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Europe in Visual Representations of Migration:
WESTERN UNION: Small Boats by Isaac Julien

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Migration – (Self-)Images of Europe – Visual Culture – Identity – Female Allegories

Abstract

The emergence of the modern idea of Europe as a geographic, religious, and cultural unity that is superior to the other continents is closely connected to the so-called "discovery" of the Americas and the beginning of the colonisation of the Non-European world. This concept of Europe was reflected as well as generated by the emergence of female allegories of the continents in a wide field of visual culture, in which Europe appeared as the legitimate ruler of the world and the other continents were portrayed as primitive, savage, exotic, etc.

The film installation "WESTERN UNION: Small Boats" (2007) by the British artist and filmmaker Isaac Julien deals with contemporary migration from Africa to Europe across the Mediterranean Sea. It re-articulates the tradition of representing the continents in the form of female allegories. Female personifications of Europe, on the one hand, and of a transnational community, on the other hand, are juxtaposed. The personifications presented are crucial figures in framing the topic of migration to European countries within a narrative that questions in various ways hegemonic concepts not only of migration, but also of Europe, and the relations between them. By highlighting a transnational perspective the idea that nations/national unions, communities, identities, and space are inextricably connected is challenged. This also calls into question the understanding of migration as a deviation from the norm. Furthermore, the ability of the European border regime to entirely control the movements of migration is queried by migration itself. Finally, a counter-narrative is presented which calls into question the hegemonic European historiography according to which Europe has developed on its own terms. In this context, the (post-)colonial violence by which the "entangled histories"[i] between Europe and Non-European societies have been shaped are evoked. I argue, however, that the allegoric translation by which this happens perpetuates hegemonic notions of gender and race that are traditionally fundamental for the construction of the European "Self" and the Non-European "Other".

Introduction

In this article I am presenting extracts of my analysis of the film installation *WESTERN UNION: Small Boats* (2007) by the British filmmaker and artist Isaac Julien. This analysis is part of my doctoral project with the working title *Migration at the Borders of Europe: Visual Representations in Contemporary Art*.

I consider the multilayered relationship between migration[ii], and migration regimes, on the one hand, and visual culture on the other hand, as the overall framework of my doctoral project and would like to outline here some of its central aspects. I proceed on the assumption that visual representations do not reflect reality, but rather produce specific ideas about it.[iii] What makes visual representations powerful to media is that they are usually seen as reflections, or, going further, as compelling proof of a reality that precedes the representation. As a result, the construction processes taking place in visual representations become invisible, whereas what is made visible appears to be evident.[iv] Thus, in the context of my research, visual images and narratives not only affect *how* migration, Europe, and the borders between them are perceived, they also play a role in generating those as primary categories for a specific perception of spaces, movements, persons, communities, and identities and how they are interrelated.

Stuart Hall argues that visual representations and viewing subjects do not exist as two separated units, but in an interdependent constituting relationship.[v] On the one hand, this implies that the meaning of images is, among other factors, established based on each new spectator. On the other hand, the viewing subjects and their gaze are constituted in a specific manner by their interaction with images. Therefore, visual representations in the field of migration and migration regimes do not only create a "'positive unconscious' of viewing"[vi] (translation by the author) which significantly determines the perception of this group of issues; they furthermore shape the manner of subjectivization of the spectators and thereby their imaginary and real relationships to the viewed subjects. Against this background, visual images and narratives are, in my view, essential for the maintenance of the European border regime. For instance, they contribute in a crucial way to the perception that certain migration policies appear rational and based upon societal consensus as a reaction to a visually preconstructed reality.

In my analysis, I deal with visual representations of migration to Europe in artistic works. In recent years, several publications have been published that deal with different aspects of the connections between migration, migration regimes, and visual culture.[vii] They mainly critically investigate how migration is represented. Yet, its "counterpart", namely national formations, which is always implicitly invoked in these representations, mostly remains unnoticed. Therefore, the idea is perpetuated that national formations are stable, self-contained, and clearly bounded units, which are approached from the outside by migration movements. I consider it crucial to give attention to the representations of nations or national unions as well, instead of leaving them as an unquestioned point of reference with regard to which migration appears as the "Other". Therefore, in the context of my research, I do not only ask how migration is visualy represented, but I also aim to discuss visual representations of Europe and its relation to migration.

I develop my methodological approach in close relation to the artistic works, my theoretical presuppositions and my specific epistemological interests. Therefore, I complement the iconographic-iconological analysis model by Erwin Panofsky with approaches deriving from semiotics, discourse analysis, visual studies, and (feminist) film theory. Since I assume that the meaning of visual representations is constituted in a nexus of different factors, I do not intend to decode a singular meaning which is inherent in them but rather aim at discussing a *potential* of meaning they can unfold.

WESTERN UNION: Small Boats

WESTERN UNION: Small Boats (2007) is the third part of a trilogy that also includes *True North* (2004) and *Fantôme Afrique* (2005). The work exists in different versions.[viii] In my analysis I deal with *WESTERN UNION: Small Boats* as an audio-visual film installation on three screens.

The work consists of two narrative levels that are closely interwoven. Scenes shift constantly from one narrative level to another. The first narrative level deals with contemporary migration from North Africa to Europe across the Mediterranean, whereby the central subject is the death of people trying to reach European shores. The narration is shaped by well-known images and narratives of the topic: Black men drifting in a small wooden boat under the blazing sun on the open sea, piled boat wrecks, and foil-covered corpses laying on the beach are contrasted with leisurely activities in a small Italian fisher port and people bathing and playing in the water.

This narrative level seems to be authentic and creates the impression of depicting events, people, locations, and times in a transparent way. The second narrative level is marked as inherently symbolic. It also refers to the topic of contemporary migration from North Africa to Europe across the Mediterranean with a focus on people drowning on this journey. However, it carries a meaning that goes beyond the first narrative level. I want to suggest that it contextualizes the latter in a broader frame. This frame can be seen as a narrative that challenges in various ways specific concepts of migration and of (Western) nations and national unions at large, particularly of Europe.

The main figure of the second narrative level is a Black woman whose counterpart is a *white* woman.[ix] Before arguing that I interpret these two female figures as allegories who connote the delineated narrative framework, I want to describe some scenes of *WESTERN UNION: Small Boats* that are crucial for my later argumentation in more detail. Due to the complexity of the film installation, which results from the simultaneous actions on the three screens, the description is summarized and some shots that feature amongst those that are described are omitted.

The introductory scene of *WESTERN UNION: Small Boats* starts on the middle screen with the focus on an iron gate. The room which the gate belongs to is not identifiable since just a narrow frame around the gate is in the field of view and the dark interior is only brightened slightly by the light from outside. One recognizes a stone slab floor and the walls are built from rough stone or carved out of a rock. In front of the gate, the sea gurgles in calm waves at the stony shore. The viewers are positioned inside the dark interior of the room. They look through the gate to the sea, the horizon and the sky. The screens on the left side and on the right side are black. Thus the focus on the gate opening the view to the daylight and to the outside is enhanced. After some seconds a Black woman walks from the right edge of the screen to the open gate. She is barefoot, in a white transparent dress and with a shaved head, and she seems as though she is gliding across the floor. Once she reaches the open gate, she stops and stays there looking at the sea.

Approximately in the middle of *WESTERN UNION: Small Boats*, there is a long sequence of scenes inside the ballroom of the Palazzo Gangi in Palermo. It is equipped with pompous furnishings, brightly shining chandeliers and sconces and paintings on the floor, the walls and the ceiling. In all these scenes, the viewers are fixed more or less at the same point. They look across the ballroom in the direction of two doors from where figures, one after the other, are coming in as if the room were a stage: first a *white* woman, then the Black woman mentioned above and finally a Black man who is carrying a dead *white* man on his shoulders. All three figures seem to be aware of the presence of the camera, and the viewers become directly involved in their appearances.

At the beginning of the scenes in the ballroom, a *white* woman walks in a decisive manner to the viewers and is thereby looking directly into the camera. One can hear her resolute steps on the tile floor as she approaches. She comes so near to the camera that the viewers see her in a close-up. She stands motionless and smiles directly at the camera for several seconds. The woman is wearing a pink-colored trouser suit with a sleeveless top, jewellery and make-up and her blond hair is tied up. The sound effects of the scenes in the ballroom are interspersed by a male and a female voice speaking Italian which are often difficult to understand. While the *white* woman enters the room, the female voice says: "The princess of Lampedusa, the countess of [...], the princess of Salina, good evening!"

In the following scene, the Black woman from the introductory scene appears in the ballroom wearing a sleeveless white dress. She is waving a red fan while striding in a graceful way towards the viewers, although not directly approaching. The camera comes closer to her as she passes it on the right side. But the woman is looking straight ahead as if she wants to escape the camera and, through extention, the viewers who are observing her. She does it in a coquetting way and as if she were subtly "flirting": there is a faint smile on her lips, although there is nobody else in the room. At the end of the scene, the camera watches her pass by. Since the gaze of camera coincides with that of the viewers, the Black woman is turned into an object of desire.

During the transition between scenes, the camera moves on the left and right screens in opposing directions: from the floor to the ceiling of the ballroom and vice versa, while the middle screen remains stationary. These reverse teetering movements are reminiscent of sea waves. Together with the background noise which sounds like the creak of old wooden beams, the impression is evoked that the ballroom could also be the interior of an old ship sailing across the sea.

The following scene opens with a shot of white rocks that are shaped like stairs. From the right edge of the screen, a Black man walks in carrying a *white* man on his back. The way the latter is hanging over the shoulders of the former indicates that he is dead. They are moving away from the viewers, who are able to see them only from the back. Church bells are heard tolling the moment the two men appear on the screen.

In the scene that follows, the viewers see the Black woman from behind on the middle screen. She is walking in the opposite direction from where she entered the ballroom. On the left screen, the Black man who is carrying the *white* dead man across his shoulders enters through the door of the ballroom. This is accompanied by the loud sound of a slamming door. As soon as he turns to the right on the left screen, the woman makes a move to the right on the middle screen, as if wanting to let him pass. This gives the impression that the woman and the men are taking turns. Even though they are not sharing the same cinematic space (as they are on different screens), let alone communicating with each other, it seems as if they are connected in a certain way. While the man is walking up to the camera, the woman walks out of the door. As the man is approaching the viewers, the camera focuses on the sagging head of the man who is laying on his shoulders. Coming up very close to the camera, the man turns a bit so that the head of the dead man is even closer to the lens. He then sways a foot of the dead man towards the camera. It appears as a presentation of the dead body to the viewers.

The final scene in the ballroom opens with the Black man squirming and writhing on the painted floor of the ballroom. This image quickly and irregularly alternates with images of a person who is awash and struggling in a cloud of seafoam. As one sees these images in juxtaposition with each other, the movements of the man on the floor of the ballroom reflect those of a person who is drowning. The dynamic nature of the fast change of the images is reinforced by the differing sounds accompanying them. The movements of the man on the floor of the ballroom are underlied by a rasping sound that becomes progressively more muddy, and the underwater images are accompanied by sounds of water that are sometimes combined with a melody. After a while, shots of the ballroom are alternated into the previously described images. The scene ends with the ballroom displayed on all three screens. Finally, a fairly long shot shows the face of a leopard painted on the ballroom floor in an extreme close-up.

The Allegorising of a Transnational Community and of Europe

Allegories are representations of abstract ideas in concrete forms that are able to convey the meaning of the abstract. Hence, personifications, which are a common way of allegorising, signify not a "real" person, but something else.[x] Allegories in the form of a woman often represent different kinds of communities and „what connects them, or what is supposed to connect and unite them"[xi] (translated by the author). As I want to elaborate in the following, the Black and *white* women in *WESTERN UNION: Small Boats* can also be seen as allegories of different concepts of communities.

The main figure in WESTERN UNION: Small Boats is a Black woman who is moving at and between different places, indoors and outdoors, between Africa and Europe. Yet, she is particularly close connected to the sea. In several scenes, she walks along the sea and stands or sits at its shores while looking at the water. The sea, which is staged in a very impressive and aestheticised way, is the main location in *WESTERN UNION: Small Boats*. Almost all action takes place in, by, or on the sea. It does not appear as the border of the land, rather, the land appears as the border of the sea.

Before further dwelling on the meaning which the sea possibly carries, I want to refer back to the introductory scene that I described above. The image of the Black woman looking at the sea while standing on the threshold of an iron gate enclosing a dark interior made out of stone or carved into rock arouses associations of imprisonment and freedom, of tightness and vastness, of being locked-in and escape. This introductory scene can be seen on a symbolic level as the starting point for migration from North Africa to Europe across the Mediterranean Sea.

Nevertheless, this scene lends itself to another meaning: the place is strongly reminiscent of fortresses at the shores of Africa where Africans were shipped as slaves to America.[xii] This alternate passage which is also potentially inidicated here is, for Paul Gilroy, the initial moment of the "Black Atlantic", which "refers to a system of historical, cultural, linguistic and political interaction and communication that has its origins in the process of the enslavement of Africans"[xiii] (translated by the author). The sea is the referential point of this concept, seen as a space of transnational formations that are in motion and produce "fluid" cultures.[xiv] The "Black Atlantic" is opposed to the idea of nations in which territory, ethnicity, race, culture, and belonging are inextricably connected and whose space is the land as a location where settled societies are supposed to be rooted in clearly defined bounds.[xv]

In my opinion, the sea as represented in *WESTERN UNION: Small Boats* bears a similar meaning to what Gilroy describes, without being a mere illustration of the concept of the "Black Atlantic".[xvi] The sea appears here as the main space, the space of those who moved and still move in the context of colonialism, slavery and postcolonial power relations. The sea in *WESTERN UNION: Small Boats* closely connects or even unites these people to a community of those who have been inextricably involved in the formation of Western nations and national unions but simultaneously excluded from them. Thereby the sea also links various locations, histories, and the present to the past. This is implied from the first scene through the oscillation between a space that could be, for example, in Libya nowadays, and on the West African coast in the past. I want to suggest that the Black woman is an allegory of the described transnational community and is set in contrast to the *white* woman, who I also consider an allegoric figure.

The *white* woman appears only once in a single place: the ballroom of the Palazzo Gangi in Palermo. This location, which I consider crucial for the characterisation of the *white* woman, and which is given a great amount of attention in long tracking shots focusing on the details of the room, is very different from the sea which the Black woman is related to. It is a pompous interior of an aristocratic building, belonging to the architectural traditions of the so called "high culture". Furthermore, it is staged in opposition to the openness of the sea as a bounded European space.

The way the *white* woman walks towards the viewers, as if she were welcoming guests, gives the impression of the lady of the house, hence possibly a countess or princess. This is substantiated by the female voice in the background who names different countesses and princesses, as though introducing them in an official context while the *white* woman enters the room. Nevertheless, she elicits the idea of an outdated lonely ruler who was in power in former days, but whose dominant position has been eroded. Her performance, which is dedicated to the viewers and seems as though it is supposed to demonstrate a sovereign position, looks rather like a somewhat absurd gesture that has lost its reference point. Confronted in an uncomfortable way by her long penetrating gaze, the viewers are compelled to look away, rather than to be impressed. Furthermore, she is sharply outlined, static and with a plain surface. Her posture and her smile seem petrified, and together with her style, she appears "artifical", "superficial", exaggerated and almost ludicrous. This impression is reinforced in contrast to the Black woman, who wears simple dresses, often no shoes or jewellery, whose head is shaved and who is made up subtly. Together with her smooth movements and her gentle facial expression, she appears "natural", authentic, pure and even "sublime".

I would like to take into consideration the tradition of the allegory of Europe in order to offer an interpretation of the *white* woman. The allegory of Europe arose during the early modern times in a wide field of visual culture, along with allegories of the other continents that were known at that time, namely Africa, Asia, and America. Even though the representations of these allegories varied depending on different factors, there was a strong tendency towards representing the allegory of Europe as a queen, sitting on a throne or the globe, presiding in a dominant position over the other continents. Attributes of science, art, warfare, and Christianity were supposed to indicate her superiority over the other continents and hence her role as legitimate ruler of the world. In graduated order, Asia, Africa and America, usually ranking lowest, came after Europe. Africa and America appeared especially wild, uncivilised, barbaric, and (in a sexualized way) exotic.[xvii]

As Michael J. Wintle argues in his study "The Image of Europe", the appearance of the allegories of the continents in the previously described manner was closely connected to a new conceptualization of Europe, which was characterized by the belief in a genuine European identity that was defined in terms of religion, culture, civilization, and by the feeling of superiority towards the other continents.[xviii] The so called "discovery" of America and the colonisation of the Non-European world that started at that time, and also, as Stuart Hall argues, the expulsion of those who were considered the "Others" on the European continent, were crucial for this self-conception of Europe:

> "[...] the point when we can most confidently say that a European identity exists coincides with the defeat and expulsion of the Muslims from Spain by a militant and purified Catholic monarchy, the expulsion and forced conversion of the Jews and the launching of the great „experiment" of conquest and exploration down the African coast and into the great unknown across the Green Sea of Darkness."[xix]

Through the hegemonic narration that Europe developed out of the tradition of ancient times, accompanied "by steadily detaching Greek culture from its roots in Asia and Egypt, and relocating it firmly in Europe"[xx], the role which Non-European societies and individuals (and those who are labeled as such) played towards the formation and definition of modern Europe, are concealed. The concept of Europe as an autonomous unity "producing itself, by itself, from within itself"[xxi] was connected with the cartografic depiction of Europe as a definite space with clear external borders in the centre of the world.[xxii] The European concept that the allegories of the continents emerged in a reciprocal relationship with still plays a part in shaping a specific European self-understanding.

I want to suggest that the *white* woman is as a re-articulation of the allegory of Europe. Represented as a lonely ruler in decline, she is, in a way, replaced by the Black woman who enters after her the ballroom, while drawing the admiration of the spectators towards herself.

Finally, the Black woman leaves the room for persons who are representatives of the community she personifies: The Black man who is carrying the *white* dead man on his shoulders from the Italian coast in the ballroom of the Palazzo Gangi and who is later writhing on its floor as though drowning. The scenes which alternate with this image – people heavily moving awash – recall the thousands who have lost, and continue to lose, their lives on their journey to Europe in the Mediterranean in present times, while simultaneously recalling the slaves who were thrown overboard in the Atlantic during their abduction to America. Here, again, different historical moments are layered. This is supported by the moment when the ballroom appears to evoke the image of the hold of an old ship, which alludes to the European voyages across the sea for the purposes of conquest, colonisation and enslavement of Non-European socities and people. The subtle allusion that the ballroom could be the hold of a ship also undermines the idea that Europe is a static, spatially fixed, and self contained unity. The inverting of „inside" and „outside", or the blurring of spatial demarcations, is continued by the symbolic drowning on the floor of the ballroom. As conveyed here and in other scenes, the constitution of a wide-spread community whose routes, networks, memories, histories, and encounters are connected by the sea, coincides with a historical narrative that evokes the massive violence by Western societies towards those who they considered as their "Others". Locating the death in the ballroom can be seen as an act of re-framing it from happening removed from the European space as a result of the unpredictability of the sea, unreliable boats, missing compasses, etc., to happening due to the migration policies of Europe. While it is crucial to connect the past and present of Western national formations, as well as the movements of those who have been excluded from them within (post)colonial power relations, it should not be denied that, at certain points, the narrative of *WESTERN UNION: Small Boats* – as becomes obvious here – runs the risk of going further and *amalgamating* historically specific situations and *equating* the people who are located in them.

Contested Images of Migration, Europe, and Borders

I want to suggest that the *white* woman is as a re-articulation of the allegory of Europe. Represented as a lonely ruler in decline, she is, in a way, replaced by the Black woman who, accompanied by the representatives of the community she stands for, confidently moves into the former's realm, while drawing the admiration of the viewers towards herself. Through the encounter between these two female allegories, hegemonic concepts of national or supranational formations at large, particularly a specific perception of Europe, are challenged by a transnational community. This is suggested in different ways:

While transnational communities are caused by and are, by definition, always related to (Western) nations and national unions, they also oppose them. Migration as a distinct category of deviation from the norm, which only becomes intelligible with regard to national unities and their borders, erodes when faced with a transnational reference system of lifestyles, ways of working, family connections, political activities, etc. Simultaneously, a narrative, such as *WESTERN UNION: Small Boats*, that elevates a transnational perspective challenges the nexus of territory, community, identity, and belonging which national formations are based on.

Western nations and unions have not only dictated the movement of people who are or have been denied their fundamental rights due to their respective citizenship/status of being stateless, their race or ethnicity, their religion, etc.; they have also tried to prevent or regulate it. Against this background, migration should be seen as an act of empowerment, of claiming the right of movement. In these terms, it has a potency that is not entirely controllable by migration policies—a fact that has been described as the „autonomy of migration"[xxiii]. In this sense, also, the scattered and sporadic movements of the Black woman, and those of the people who belong to the transnational community she stands as a personification for, can be seen as a statement against the power of Europe and of the European border regime.

Finally, the idea that Europe is a unity that has developed on its own terms, which goes along with a historical narrative referring to ancient times, while negating the "entangled histories"[xxiv] with Non-European societies, is contested by a counter-narrative in *WESTERN UNION: Small Boats*. The (post)colonial violence by which these relations have been shaped is thereby brought to the forefront.

The challenge to Europe by a transnational concept of imagining communities, by the embedding of migration in a discourse of rights and agency, and by a counter-narrative to the hegemonic European historiography is, after all, staged by the allegoric encounter between the two female figures. Herein, the spectators become involved with a bias towards the Black woman. The viewers often share the visual viewpoint of the Black woman; she directs their gaze and they, therefore, identify with her and her perspective. Furthermore, through the manner in which she is captured on camera, the viewers see her through a perspective of desire. This becomes especially explicit when she enters the ballroom and seductively wins the viewers over with her performance. Given that the Black woman is an allegory, the viewers identify – through the allegoric translation – with the perspective of transnationality.

Traditional images of femininity are evoked in order to evaluate what the two female figures signify. While the Black woman represents in her „natural beauty" that which is true, good, and right and therefore elevates what she personifies, what the *white* woman stands for is denigrated by her „distorted" appearance. By associating the *white* woman with high culture and denigrated „artificiality", and the Black woman with nature and esteemed „naturalness", racialized stereotypes are sustained. This is supported by the specific spatial localization of the two female figures. While the Black woman is related to the sea, which can be interpreted as a cultural space, as described above, but which, nevertheless, also carries the connotation of being a „natural" environment, the *white* woman is located in a palace that is associated with the so-called „high culture". In connecting the *white* woman with Europe and the Black woman with the „Non-European", the racialized demarcation lines between them are furthermore upheld. Yet, they are partly blurred by the fact that there are *white* persons amongst those who belong to the transnational community. While it is crucial to recognize the fundamental role that race plays for power relations established by migration policies, it is equally important to complicate the hegemonic equation of Europe with *white* people and the "Non-European" with Black people, or people of color.

On the one hand, in *WESTERN UNION: Small Boats*, hegemonic concepts of Europe and (Western) nations and unions, and of migration, as well as concepts of the demarcations between them, are unsettled. On the other hand, the allegoric translation by which this happens maintains hegemonic ideas of gender and race. Since, traditionally, these categories are fundamental for the construction of a European "Self" and the Non-European "Other", it is crucial to upset them as well in order to destabilize not only specific ideas of migration, but also of its implicit invoked counterpart, Europe, and of the borderlines drawn between them.[xxv]

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[i] See for the concept of „entangled histories" Randeria 1999.

[ii] I use the term migration in a political sense for denoting the movement of people who become deprived of citizen and human rights by passing national borders.

[iii] See for this definition of representation further Hall 1997.

[iv] The alleged evident nature of photographs, videos, and films is explained also by their specific mediatedness. Due to their indexical character they are often perceived as quasi-identical with the represented. In doing so it remains unconsidered that photo-, video-, and film-technique are medial renderings of real events, persons or objects, and that a variety of factors is decisive for the construction of meaning in this process: the selection of the taken subjects, objects, moments, perspective, etc. out of a range of other possibilities which always includes what is *not* shown; aesthetic, contentual and textual references; the embedding into a discursive and non-discursive context; the mode and place of presentation, the interpretation of the viewers, etc.

[v] See Hall 1999, 310.

[vi] Rajchman 2000, 42.

[vii] Among them are: TRANSIT MIGRATION Research Group 2007 (see here in particular the articles by Brigitta Kuster and Marion von Osten); Wenk and Krebs 2011; Bischoff, Falk, and Kafehsy 2010; Gutberlet and Helff 2011; Brandes 2011.

[viii] *WESTERN UNION: Small Boats* also exists as lightbox installation, as film installation on five screens, and as staged version as part of the show *Cast No Shadow*.

[ix] I mention skin colour as a distinguishing feature of the figures in *WESTERN UNION: Small Boats* since I consider it a crucial category for the way they are characterized and differentiated, as will become clear later. I adopt the spelling of *white* (uncapitalised and in italics) from the editors of *Mythen, Masken und Subjekte. Kritische Weißseinsforschung in Deutschland* in order to denote that it is a constructed category without equating it with the political impetus of the capitalised spelling of Black. See Eggers et al. 2005, 12-13.

[x] See Wenk 1996, 15; Warner 1989, 13-14.

[xi] Wenk 1996, 102.

[xii] See for a cinematic reference, for example, „Sankofa" (1993) by Haile Gerima

[xiii] Gilroy 2004, 13.

[xiv] See ibid.

[xv] See ibid.; ibid., 25.

[xvi] In my methodical approach I do not consider the intentions of the artists for my analysis of their works, but rather develop my analysis based on what the artistic works represent. However, Isaac Julien himself declared that the concept of the "Black Atlantic" by Paul Gilroy affected his work fundamentally from the beginning. See Julien 2004, 212-216.

[xvii] See for a detailed iconography of the allegories of the continents Poeschel 1985.

[xviii] See Wintle 2009. 236-281; 466-467.

[xix] Hall 2003, 41.

[xx] Ibid., 40; see also Bernal 1987.

[xxi] Hall 2003, 37.

[xxii] See Wintle 2009, 228-236.

[xxiii] See Bojadžijev and Karakayalı 2007

[xxiv] See Randeria 1999.

[xxv] I want to thank my advisor, Prof. Dr. Silke Wenk, and the members of the „Kolloquium zur Methodologie kunst- und kulturwissenschaftlicher Geschlechterforschung" at the universities in Oldenburg and Bremen for their precious suggestions with regard to the interpretation of *WESTERN UNION: Small Boats* and Vladimir Serrato for the proofreading of this text.

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