

SINK WITHOUT TRACE

EXHIBITION ON MIGRANT DEATHS AT SEA



Curated by Federica Mazzara and Maya Ramsay

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Introduction

Federica Mazzara and Maya Ramsay

The concept for the *Sink Without Trace* exhibition began in 2014, borne out of both curators long standing research into the subject of art and migrant deaths at sea. Migrant deaths at sea are not a new phenomenon, as the media and governments might have us believe. They did not begin in 2015 with the death of Alan Kurdi or the so-called 'migration crisis'. Evidence of migration to Europe by sea throughout history, with inevitable consequences. In post-Schengen times, the first migrant deaths recorded in European waters occurred in 1988 and there have been an unknown number of deaths in the three decades since then, estimated by the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) to be in the hundreds of thousands.

Migration has become a highly popularised subject in the arts in recent years but there has been a lack of engagement with the subject of migrant deaths at sea. Galleries and museums have largely focussed on other, less harrowing, aspects of migration.

There have been just two exhibitions in the UK that have substantially involved the subject of migrant deaths at sea; *Disappearance at Sea - Mare Nostrum* (BALTIC, 27 January – 14 May 2017) and *The Sea is the Limit* (York Art Gallery, 4 May – 5 September 2018).

Sink Without Trace will be the most comprehensive exhibition on the subject to date, providing an overview of art being made on the subject by eighteen artists from ten countries - including Denmark, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Israel, Iraqi Kurdistan, Italy, Slovakia, South Africa, South Sudan and the UK. The artists are currently residing in France, Germany, Italy and the UK.

Sink Without Trace also includes found objects from shipwrecked migrant boats, as well as images of anonymous drawings made on migrant boats and works made by unaccompanied minors in transit camps in Calais.

In addition, the exhibition presents the documentation of the forensics project carried out on the victims of the shipwrecked migrant boat that has been controversially displayed as 'Barca Nostra' at the 58th Venice Biennale in 2019.

Artists have been making works on the subject of migrant deaths at sea a lot longer than the media and politicians have been talking about the subject, starting with the British-Caribbean artist Isaac Julien's seminal film *Western Union: Small Boats* in 2007. *Sink Without Trace* provides an overview of work being made from 2011 to the present day, through a diverse variety of media, by artists from a wide variety of backgrounds. Space and funding limitations meant that we were not able to include Isaac Julien's work

or the important works *Horizon* (2016), a video installation by Syrian artist Hrair Sarkissian, and the boat sculptures of Greek artist Kalliopi Lemos such as *Pledges for Safe Passage* (2009).

The aim was to present the exhibition in a public gallery where visitors would happen upon the subject unexpectedly but after years of discussions with public galleries, who agreed on the urgency and importance of the exhibition, but were unable to give it space, a private gallery was the only option. To try to counteract the lack of public visibility, *T06411* a North African migrant boat will be moored in the public sphere, close to the gallery on Regent's canal for the duration of Refugee Week (17- 23 June). *T06411* is a rescued North African migrant boat that artist Lucy Wood sailed single-handedly from Lampedusa to London in 2013 and contains the objects that were found on the boat as well as video works made by the artist.

A series of public events taking place in the gallery during the exhibition include artists talks, book launches, a workshop and a symposium on the subject. The events will raise such questions as what it means to make aesthetic works about migrant deaths at sea and who has the right to make these works and tell these stories.

It is hoped that this will not be the last incarnation of *Sink Without Trace*, that the exhibition will travel, expand and inspire more curators, galleries, museums, artists and audiences to engage with the subject. It is hoped that more people will be inspired to request that governmental migration and asylum policies be changed and that safe migratory routes be implemented.

The title *Sink Without Trace* reflects the fact that many of the bodies of migrants who have died at sea are never recovered and that forensic investigations are very rarely carried out on the bodies of those that are found, making them impossible for families to trace or to grieve properly.

The *Sink Without Trace* exhibition and catalogue will raise funds towards the charity AlarmPhone, a hotline for migrants in distress at sea which supports rescue operations by ensuring that distress calls are acted upon promptly and fully (www.alarmphone.org/en/about).

We would like to extend our sincere thanks to all of the artists, to Arts Council England for funding the exhibition, Westminster University for funding the Symposium, and Counterpoints Arts for all their support.

The exhibition is dedicated to all those who have perished whilst trying to reach Europe by sea, to all those who will perish in the future and to all those who have successfully made the journey.

Federica Mazzara is an academic who has recently published *Reframing Migration: Lampedusa, Border Spectacle and Aesthetics of Subversion* (Peter Lang, 2019), exploring how art forms have become a platform for subverting the dominant narratives that surround migration and generating a vital form of political dissent.

Maya Ramsay is an artist whose *Countless* project (2016- 2018) involved working with the unidentified graves of migrants who died at sea and shipwrecked migrant boats, and has published *Reframing the Debate: The Art of Lampedusa* (Crossings: Journal of Culture & Migration, 2016), an article on art and migrant deaths at sea.

Behjat Omer Abdulla

From a Distance (2016) are a series of graphite drawings based on the following story: 'Under the fear of war, as thousands of families fled their homelands, a mother of twin infants started her journey to seek a safer place. During the journey, a tragedy occurred. Due to the geographical location, the mother was most likely coming from the Middle East or Asia, crossing the deadliest route to Europe over the Mediterranean Sea by boat. During the harsh physical struggle of the journey, the mother lost one of her twin infants. Despite the loss, she kept the dead child with her for days on the boat. As tensions rose, the smugglers tried to force the mother to throw the body of her child into the sea. She refused and kept the body with her. One night while the mother was sleeping the smugglers took action. The mother woke to realise that her living child was missing and that she had been left with the dead child. The smugglers had mistakenly thrown the sleeping twin into the sea'.

'I heard this account while it was being retold around Swedish refugee camps, and I began to see it as a kind of myth. I have explored this story through making a series of drawings in order to cope, understand, expose and transmit the potential of this story to further audiences. What happened on the boat that night is one string in a collection of narratives, which also encapsulate what I myself experienced as a refugee fifteen years ago.'

Behjat Omer Abdulla is a mixed-media Kurdish artist, working mainly with drawing, photography and video installation. Through his projects, Abdulla creates reflections and debate on war and the experiences of refugees. His works often focus on individual stories which are difficult to explain and share. Abdulla studied at Staffordshire University, UK and Valand Academy, Gothenburg University, Sweden. He has participated in a number of international exhibitions, including Tate Exchange at Tate Modern, The Southbank Centre in London, and Drone Vision at the Hasselblad Center, Gothenburg. Abdulla works at Gothenburg University and is a founder and Artistic Director of the annual River of Light project: a lantern procession focussing on children's rights, held annually in the city of Gothenburg on February 20th, United Nations World Day of Justice.

www.behjatomer.com



Head of Child I (From a Distance), 2016. Graphite powder and pencil on paper, 150 x150cm



Head of Child II (From a Distance), 2016. Graphite powder and pencil on paper, 150 x150cm

Broomberg & Chanarin

The Bureaucracy of Angels (2017) is a 12 minute film recording the demolition of 100 migrant boats in Sicily in the winter of 2016. The boats arrived laden with migrants from North Africa and while their human cargo were either sent home or absorbed into the asylum system, the boats themselves were never returned to their owners, laying beached on the concrete forecourt of a vast 'boat graveyard' in Porto Pozzallo, Sicily. Broomberg & Chanarin filmed the destruction of the boats and also rescue missions made by the Migrant Offshore Aid Station Foundation off the coast of Libya. The film is narrated by the hydraulic jaws of a mechanical digger destroying the boats, tearing them apart into their constituent parts of timber and metal, a process that took forty days to complete. The digger appears in the narrow corridors of the boat yard, on the open sea and in the midst of a rescue operation off the coast of Libya, as a Cantastoria or 'singing storyteller', recounting the Sicilian ballad 'Terra ca nun senti'. The song speaks of the fear and pain associated with migration to and from Sicily, Europe's most Southerly territory, over the last 150 years. The music 'Terra ca nun senti' is by Alberto Piazza and is performed by Rosa Balistreri. *The Bureaucracy of Angels* was commissioned by Transport for London and was presented in 2017 within King's Cross St. Pancras station, close to the Eurostar, a passageway between the UK and Europe.

Adam Broomberg (born 1970, Johannesburg, South Africa) and Oliver Chanarin (born 1971, London, UK) are artists living and working between London and Berlin. They are Professors of Photography at the Hochschule für bildende Künste (HFBK) in Hamburg and teach on the MA Photography & Society programme at The Royal Academy of Art (KABK), The Hague. Together they have had numerous solo exhibitions, most recently at The Centre Georges Pompidou (2018) and the Hasselblad Center (2017). Their participation in international group shows include the Yokohama Triennale (2017), Documenta, Kassel (2017) and The British Art Show 8 (2015- 2017).

Their work is held in major public and private collections including The Pompidou, TATE, MoMA, Yale, Stedelijk and the V&A. Broomberg and Chanarin are the winners of the Arles Photo Text Award 2018 for their paperback edition of 'War Primer 2', published by MACK.

www.broombergchanarin.com



The Bureaucracy of Angels (detail), 2017.HD Film (12 minutes) Image courtesy of Lisson Gallery



The Bureaucracy of Angels (detail), 2017.HD Film (12 minutes) Image courtesy of Lisson Gallery

Victoria Burgher

Surviving (2019) is an installation of hundreds of fragments of a foil survival blanket cast in ceramic and laminated in gold leaf. The use of these materials dignifies and revalorises the symbol of the survival blanket that has become such a media trope for those forced to make hazardous journeys across the seas to escape persecution and poverty. Made from imperishable ceramic, *Surviving* represents the strength and tenacity of these people while recognising their vulnerability and fragility when at the mercy of the sea. Displayed in the form of archaeological shards, the work seeks to highlight how traces of these plastic foil blankets will be found in the sea for generations to come, future reminders of these tragedies.

Plundered (2017) is a still image taken from a three-minute digital video of a gold foil survival blanket that sparkles and glows as it floats on a body of dark water before gradually sinking below the surface and disappearing. The work highlights how the ubiquitous media images of migrants wrapped in shiny shrouds tell only a small part of the story of forced migration, ignoring the horrors of shipwreck and people trafficking, and how these stories soon sink from public view.

Don't Let Them Drown (2015) is a canvas protest banner juxtaposing a reproduction of the Brookes Middle Passage slave ship woodcut with "They are here because we were there", a rewording of Ambalavaner Sivanandan's celebrated aphorism relating to post-colonial migration. The work aims to contextualise the Mediterranean migrant crisis in terms of Western geopolitics.

Victoria Burgher is a British, multi-disciplinary artist and arts educator with an MA in Art & Politics from Goldsmiths College, University of London. Her politically engaged practice ranges from sculptural installations and site-specific interventions to collaborative public ventures. She is interested in using craft, process and materiality to challenge histories and highlight stories. A sense of place and identity are ingrained in her work, underpinned by thorough contextual research and sensitive responses to spaces, situations, objects and contexts. She exhibits nationally and internationally, including exhibitions at APT Gallery, London; Ovada, Oxford; Wolverhampton Art Gallery; Galerie de Stoker, Amsterdam and Glogauair, Berlin.

www.victoriaburgher.com



Surviving (detail), 2019. Ceramic and gold leaf, 100x120cm



Don't Let Them Drown, 2015. Canvas and paint, 180x60cm

Max Hirzel

Migrant Bodies (Sicily/Senegal, 2015/2017), is a photographic series documenting the management of migrants corpses in Sicily. The idea for the series originated in 2011 when Hirzel met Alpha, a young Cameroonian man in Mali, who told him: 'in the desert I saw a grave, they told me it was of a girl from Douala, and I wondered if her parents knew that their baby was there'.

Hirzel began exploring the cemeteries of Sicily, where many migrants are buried. He wanted to know where and how they are buried and how many of them had been identified.

The *Migrant Bodies* series focuses on one of the very rare forensic cases carried out on corpses from the so-called "boat of innocents" shipwreck of April 18, 2015, which caused between 700 and 1100 deaths. The wreckage of the boat was recovered near the Libyan coast one year after the shipwreck, with 450 bodies found inside. Due to the unprecedented numbers of deaths involved in the shipwreck and the related publicity, the Italian authorities decided to carry out forensics on all of the 450 bodies that were recovered. *Migrant Bodies* goes beyond just documenting the forensics to uncover the stories of some of those involved. Including Mohamed Matok, a Syrian lawyer who travelled from Damascus to collect the belongings of his brother and to visit his grave once the body had been identified; the young autopsy technicians of Palermo who were faced with the task of carrying out the forensics and the family of Mamadou in South Senegal, an alleged victim of the 2015 shipwreck, whose body has never been recovered.

Hirzel's project shows the many similarities between the reception of migrants arriving on boats and the management of migrant corpses - both being dealt with by codes, lines, numbers, suits and masks. *Migrant Bodies* highlights the anomaly of migrant deaths at sea, a crime that should not be mistaken for an accident.

Max Hirzel is a freelance photojournalist based in Italy. He graduated in photography at the Istituto Europeo di Design, Milan. He has undertaken reportage in various countries in Africa, Middle East, Asia, South America and Europe. His works have been published in various magazines including 6Mois, Polka magazine, Der Spiegel, Al Jazeera, BBC online, Il Venerdì di Repubblica, Internazionale and Sportsweek.

www.maxhirzel.photoshelter.com



Migrant Bodies. The 'boat of innocents' shipwreck of 18th April 2015



Migrant Bodies 18th April 2015. Daniele Daricello, autopsy technician with his tools in the laboratory

Mariwan Jalal

Faces of Sea (2017) are a series of screen prints based on Jalal's personal experience of travelling to the UK by sea. **Messages from the Sea** (2019) are a series of scroll-like ceramic works with burnt edges, reminiscent of the dead sea scrolls but covered in images relating to migrant deaths at sea.

'I was born in an area very far from the sea. I had no relationship with the sea other than having seen it in the movies and in my imagination. Until the day came when I had to travel to the sea and attempt to cross it illegally. The blue of the sea that I had imagined changed to the colour of blood and yellow like my own face. The waves got stronger and more angry.'

Mariwan Jalal is a Kurdish mixed media artist, living in London. He employs a variety of materials and processes including ceramics, printmaking, wallpaper design and painting. Jalal's works take a critical view of social, political and cultural issues and often reference the history of his homeland. Jalal has exhibited in Germany, Iraqi Kurdistan, Japan, Netherlands, Sweden, UK and the USA. Recent exhibitions include *I AM BRITISH PETROLEUM: KING OF EXPLOITATION, KING OF INJUSTICE*, P21 Gallery, London (2019), *dis/placed*, Counterpoints Arts, London (2015), *Future and Conflict of the Middle East*, P21 Gallery, London (2015), and *Conflict and Hope: Art in Troubled Times*, The Ismaili Centre, London (2015). He has a BA in Ceramics (2011) and an MA in Printmaking (2014) from Camberwell College of Art & Design, University of the Arts, London.

www.mariwan.exto.nl



Faces of Sea, 2017. Digital print on canvas and ink, 40.5x50cm

Tamara Kametani

Half a mile from Lampedusa (2017). On October 3rd, 2013 a boat carrying over 500 migrants and refugees from Libya to the Italian island of Lampedusa capsized half a mile from its destination. 368 people died in the tragedy that sparked global outrage and led to the launch of the year-long search and rescue operation Mare Nostrum. In order to retrieve the bodies of those who drowned, the Italian Navy sent divers to assess the scale of the operation who recorded video footage of the scene underwater. The footage showed the sunken boat with corpses scattered around it and was soon circulated via social media and in the news, before being pulled due to moral disapproval. Kametani's cyanotype is a single frame image taken from this footage. The cyanotype printing method does not use a fixer to stabilise the image and prevent it from fading. As a result, Kametani's image will continue to slowly fade during the exhibition, metaphorically highlighting the fact that the memory of the event itself continues to fade, and in the end will disappear from public memory altogether.

Tamara Kametani is a Slovak artist based in London. Kametani's practice is largely informed by local and global current affairs and spans photography, video, and installation. Kametani is particularly interested in the role technology plays in the construction of historical narratives, with the complex relationship between aesthetics and politics being at the core of the enquiry in her practice. Among her works revolving critically around the current phenomenon of migration, *The Sea Stayed Calm for 180 Miles* (2017), *Dublin Regulation* (2017) and *24 Hours at Aegean* (2016). Her latest project *Walls 2.0 - Augmenting border reality* explores issues surrounding borders and forced separation through Augmented Reality participatory group experience. Kametani has an MA in Contemporary Art Practice, Royal College of Art (2017).

www.tamarakametani.com



Half a Mile from Lampedusa, 2016. Cyanotype print on paper, 145x80cm



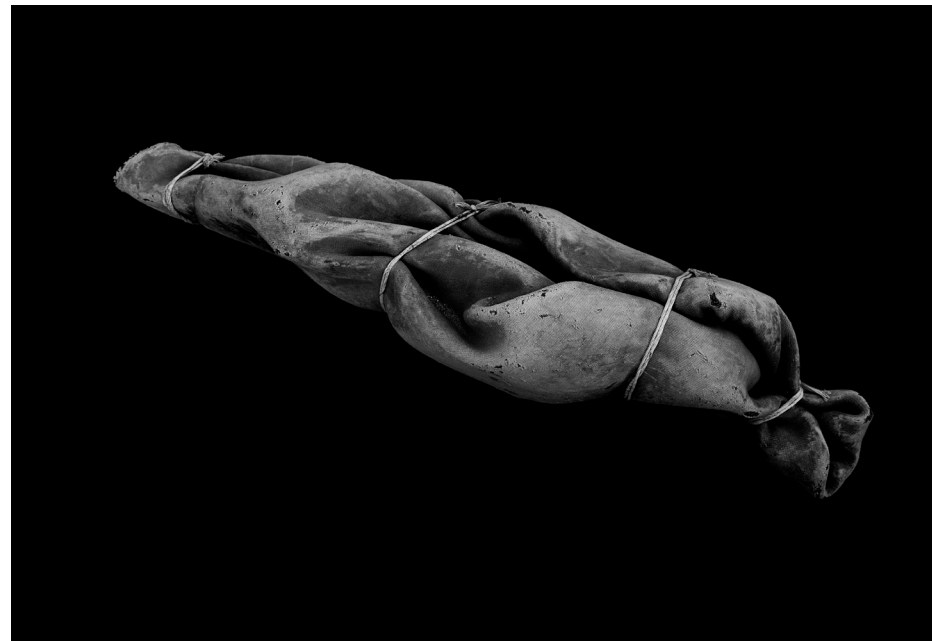
Half a Mile from Lampedusa, 2016. Cyanotype print on paper, 145x80cm

Nikolaj Bendix Skyum Larsen

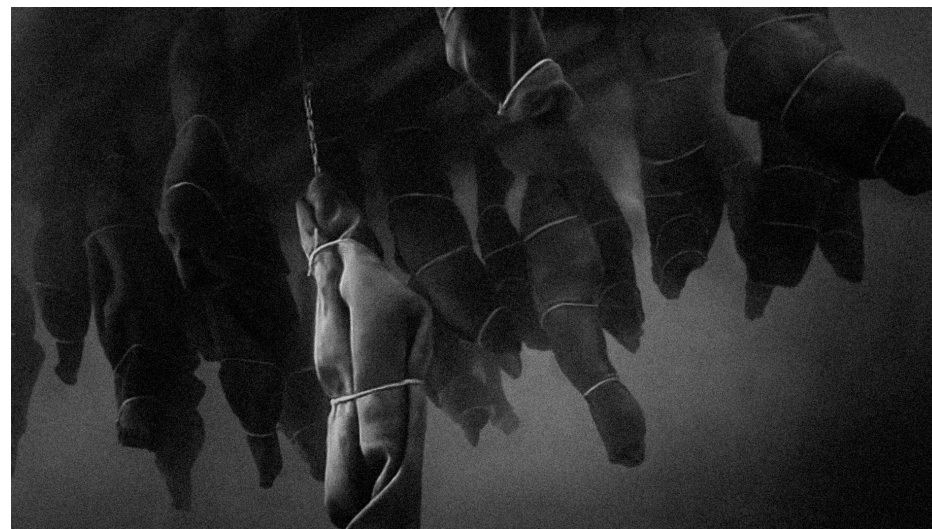
Produced during a residency at the Italian art organisation, qwatz, *End of Dreams* (2014-16) is an ode to the countless lives that have been lost by those attempting to traverse the Mediterranean Sea in order to reach Europe. Initially envisioning *End of Dreams* as a sculptural installation, Larsen began by submerging 48 concrete-canvas sculptures off the coast of Pizzo Calabro in Calabria, Southern Italy. The plan was to allow these sculptures, reminiscent of body bags, to slowly acquire a patina of sea organisms. They were then to be removed from the sea and exhibited as a sculptural constellation. During the making of the work an unanticipated violent storm ravaged the raft that was holding the structures in place and their remnants were scattered across the seabed and onto nearby beaches. Many disappeared altogether. Larsen felt that the intervention of nature brought the work even closer to the feelings of trauma and peril he wanted to express. Following the storm he worked closely with an assistant who filmed the search for the lost sculptures. After several dives over 6 months they managed to locate 14 of the 48 sculptures. With the video footage of the search for sculptures Larsen created an immersive video work that exists both as a single screen film and a multimedia installation, consisting of a multi-channel HD video, surround sound, and the sculptures that were salvaged by the team of divers. The *Sink Without Trace* exhibition features the *End of Dreams* single screen film and two photographic portraits of the *End of Dreams* sculptures.

Nikolaj Bendix Skyum Larsen is a Danish artist based in France. He has an MA in Fine Art & Media from the Slade School of Art, London. Larsen works in a variety of media and materials to create visual responses to challenges within society. Migration and disempowerment are some of his main areas of research. Solo exhibitions include 'In Limbo', Galeria Presença, Porto, Portugal (2018); 'End of Dreams', Fotografisk Center, Copenhagen, Denmark (2016); 'End of Dreams', SALT Galata, Istanbul, Turkey; 'Promised Land', Dilston Grove, London. Group exhibitions include: 'Believe', MOCA - Museum of Contemporary Art, Toronto, Canada (2018); 'Disappearance at Sea - Mare Nostrum', BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art, Gateshead (2017); 'Word. Sound. Power.', Tate Modern, London (2012); 'Folkestone Triennial', Folkestone (2011); 'Sharjah Biennial 9', Sharjah, UAE (2009). In 2016 Larsen was awarded the Inga & Ejvind Kold Christensen's Honorary Award.

www.nbsl.info



End of Dreams Portrait Series No. 5, 2016. Pigment print on Tirage Baryté, 130cmx83cm



End of Dreams, 2016. Still from documentation of 48 sculptures under a raft in the Tyrrhenian Sea (14:14 minutes)

Gil Mualem-Doron

The Eucharist (2016) are a series of five porcelain plates printed with digital collage depicting the themes of the plight of refugees in the Mediterranean and the colonial past of Great Britain. The plates are placed on reclaimed wood found on Dover's coastline and accompanied with a gold plated fish knife and fork.

'Eating sardines and chips on Jaffa's beach when a thought about yesterday's news headline creeps into my mind "880 refugees lost their lives in Mediterranean- 2510 deaths so far this year". And the thought sinks - what did these fish eat before they ended up here on my plate? What am I eating now? And I throw up.'

Gil Mualem-Doron is a socially and politically engaged artist working with photography, installation, performance and digital art. Much of his work is participatory, working with marginalised communities in the UK and abroad. Mualem-Doron is the creator of The New Union Flag, a proposal for replacing the Union Jack (2015- current) that has been supported by the Art Council England. He has exhibited internationally including at Tate Exchange at Tate Modern, People's History Museum, Manchester, Turner Contemporary, Margate, Haifa Museum of Art, Israel, Detroit Centre of Urban Ecology, USA, East66 Centre for Urban Activism, Amsterdam and EME3, Barcelona. He has been commissioned to create installations by public and private bodies such as The Southbank Centre and Ben & Jerry's and has won grants and awards from The Art Council England, the British Council, Henry Ford Foundation and Counterpoints Arts. He has a PhD in Architecture from TU Delft, School of Architecture (2018) and is the founder and creative director of SEAS – Socially Engaged Art Salon www.seasbrighton.com

www.gildoron.co.uk



The Eucharist (detail), 2016. Digital print on ceramic with gold plated knife and fork on driftwood, 70x50x10cm



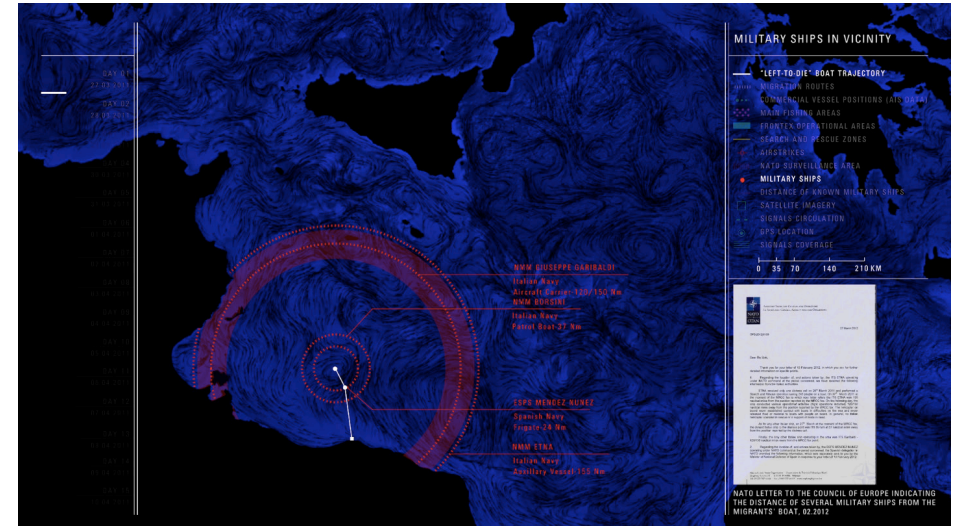
The Eucharist, 2016. Digital print on ceramic with gold plated knife and fork on driftwood, 70x50x10cm

Forensic Oceanography

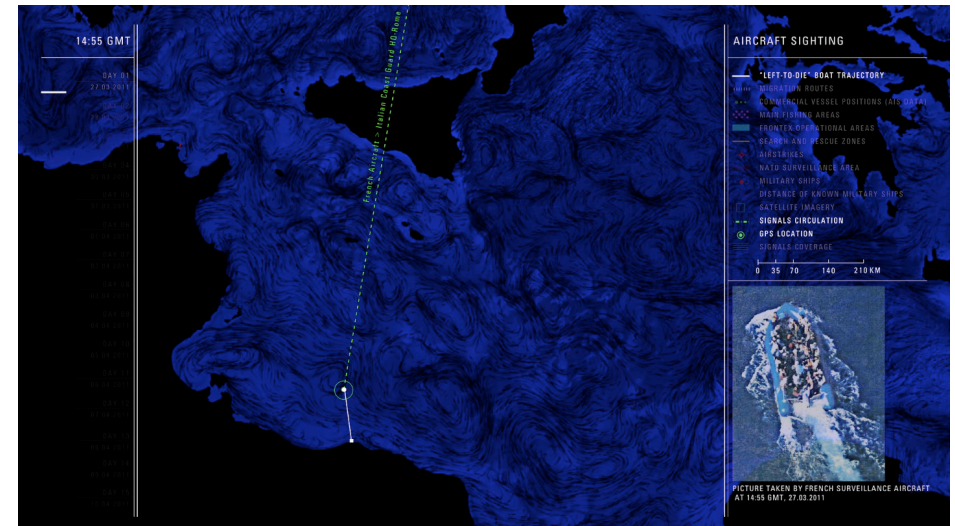
Liquid Traces – The Left-to-die Boat Case (2014, 17 min) is an investigative project carried out by Forensic Oceanography (FO). In March 2011, 72 passengers left the Libyan coast heading in the direction of Italy on board a small rubber boat at the time of NATO's military intervention in Libya. Despite several distress signals relaying their location, as well as repeated interactions with at least one military helicopter and a military ship, they were left to drift for 14 days in one of the most surveilled maritime areas in the world. As a result of the inaction of all state actors involved, only nine of the passengers survived. By combining their testimonies with wind and sea-current data as well as satellite imagery, Forensic Oceanography reconstructed the liquid traces of this event, producing a report that served as the basis of several legal complaints. *Sink Without Trace* features the video reconstruction of this event released by Forensic Oceanography in 2014 as an outcome of the investigation.

Forensic Oceanography (FO) is a project initiated within the Forensic Architecture agency by Charles Heller and Lorenzo Pezzani, in the wake of the Arab uprisings of 2011. It seeks to critically investigate the militarised border regime imposed by European states across the EU's maritime frontier,, analysing the spatial and aesthetic conditions that have caused over 30,000 recorded deaths at the maritime borders of Europe over the last 30 years. Working in collaboration with a wide network of NGOs, scientists, journalists, and activist groups, FO has produced several maps, video animations, human rights reports and websites that attempt to document the violence perpetrated against migrants at sea, often mobilising surveillance means 'against the grain' to contest both the violence of borders and the regime of (in)visibility on which it is founded. FO's work has been used as evidence in courts of law, published across different media and academic outlets, as well as exhibited and screened internationally.

www.forensic-architecture.org/investigation/the-left-to-die-boat



Left-to-Die Boat (detail), 2011. Video, (17:59 minutes)



Left-to-Die Boat (detail), 2011. Video, (17:59 minutes)

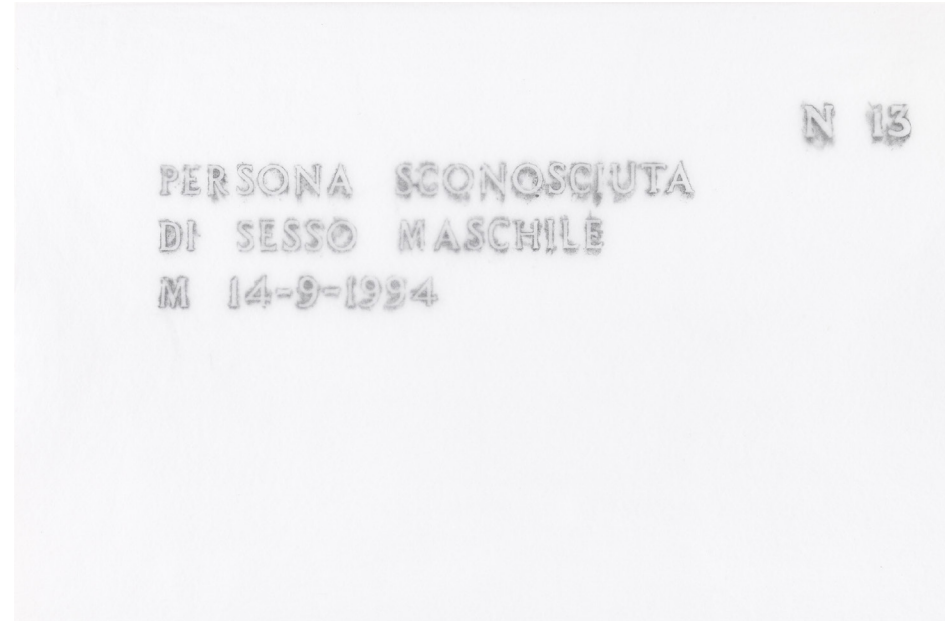
Maya Ramsay

Countless (2016- 2019) includes a series of 30 graphite rubbings from the graves of 30 unidentified migrants who died at sea whilst trying to reach Europe. In 2017 it was 30 years since the first recorded migrant shipwreck occurred in post-Schengen Europe. The grave rubbings were taken from four cemeteries in Sicily. The vast majority of migrant's graves are marked with numbers rather than names as their bodies remain unidentified. *Sink Without Trace* presents five rubbings from unidentified migrant's graves and two rubbings from the graves of migrants who had been identified. Of the approximately 200 migrant's graves seen in the four cemeteries, only five of the bodies had been identified. The project highlights the institutional inadequacies in dealing with migrant deaths at sea, including the lack of identification of bodies and the improper burials which render migrant's bodies impossible to trace, thereby making it impossible for the families of the deceased to properly grieve.

Alongside the nameless grave rubbings Ramsay made a series of rubbings from the names painted on the sides of shipwrecked migrant boats in a 'boat graveyard' in Portopalo, Sicily. The names refer to the owner of the boat or to religious phrases such as 'In God We Trust'. Migrant boats are usually destroyed by the Italian authorities. The *Countless* project also includes found objects from the 'boat graveyard' including objects left on the boats, ashes and nails from burnt migrant boats, anonymous drawings made on the boats and photographic and film footage, including a short film made on one of the boats entitled *Leave or Remain | Taraka aw Baqqa | ترك او البقا*. The *Countless* project was funded by Arts Council England.

Maya Ramsay works with historically and politically important sites, employing a variety of processes to capture visual histories that would otherwise be lost or unseen. Her work has focussed on the subject of conflict for the past ten years and on migrant deaths at sea since 2014. Recent awards include an Arts Council England Award for her *Countless* project (2016- 18) and an Arts Council England Award for curating *Sink Without Trace* (2018- 19). Ramsay was elected as a member of the Royal Society of Sculptors in 2016. She published an article on the subject of art and migrant deaths at sea 'Reframing the Debate: the Art of Lampedusa' in *Crossings: Journal of Migration & Culture* (2016). She won the EMERGENCY Award 2016 and her winning solo show *Countless* was first presented at Aspex Gallery, Portsmouth (2017). In 2014 she won the London Group Solo Show Award and her winning solo show *Wall Talk* was held at the Cello Factory, London (2014). The *Wall Talk* project was shortlisted for the Artraker Award in 2014. Ramsay studied BA Fine Art, Chelsea College of Arts (1998) and MA Fine Art, Central Saint Martins (2008).

www.mayaramsay.co.uk



No.13, Unknown person, male, died 14-9-1994, 2016. Graphite rubbing from unidentified migrant's grave on tissue paper, 42x60cm



Leave or Remain, 2017- 2018. Burnt remains of a shipwrecked migrant boat, 40x128x10cm

Mario Rossi

Mario Rossi's **Annex** series began in 2005, large scale works which draw on 'circulars' published by the International Maritime Organisation entitled '*Unsafe practices associated with the transport of migrants by sea*'. The reports give information relating to- type of boat- name of owner- location of interception- action- outcome- number of people involved- gender and nationality. Each entry relates to an incident and they repeat in a seemingly endless procession. The paintings engage the viewer in a dynamic encounter between distance and proximity, hydrodynamics and the bureaucratic.

Mario Rossi was born in Glasgow in 1958. He studied at the Royal College of Art London, 1979- 81. Rossi was a Fellow in Creative Arts, Trinity College Cambridge, 1987-89, and was awarded the Fulbright Award for Visual Art, New York, in 1994. He is a Senior Lecturer in Fine Art at Central St. Martins, London, and is a regular contributor to the UAL Research Network Paint Club. His work is held in many private and public collections including the Arts Council England, The Gallery of Modern Art Edinburgh, and the Saatchi Gallery, London. Recent shows include *Knock Knock*, Jerwood Gallery and *UnSpooling: Artists and Cinema*, Cornerhouse Manchester. Recent solo shows include at Canal Projects, London, 2016, and '*It's a front*', Solaris, St. Leonards on Sea, 2018.

www.mariorossi.co.uk



Annex: IMO circular #11, 2012. Watercolour on paper mounted on canvas, 250x300cm

Boat name	Date	Time	Position of the incident	Brief description of the incident	Measures taken	Voyage (from date and time of departure to estimated date and time of arrival)	Shipowner (nationality) Master (nationality) and crew (number and nationality)	Migrants (number and nationality of region) (number and mass no. of adults (A) and no. of minors (M)) Other persons on board (number and nationality)	IMO Circ. 10 Annex Page 11
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
40	06/09/2005		17 nm North-East Lampedusa Island, Italy	The migrants were spotted when their engine stopped working	The migrants were transferred to another boat			21 of this figure (2) Librarian (4) Ghanaian (12) Somali (3) Female(s) A M Male(s) A M	Italy
Boat with outboard engine									
41	06/09/2005		16 nm North-East Lampedusa Island, Italy	The migrants were spotted when their engine stopped working	The migrants were transferred to another boat			14 Moroccan (1) Tunisian (10) Egyptian (1) Syrian (1) Algerian (1) Female(s) A M Male(s) A M	Italy
Boat with outboard engine									
42	06/09/2005	38°39' 09N 07°15' 20E	38°39' 09N 07°14' 07' 00E Italian coast of Pozzallo, Italy	The migrants were spotted and intercepted by Coast Guard patrol boats	The vessel was escorted by Coast Guard patrol boats to Pozzallo harbour. The migrants were brought to a refuge gathering area in Pozzallo and were taken care of by immigration authorities			22 Togolese (1) Moroccan (1) Sudanese (1) Female(s) A M Male(s) A M	Italy
Approx. 3 fishing boat with outboard motor									
43	06/09/2005		1.5 nm North Lampedusa Island, Italy	The migrants were spotted	The migrants were transferred to another boat. Their boat was towed and contacted			10 Tunisian (10) Female(s) A M Male(s) A M	Italy
Boat with outboard engine									
44	04/09/2005	39°30' 07N 08°00' 21E	39°30' 07N 08°00' 21E Italian coast of Pozzallo, Italy	The migrants were spotted and intercepted by Coast Guard patrol boats	The vessel was escorted by Coast Guard patrol boats to Pozzallo harbour. The migrants were brought to a refuge gathering area in Pozzallo and were taken care of by immigration authorities			9 Panama (1) Iraq (2) Female(s) A M Male(s) A M	Italy
Approx. 1.5 pleasure craft with outboard motor									

* Unknown, unreported or not applicable

Annex: IMO circular #11 (detail), 2012. Watercolour on paper mounted on canvas, 250x300cm

Shorsh Saleh

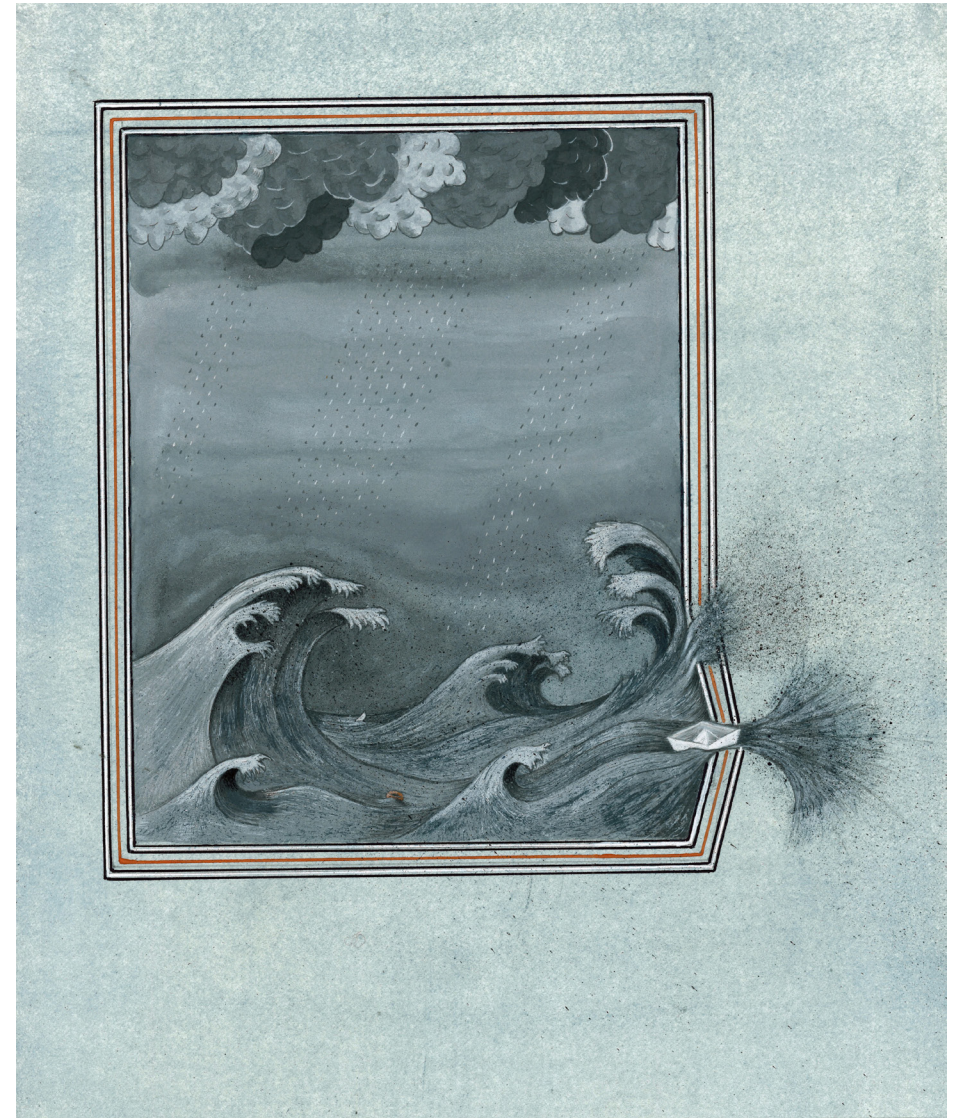
Shorsh Saleh is a Kurdish mixed-media artist. Having travelled to the UK as a refugee 17 years ago, Saleh deals with the subjects of migration, borders and identity through his work, with a particular focus on the Kurdish people, who have been stateless and subject to persecution for the past 100 years.

Saleh's works employ the traditional techniques of miniature painting using handmade natural pigments, dyes and papers, in a contemporary context. As an experienced Persian carpet maker many of his paintings are inspired by the symbolic motifs used in traditional carpets, combined with contemporary imagery. For *Sink Without Trace* Saleh presents **Crossing Border**, **Aftermath**, **Migration** and **Capsize**, a series of miniature paintings on the subject of migrant deaths at sea. Alongside these are **Submerged** and **No Entry**, two large 2D works made using found objects such as rusted nails and a torn sail from a shipwrecked migrant boat and barbed wire.

'As a Kurdish artist who was born and raised in a war zone, my works relate to my experience of leaving my homeland, the two years of travelling across borders illegally, the eight years of waiting for asylum in the UK and the more than one hundred years of persecution of the Kurdish people.'

Born in Kurdistan, Saleh studied MA Traditional Arts at The Prince's School of Traditional Arts, London, where he has been teaching carpet weaving since 2015. He has also been teaching at the Museum of Islamic Art in Doha since 2017. Saleh has exhibited in Germany, Iraqi Kurdistan, Lebanon, UK and the USA. His work was part of the Prince & Patron exhibition at Buckingham Palace, 2018. His solo exhibitions include *Remembering Yazidis*, Faculty of Human Sciences, Iraqi Kurdistan, 2015 and *Always Colour, Always Rain*, Iraqi Kurdistan, 2000. Saleh was Artist in Residence at the Migration Museum, London, April 2019. His works are held in the Royal Collection Trust, the British Museum, the Bagari Foundation and the Islamic Art Museum, Malaysia.

www.shorshsaleh.com



Crossing Border, 2019. Natural pigment on paper, 30cmx40cm

Aida Silverstri

Even This Will Pass (2014) depicts the journeys and experiences of Eritrean migrants to the United Kingdom. Inspired by the story of a childhood friend, Silverstri set out to investigate the stories of those who emigrated from Eritrea, only to learn that there were many who didn't want to share their experiences, for fear of the consequences. The title *Even This Will Pass* echoes a message found on the walls of the Sinai Mountain range, a route through which migrants often travel. The project includes blurred head and shoulder portraits, their faces inscribed with the journey that each sitter took. Alongside the portraits are texts extrapolated from interviews the artist made with the travellers, using a careful strategy of rewriting to hide any identifiable details. The project aims to raise awareness of human trafficking and to bring to light the different experiences and difficulties that the participants in the project faced on an uncertain voyage to exile. Only a few make it to their final destination after months of struggling to cross different countries. Some end up dying in the Sahara Desert or the Mediterranean Sea. Others are detained in refugee camps or prisons and many more end up in the hands of human traffickers where they are abused, tortured or killed unless a ransom is provided.

'Even This Will Pass is dedicated to those who died, suffered or were left behind in their quest for the 'Promised Land' and to those who marked their names and left hopeful messages. Your voices will be heard.'

Aida Silverstri is a UK based artist who creates work concerning the issues of culture, ethnicity, identity, health, politics and the urban landscape. She has a BA in Photography from the University of Westminster, London. Silverstri has experience of coordinating photo-shoots, running workshops and public speaking on these issues. Her works explore new and unique approaches to documentary photography to raise awareness, give voice to the voiceless and to promote acceptance within communities. Silverstri has exhibited in London at Autograph ABP, Mall Gallery, Photographers' Gallery, Roman Road Gallery, Saatchi Gallery, and in France, Greece, Luxembourg, Taiwan and Reunion Island. She was voted one of the British Journal of Photography's two Best of Show Winners at the Free Range exhibition, London in 2013. She was awarded the Festival Audience 2017 Award at Circulation(s) and was shortlisted for the 2017 Arendt, European Month of Photography awards.

www.aidasilvestri.com



Samuel. *Eritrea to London on foot, by car, lorry, boat and train*, 2013. Giclée print on fine art paper and red stitching, 84.5x60cm

SAMUEL

I am accused of misconduct.
I am imprisoned and tortured.
I escape.
I am promised the Promised Land.
But end up in the hands of the wrong people.
I am not an animal. I am not for sale.
I am sold and re-sold... three times.
I am detained and taken to a far land by my new owners.
Here, I am in this desert-like place,
packed like a sardine in a small and steamy room.
My eyes don't want to see but I have to see.
I have to see in order to be ready mentally.
I am waiting... waiting and waiting.
I am dreading my turn; the anticipation is worse than any pain.
When is it going to be my turn?
I am chained, tortured, burned with melted plastic and raped.
I am begging, begging them to stop:
'Stop.'
'Stop.'
'Stop.'
Begging to my family to get me out.
My family is poor now. They wasted their entire life savings...
I am free.

Samuel, 2013. Poem

Art Refuge UK

Sink Without Trace presents clay boats containing figures made by two young men in a refugee day centre run by Secours Catholique in Calais, Mazin Ahmad Mohammad from South Sudan and another anonymous artist from Sudan. The clay pieces were never fired, making them more poignant in their fragility and particular vulnerability if exposed to water. The day centre welcomes all asylum seekers living in the Calais area, offering emergency support, advice and activities.

The exhibition also includes images of ***Crossing the Mediterranean*** (2017), a plasticine representation of the boat that he travelled in from Libya to Italy, made by Natnael Getachewu, an unaccompanied young person from Eritrea, in association with Art Refuge UK in Calais.

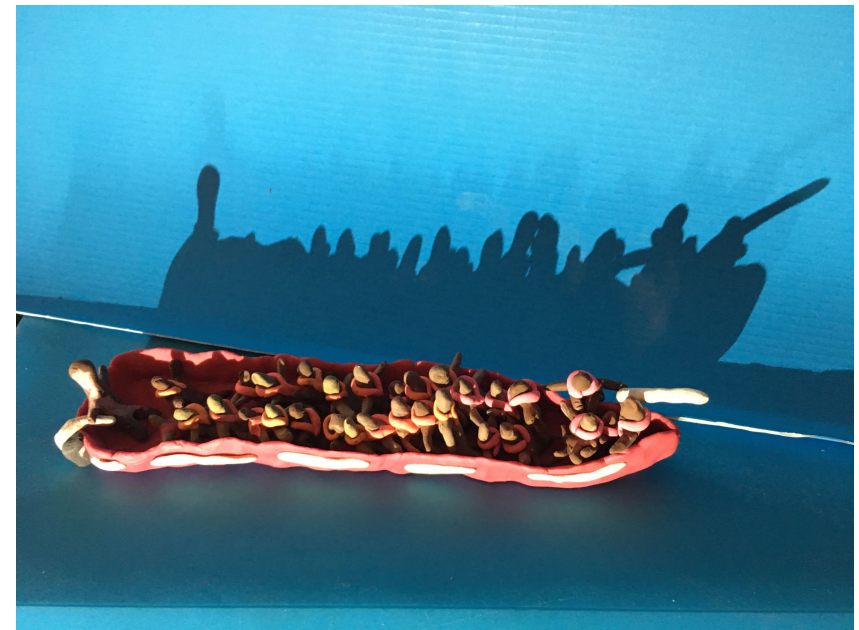
Established as a charity in 2006, Art Refuge UK offers specialist art and art therapy spaces to people who have been displaced due to war, persecution and poverty, both whilst in transit and once they have reached their hoped for destination. Always working in close partnership with local and international government and non-governmental organisations, their work largely takes place through groups and currently operates in London, Bristol and on the France-UK border at Calais. The charity's core ethos is based upon a participatory and collaborative practice informed by decades of individual and collective experience and skills in the visual arts, art therapy, mental health, trauma work and psychosocial approaches. They have a specialist and committed team of freelance HCPC registered art therapists, visual artists and humanitarian workers who are experts in the field of art and art therapy with people seeking refuge as a result of war, persecution and poverty.

The team has been working in Calais since 2015 and have been working with migrants living in transit on the France-UK border who face ongoing exposure to hostility and homelessness. They offer art therapy, crisis intervention and arts-based psychosocial support in various locations alongside Médecins du Monde, Secours Catholique and the other organisations working on the ground in northern France, with a particular focus on unaccompanied young people.

www.artrefugeuk.org/calais



Untitled, 2016. Unfired clay, variable dimensions



Crossing the Mediterranean, 2017. Plasticine, 5x25 x5cm

Nathaniel White

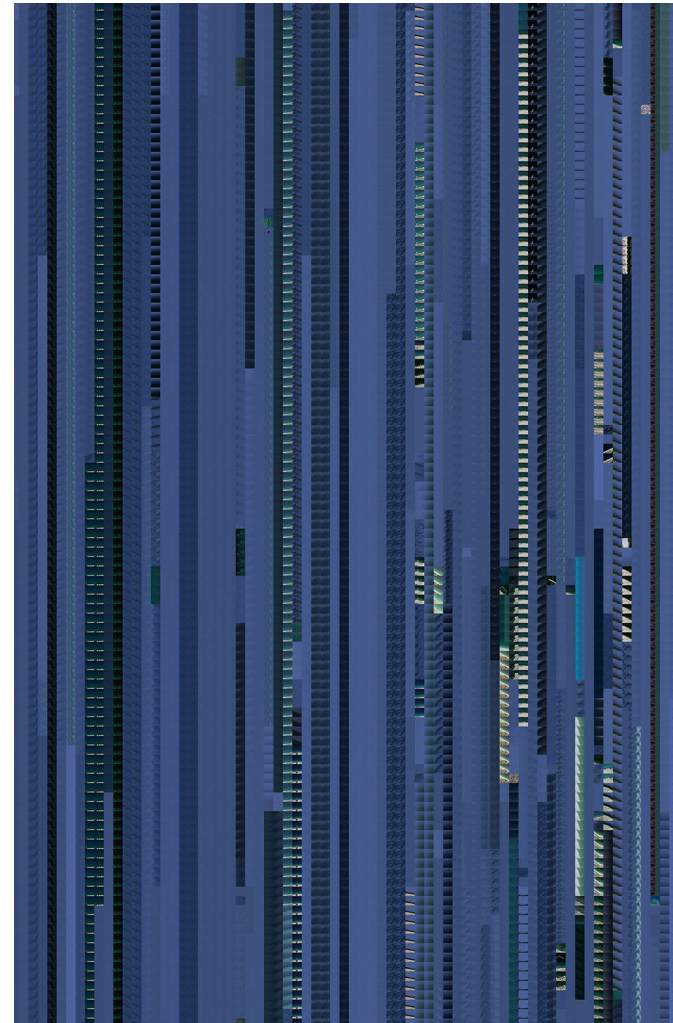
Routes (2018) is a photographic installation that makes visual the scale of the tragedy of migrant deaths in the Mediterranean; often something only communicated through statistics. *Routes* shows the brutal and dehumanising breadth of the so-called 'migration crisis', documenting, fact checking and photographing the locations along the major European migration routes where people were reported dead or missing between January 2014 and November 2018. Making use of painstaking research and attention to detail, *Routes* acts as a witness to the tragedy of those who die and go missing whilst attempting to reach Europe.

'Now more than ever, we have an enormous wealth of data available to us. Increasingly everything, from politics to romance, is viewed through a lens, coloured by a world that revolves around information. Photography has been slow to react. I aim to find new ways of visualising stories that have been told before; have been imaged before.'

Nathaniel White is a British artist whose work takes an investigative approach, whether scrutinizing money and reputation laundering in London (*Corrupted*, 2018), the sell-off of NATO communication towers for stock trading (*Microwave*, 2018), or cataloguing reported deaths along European migration routes (*Routes*, 2017). Data and research have always been at the centre of his work. Using the tools of the photojournalist and the photographic artist respectively Nathaniel seeks to build compelling narratives out of the investigative process.

White was awarded the Vice-Chancellor's scholarship and the Metro x MiAL Mentorship award. His work has been featured in *The Independent*, *Al Jazeera* and *Politiken*. He has an MA in Photojournalism and Documentary Photography from the London College of Communication (2018).

www.nathanielwhite.me



Routes (Central Mediterranean, 15,636 dead and missing), 2018. Digital collage on bond paper, 0.9 x 5.5 m

Lucy Wood

British artist Lucy Wood, set out on an epic 4000-mile solo voyage from the southern Italian island of Lampedusa to London in a rescued North African migrant boat, named **T06411** on World Refugee Day, 20th June, 2013. She arrived in London nearly 4 months later. **T06411** was named after the official code given to it by Italian customs when it was seized close to Lampedusa in 2012, with 36 North African migrants on board.

The main aim of Wood's project was to highlight the plight of migrants travelling by sea- not just from North Africa, but across the globe. **T06411** serves as a 'floating art installation', containing the objects that had been abandoned by the migrants on the boat and filmed footage of the stories of migrants that the artist met in Lampedusa. Wood also organised 'sit-ins' en route for the public to experience the cramped conditions onboard. **T06411** will be moored on Regents Canal, close to P21 gallery, during Refugee Week (17- 23 June, 2019).

Wood is also showing sculpture and wall based works, including **Boat Fragments**, wooden fragments of migrant boats from Lampedusa, onto which she has painted media images relating to the so-called 'migration crisis' and **Unsung Heroes**, bronze copies of migrant boats and found objects from the 'boat grave yard' in Lampedusa. Wood's sculpture **Chair of Director General for Migration and Home Affairs European Commission** is a white chair with a brass plaque bearing the aforementioned title and a shipwrecked boat sinking through the seat of the chair.

Wood is a British artist currently living in the UK. Since 2007 she has travelled to worldwide borders to document global migration. Her work has been exhibited in Europe, New Zealand, the UK and the USA and is included in collections worldwide, including Arts Council England. Recent exhibitions include: *Gimme Shelter film festival*, Tyneside Cinema, Newcastle, *Papers*, Barbican, London, *DU UND ICH* Hospitalhof, Stuttgart, *Strijd! Oorlog en Overleven*, Stadelijk Museum, Zwolle, Netherlands, *Risk*, Turner Contemporary Gallery, Margate and *Re - Work it*, The Art Room, Selfridges, London.

www.lucywood.net



T06411, North African migrant boat, 2013



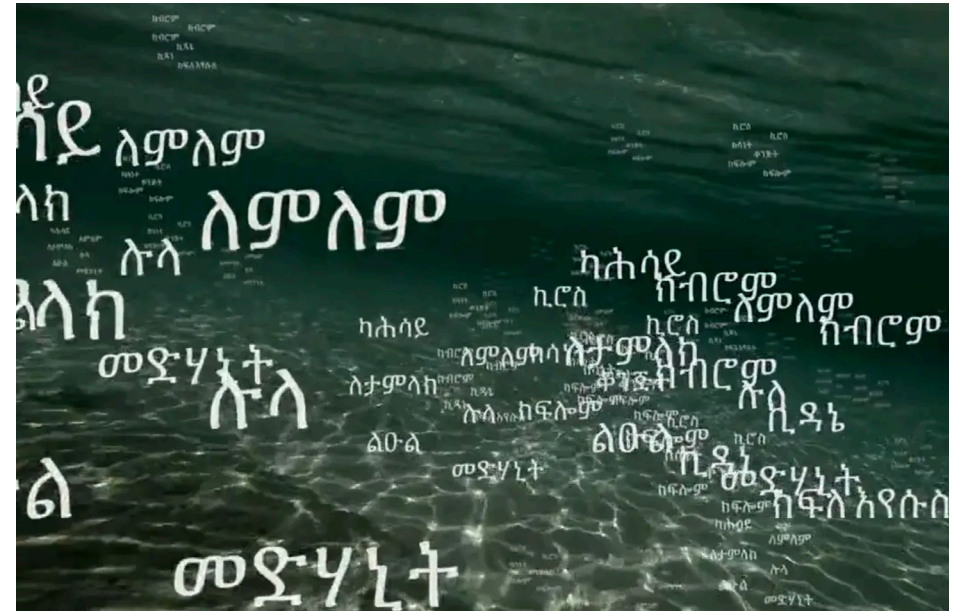
Boat Fragments. TG1 Online, 14/03/2011', 2011. Acrylic on wood, 56cmx65cm

Dagmawi Yimer

Asmat (Names) (2015) is an eighteen minute long film directed by Dagmawi Yimer. The film is a poignant and hypnotic tribute to the 368 Eritrean lives lost at sea off the coast of the Italian island of Lampedusa on 3 October 2013. Taking advantage of the fact that for the first time all of the names of the dead recovered from the sea were known, Yimer challenges the viewer with an act of remembrance that makes the names of the dead both visible and audible. In the film, Eden Getachew Zerihun slowly voices all 368 names, one by one, in the Tigrinya language. To ensure that the meaning of these names reaches a Western audience, they are also translated into English and Italian in the respective versions of the film. As Yimer states, the intention behind the strategy of naming the dead was *'to defy the attention and patience of the public, in order to bring back the numbers of the tragedy to the reality of names'*.

Dagmawi Yimer is an Ethiopian filmmaker. He left his country after the 2005 post-election unrest in which hundreds of young people were killed and imprisoned. After a long journey across the Libyan desert and the Mediterranean sea, he reached Lampedusa on 30 July, 2006. Once settled in Rome, he co-founded AMM (Archivio Memorie Migranti/Archive of Migrant Memories), which produces written and audio-visual narratives made by migrants about their experiences, enabling them to participate directly in the dissemination of their own stories and testimonies. He co-authored the film "Il deserto e il mare" (The Desert and the Sea) along with five other migrants. Yimer co-directed the documentary film "Come un uomo sulla terra" (Like a man on Earth), 2008. He filmed the documentary "C.A.R.A. ITALIA" (Dear Italy) in 2009 and "Soltanto il mare" (Nothing but the Sea) in 2011, along with several other short films. He coordinated the collective film project "Benvenuti in Italia" (Welcome to Italy) in 2011 and he made "Asmat-Names" in 2015. In 2016 he was assistant director on the feature film "The Order of things" by Andrea Segre. He has produced short documentaries for the Italian National TV and works with various universities, schools and institutions. Currently he is involved in leading small workshops on documentary making for migrants.

www.archiviomemoriemigranti.net/en/about-us



Asmat. Nomi per tutte le vittime in mare [Names in Memory of all Victims at Sea] (detail), 2013. Video, (17:19 minutes)



Asmat. Nomi per tutte le vittime in mare [Names in Memory of all Victims at Sea], (detail), 2013. Video, (17:19 minutes)

War on the water

Iain Chambers

In the wake, the semiotics of the slave ship continue: from the forced movements of the enslaved to the forced movements of the migrant and the refugee, to the regulation of Black people in North American streets and neighborhoods, to those ongoing crossings of and drownings in the Mediterranean Sea, to the brutal colonial reimaginations of the slave ship and the ark; to the reappearances of the slave ship in everyday life in the form of the prison, the camp, and the school.

Cristina Sharpe, *In the Wake: On Blackness and Being*

This war, like many in the modern age, is undeclared. Yet it is being relentlessly waged. If, most obviously, it is a war against the poor and dispossessed of the planet, it also a war against the right to migrate, now enmeshed in the deadly survival to have (or not have) the right to have rights (Arendt, 1973). Here, where the languages of democracy and freedom splutter on the edge of the unsaid and the indecipherable, the nudity of racial capitalism (Robinson, 2000), and the global outreach of the economic and political organisation of labour, resources and their juridical definitions, is brutally exposed. We are left without answers, sucked into the black hole of our modernity, confronting the horror, facing what history refuses to register and has rendered ghostly (Anderson, 2008). So, the question that troubles me is how not to reduce *Sink Without Trace* simply to a collection of artistic objects, only susceptible to aesthetic evaluation or simply the brutal evidence of the political violence of the present? Of course, the images initially exist in those registers. They bear witness to the critical gaze in the history of art that propels us to look again, leaving our comfortable assurances adrift, at sea: from William Turner's *The Slave Ship* (1834) to Isaac Julien's *Western Union, Small Boats* (2007). Here emerges a disturbing genealogy that links the Atlantic slave trade and the notorious case of the British slave ship *Zong* jettisoning its human cargo in the sea (probably the inspiration for the Turner canvas) to the contemporary "Black Mediterranean" and Dagmawi Yimer's work *Asmat* (2014) where the artist insists that Europe listen to the names of those it has drowned.

Clearly the works on display register the under-discussed closing down of Europe as the waves of its colonial histories roll back to its shores, carrying the bodies of those that Occidental power and knowledge had previously reduced to objects of its design (Gil Muallem-Doron). With ports closed, walls raised, legal apparatuses creating illegality, the contemporary migrant becomes the cypher of our time. She involuntarily decodes the asymmetrical relations of power that reveal the deadly restrictions and necro-politics of Occidental democracy, its vaunted humanism, liberty and rights. If we look at a map of the Mediterranean everything is laid out flat. Borders are clearly defined. All is seemingly captured by the eye, rendered measurable and knowable. This is the basis for the

geopolitical chessboard where everything is put on the dissecting table (Max Hirzel). It apparently provides a neutral and disinterested (or scientific) rendering of reality. It appeals to a liberal organisation of the world where all the actors are treated as though equal, permitting the analysis to remain 'balanced' and 'impartial' – something that is patently impossible to sustain when considering present-day relations between the northern and southern shores of the Mediterranean, or, the dramatically unequal relations of power that sustain the colonial violence in Palestine-Israel. To listen again to Cristina Sharpe: 'What will happen then if instead of demanding justice we recognize (or at least consider) that the very notion of justice . . . produces and requires Black exclusion and death as normative' (Sharpe, 2016).

Arriving at this conclusion forces us to disentangle ourselves from a manner of reasoning that continually divides understanding into enclosures of competence. The aesthetical and the juridical, the historical and the humanitarian, are rarely permitted to cross and pollinate each other's paths. The connections are resisted and refused. Yet, saving lives at sea, or abandoning them to the abyss, opening borders or establishing camps, are questions and decisions that criss-cross our lives in multiple directions: from everyday encounters in the street and the evening news of more drownings and deaths to political elections and art galleries. Migration as death: these images are the traces, echoes and ghosts of this implacable scenario where the entangling of migration and modernity is drawn so tight as to be necessarily evaluated together.

To contest the sinking without a trace, to contest the oblivion and cancellation of the unrequited history and necessary political culture the migrant proposes, is to cut conservative moorings tied to unquestioned faith in homogeneous identities, cultures and histories and their political securing of the status quo. But if modernity – from voyages of discovery, foreign conquest, global trade and planetary financial flows – is all about mobility and the perpetual movement of goods and capital, it is equally, and inevitably, also about the migration of bodies, lives, cultures and histories. One comes with the other. The time-space communality of modernity has been in place for 500 years. Earlier periods also experienced such mobilities, but it is only when the whole world can be conceptually charted by the compass of capital resourcing its accumulation across the globe that we register the cruel specificity of modernity that is sustained between the charged poles of capitalism and colonialism juridically transforming the world into property and profit.

If we were to think with the Mediterranean at this point, that is with the specificity of a maritime epistemology, then another horizon emerges. To insist on the sea as a laboratory of modernity – from its centrality in the passage of the European colonial engulfing the world to its present transformation into a barrier to migration – is to bring into play liquid archives and the histories that are suspended and sedimented in the aquatic realm (Behjat Omer Abdulla). Such going off-shore permits us to consider the manner in which the sea constitutes an interrogative archive and counter-space to the prevalent understanding offered by the terrestrial assurances of modern Europe. If, as we have seen, the continuity of the sea connects Paul Gilroy's *Black Atlantic* to the becoming black of the present-day Mediterranean (Victoria Burgher), its fluid

coordinates also disturb our habit of running history through the soil of national narratives and their provincial comforts (Tamara Kametani).

Both in, but not completely of, Europe (after all, two-thirds of its coastline is constituted by its African and Asian shores), attention to the making of the modern Mediterranean as a subaltern historical and cultural formation interrupts the logic that the world can simply be laid out, flat as a map, ripe for appropriation. To insist on that flatness and the potential to map all and render it transparent to a specific Occidental will to power, traces of alternative histories must be obliterated, removed from the accounting of time and progress; the boat cemetery in Pozzallo (Sicily) must be destroyed (Broomberg & Chanarin). The activity of counter-narratives, of histories arriving from below the surface of a unilateral framing of modernity, must be marginalised, silenced, and allowed to circulate only in the phantasmagoric world of the arts and ideology; certainly not as critical imperatives deployed in the re-assembling of received reality. The traces of another Mediterranean that propose the desires and dreams (Nikolaj Bendix Skyum Larsen) that fuel precarious journeys (Mariwan Jalal) while seeking a better life must be ignored. The European definition and control of this geo-history continues unchallenged, leaving Occidental sovereignty to decide who is to live and who is to die (Forensic Oceanography).

And yet every day, every night, such borders are crossed and confuted. The seemingly external world – Africa, Asia, Latin America – insists on its constitutive role in the making of modernity. If the contact zones are conflict zones, constantly promoting the violence of the colonial present (Gregory, 2004), they are also internal to planetary modernity that is never simply ours to manage and define. The hegemonic narrative is dispersed and ghosted by what it seeks to expel. The borders crack in the complexity of what is ultimately uncontainable (Shorsh Saleh). The algorithms of power that track the movements of migration (Mario Rossi, Nathaniel White) are shadowed, interrogated and interrupted by a multiplying modernity that exceeds its grasp. The daily ordinariness of physical and symbolic brutality (Aida Silvestri) that seeks to ‘take back control of our borders’ – law and order betrayed as racism and white supremacy – is at sea, frightened and afloat in a world it can never own. Today, we bear witness and trace the testimonies that tear the previous maps of understanding (Lucy Wood). Of course, what we are saying, encouraged by the works exhibited, is that such art renders an aesthetics in ethical terms, the sought stillness of abstract beauty is transformed into the terrible sublime that exceeds our grasp (Maya Ramsay). Such art, less the object of an aesthetic discourse or an art history, promotes a critical disposition. It exceeds the academic frame: the history or sociology of art becomes art as history, as sociology. This, as Georges Didi-Huberman (Huberman 2000) has so brilliantly argued, is true of all art, but it is particularly evident in the present conjuncture of postcolonial and decolonial criticism (Zucconi 2018).

Libyan gunboats and concentration camps, financed by European Union money, together with all the sophisticated hi-tech surveillance, are seeking to block historical movement. To insist that modernity is itself a migratory apparatus perpetually crossing water and seas, evidenced in the Atlantic slave trade, the mass migrations from rural poverty in the European peripheries of the Nineteenth century, and the movements

from the souths of the planet today, is radically to challenge our coordinates of comprehension. Further, and altogether more disturbing, it is in the maritime regions that we can register most acutely the limits of our rational grasp of the world. Here the levelling mechanisms of Occidental reason that ‘remain the productive weapons of global subjection’ sink in deeper waters (Ferreira da Silva, 2007). Here the ‘hegemony of the Kantian subject’, that objectifies and then obliterates the specificities of the lives whose very presence and persistence implicitly disturb our order of knowledge, is cast adrift. It is precisely the history of that manner of reasoning, apparently rendering the world fully knowable and transparent to a particular will to power, that today explain the ‘disregard for lives lost in the streets of the US and the Mediterranean Sea’ (Ferreira da Silva, 2007).

The modern migrant, her life and death, not only challenges juridical definitions of rights and citizenship, national framings of cultural belonging and identity, but also opens up the complex constitution of what makes the West the West. This opens a hole in time, rendering the past proximate to contemporary concerns, presenting us with archives of the present. To reassemble the fragments of the past in this manner is to construct an alternative sense of the present. It is to operate a cut on the body of modernity in order to produce a further critical montage. This permits us to engage with the entanglements of the represented and repressed in an emergent and dissonant constellation that seeks to frame a global injustice sustained by the general equivalence and indifference of capital.

Removing the Mediterranean from a single register, respecting the complexity of its historical and cultural formation, means not simply reintroducing denied stories and voices, or opting for the other shore and pretending to be able to see the world from the subaltern perspective. It means dismantling the assumptions of the knowledge and languages that have brought us here; not to delete them, but to expose them in another, unauthorised, configuration and perhaps there to acquire a critical apprenticeship in speaking in its proximity. I believe that *Sink Without Trace* necessarily draws us in this direction.

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Can Art Subvert the 'Ungrievability' of Migrant Lives?

Federica Mazzara

For at least the past three decades, migrants crossing the sea via unauthorised routes have been victims of shipwrecks in one of the most recent human relocations, where Europe is the desired destination. Today, people watching news reporting on migrant death at sea have become desensitised towards what should be an avoidable daily human loss. The increasing enforcement of EU borders has seen member countries making agreements with third countries, such as Libya and Turkey, to handle what, from the ill perspective of Europe, is an 'unmanageable migration and refugee crisis'. These drastic measures, which have been carried out without first assessing the human rights standards in those places, have inevitably intensified the risk of death and have certainly not prevented the loss at sea. No policies or agreements will inhibit people from migrating in order to save their life, or more simply to improve their life-style.

Another dreadful aspect of migrant death at sea, namely the lack of regulations related to the recovering and, consequently, to the identification of migrant corpses, has turned the Mediterranean and Aegean Seas into graveyards for thousands of nameless and unclaimed 'bodies of water' (Pugliese, 2006). The data on the victims of the illegalised journeys available to the general public is largely sourced from news media, which raises doubt about its reliability, while there are no official death tolls. Victims of illegalised shipwrecks, in fact, fall under the category of 'ungrievable lives' – to use Judith Butler's term – which refers to lives 'that cannot be lost, and cannot be destroyed, because they already inhabit a lost and destroyed zone; they are, ontologically, and from the start, already lost and destroyed' (Butler, 2009: 201).

Also the strategies of the burial of the recovered bodies, adopted in places that receive their corpses, corroborate the fact that grieving the migrants' lost lives is not a recognised and respected practice. Rarely are these corpses allowed a coffin, and if they are, it is often in response to strategies of spectacularisation revolving around events that require an opportunistic humanitarian response from the Institutions. This was the case, for instance, with the commemoration of the 3 October 2013 tragedy in Lampedusa – that caused the death of at least 368 Eritreans – where a state funeral, to which survivors were not admitted, was arranged on the island in order to allow a parade of governmental representatives. In such cases, the dead are instrumentalised for political purposes, to justify policies of repression and border-militarisation, which are sold as humanitarian missions (See for instance the Italian Navy mission, *Mare Nostrum* [2013], and Frontex mission, *Triton* [2014]). On the occasion of the 3 October shipwreck, all the recovered corpses – several more are still resting at the bottom of the sea – were given a coffin. However, this state funeral and the yearly commemorations are an exception within the politics of burial and grieving for victims of shipwrecks in the Mediterranean. Bodies of water, in fact, do not commonly end up in coffins, and are

certainly not offered state funerals. Plastic bags are the most common destinations of these ungrievable bodies, while numbers are used to identify them, when they are interred in unmarked mass graves, as the art project by Maya Ramsay, *Countless*, attests. Those who are never recovered are left decomposing at the bottom of the sea.

While the response to migrant deaths should be similar to that for deaths in 'commercial air crashes, shipwrecks or humanitarian disasters, where immediate steps are taken to count the dead, record the missing, identify the victims, interview survivors and preserve evidence' (Grant, 2013: 13), as the lawyer Stephanie Grant observes, this does not happen in the case of victims of unauthorised journeys, where the dead are considered responsible for their own destiny. For the dead of the Mediterranean, and more recently of the Aegean Sea, there are no systematic methods in place for the identification of corpses; nor are deceased's families involved in the identification processes or funerals and mourning rites of those identified. The technologies for identification exist, of course, but no EU government is willing to support their implementation for what are clearly considered second-class and ungrievable bodies. The erasure from public representation of names, images and narratives of migrants dying at sea responds to what Mbembe has defined a 'necropolitical' condition of Europe's violent border regime and the 'subjugation of [migrant] life to the power of death' (Mbembe, 2003: 49); In other words sovereignty as a way to exercise the right to kill.

As the exhibition *Sink Without Trace* shows, art response can produce an important and radical alternative to this necropolitical condition, by engaging in acts of contestation of all those practices that conceal the violence of borders. One of these examples is *Asmat: Names in Memory of All Victims of the Sea*, a short video by Ethiopian-Italian filmmaker Dagmawi Yimer – himself a migrant who made the unauthorised sea crossing in 2006. The art-video resists the logic of ungrievable lives, by calling by name all the 368 victims recovered from the 3 October shipwreck. A voice over calls the names one by one, defying the attention and the patience of the viewers. As the director declared "it takes ten minutes to read the 368 names of the victims of Lampedusa. Imagine how long it would take to read all 900 names of the last tragedy" (Quoted in Ponzanesi, 2017: 125).

The idea here is that art has a potential unavailable to governmental discourse, which is 'to open up the possible visibility of situations, issues, events and people and [to] leave it to its viewers or readers to enact that visibility', to answer that call by seeing (Bal, Hernández-Navarro, 2011: 14). In this context, the very act of seeing and participating in these practices has the potential to make the invisible and unsayable, visible and sayable.

Increasingly, art is developing more and more spaces for dissensual practices that challenge the criminalisation of human movement. This testifies to the fact that art operates within the social and not beyond or aside of it. These forms of 'aesthetics of subversion' (Mazzara, 2019), have the potential to trigger a 'perceptual shock' that implies the production of a sensory form of 'strangeness' in the viewer, followed by the development of a recognition of the reason for that strangeness and finally, a mobilisation of individuals as a result of that recognition (Rancière, 2004: 63; 2011: 142).

Artistic practice becomes, in this way, a potential disruptive tool that relies on specific

characteristics that only art possesses, such as its materiality, proximity and performativity, the most articulate means through which art has the capacity to become unsettling: 'This materiality makes art tangible, and thus brings it closer to the social agents that interact with it. The resulting proximity encourages participation; no art can exist without its audience; therefore, art is by definition performative' (Bal, Hernández-Navarro, 2011, II).

Sink Without Trace invites the viewers to immerse themselves in a journey that will let them question migrant deaths at sea, going beyond a mere commemoration of lives lost, and embracing a more critical awareness of one of the most shameful crimes of our century.

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Leave or Remain

Maya Ramsay

As the *Sink Without Trace* exhibition was being installed, controversy surrounding the installation of a shipwrecked migrant boat by artist Christoph Büchel at the 58th Venice Biennale began. Previously known as the 'Boat of Innocents', before Büchel re-named it 'Barca Nostra' ('Our Boat'), the boat has received far greater attention at the Biennale than it did when between 700 and 1100 of its passengers drowned on the night of 18th April 2015, with only 28 survivors. Discussions abound in the art press around whether the boat is art, whether it is appropriation and whether it is inappropriate for it to be displayed at the Biennale. All of which sadly serve to distance us from the very real subject that the boat represents, that of the deaths of migrants at sea. It is far easier to debate aesthetics, semantics and political correctness - than to discuss, or try to do anything about, the subject of migrant deaths at sea.

One of the main criticisms of project has been that the boat has been presented without any contextual information for the viewer, which has indeed proven to be highly problematic, as it can easily be mistaken for being just another boat in a city full of boats. *Sink Without Trace* includes Max Hirzel's photographic project *Migrant Bodies* (2015-17) which details the story of the forensics that were carried out on the bodies that were recovered from the same boat. It is extremely rare for forensic investigations to be carried out on migrants bodies, which makes them impossible for the families of the deceased to trace. Due to the unprecedented numbers involved in the shipwreck and the related publicity, the Italian authorities decided to carry out forensics on all of the 450 bodies that were recovered.

The *Migrant Bodies* project goes beyond just documenting the forensics to uncover the stories of some of those involved. Including Mohamed Matok, a Syrian lawyer who travelled from Damascus to collect the belongings of his brother and to visit his grave once the body had been identified; the young autopsy technicians of Palermo who were faced with the task of carrying out the forensics and the family of Mamadou in South Senegal, an alleged victim of the shipwreck, whose body has never been recovered. Had Hirzel's project been included in the Venice Biennale, it could have perfectly provided the context behind the boat.

In addition, *Sink Without Trace* includes work by Forensic Oceanography, led by researchers Charles Heller and Lorenzo Pezzani, who previously conducted a highly detailed investigation of the same shipwreck in their report *Death by Rescue* (2016). The boat capsized when it collided with a merchant ship that was coming to its rescue. The report states that Italy's suspension of the *Mare Nostrum* search and rescue operation a few months prior to the incident was a crucial element in determining the fate of the boat. *Mare Nostrum*, with its wide-ranging operation in the area of sea between Sicily and North Africa was replaced by Operation *Triton*, which was managed by the EU border agency Frontex. *Triton*'s area of coverage was much more limited, which meant that commercial ships in the vicinity were often called upon to assist migrant boats in distress.

According to the report, such ships are "unfit to carry out the large-scale and particularly dangerous rescue operations involving migrants" (2016). Forensic Oceanography's report could also have been used to give context to the boat.

Art on the subject of migrant deaths at sea aims to increase awareness and understanding of the subject but it is hard to gauge its true impact. Are audiences being encouraged through art to campaign for change in migration policies or is there simply an empathetic response followed by inaction? How much of what we are do as artists and curators has any real impact on those that we are making the work about? Büchel's project has been criticised for allegedly costing 23 million euros. If all the money, time and effort that is spent on making and discussing art on migrant deaths at sea was put to use on the ground, with the people that we are making the works about - what kind of impact could be achieved then?

One example of just how important art and artists can be in relation to the subject is *T06411*, a project by Lucy Wood in 2013. *T06411* is another migrant boat, named after the official code given to it by Italian customs when it was seized close to Lampedusa in 2012, with 36 North African migrants on board. Over the course of three years, Wood regularly travelled to Lampedusa to collect and document migrant experiences through found objects, photography and interviews. She asked the island authorities to give her a rescued migrant boat, with the intention of sailing it from Lampedusa to London. The aim of the project was to bring wider attention to the subject of migrant deaths at sea, which at the time had received almost no media attention outside of Mediterranean countries- despite the many thousands of migrant deaths recorded in European waters since 1988.

After two years of persistence Wood was eventually offered boat *T06411* and she spent nine months living on the island, preparing for the project, restoring the boat and taking a short navigation course. She then set sail on a 4000-mile solo voyage from Lampedusa, arriving in London nearly four months later. Before setting sail, Wood wrote to Pope Francis to ask him to bless the boat, which he agreed to do. Her request initiated the Pope's subsequent visit to Lampedusa, which became a fundamental moment in bringing the attention of the world's media to the issue of migrant deaths at sea.

Wood travelled with the objects that had been abandoned by the migrants on the boat, displayed filmed footage of the stories of migrants that she had met and organised 'sit-ins' en route for the public to experience the cramped conditions onboard. After reaching London *T06411* was moored close to Surrey Docks and the public were invited aboard. Having arrived in London shortly after the shipwrecks of the 3rd and 11th October 2013, the UK press deemed her arrival to be too controversial to publicise at the time but two months later, on World Refugee Day 2013, a group of politicians and religious leaders took a short trip on *T06411* down the Thames to Westminster. Since then, the boat has been gathering moss at a mooring in Kent.

As part of *Sink Without Trace*, *T06411* will be moored on Regent's Canal close to P21 Gallery, where the public can see the boat and its contents and discuss the project with the artist. The experience of seeing *T06411* in reality is very different to seeing images of migrant boats in the media. It allows visitors to be able to more closely imagine trav-

elling with so many people on such a small and unstable vessel on the open sea and the desperation that must be involved in making such journeys.

With the impending progression of climate change, the numbers of people fleeing natural disasters, failed crops and related poverty can only be about to massively increase, with obvious implications for the numbers of migrant deaths at sea. In these politically uncertain times in the UK and Europe, there is one absolute certainty- that those desperately trying to reach our shores face a far more uncertain future than we do, whether they leave or remain.

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The *Sink Without Trace* exhibition and catalogue are raising funds for AlarmPhone (Watch The Med). AlarmPhone was initiated in October 2014 by activist networks and civil society actors in Europe and Northern Africa. The project established a telephone hotline for migrants and refugees in distress in the Mediterranean Sea.

The main objective is to offer boat people in distress an additional option to make sure that their SOS call is acted upon, making sure that rescue missions are carried out promptly. AlarmPhone documents the distress situation, informs the coastguards, and, when necessary, mobilises additional rescue support in real-time. They put pressure on the responsible rescue entities to avert push-backs and other forms of human rights violations against migrants in distress at sea. If prompt rescue is not carried out AlarmPhone inform humanitarian organisations and the media to put pressure on the rescue services. AlarmPhone also provide Safety at Sea information for migrants, about risks, rights, and vital safety measures to take at sea.

AlarmPhone is actively involved in all three regions where migrants and refugees attempt to travel to Europe: the Aegean Sea (between Turkey and Greece); the Central Mediterranean Sea (between Libya/Tunisia and Italy) and the Western Mediterranean Sea (between Morocco and Spain).

AlarmPhone is made up of volunteers, most of whom have been active at the external borders of Europe for many years in networks, such as Welcome to Europe, Afrique Europe Interact, borderline-europe, Noborders Morocco, Forschungsgesellschaft Flucht und Migration, Voix des Migrants and Watch The Med.

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Sink Without Trace presents works being made on the subject of migrant deaths at sea by eighteen artists from ten countries; Denmark, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Israel, Iraqi Kurdistan, Italy, Slovakia, South Africa, South Sudan and the UK.

Through the medium of drawing, painting, photography, printmaking, sculpture and video works, the exhibition offers alternative perspectives on a subject that is often only presented by the media and politicians.

Sink Without Trace provides the most comprehensive overview to date of art being made on the subject from 2011 to the present day. The exhibition also includes objects and materials found in shipwrecked migrant boats, anonymous drawings made on migrant boats and works made by unaccompanied minors in transit camps in Calais. In addition, the exhibition presents documentation of the forensics project carried out on the victims of the shipwrecked migrant boat displayed as 'Barca Nostra' at the 58th Venice Biennale. *Sink Without Trace* includes works by: Behjat Abdulla Omer, Broomberg & Chanarin, Victoria Burgher, Max Hirzel, Mariwan Jalal, Tamara Kametani, Nikolaj Bendix Skyum Larsen, Gil Mualem-Doron, Forensic Oceanography, Maya Ramsay, Mario Rossi, Shorsh Saleh, Aida Silverstri, Art Refuge UK, Nathaniel White, Lucy Wood and Dagmawi Yimer.

The *Sink Without Trace* catalogue contains *War on the water*, an essay by Iain Chambers, Professor of Cultural and Postcolonial Studies at the Oriental University in Naples and texts by the exhibition curators, Dr Federica Mazzara, Senior Lecturer in Intercultural Communication, University of Westminster and artist Maya Ramsay. The *Sink Without Trace* exhibition and catalogue will raise funds towards AlarmPhone, a hotline for migrants in distress at sea which supports rescue operations by ensuring that distress calls are acted upon promptly and fully.

The catalogue has been published on the occasion of the *Sink Without Trace* exhibition at P21 Gallery, London, 13 June - 13 July 2019.

