

ICGC COLLOQUIUM SERIES



Photo credit: Anna Blom

Uncertain Afterlives: Diasporic families and death during migration journeys

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537 Heller Hall (ICGC)

Live Stream Available @ www.icgc.umn.edu

Migrant deaths at global borders are unlike other deaths. There are interconnected elements of uncertainty that make border deaths specific. This presentation discusses the uncertainties related to the dead body and death rituals, and uncertainties deriving from the context of migration. Bodies often disappear or their burial sites are not known or accessible to relatives, producing a sense of ambiguous loss. Death during a transnational migration journey position the dead and their relatives in complicated situations conditioned by race, ethnicity, and citizenship. Rights of the dead nor the living are equal to the majorities. Furthermore, relatives often feel implicated in the deaths by way of setting an example or having paid the journey, which adds another layer of uncertainty. Focusing on Eritrean refugee diaspora in Europe, I discuss the complex ways in which relatives of those who died at Europe's borders creatively navigate the afterlives of these deaths. Through mourning and memorialization, they cultivate their own survival and the survival of their family and community.

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