

The sea is the limit

Works by Nidhal Chamekh, Thomas Kilpper, Massimo Ricciardo, Varvara Shavrova and Susan Stockwell

Downstairs, clockwise

Varvara Shavrova

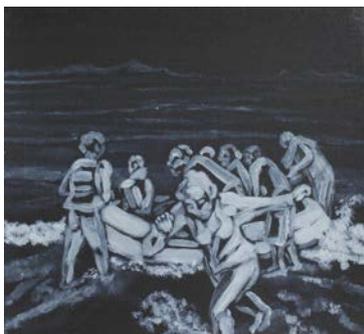
Migrant Crisis Series, set of 37 drawings
Graphite and acrylic on watercolour paper, circa 25 x 28.5 cm, 2015-2016



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23.

£ 1.500 plus VAT each (unframed)

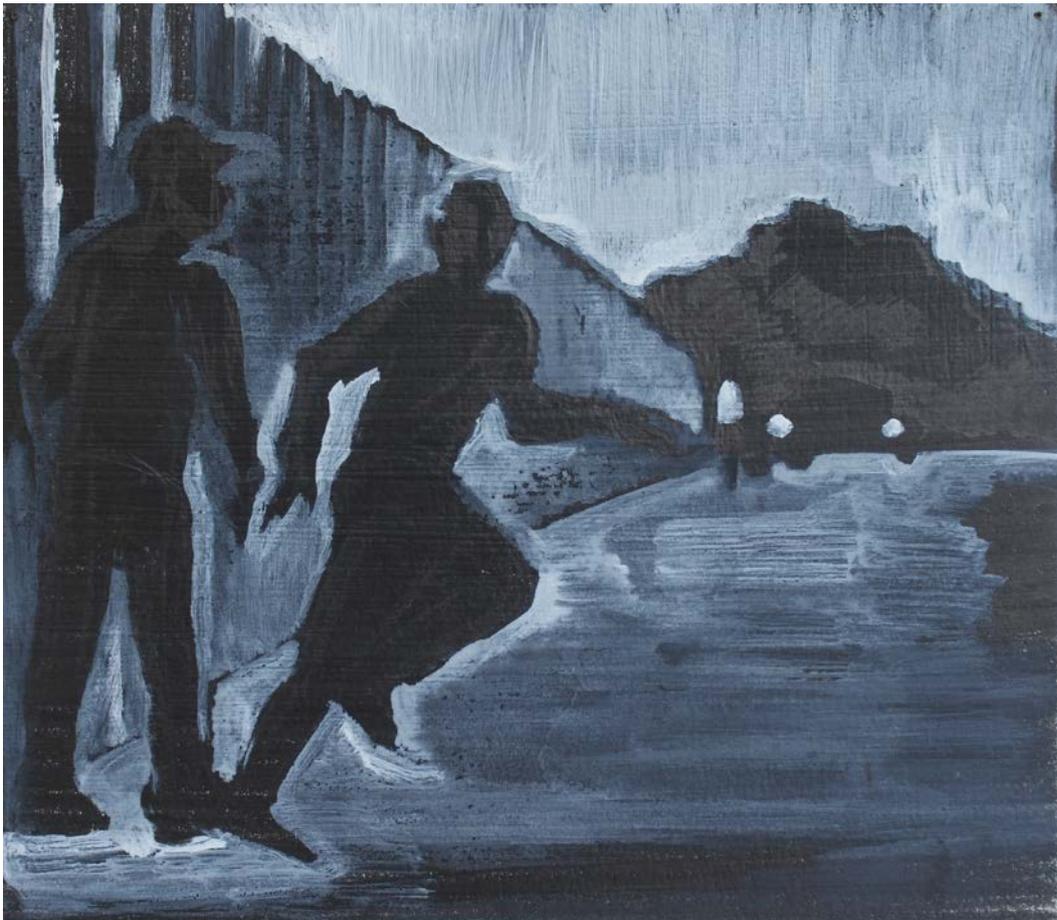
Susan Stockwell



Sail away
Paper currency, tickets, stamps, maps, coins and thread
Size variable
2013

Price on request

Varvara Shavrova



'Migrant Crisis' installation

Back projection fabric, metal cable, 37 drawings presented as 6.39 mins video loop

Edition of 6

2016

£ 6.000

Upstairs, clockwise

Nidhal Chamekh



Studying Circles
Graphite on wood-free paper
240 x 300 cm
2015

Not for sale

Susan Stockwell



Finesilver - Blackgold

Digital print on silk georgette, with hand rolled and stitched edges

86 x 38 cm (unframed)

Edition of 10

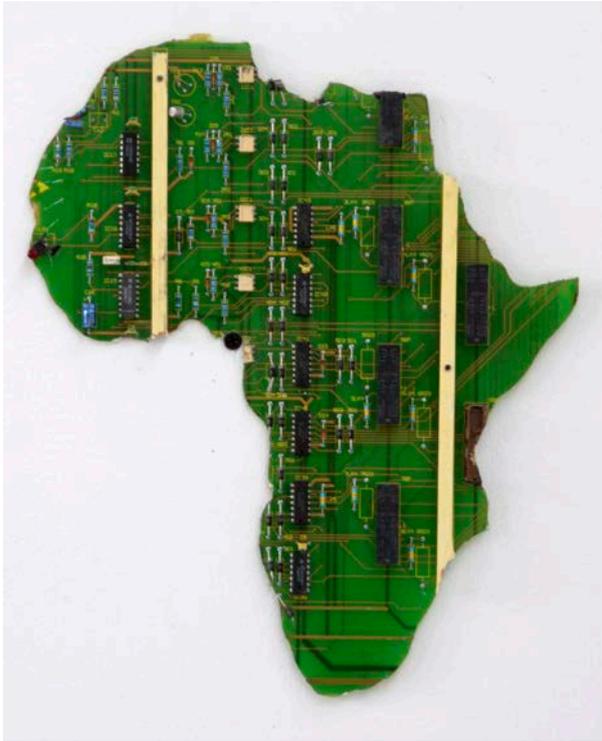
2016

£ 5.800 plus VAT



Motherland Britain
Recycled computer components
23 x 13 x 2 cm
2012

£ 2.800 plus VAT



Africa
Recycled computer components
29 x 24 x 2 cm
2012

£ 3.500 plus VAT



America
Recycled computer components
31 x 19 x 2 cm
2012

£ 3.500 plus VAT

Thomas Kilpper and Massimo Ricciardo



Objects of Flight – An Inventory of Migration | Vitrine 1



Objects of Flight – An Inventory of Migration | Vitrine 2



Objects of Flight – An Inventory of Migration | Vitrine 3

Price on request

The sea is the limit

Text by Verena Platzgummer

The width and depth of the sea have ever since impressed mankind. As an art historical motif, a literary imagery or a cinematic strategy it evokes a feeling of desire, eternity and mystery. Furthermore it has become a place of tranquility, relaxation and regeneration. However, the image changes dramatically when we think about the sea in the context of migration. Then the infinite width of the sea turns from a romantic idea into a lethal trap, the journeys of hope often into deadly tragedies.

With the current conflict in Syria, more than 1.2 million refugees and migrants crossed into Europe in 2015 alone. The vast majority arrived by sea, travelling across the Mediterranean or through Southeast Europe sparking a crisis in which the question of borders and nationalism, inclusion and exclusion has become so pressing that the free movement of persons and goods, fundamental to the idea of a United Europe, are at stake.

The subject of migration, immigration, dispossession and borders is evidently not a new one, and artists such as the ones featured in *The sea is the limit* have for years worked with these major topics. But how can such events as the European migrant crisis, aspects of which will always remain beyond comprehension, be expressed in art? The works presented in the group exhibition attempt to tackle the subject but simultaneously deal with the impossibility of representing these horrific scenes. They don't claim to offer a realistic depiction but remain fragmentary: personal and intimate portraits with no demand for documentary evidence, no desire for a visionary statement.

In the exhibition some of the materials and components used even set us on a wrong track. In Susan Stockwell's work *Finesilver - Blackgold* for instance the seductive fine crepe silk and rich frame lures in the viewer, where upon closer inspections he finds a shockingly horrific image of humans shackled to be bought and sold, traded as goods. The digital print is made from layered components: a ledger card found in a disused garment factory in San Antonio, Texas and a famous image of a slave ship storage plan. This discrepancy of materials and issues addressed allows differing interpretations and hence, although this is a historic image, it reminds us of contemporary imperial trades.

Similarly Nidahl Chamekh's drawings have a historical yet at the same time personal dimension. The Tunisian artist moves freely in the intersection between a biographical microcosm and a political framework, between personal experience and history. 'Etude d'un Habitat Fortune' and 'icare' belong to a series of drawings he made from the refugee camp in Calais. As such the works are based on real images from the Internet, newspaper or social media channels. But newly composed they tell their own story and open up to new connections and interpretations. As Chamekh explains: 'The figure and figuration are at the heart of my work, and I work from real images. Yet I don't see any imitation of the real, nor do I see narrative or a form of representation'.

Also Varvara Shavrova is exhibiting a new series of drawings based on images from the Irish media on the migrant crisis. The series of 36 drawings shows sketch-like sceneries in black and white, displayed as a loop projection in space. And although we recognize large groups of people on the run and in confrontation with the police, their faces remain an outline, a rough idea. Again, the works do not offer a clear conclusion but challenge the viewers to spend time seriously investigating what the pictures are about, how they operate and what they convey.

In their white on black visual and in their roughness the drawings recall the woodcut works by Thomas Kilpper, for which the German artist is best known. In *The sea is the limit*, together with Italian artist Massimo Ricciardo, Kilpper is presenting collected objects that the refugees left behind in the boats that brought them to Europe. From technical instruments to notebooks, contact cards, drawings and images of family members, the objects are emotionally charged. They do not only witness the exertions hundreds of thousands of people went through on their journey fleeing from war zones in their home countries but also link very personal stories to broader political questions.

The migrant's desire for freedom and a better life thereby stands in sharp contrast to the reality that they experience on their journeys and partially also upon their arrival when the fateful and fantastical dream of 'the sky as the limit' clashes with what the countries are actually able and willing to provide. With his *Lighthouse for Lampedusa* Kilpper offers a utopian idea to question and antagonise this limitation by inviting European citizens to put pressure on their governments and bring an end to the massacre of refugees in the Mediterranean by adopting a more humane and fairer immigration and integration policy. The work can thereby only be a symbol, a sketch, a model. As Kilpper admits: "It is not big enough, not large enough, not light enough...[but] the plan is to put the real thing up in Italy [on the island.]"

Sail Away by Susan Stockwell closes the circle and brings us back to the overarching issues of ecology, geo-politics, mapping, trade and history. The work, which has originally been shown in the Turbine Hall of Tate Modern in London, consists of many small boats made from old paper currency, tickets and maps that form a large-scale flotilla. It reflects Stockwell's interest in materials and their inherent content and histories. Just as the motherboard maps, whose basic materials are made of precious metals mined in Africa that are vital to make certain computer components mainly serving the Western world.