

# Homes Translated

Dispossessions, belongings, and the materiality of lives in asylum reception and exile

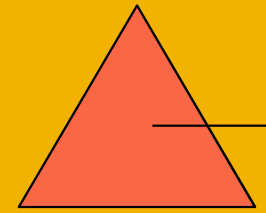
Friedemann Yi-Neumann  
Thesis Defense  
25 January, 2024



# Tableware Quarrels



Tableware re-staged © Friedemann Yi-Neumann, 2019



Nazik Pourghaz:

institutional

vs.

personal

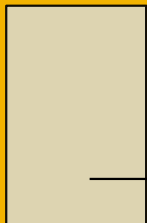
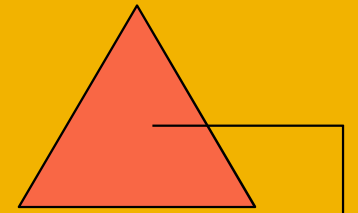
understanding of  
home

(Decentralized container  
shelter, Hanover, May  
2019)



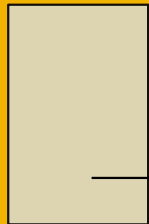
# This Presentation

1. Research Questions & General Approach
2. Contexts & Research
3. Findings
4. Conclusion



# 1. Research Questions & General Approach

- What does it take to make a home?
- How are homes “translated” and (re-)assembled during (forced) migrations and in asylum reception?
- What are the particularities of home cultures and makeshift homes?

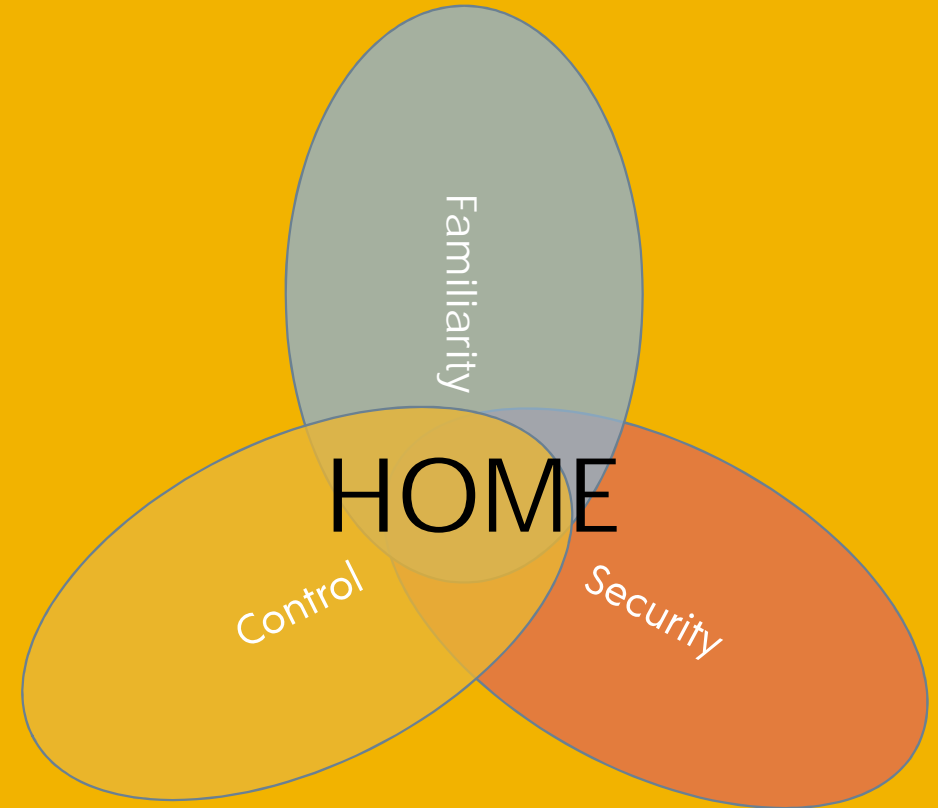


# 1. Research Questions & General Approach



Boccagni (2017) Home:

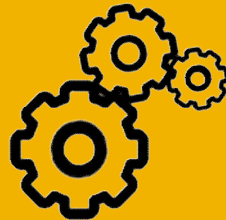
- Security, familiarity, control
- Process & product
- Structures of opportunities
  
- Socioculturally specific  
(Hart, 2017; Savaş, 2014)  
→ Home cultures
  
- Institutionally restricted & adjusted  
(Goffman, 1961; also Scott-Smith, 2020)



# 1. Research Questions & General Approach

Ghassan Hage (2013) “political economies of being”

- Modes & practices of life maintenance
- Having (*hexis*) & being (*habitus*) become indistinguishable
- Process of creating homes as accumulation of being

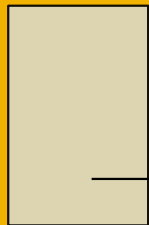
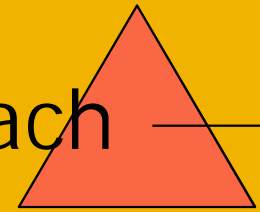


© Elza Czarnowski, 2022

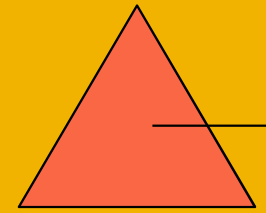
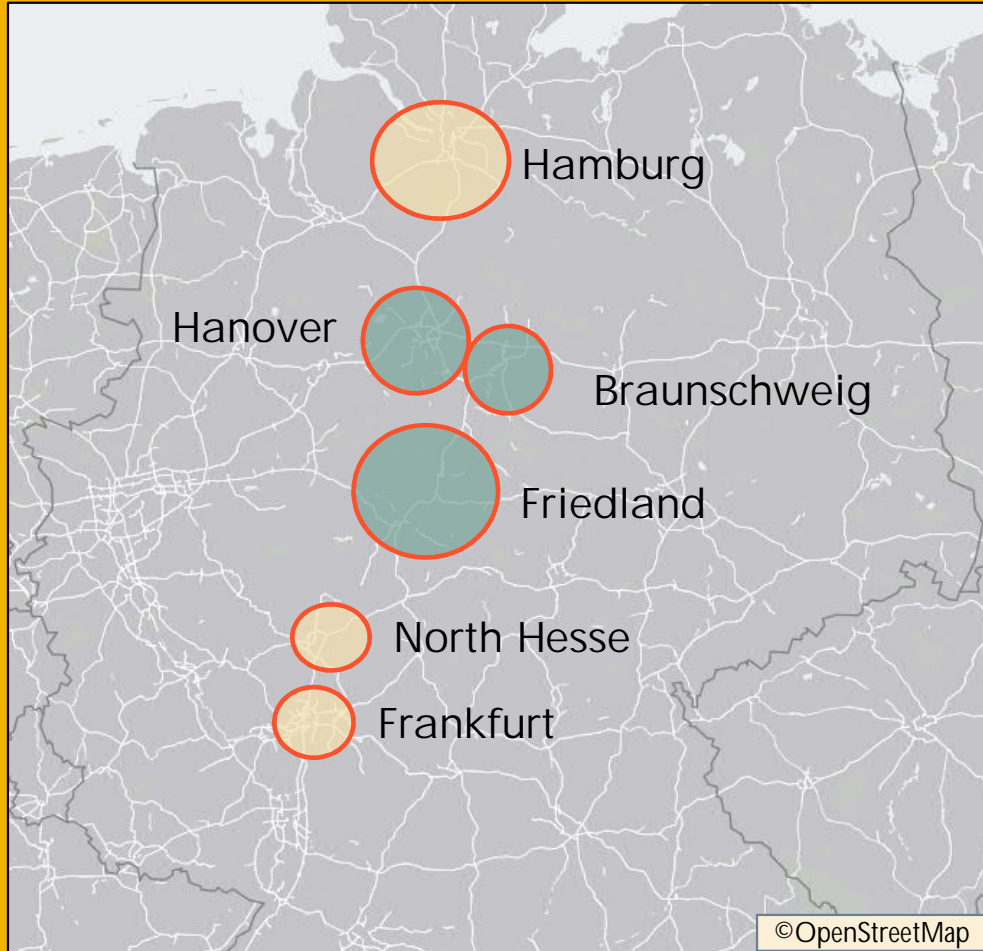
# 1. Research Questions & General Approach

## Translations

- Lat. *trans* 'across' and *latio* 'carrying'
- Attempt of consistency through transformation to settle on same meaning (Latour 1999, p. 58)
  - Mobilizing means of home (across borders)
- Affective, dynamic, multi-directed, conditioned
- Thing (co-)create social positions (Auslander 2005, p. 1018)



# 2. Contexts and Research



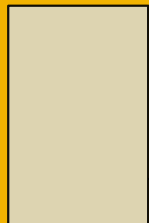
Field research periods



2016-2017  
(Frankfurt Main Goethe University)



2018-2020  
(University of Göttingen)

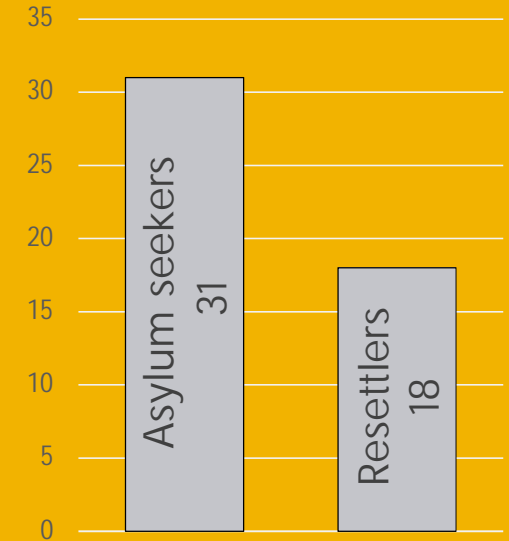




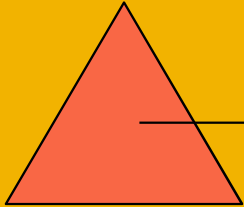
## 2. Contexts and Research



49 Case Studies  
(Individuals & Groups)



# 2. Contexts and Research (Types of) Reception Facilities



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improvised emergency shelters (first research period)



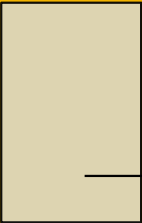
1 Friedland transit camp. © Maliheh Bayat Tork, 2021

Friedland transit camp  
(Lower Saxony, second research period)



© Friedemann Yi-Neumann, 2019

Decentralized accommodations (both periods)



# 3. Findings

## a) Dispossession

Dispossession: destructions or negations of means of social reproduction

- “dismaterial” phenomenon
- various direct & indirect forms  
(warzones, displacement & asylum reception)
- accumulation
  - chronic predicaments
  - “all-taking”



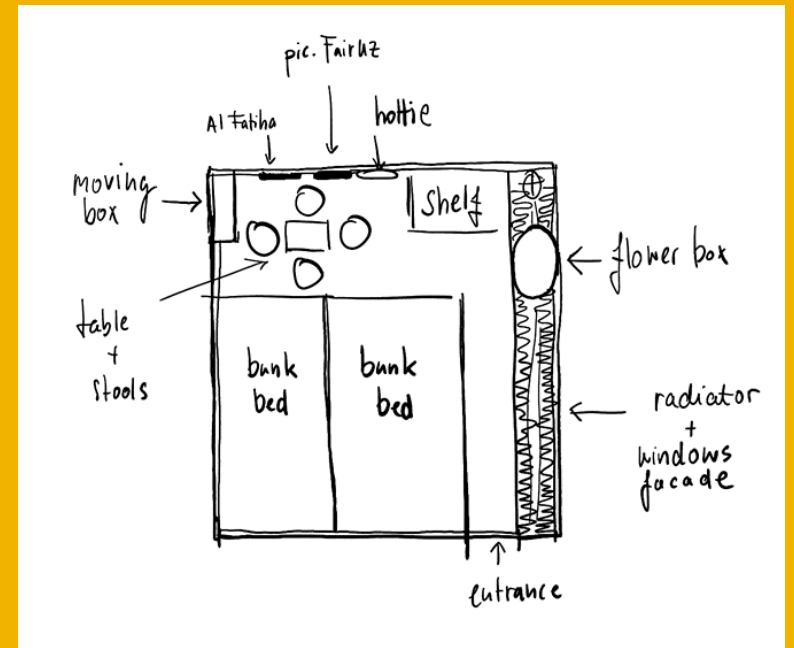
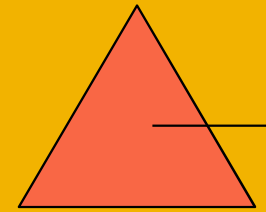
Destroyed house of the Jasser Family in Aleppo city center, 2012, © Adasa Halab News

# 3. Findings

## b) Translative Homing

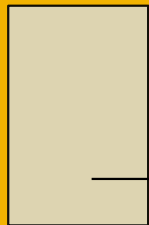
### I. Translating home arrangements

- enclosure/ minimal privacy, normalcy & comfort
- reassembling fragments of homes (Conlon, 2011)
- means of coping (social isolation) & connecting
- material & spatial reception limitations
- material array important in itself



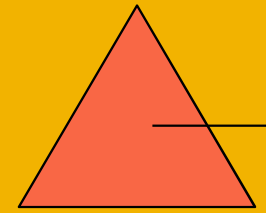
Laila and Omar Al-Daraji's *sālūn*

Sketch © Friedemann Yi-Neumann, 2016



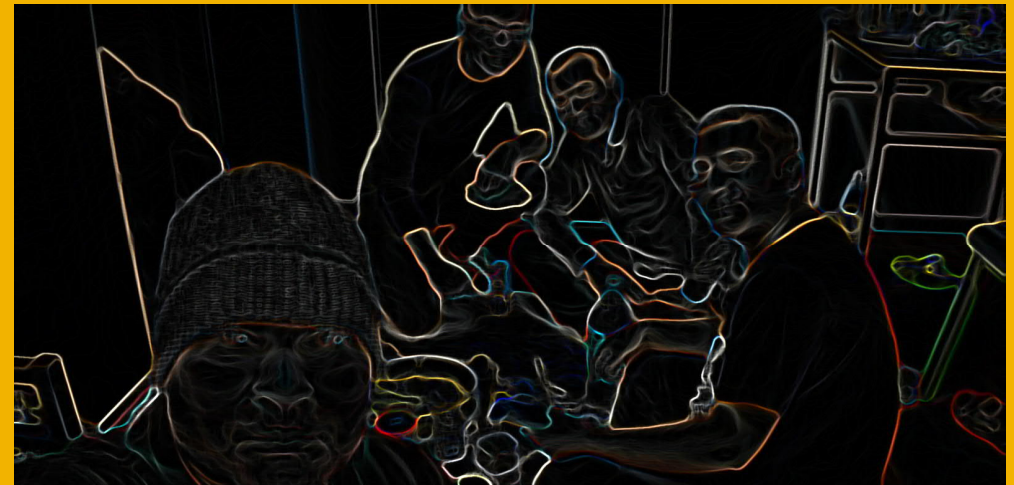
# 3. Findings

## b) Translative Homing



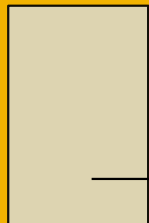
### II. Communal homing

- sense of home by 'dense moments' (Abels, 2019)
- material culture secondary
- social interaction, binding & outreaching  
(Vandevoordt, 2017)
- conflicts with site regimes likely



Dinner at Friedland transit camp

© Friedemann Yi-Neumann, 2019



# 3. Findings

## b) Translative Homing

Case study tableware quarrels:

- quarrel over essentials of a minimal home considered undignifying
- site-regime controls constrain visits
- material home efforts stalled
- family relies reluctantly on tableware of neighbor

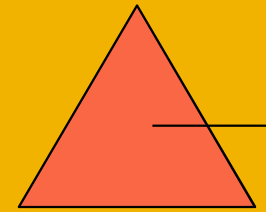


Nazik Pourghaz's Tableware

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# 3. Findings

## b) Translative Homing



III: Translations of individual and profession-oriented practices

- adapting self to “successful” arrival, above all education (Lems, 2019)

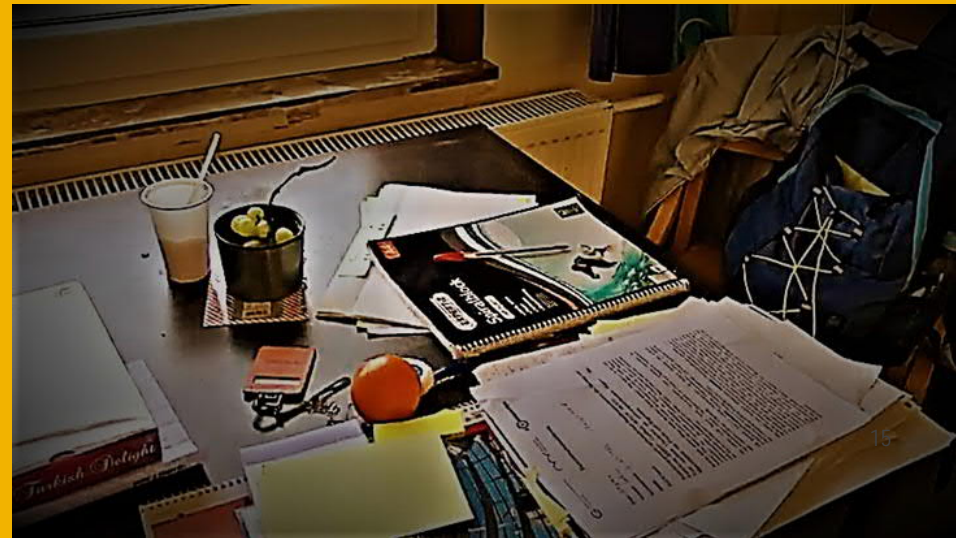
→ self as subject & object

- calm & focus required

- material social aspects of home postponed

- disturbance in centers

→ use of public spaces



Writing desk of a learner in Friedland

© Samah Al Jundi-Pfaff, 2019

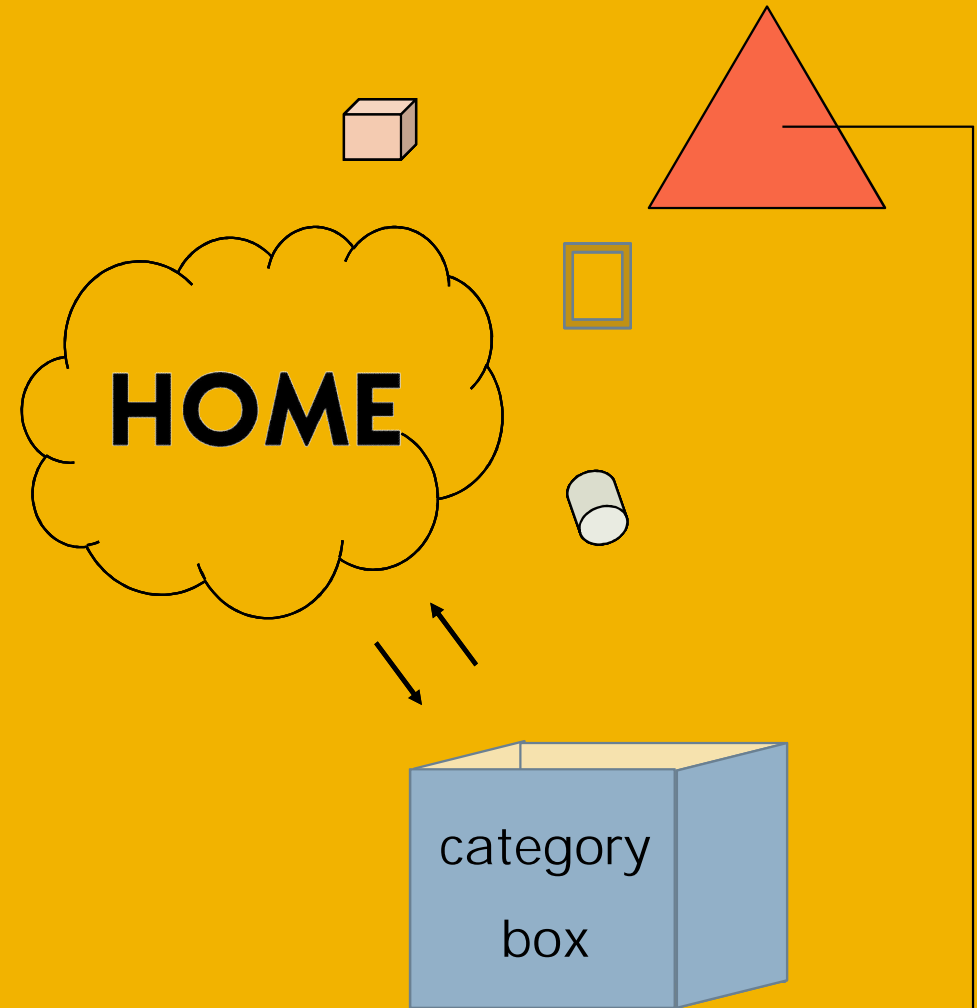
# 4. Findings

## b) Translative Homing

- no ideal-typical way
- conditioned, complex & dynamic
- intersections matter

However,

- gender?!
- class?!
- reception infrastructure +/-?





# 4. Conclusion

Query: "What does it take to make a home?"

Fieldwork:

- 2016-2017 & 2018-2020

Reception facilities

- improvise emergency shelters
- Friedland transit camp
- decentralized accommodations



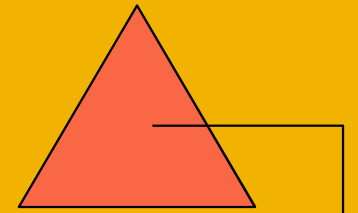
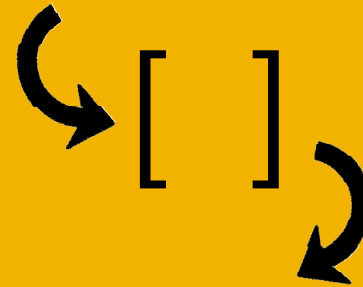
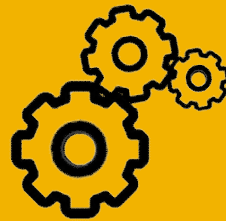
Shared kitchen Friedland transit camp

© Maliheh Bayat Tork, 2021

# 4. Conclusion

Homes in (forced) migration & asylum reception:

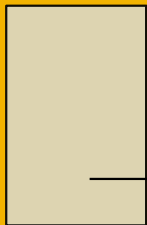
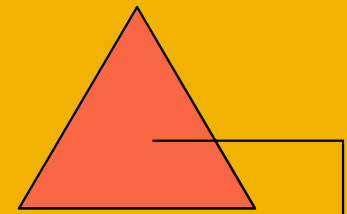
- security, familiarity & control  
(socioculturally specific, institutionally constrained)
- political economies of being
- material translations



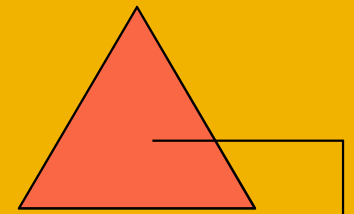
# 4. Conclusion

Thesis results:

- dispossession  
“dismaterial”, multiple & accumulative
  
- three forms of translative homing in asylum reception
  - I. arrangement-based
  - II. communality-based
  - III. individually-focused

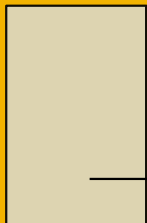


# 4. Conclusion

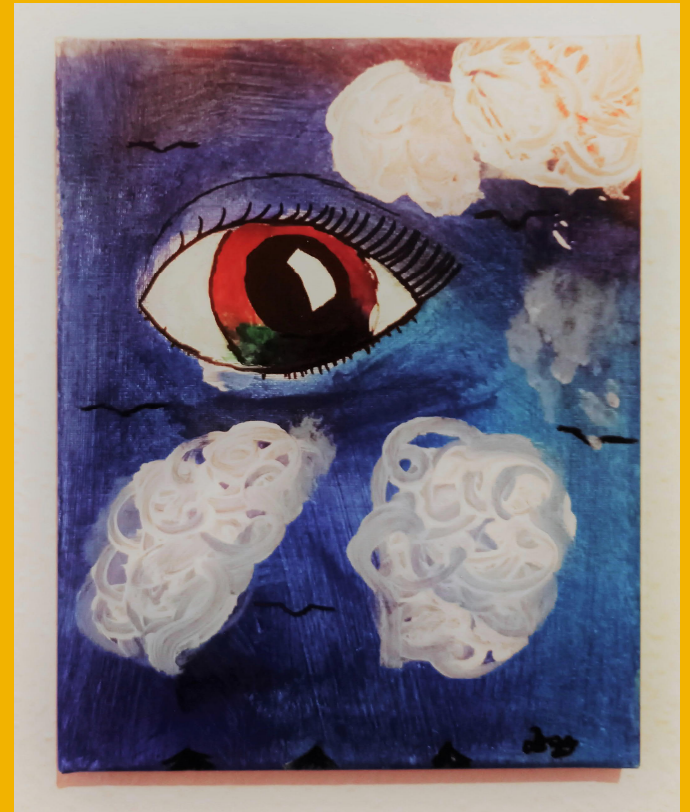


This thesis offers:

- 'translation': original approach to (forced) migrations tangible, sophisticated & systematic insights into home & asylum reception crossing categories
- novel, material understanding of dispossessions & their accumulations beyond 'displacement'



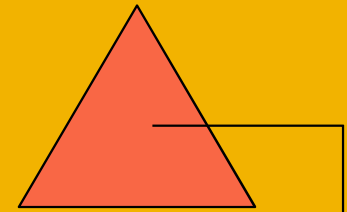
Thank you  
for your  
attention!



Canvas painted in Friedland

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