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“The reconstruction of various objects in the home that were destroyed in the attack”

The artistic materials of migrant home-making in Sweden

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Panel Body04 *Uncertain belongings: exploring the materiality of home among refugees and migrants*

Title: (max 200 characters)

“The reconstruction of various objects in the home that were destroyed in the attack”: The artistic materials of migrant home-making in Sweden

Short abstract: (max 300 characters)

I present key findings of an interdisciplinary research project about the aesthetics of migrant home-making, focusing first on a series of aesthetic-ethnographic workshops with migrants. I also analyse how the Swedish artists Sirous Namazi and Lap-See Lam explore the materiality of migrant belonging.

Long abstract: (max 250 words)

Making It Home: An Aesthetic Methodological Contribution to the Study of Migrant Home-Making and Politics of Integration (aka MaHoMe) is a NordForsk-funded project involving eight researchers from universities in the UK, Denmark and Sweden. It examines how migrants make and make sense of home amidst the complex and divergent politics of integration in these three so-called “host societies”. My role in the project has included: (1) co-organising and evaluating two “visual ethnography workshops” with migrants in Lund, Sweden, focusing on the objects and images of home, facilitated by the artist Henrik Teleman; (2) participating in and auto-ethnographically reflecting on two “aesthetic workshops” with migrants on Gotland, Sweden, focusing on the food of home, facilitated by the Baltic Art Centre; and (3) analysing how professional artists in Sweden have explored the theme of migrant home-making in Sweden over the last decade. In this presentation, I will briefly discuss all three elements, but I will focus especially on the third. In particular, I will analyse the work of the artists Sirous Namazi (b. 1970, Iran) and Lap-See Lam (b. 1990, Sweden), who have featured in home-themed group exhibitions such as “Unhomed” (Uppsala Konstmuseum, 2020) and “A Home” (Thielska Galleriet, Stockholm, 2022). Both artists have used 3D scanning and printing technology to (imperfectly) recreate the objects of lost homes and their aesthetic explorations of the materiality of home contribute a rich understanding of migrant belonging.