

La Mer au Milieu des Terres //

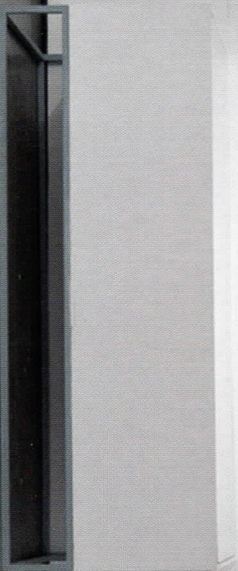
Mare Medi Terraneum

Curator: Cécile Bourne-Farrell

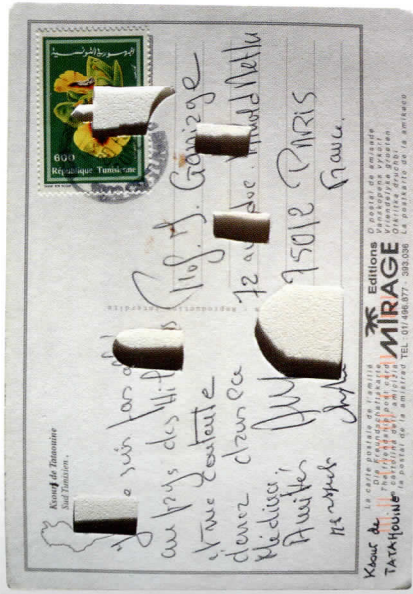
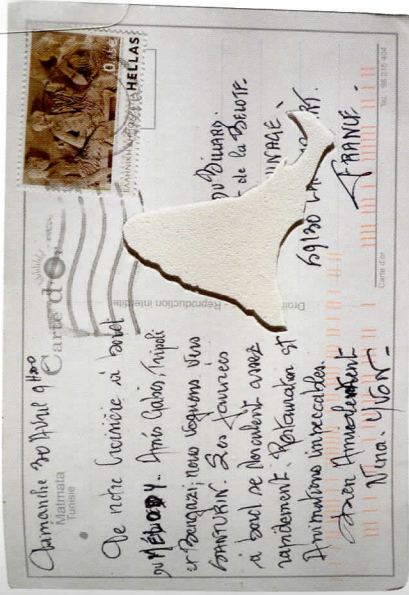
March 13th – August 30th 2015

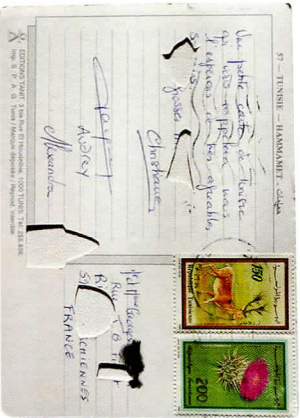
Es Baluard Museu d'Art Modern i
Contemporani de Palma

◆ MER. Paper Kunsthalle



Farah Khellil, display of *Point de vue, point d'écoute*, (Clichés II), 2013-2014
Bouchra Khalil, *Mapping Journeys n°4*, 2010





Farah Khellil, *Point de vue, point d'écoute*
(Clichés II), 2013–2014

When we realize the legacy we leave behind us with our industrial landscapes, which we can rediscover in the photographic works of *Goffroy Mathieu* and *Bernard Stofflet*, and also in the *in situ* drawing by *Chourouk Hriech*, we are filled with another consideration of the Mediterranean waterfront. These artists contribute a different gaze to the contemporary wastelands of our coasts, which have borne (and some of which still do bear) intense industrial activity as in the case of Fos-sur-Mer, in Marseille. Bauxite ruins the soil and the landscape

forever, as occurs with the factories erected by Franco at the entrance of Gibraltar⁶, which rise up like monstrous cathedrals of lights at the gates of the Mediterranean both during the day and at night. *Chourouk Hriech*'s site specific drawings reveal the ruins of modern times, such as unfinished houses or phantasmagoric industrial buildings all around the Mediterranean, evoking haunted places which are emblematic of the disrespectful attitude people have towards those waters... The artist has chosen to speak about the shadows of the modern ruins we are leaving behind in waterfront landscapes, dialectically responding to two existing paintings, which are depicting the role that industrial boats are playing on these coasts.

"The Sea in the Midst of the Lands" is also about the phantoms projected by the collection of sublime, disquieting postcards of sunsets by *Oriol Vilanova*, presented on endless horizons, which contrast with the image on constant flow of *Ange Leccia*. *Oriol Vilanova* has collected these postcards since 2000, from early black and white images to the most recent ones, assorted them by color and then reproduced them on large scale (12 meters width): from a distance they look like huge waves, while if looked at in detail, they almost look like nightmares...

In another language, around the stereotypes that circulate in the Mediterranean and in an extreme reduction of representations of prominent Tunisian tourist destinations, the artist *Farah Khellil* has returned to the places she knows like the back of her hand through postcards gathered in European and North African street markets, as though they

were fragments of correspondence, between the message she would like to send and the difficulty of speaking of the histories, past and present, of the coastline.

"Mare Medi Terraneum" tries to give an account of the gaze of selected contemporary artists over a space, which is that of all the civilizations of the world, come together in the shared waters of the Mediterranean. Due to the context where this exhibition is taking place, this project has been influenced by Robert Smithson's works⁷. His work focuses on space seen from an exotopic perspective: for example, when seen from an island such as Mallorca, the perception of continents can be viewed differently to that of mainland people.

Because of an Islander's relationship with the water, it means that it won't be looked at in the same way. Oblivious to all this, and yet so close to it,

current affairs brim over and art proposes a certain necessary distance for this crisis which has, for thousands of years, shackled man to the land and the sea, above or below the waterline.

Let us not forget that, as Franco Cassano points out, "this space has always been a place of genetic and linguistic mixtures that generate a culture, the result of which is also a creolization of the peoples who participate in its construction"⁸. And what about us? How do we experience these fusions? What are we looking for? What is in our head, in our beach bag or in our sociological or cultural studies when we travel around these places?

1 "La Mer au Milieu des Terres",

original title in French.

2 Illegals, those who risk their lives

to make the crossing to Europe.

3 Tanger/Tarifa: 13 km and

<http://watchthem.net>

4 "Vogue la Galère, trafic des migrants", by Andrea Palladino and

Andrea Tornabò, p. 12, *Le Monde*,

6 February 2015.

5 Christopher Wool prices: <http://www.bloomberg.com/bw/articles/2014-10-09/price-of-christopher-wool-apocalypse-now-sours-with-art-market>

6 "La Linea is the most polluted

town in Spain, according to the

WHO", Manuel Planellas and

Cándido Romaguera, Sevilla /

La Línea de la Concepción,

El País, 24 May 2014,

http://sociedad.elpais.com/sociedad/2014/05/24/actualidad/1400953564_317787.html

7 Robert Smithson: "Photoworks"

Los Angeles County Museum

of Art, Los Angeles and

University of New Mexico

Press, Albuquerque, 1993,

ed by Chris Kelidjian

8 Franco Cassano, *Southern*

Thought and Other Essays on

the Mediterranean. Spanish

translation by Norma Bouchard

and Valerio Ferme. New York:

Fordham University Press, 2011