

## "GIVING UP THE IDEA OF HOME": AMBIVALENT GEOGRAPHIES, GEOPOETICS AND RESISTING CAPTURE IN THE CITIES OF THE MIDDLE EAST

Looking towards the Egyptian poet Iman Mersal, I grapple with affective ambivalence towards common objects of desire, such as an anchorage of one's place in the world, an idea of home. What does it mean to 'train' ourselves into the idea that we are never really at home? In what forms might these trainings to come to terms with our precarious relation to the world manifest? By way of an answer, I suggest supplementing the urban geopolitics of home, one that is beholden to the event of violence, with an urban geopoetics of home, one that might be more open to affectual ambivalence. An urban geopoetics of home opens up towards modes of knowing, feeling and storytelling home, and city otherwise; one that critically witnesses their material precarity without being beholden to the event of violence inflicted on it.



ARTWORK: AZZA EZZAT, OBJECTS FROM HOME, DETAIL, 2023

Aya Nassar is a British Academy post-doctoral fellow in the University of Warwick where she conducts the research project "When the city stands still: Curfews and Urban Life in the Middle East". Aya is an interdisciplinary scholar in between politics and IR, Urban and Political Geography and Middle East studies: interested in questions of memory, archiving, poetics of space, infrastructure and affective and material aspects of cities, mostly in Cairo, Egypt. She is currently one of the editorial team of Arab Urbanism, a bi-lingual open access platform that publishes on urban questions in the Arab World. Her recent publications look at thinking about cities during curfews (EPD), experimenting with narrating homes through objects (City: Scenes Sounds and Action), and thinking about space and memory in Egypt (Égypte/Monde Arabe).

# 28 / 03

2 0 2 4

## 5 PM (CET)

### Aya Nassar

The seminar will be online,  
[register at:](#)

[https://polito-it.zoom.us/join/register/tZMt\\_fiorT4tGNz\\_MyXlZpi9Kh8EqP041Ud](https://polito-it.zoom.us/join/register/tZMt_fiorT4tGNz_MyXlZpi9Kh8EqP041Ud)

For info about our other events:  
<https://beyondinhabitation.org/events/>



Politecnico  
di Torino



UNIVERSITÀ  
DI TORINO



Interuniversity Department of Regional and Urban Studies and Planning

