The Forgotten Frontier – Death on the Mediterranean Eastern Pyrenees Border **Syd Bolton and Catriona Jarvis (Methoria - Last Rights Project)**

Of the many and increasingly deadly migration corridors of Europe and beyond, the Mediterranean is generally considered to be well observed and researched, yet the route across the Pyrenees-Orientales between Spain and France is one of the currently less

documented and understood contemporary migration corridors. Its historical importance and significance in helping us understand the phenomenon of mass flight from persecution and its fatal consequences, casts an important light on present day European border security policies and can assist our own responses to those measures.

This presentation is itself in the form of a journey, and a photographic journal, starting with the “Retirada” to France from Franco’s Spain in 1939, via Walter Benjamin’s flight from Marseille and his death at the Spanish border in Port Bou in 1940, Arendt’s search for his body and the subsequent relocation of civil war tombs, through to the contemporary migrations from Sub-Saharan Africa to Europe using the same routes. Along the way, public and private acts of preservation and memorialisation have continued to mark these significant places, events and deaths. These include graves; way-markers and repositories of collective memory; cultural collaborations on both sides of the border; literary; linguistic; artistic; musical and educational interventions that provide an enduring record of exile and loss, as well as a tool with which to examine, respond to and influence the current contested political space across our borders.

Syd Bolton is one of the co-founders of the UK charity Methoria and its First Rights/Last Rights projects, working to promote and protect the rights and interests of migrant children and for bereaved families of those who have lost their lives as a consequence of migration journeys. Syd qualified in the UK as a lawyer in 2000. He is now resident in France and not in UK practice. He specialises in advocacy for children’s rights and the rights of people on the move, globally. He has worked as a lawyer for abused children, forced child conscripts, victims of trafficking, survivors of torture and families of missing and deceased migrants. He has written and published many journal articles and contributed to legal practice and academic texts and the training of other lawyers. He has spoken regularly at UN, international NGO, European and national events. In 2024 Syd gave evidence to the PACE Committee on Migration, Refugees and Displaced Persons, leading to its report on the need to clarify the fate of missing migrants.

Catriona Jarvis, LL.M., MA, is a retired judge from the United Kingdom. She is co-convenor, with Syd Bolton, of Last Rights, part of the UK charity Methoria. The Last Rights programme is creating a new framework of respect for the rights of missing and dead refugees and migrants and bereaved family members, to transform research and legal principles into deliverable, real benefits and respect for human rights. The two are also co-convenors of Equal Justice for Migrant Children, a project launched by the First Rights programme of Methoria, which aims to promote a model of justice for migrant children by building upon the rights acquired by children under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Catriona is the author and co-author of various articles and blogs and a contributor to handbooks on refugee and migration law. www.lastrights.net, www.firstrights.net. Methoria is a charity registered in the UK, No.1188043.

Film Screening and Post-screening discussion (15:45-17:30)

***A Letter to Nikola* by Hara Kaminara (Filmmaker, Photographer SOS Méditerranée)**
Chair/discussant: Dr Bidisha Banerjee (IRCCS, The Education University of Hong Kong)

Letter to Nikola is an audiovisual letter from artist and filmmaker Hara Kaminara to her unborn son. At once intimate and political, it bears witness to her experience aboard the Aquarius, the rescue ship that saved 29,523 lives in the Mediterranean between 2016 and

2018. Through the lens of her camera, she navigates the tension between the overwhelming numbers of the dead and the survivors, and the deeply personal stories of those rescued. The film unfolds as a confession of despair and frustration with a world in crisis, yet it is also a meditation on beginnings—of her child’s life and of fragile hopes for humanity. Between personal memory and collective testimony, between the act of photographing strangers at sea and the hesitation to photograph her own child, Hara confronts the role of images in shaping intimacy and distance. *Letter to Nikola* emerges as a poetic reflection on motherhood, exile, and the uncertainty of a civilization facing unprecedented upheaval.

Hara Kaminara is an audio-visual storyteller. Working between the fields of visual arts, photography and film, her work focuses mainly on social issues with a wide range of experimentation exploring the act of testifying.

DAY #2 - OCTOBER 10th, FRIDAY
ROUNDTABLE 1 (9:00-10:30)

The Politics of Aesthetics: Representing Death and Migration in Contemporary Art and Film

Chair: Dr Erin Yunes (American College of the Mediterranean)

- Matthew Gernt (Artist and Educator ACM-IAU)
- Hara Kaminara (Filmmaker, Photographer, SOS Méditerranée)
- Dr Elsa Gomis (Artist and Researcher, Institute Migration Paris)
- Dr Katrin Ströbel (Artist)
- Freya Powell (Parsons, The New School)

This roundtable brings together artists and researchers to examine how the politics of death and migration emerge in contemporary art and film. Rather than treating politics as separate from aesthetics, the discussion will consider how political conditions, ethical challenges, and cultural narratives actively shape artistic choices and representations. Participants will share perspectives on how their practices reveal, critique, or are influenced by the political realities of displacement and loss. They will also reflect on strategies of collaboration, ethical representation, and the role of art in making visible experiences of displacement and loss, while opening spaces for dialogue and collective responsibility.

Matthew Gernt is a lecturer at the American College of the Mediterranean (France) and an artist based in Marseille, France. His work draws inspiration from both moving and still images, exploring their ability to convey meaning and their role in storytelling. Working across multiple media, Gernt's interdisciplinary practice examines landscape and its connection to power. For him, landscapes act as vessels that carry history, memory, and narrative—where social, ecological, and political issues intersect. More recently, his work addresses themes of displacement, movement, and migration in the Mediterranean.

Gernt holds an MFA in Visual Art from Vermont College of Fine Arts and a BFA in Studio Art from the School of the Museum of Fine Arts at Tufts University. His recent exhibitions, residencies, and grants include PAC OFF at Fuite Atelier (2023), the Artspace New Haven Artist-in-Residence (2022), Murmurations at La Friche Belle de Mai (2022), the Puffin Grant (2022), and La Nuit Étoilée at Polygone Étoilé (2021).

Hara Kaminara is an audio-visual storyteller. Working between the fields of visual arts, photography and film, her work focuses mainly on social issues with a wide range of experimentation exploring the act of testifying.

Elsa Gomis is a visual artist, filmmaker, and researcher whose work integrates artistic research with refugee studies to explore innovative visual narratives of contemporary migrations. She has served as a postdoctoral research assistant at Oxford Department of Politics and International Relations and taught European Cinema at Oxford Faculty of Medieval and Modern Languages. Elsa has presented her research at several academic institutions including Collège de France.

Social Anthropology Laboratory, the Rothermere American Institute in Oxford, and Harvard's Immigration Initiative. Her artwork has been exhibited at Sergels Torg in Stockholm, Wolfson College in Oxford, and Nuit Paris. Her feature documentary "The People Behind the Scenes" is included in the Museum of Ethnography of Neuchâtel's permanent collection.

Katrin Ströbel (b. 1975) is a visual artist who lives and works between Marseille, Stuttgart, and Rabat. She studied fine arts and literature, and earned a PhD in art history, with a focus on the relationship between text and image in contemporary art. She is also a mother.

Her drawings, site-specific works and installations are based on a critical questioning of the social and geopolitical conditions that define our everyday social life. Her work deconstructs gender roles and female stereotypes through a range of drawings and collages, while also engaging with cultural codes, visual languages, colonial histories, migration, and displacement. She highlights the deep interconnections between gender and geopolitics in her exploration of these themes.

In addition to her artistic practice, she has held academic positions at Villa Arson, École nationale supérieure d'art in Nice (since 2013), and became Professor of Drawing at the Stuttgart State Academy of Fine Arts in 2023. Since 2013, Ströbel has collaborated with Moroccan artist Mohammed Laouli on *frontières fluides* – fluid boundaries, a multimedia project addressing themes of migration and transit between Europe and North Africa.

Freya Powell creates ensemble performances, immersive sound installations, and essay videos. Drawing on fields such as forensic anthropology, feminist and affect theory, and literature her projects make connections between the individual and collective, and addresses issues of ambiguous loss and grievability. She creates opportunities for her audience to vicariously witness lesser known political events or ideas such as a mass grave of undocumented migrants or Prevention Through Deterrence, the US border policy. Collaborating with actors and singers, she explores the expressive capacities of the voice.

She has performed, screened, and exhibited her work nationally and internationally at institutions including, MoMA PS1, Videotage, Art in General, Queens Museum, Arts Santa Monica, and Socrates Sculpture Park, among others. She has received grants from NYSCA, Queens Council on the Arts, and NYFA. Her work is in the collections of the Los Angeles Contemporary Archive, the Smithsonian Institution Libraries, and the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. Powell holds an MFA in Combined Media from Hunter College and a BA from Bard College. She holds the position of Assistant Professor of Contemporary Art Practice at Parsons, The New School.

PANEL 3 (10:45-12:30)

Literary Representations of Exile and Migration

Chair: Dr Judith Misrahi-Barak (Université de Montpellier Paul Valéry, EMMA)

- **Claudine Raynaud (Université de Montpellier Paul Valéry, EMMA)**
Claude McKay's Mediterranean Exile: Romance--or Carmen?--in Marseille
- **Alan Rice (University of Lancashire, Preston)**
Locality, Its Necessities and Its Discontents
- **Karim Daanoun (Université de Montpellier Paul Valéry, EMMA)**
"the seaborne sky": heaven and hell in Omar El Akkad's *What Strange Paradise* (2021)
- **Nandini Dhar (Adamas University, Kolkata)**
Social Death and Mortuary Aesthetics: Constructing a South Asian Mediterranean in Jhumpa Lahiri's *Roman Stories*

Claude McKay's Mediterranean Exile: Romance--or Carmen?--in Marseille

Claudine Raynaud (Université de Montpellier Paul Valéry, EMMA)

Claude McKay wrote his major fictional works in exile: his *Return to Harlem* (1928) that pioneered the Harlem Renaissance and influenced Césaire's and Senghor's "Négritude" was written in Marseille. Two of his novels are set in the Phocian city: *Banjo* (1929) and *Romance in Marseille* (started in 1929 in Bilbao, interrupted, and completed in 1933). *Romance* was thus finished while McKay had settled just outside the city of Tangier, after an itinerance that led him from the South of France to Morocco via Barcelona.

Romance has often been described as a follow-up to *Banjo*. Like that "novel without a plot," its action takes place on the "Vieux-Port," among an array of Black dockers, Corsican pimps, Communist recruiters, and female and male prostitutes. Unlike *Banjo*, it has a plot based on a true story, that of a maimed and now affluent West African docker's return to Marseille, Lafala, in love with Aslima, a Black Moroccan sex worker. While jazz is at the heart of *Banjo* (Parent), my talk will focus on the comic opera, Bizet's *Carmen*, as a trace in *Romance*'s dénouement and dramatic structure. At the close of the novel Aslima's pimp, Titin, kills her and Lafala leaves Marseilles for Africa. The heroine's tragic death rewrites the murder of Carmen by her jealous lover, Don José, while the bullfighter Escamillo triumphs in the arena, as the opera finale. The displacement operated vis-à-vis her celebrated model by the heroine's tragic fate rewrites death within the context of Marseilles exiled and immigrant African characters under McKay's pen, himself an exile. Tragedy leads to death, so does *Romance* for the Moroccan immigrée, victim of her Corsican pimp. The novel thus includes and eludes the fate of Mérimée's heroine, a symbol of utter freedom, freedom unto death. Lafala goes back to his homeland alone.

Biographic evidence supports my hypothesis. McKay was an occasional drama critic for *The Liberator* in 1921-22 and went regularly to the theater, the music hall, and the opera. While residing in La Ciotat, where he settled to write in 1924 after his Parisian sojourn, McKay "went to Toulon to hear *Carmen* by the Opéra Comique Company of Paris" (*A Long Way* 255). He may also have heard (of) the Marseilles "*opérettes*" that made the city's fame for a style of music specific to itself. Aslima's murder means the end of exile and a solitary return for the African hero. If "Marseille is a home of dislocation" cherished by McKay (Maxwell in Newman), the city of his fiction refracts the exile as displacement that infuses his writing, both poetically and politically.

Claudine Raynaud, Professor Emerita at the University of Montpellier Paul-Valéry, has taught in England (Birmingham, Liverpool) and the United States (Michigan, Northwestern, Oberlin). A Fellow at the Du Bois Institute, she has headed GRAAT, a nationwide African American Studies Research Group (EAA in Tours) and a research unit at ITEM/CNRS (Paris). A member of the editorial board of the *James Baldwin Review*, she has organized an international conference on James Baldwin in Montpellier (2014) and Morrison's *Song of Solomon* (2020). Her publications include *Toni Morrison: L'Esthétique de la survie* (1996), many coedited volumes, and articles on black autobiography (Hurston, Wright, Lorde, Angelou, Brooks, Baldwin, and Ward). She translated Sojourner Truth's *Narrative* (2016) into French.

Locality, Its Necessities and Its Discontents

Alan Rice (University of Lancashire, Preston)

This paper engages with ways that Contemporary artists have used the geographies of Northern Britain, France, the Atlantic Ocean and the Mediterranean to make links between chronologies of slavery and post-slavery and the present 21st Century crisis of migration. It will interrogate Isaac Julien's *Western Union: small boats* from 2007 and its use of Lampedusa as a key site discussing whether his beautiful aestheticization undermines his political radicalism. His later work *Ten Thousand Waves* (2010) pertaining to the death of the Morecambe cockle pickers in 2004 will be discussed in these terms but more specifically the problematics of a global approach that marginalizes the local implications that can be examined in a specific case study from the 2024 commemorations of the event. Julien's rather cavalier approach to the local can be compared to Himid, Moris Vai and Harris's various kinds of specific local memorialisations in their works. I will look specifically at Himid's *Memorial to Zong* (1991), *Naming the Money* (2004) and the *Rodeur* series (2016-21). For the French artist Elisa Moris Vai I will discuss her video piece *Recit National/National Narrative* from 2020, and for Lela Harris's *Facing the Past: Black Lancastrians* exhibition which I co-curated in 2023. These latter artists dialogise previously white dominated spaces with images and narratives of local African Atlantic figures engaging politically with them and questioning dominant paradigms. The paper will utilize the theoretical frameworks of Edouard Glissant, Stuart Hall, Michael Rothberg, Paul Ricoeur, Giorgio Agamben, Dionne Brand and Saidiya Hartman amongst others.

Alan Rice is Professor in English and American Studies at the University of Lancashire, Preston and co-director of the Institute for Black Atlantic Research (IBAR). His books include, *Radical Narratives of the Black Atlantic* (2003), *Creating Memorials, Building Identities: The Politics of Memory in the Black Atlantic* (2010) & (co-written) *Inside the Invisible: Memorialising Slavery and Freedom in the Life and Works of Lubaina Himid* (2019). He was a member of the *Slave Trade Arts Memorial Project* in Lancaster from 2000-2007, co-curated *Trade and Empire: Remembering Slavery* at the Whitworth Gallery in 2007 and has been involved in a variety of documentaries and dramas with the BBC and other arts and media companies including being consultant to Studio Canal for their 2022 release *The Railway Children Return*. In 2021 he curated the exhibition *Lubaina Himid: Memorial to Zong* and in 2023 co-curated *Facing the Past: Black Lancastrians*. Working with local Black History groups he has rolled out his Lancaster Slave Trade Tour and organised commemorations, supported by the Embassy of the United States, for the Battle of

Bamber Bridge where African American soldiers in WW2 fought Jim Crow racism on British shores. In 2025 he was Fulbright Visiting Professor at the University of Michigan.

“The Seaborne Sky”: Heaven and Hell in Omar El Akkad’s *What Strange Paradise* (2021)

Karim Daanouné (Université de Montpellier Paul Valéry, EMMA)

Dealing with the refugee crisis, Omar El Akkad’s *What Strange Paradise* is an ambiguous novel that sustains a highly undecidable narrative through its fable-like structure. Alternating between chapters entitled ‘Before’—narrated in the past tense and recounting nine-year-old Amir’s departure from Syria through Jordan and Egypt, culminating in a perilous crossing of the Mediterranean aboard the *Calypso*—and chapters entitled ‘After,’ told in the present tense, where Amir has reached the shore of a Greek island and is aided by a local teenager named Vänna, the novel oscillates between two temporal and symbolic poles. The sea voyage allegorically evokes a kind of hell, while life on the island initially appears to offer the promise of heaven. Yet, as the title of my talk suggests, El Akkad deliberately blurs the boundary between hell and heaven, and with it, the line between life and death. The mirroring narratives of ‘After’ and ‘Before,’ along with the inversion of the realms of the dead and the living, create a sense of narrative instability, ultimately preventing the reader from being certain whether Amir truly survives. In this presentation, I will first examine how El Akkad portrays the journey at sea in order to contrast it with the experience on land. I will then demonstrate how Amir’s miraculous survival from the wreckage renders him an ethereal presence—one whose existence readers are constantly asked to affirm, yet are equally encouraged to doubt. Finally, I will analyze the novel’s fabulating dimension and El Akkad’s broader strategies of inversion, which are intended to challenge readers’ ethical positions and foreground the human cost of global inaction in response to migration crises.

Karim Daanouné is Associate Professor in American Literature at Université de Montpellier Paul-Valéry, France. His research centers on contemporary North American literature, including Arab American and Arab Canadian writing. His work is concerned with the intersection between poetics, ethics and politics.

Social Death and Mortuary Aesthetics: Constructing a South Asian Mediterranean in Jhumpa Lahiri’s *Roman Stories*

Nandini Dhar (Adamas University, Kolkata)

Death is written about frequently in Jhumpa Lahiri’s short story collection *Roman Stories*, albeit in an offhand manner. Most of the deaths narrated in the stories are personal in nature, and the grief which follows them is also intensely personal, which seemingly forecloses the possibilities of any political reading. Indeed, Lahiri’s previous work largely avoided the political and focused instead on a quietist aesthetics of immigrant representation. Yet it is also true that her final novel written in English, *The Lowland*, represents not only one of the most discussed political movements in India -- Naxalism -- but also centers around multiple political deaths. Crucially, then, the short story “Well Lit House”, included in the collection *Roman Stories*, takes as its point of departure the temporality explored in *The Lowland* -- the global 1970s -- and concludes in contemporary Rome. Between the publication of *The Lowland* and *Roman Stories*, Lahiri shifted to writing in Italian. If her characters in English are distinctly Bengali, Lahiri’s characters in Italian bear few marks of race, ethnicity or even geography, other than the city they currently inhabit. Yet from the material markers made available in the story, the immigrant characters in the story are distinctly Bangladeshi, whose life-narratives often begin from the violent deaths of the Liberation War of 1971, an event

unnamed but hinted at in Lahiri's story. This paper argues that *Roman Stories* in general, and the story "Well-Lit House" in particular, serves as an important literary conduit to conceptualize a South Asian, or specifically, Bengali Mediterranean social reality. Italy's picturesque piazzas, church interiors and tourist-filled museums teem with the specters of death in the middle of the sea, with Bangladeshi refugees arriving in boats, and with the racialized precarity of immigrant life, which almost always leads to the "social death" of the migrant, often quietly complementing the personal deaths in the immigrants' lives. While Lahiri's stories underplay physical deaths, they magnify and dramatize moments of social death to create a mortuary aesthetics which not only represents an important divergence from her own earlier narrative and aesthetic quietism, but turns that quietism onto its head to transform the personal deaths in the migrants' lives as inextricable elements of the precarious global geographies.

Nandini Dhar is Associate Professor of Literature, Gender Studies and Creative Writing in the Department of English Language and Literature at Adamas University, Kolkata, India. Focusing on legacies of forced migrations of slavery and indenture, Nandini's work focuses on contemporary historical novels which re-constitute such histories, paying attention to the intersections between literary forms, neoliberal memory complexes and national histories. Her essays have been published in *ariel: A Review of International English Literature*, *The Comparatist*, *a/b: Auto/Biography Studies*, *Gender, Place & Culture* and other edited volumes. She is the editor of *Contemporary Gender Formations in India: In Between Conformity, Dissent and Affect* (Routledge, 2024). Nandini is also a bi-lingual poet who writes in English and her native tongue Bengali, and between these two languages, has authored nine volumes of poems.

PANEL 4 (14:00-15:30)

Exile and After: Navigating the Sensitivities of Ethnography, Art, and Translation

- Félicien De Heusch (University of Copenhagen)
- Gaspard Njock (Artist, La Sorbonne)
- Sophie-Béatrice Nyiri (Université de Montpellier Paul Valéry)

Discussants:

- Bidisha Banerjee, IRCCS, the Education University of Hong Kong
- Marianne Dugeon, EMMA, Université de Montpellier Paul Valéry
- Judith Misrahi-Barak, EMMA, Université de Montpellier Paul Valéry
- Alexandra Délano Alonso, The New School

Interpreting research participants' practices and narratives through a hermeneutic approach has long been a central concern for ethnographers. This remains highly relevant today, particularly when engaging with creative forms such as ethno-graphic novels. In such works, ethnographic material is reinterpreted through the artist's sensibility—via characters, illustrations, and poetry—resulting in a co-constructed narrative that evolves from fieldwork to ethnographic writing, and from there to the graphic novel. Dissemination practices further extend this process, bringing scientific and creative outputs back to the field and generating new interactions. Translation into multiple languages represents another crucial dimension of this ongoing interpretive process, especially among different literary and cultural landscapes. This panel presentation focuses on the work *Au-delà l'exil* (Njock & de Heusch, 2024), examining its reception among diverse audiences and its translation into English, Spanish, and further languages. It questions the intricacies of translation, focusing on the specific genre of the graphic novel within the Anglo-Saxon tradition as a valuable framework for

anticipating how such a publication might be received by different audiences. The novel explores the transnational thanatic ethics underlying the migration trajectories of Senegalese and Cameroonian individuals to Europe. The project emerges from a collaboration between ethnography, musicology, comics, and the humanities. In the panel, the collaborators collectively reflect on the interpretive challenges posed by interdisciplinary and creative work, and on its reception across diverse cultural and linguistic contexts.

Félicien de Heusch is a Postdoctoral Research Fellow within the ERC-funded project "*The Social Life of Dead Bodies: A new ethnographic approach to migrant deaths in and around the Mediterranean Sea (SOLID)*", at the Department of Anthropology, at the University of Copenhagen. His PhD thesis "Mobilizing *for* and *through* the Dead: An Ethnography of Senegalese Migrants' Transnational Death Management in Europe" was conducted within the ERC-funded project "*Migration, Transnationalism and Social Protection in (post-) crisis Europe (MiTSOPro)*" at the Centre for Ethnic and Migration Studies, University of Liège. In 2023, he was awarded a Fulbright Postdoctoral Fellowship at the Latin American Institute, UCLA. In 2024, he published at Sofia Comics the graphic novel *Au-delà l'exil* with Gaspard Njock.

Gaspard Njock is a multidisciplinary artist, editor at Sofia Comics and PhD candidate in Musicology at *La Sorbonne* University. His thesis focuses on the relationship between image and sound in the scenography of Richard Wagner's operas. Among his artistic works, he published in 2024 the graphic novel *Au-delà l'exil* with Félicien de Heusch, in 2021 the comics documentary "*Mauvaises Aires*"; in 2018 "*Un voyage sans retour*", a watercolor docu-fiction, around the drama of migration, and in 2015 with Andrea Aprile "*Aldo Manuzio*", a graphic novel around the origin of printing. For more information URL: <https://www.gaspardnjock.com/>

Sophie-Beatrice Nyiri is a visiting lecturer for the Department of Anglophone Studies and a Master's degree recipient in French and Comparative Literature from the Department of Literature, Arts, Philosophy and Psychoanalysis at Université de Montpellier Paul-Valéry. As a young researcher, her master's dissertation focused on the short story form by the American writer, Edgar Allan Poe. Equally, on his respective influence in nineteenth century France and the arrival of the narrative form of the *nouvelle*. Through a study of translation as a mode of reading and as a medium, she wrote on two works in prose by the acclaimed French poets and translators of Poe's work, Charles Baudelaire and Stéphane Mallarmé. She previously received her undergraduate degree in a liberal arts model of education from Sarah Lawrence College in New York, where she concentrated in English and French language literatures.

DISCUSSANTS:

Bidisha Banerjee is Associate Professor of English in the Literature and Cultural Studies Department and Associate Director of the International Research Centre for Cultural Studies (IRCCS) at the Education University of Hong Kong. She has published widely on South Asian diasporic literature and film, visual culture and the refugee graphic novel. She leads the international, transdisciplinary project *Thanatic Ethics: The Circulation of Bodies in Migratory Spaces*. She has co-edited special issues of journals like *Interventions: A Journal of Postcolonial Studies*, *Cultural Studies* (forthcoming) and *Journal of Graphic Novel and*

Comics (forthcoming). She recently published her monograph *Traces of the Real: The Absent Presence of Photography in South Asian Literature* (Liverpool University Press, 2025).

Alexandra Délano Alonso is a writer, researcher and professor. Born and raised in Mexico City and living in New York City, she is interested in transnational lives, borders and migration justice; memory and collective mourning; and the intersection of art, poetry, translation and political imagination. Her recent books include the co-edited volumes *New Narratives on the Peopling of America: Immigration, Race and Dispossession* (Johns Hopkins University, 2024); *Las luchas por la memoria contras las violencias en México* (El Colegio de México, 2024) and the poetry collection *towards and away / se acerca, se aleja* (Elefanta Editorial, 2024). She is Professor of Politics and Global Studies at The New School.

Marianne Dugeon is a Lecturer in English Studies at Université de Montpellier Paul-Valéry, France. Her research focuses on politically committed British playwriting from the 19th century to the present. She has published articles and edited and co-authored books on David Edgar, Oscar Wilde, Samuel Beckett and Tom Stoppard. She also edited *Medieval and Early Modern England on the Contemporary Stage* (Cambridge Scholars, 2021) and an issue of the review *Coup de Théâtre* entitled *Seriality, Reboots and Iterability on the Anglophone Contemporary Stage* (2024). As a member of the Maison Antoine Vitez, she has co-translated a dozen plays including Stoppard's *The Hard Problem* (Nouvelles Scènes, PUM, 2017) and *The Invention of Love* (Nouvelles Scènes, PUM, 2022) as well as documentary plays, including Wolé Oguntokun's *The Chibok Girls: Our Story* (Nouvelles Scènes, PUM, 2024). She is now co-director of the English collection of *Nouvelles Scènes*, Presses Universitaires du Midi. She is head of the Master in Translation at her university and organises yearly translation workshops.

Thomas Lacroix is a geographer, CNRS director of research at the Centre for International Research of Sciences Po Paris and a fellow of the Institut Convergence Migrations. Thomas Lacroix works on the social and spatial aspects of transnational migratory worlds and the way they affect states, territories and subjectivities. He has published some fifteen books and special issues of journals, including *The Transnational Society* (Palgrave 2023), *The Transnational State* (Palgrave 2024), with Paolo Boccagni, *Death in Migration: Foregrounding loss, grieving and memory out of place* (Forthcoming, Bristol University Press).

Judith Misrahi-Barak, a former student at the Ecole Normale Supérieure (Fontenay-aux-Roses), is Professor in Postcolonial Studies at the English Department, University Paul Valéry Montpellier 3, France, where she teaches Postcolonial literatures. She is a member of the research centre EMMA, and her prime areas of specialization are Caribbean and Indo- and Sino-Caribbean literatures in English, diaspora and migrant writing, as well as Dalit literatures. She is General Editor of the series *PoCoPages* (Pulm, Montpellier). Her monograph in French entitled *Entre Atlantique et océan Indien: les voix de la Caraïbe Anglophone* was published with Classiques Garnier (2021).

Besides her academic articles published in international journals, she has also co-edited Special Issues on Dalit Literature (*The Journal of Commonwealth Literature*, 2019) and on Thanatic Ethics (*Interventions: International Journal of Postcolonial Studies*, 2023; *Cultural Studies*, forthcoming 2026), as well as co-edited volumes among which the recent *Kala pani Crossings: Revisiting 19th century Migrations from India's Perspective* (Routledge, 2021), *The Routledge Companion to Caste and Cinema in India* (Routledge, 2022) and *Kala pani*

Crossings, Gender and Diaspora: Indian Perspectives (Routledge, 2023).
<https://cv.archives-ouvertes.fr/judith-misrahi-barak>, <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4628-0103>

Poetry and Sound Performance (15:30-16:00)

*We come to fill with green with life
What they have tried to disappear*

- Freya Powell (Parsons, The New School)
- Alexandra Délano Alonso (The New School)

Freya Powell creates ensemble performances, immersive sound installations, and essay videos. Drawing on fields such as forensic anthropology, feminist and affect theory, and literature her projects make connections between the individual and collective, and addresses issues of ambiguous loss and grievability. She creates opportunities for her audience to vicariously witness lesser known political events or ideas such as a mass grave of undocumented migrants or Prevention Through Deterrence, the US border policy. Collaborating with actors and singers, she explores the expressive capacities of the voice. She has performed, screened, and exhibited her work nationally and internationally at institutions including, MoMA PS1, Videotage, Art in General, Queens Museum, Arts Santa Monica, and Socrates Sculpture Park, among others. She has received grants from NYSCA, Queens Council on the Arts, and NYFA. Her work is in the collections of the Los Angeles Contemporary Archive, the Smithsonian Institution Libraries, and the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. Powell holds an MFA in Combined Media from Hunter College and a BA from Bard College. She holds the position of Assistant Professor of Contemporary Art Practice at Parsons, The New School.

Alexandra Délano Alonso is a writer, researcher and professor. Born and raised in Mexico City and living in New York City, she is interested in transnational lives, borders and migration justice; memory and collective mourning; and the intersection of art, poetry, translation and political imagination. Her recent books include the co-edited volumes *New Narratives on the Peopling of America: Immigration, Race and Dispossession* (Johns Hopkins University, 2024); *Las luchas por la memoria contras las violencias en México* (El Colegio de México, 2024) and the poetry collection *towards and away / se acerca, se aleja* (Elefanta Editorial, 2024). She is Professor of Politics and Global Studies at The New School.

ROUNDTABLE 2 (16:00-17:30)

The Journey Never Ends: Civil Society Accompanying Migrants and Refugees in Marseille

Chair: Dr Francesco Colin (American College of the Mediterranean)

This roundtable discusses the way in which civil society actors in Marseille use art as a lens to create, document, share, and defy narratives related to migration and exile. It will explore the challenges and opportunities of working in a city that places migration and exile at the core of its history, while also fostering a critical discussion about art as a means to produce and disseminate knowledge about migration and exile.

- Aïcha Chikh, independent artist and contributor to *Uncivilised Collective*
- Judith Depaule, director of *Atelier des Artistes en Exile*
- Mathias Ben Achour, creator of *Visite Massalia*
- Kmar Douagi, co-founder of *Uncivilised Collective*
- Andreiy Dovhopol, artist at , *Atelier des Artistes en Exile*

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