

06.06.

18:15–19:45 Uhr
HS 13
(Forum 7)

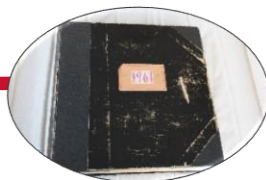
ifeas

Institut für
Ethnologie und
Afrikastudien

2023

Robert Desjarlais

Sarah Lawrence College, New York



Wound images: Photography and Violence in (post)colonial France and Algeria

With this lecture, I reflect on a series of photographic images encountered during the course of anthropological and archival 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 and writing 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 tentative hypotheses on the intricate relation between photography and wounding in the world.

Robert Desjarlais is an anthropologist and writer from Massachusetts, United States, who teaches at Sarah Lawrence College in New York. Robert has conducted ethnographic research in several distinct settings, ranging from the Nepal Himalayas to a homeless shelter in Boston, Massachusetts, to the city of Paris, France. A recent recipient of a Humboldt Research Award from the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation, he is currently a resident of Berlin. He is the author of several books, the most recent titled, *Traces of Violence: Writings on the Disaster in Paris, France*, co-authored by Robert Desjarlais and Khalil Habrih (University of California Press, 2022).

The registry for the Institut Médico-Légal morgue in Paris, for 1961. Archives of the Prefecture of the Paris Police.

Photo: Robert Desjarlais, March 2019.

Weitere Informationen: www.ifeas.uni-mainz.de