



Lecture Series in Social Anthropology

Spring
Semester
2024

Tuesday 7 May 2024 | 4.15 p.m. | Room AND 4.06

Wound Images: Photography, Life Death, and State Violence in France and Algeria

Dr. Robert Desjarlais (Sarah Lawrence College)

With this lecture, I reflect on a series of photographic images encountered during the course of research into histories of violence involved in French colonialism in North Africa. These are photographs, taken by Jewish-French photographer Élie Kagan in Nanterre on the night of 17 October 1961, of a man who had been beaten and seriously injured, probably by French police forces, in the aftermath of collective demonstrations against French colonial rule by thousands of Algerian peoples in Paris that day. The person shown in the photographs, wounded and bleeding, was later identified to be Abdelkader Bennahar, a man from the Oran region of Algeria (Bennahar died the next night, in obscure circumstances during another demonstration on the outskirts of Paris). Since encountering these photographs, the images have become important interlocutors to me, with a strong affective force to them. I have since become engaged in an intensive research project in an effort to comprehend what has been involved, through time, with the photographs and the state violence they indicate, as well as the life and death of Abdelkader Bennahar. I also consider the ways in which the photographs appear and work in the world as “wound images”: each of the photographs is an image of a wound, and image as wound. With this, I offer several hypotheses on the intricate relation between photography and wounding in the world.

Organization:

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Entrance free of charge.

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