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## Objects, Debris and Memory of the Mediterranean Passage: *Porto M* in Lampedusa

Federica Mazzara

This article will consider the current migratory passage in the Mediterranean towards Lampedusa with a focus on memorial objects. The arrival of refugees' boats, often victims of shipwrecks, on the island of Lampedusa, over the past decades, has produced a large quantity of "debris", which the locals stored in improvised "cemeteries" of boats that were also used as the island's landfills.

Within the island, the local Collective *Askavusa* has played a central role in rescuing whatever they could from the wrecked boats, including private photographs, shoes, pots, religious texts and other personal items that accompany the migrants on their often deadly passage of the Mediterranean.

We do not know if the owners of these objects survived the journey. However, they have come to serve as material testimonies to a continuing perilous global transit, which has exposed the inadequacies of European and international policies that continue to illegalize the right of refugees to move and survive. *Askavusa* has not simply collected the surviving

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objects, it has created a space called *Porto M*, where the objects are displayed to the public, in order to preserve something tangible from the often traumatic memory of the passage. *Porto M* is not a traditional museum, it resists a logic of mummification and exoticism. The objects provide the raw material for an ongoing project that also deals with recycling and rebirth in artistic works that become the symbol of what I here define as an “aesthetics of subversion”, which is meant to offer a new narrative around the migratory experience of these mostly faceless and nameless travellers.

The article will raise questions revolving around the complexities of bearing witness to this historical moment, commonly characterized as posing a great “threat” to the stability of the borders and identity of Europe that plays a complex role as passive bystander, perpetrator and at times “saviour”: What memorial strategies are used in order to resist the dehumanization perpetuated by the media and a dominant political discourse, according to which the boat migrants and refugees of Lampedusa are nothing more than an undefined and repetitive “dark” mass of undesired others? Identifying the objects that may provide a testimony for those who cannot speak, I shall suggest, will contribute to a process of subjectification of the migratory experience, where from debris, waste and anonymous mass, migrants eventually become subjects of power, subverting the dominant discourse revolving around their invisibility as “boat people”.

## Migratory Memory Practices

At times of global migratory passages there is an urgent need to document this daring human endeavour. Museums of migration all around the world have attempted in different ways throughout recent history to meet this challenge, with Ellis Island National Museum of Immigration being one of the most famous examples.

It goes without saying that when it comes to museum practices in a global context, one has to consider and question the role that museums traditionally have, which is generally to preserve national identities and a sense of cultural belonging. Migratory passages force us to reimagine

memory and exhibition strategies in light of cultural diversity that is usually kept at the margin of the mainstream national narratives.

There are important and fundamental issues to be considered when it comes to the sustainability of processes of memorialization put in place by Western societies in relation, for instance, to postcolonial contexts. Have the countries, which have originally performed colonial oppression and are implicitly responsible for most of the current migratory passages from Africa, the right to engage in processes and strategies of memorialization of these very passages? And if so, how to proceed in this very challenging undertaking?

In a recently concluded research project called “Cultural Memory, Migrating Modernities and Museum Practices”,<sup>1</sup> Iain Chambers and a group of researchers mainly based at the University of Naples, L’Orientale, have carried out an important study of museum practices in light of contemporary migration. Among the main aims of the project there is an interest in developing a reflection on the question of memory and belonging on a transnational scale in order “to raise awareness of the link between diverse forms of memory and heritage and the enhancement of mutual recognition for building a more inclusive approach of European identity.”<sup>2</sup>

Starting from the premise suggested by Chambers that the museum “does not so much conserve and transmit memory as produce and elaborate it”,<sup>3</sup> this article is interested in investigating the processes of production and elaboration of memorialization in spaces directly affected by migration, such as *Porto M* in Lampedusa.

The main challenge faced by museums as conceived in traditional terms within a migratory context, is to overcome national borders. As a space that aims at embracing cultural difference, museums need to question their traditional role of archiving dead matters that reflect a well-established, fixed and definite identity. In contexts of mobility, according to Chambers, the museum “loses the stability of a storehouse of institutional memories and shifts into a more fluid, de-territorialised and re-territorialised configuration of both the represented and the repressed”.<sup>4</sup> A more fluid configuration implies first of all a less institutionalized setting of the museum space, a redefinition of the practices of representation and a subversion of the process of spectatorship. As suggested by Lidia

Curti in an article emblematically titled “Beyond White Walls”, museums in an age of migration should promote an “interruption of the archive”, that prioritizes the performative dimension of the memorial event.<sup>5</sup>

The compulsion to exhibit the “other” is part of a wider representational discourse revolving around migration from a Western perspective, whereby migrants and refugees are the subjects of otherization, lacking any form of voice. Legal, political and media discourse reflect this strategy of subjugation and promote a shared set of values and meanings around migration that finds its confirmation in social behaviour. Within this logic, the subalterns cannot speak, they are only granted a collective speech that essentializes their cultural difference. Museums should then promote “complex rites”,<sup>6</sup> whereby the objectification of the others—which is typical of Western institutionalized practices when it comes to the representation of cultural difference—is replaced by a new scopic regime, a new way of seeing. In this new regime, the “subalterned” are given a voice and the right to claim a different status than that of victims and/or invaders of national bodies, while the physical boundaries, the “white walls” of the museums are also overcome. This reorganization of the memorial space, in light of contemporary migrations, entails the possibility of generating new memories and a new aesthetics that in the context of this article I define as an “aesthetics of subversion” (Mazzara 2015, 2016a, b).<sup>7</sup> The subversion promoted by a new memorial practice implies first of all the reassessment of the margin, which in bell hooks’ terms, becomes a “space of radical openness, a profound edge”,<sup>8</sup> in other words, a space where it is possible to perform a certain form of resistance.

In museums as potential spaces of subversion, migrants become subjects of power who challenge the fixed, self-contained, imagined community of the nation by activating a logic of exposure that reveals an uncomfortable shared memory, between the insiders and the outsiders of that community. This, according to Iain Chambers, transforms the museum into “a venue able to promote affective strategies of memorialization”, where “the sensorial bodies of spectators are activated and take us beyond the compulsion to exhibit into an altogether more porous political space”.<sup>9</sup> A place currently reflecting this potential is, as we shall see, *Porto M* in Lampedusa.

## Porto M: From Debris to Objects of Memory

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*Porto M*, which can be translated into English as ‘Harbor M’—where M stands for many different things according to their founders, including *Mediterraneo* (Mediterranean), *Migrazione* (Migration) *Militarizzazione* (Militarization), *Mare* (Sea), *Memoria* (Memory), *Miscuglio* (Mixing) and *Mobilitazione* (Mobilization)—is the base of a local association called *Askavusa* (which means ‘barefoot woman’ in Sicilian dialect). *Askavusa* was founded in 2009 following demonstrations against the creation of a new Centre for Identification and Expulsion (CIE) on the island, as a result of the increasing number of arrivals from Libya. This represents the first attempt by *Askavusa* to subvert the process of militarization that is still ongoing in Lampedusa.

The purpose of the association is generally to promote anti-racism and multiculturalism, especially in relation to the arrival of boat migrants and refugees, while the collective also supports counter-information about the island, documenting its state of abandonment and isolation; all this within a wider struggle against capitalism and class issues that has at times resulted in obstructing their initiatives, including the museum project.<sup>10</sup> Currently, one of the main aims of the collective is to challenge the process of militarization of Lampedusa, as the result of the patrolling of the Mediterranean Sea to resist immigration. This process of militarization reflects a wider discourse on the “Spectacularization of the Border”<sup>11</sup> that has created a state of emergency strongly challenged and opposed by *Askavusa*.

In order to carry out its political battles, the collective has fostered and encouraged a series of events with the aim of propagating a different image of Lampedusa than the one of the “sentinel of Fortress Europe”, perpetuated by the political discourse and the mainstream media. *Askavusa* has encouraged a process of rehabilitation of the border, being aware of the socio-economical and political marginality that Lampedusa encapsulates; an island on the border of Europe, not simply for those who arrive there from outside—the refugees and migrants—but also for the dwellers of this tiny land who feel isolated, forgotten and left behind, despite the island functioning as the stage of a global “crisis”.

Among the most important initiatives supported and organized by Askavusa was the *LampedusaInFestival*, a yearly film competition, which represents a moment of exchange, dialogue and analysis of contemporary issues revolving around migration, borderization and militarization. The festival has been an important showcase for the collective, where also migrants and refugees have been involved in various ways, especially in its first editions: as artists presenting their film projects and performances or as participants in debates and dialogues.<sup>12</sup>

The participatory method used by the collective ascribes to the protagonists of the migratory passage the possibility of self-representation and self-narration. These participatory acts facilitated by the collective represent, according to Brambilla, “counter-hegemonic borderscapes”, which refer to those practices that articulate alternative subjectivities and points of view and allow a potential subversion and substitution of a hegemonic discourse:

The *LampedusaInFestival* reveals that migrants are gradually contributing to overcoming the binary opposition between oppression and resistance at the EU southern external border, highlighting the urgency to focus our attention on a critical questioning of the ways in which more ambiguous, subtle strategies for existence and living in and across the Euro/African borderland are constructed by migrants, despite violent and oppressive border and migration regimes.<sup>13</sup>

According to the perspective of this article, these practices of active participation in a counter-discourse to a mainstream narrative about immigration into Europe—via Lampedusa—are an effective way of displacing the border dimension of the island, revealing its potential to become a “site of conflict”, in bell hooks’ words, while also including the migrants and refugees into the political space of representation. In this process of displacement, migrants and refugees gain the possibility to come out of the invisible mass to which they are commonly relegated, in order to recover a subjectivity that reflects the right to claim a voice in the constitution of a new citizenship.

Unfortunately, Askavusa has recently decided not to run the yearly Festival in the next years, and to replace it with a series of events, not

necessarily using cinema as a preferred medium, throughout the year. 194  
 This was partly due to their resistance to accepting any funding consid- 195  
 ered inadequate, in line with their struggle against capitalism: 196

We started growing a strong hatred for the capitalist system, for the cul- 197  
 tural hegemony of the media, and for all culture that is financed by banks, 198  
 by foundations such as ENI, for example, or by other organizations that on 199  
 the one hand destroy entire territories and produce poverty and exodus, 200  
 and on the other they wash their hand and conscience by supporting festi- 201  
 vals and films revolving on so-called “social” issues.<sup>14</sup> 202

Within this tension between the recognition of the importance of 203  
 migrants’ subjectivity and the collective’s struggle against the capital- 204  
 ist system, *Askavusa* has undertaken an important, complicated, and at 205  
 times contradictory journey—still ongoing—that deals with the heritage 206  
 of the migratory passage docking in Lampedusa and that has found in 207  
*Porto M* its *raison d’être*. 208

*Porto M* is the heart of the collective. It was originally born with the 209  
 intention of storing some objects that the members of *Askavusa* had 210  
 found in Lampedusa’s Imbriacola landfill where the migrants’ boats were 211  
 abandoned. It has now become a much more elaborate and political space 212  
 that reflects the collective’s agenda to resist any attempt to “spectacular- 213  
 ize” the island as a militarized border. The story of *Porto M* is fascinating 214  
 and full of controversies. I will summarize some of the most important 215  
 passages that led to the birth of this highly critical space. 216

The idea of collecting objects that originally belonged to those under- 217  
 taking the journey by boat from Africa towards Lampedusa, was first 218  
 explored by the leader of *Askavusa* Giacomo Sferlazzo in 2005. Sferlazzo 219  
 is a musician and a visual artist and, since childhood, he has been inter- 220  
 ested in recovering material from processes of deterioration, in order to 221  
 instil a new life in them, usually through a process of artistic remodelling. 222  
 The recovering of the migrants’ objects started by chance, when—during 223  
 an inspection in the landfill, later called the cemetery of boats—Sferlazzo 224  
 came across a series of wooden boat boards and a worn Koran that most 225  
 probably belonged to one of the travellers. From this first meeting with 226  
 the objects came his first work, *Verso Lampedusa* (Fig. 10.1), which 227





**Fig. 10.1** *Verso Lampedusa*, Giacomo Sferlazzo (F. Mazzara screenshot)

Sferlazzo realized by recycling fragments of boat boards and worn texts left behind by the migrants.

This act of recovering and rebirth of wasted objects belonging to the “wretched of the Earth” is particularly meaningful because it reflects a broader idea of “rehabilitation” of human waste, or “wasted lives”, to use Bauman’s words, lives that are considered to be like “trash” in the eye of global capitalism; lives like those of migrants, asylum seekers and refugees themselves, perceived in the mainstream Western discourse as “redundant, rejects and refuse of society”.<sup>15</sup>

With its founding in 2015, a still ongoing process of recovering was instigated by the urgent need to save these objects from the inevitable

destruction of the boats on which the migrants and refugees travelled. 239  
 The idea of displaying these objects came only afterwards. Originally they 240  
 were stored in the houses of the members of the collective, who had no 241  
 clear plan for what to do with them. 242

The search for objects in the landfill became consistent and system- 243  
 atized in 2009, when Sferlazzo found a box containing letters, pictures, 244  
 religious texts and music CDs coming from Ethiopia, as they later 245  
 found out. The experience of collecting the “migrants’ objects” has been 246  
 described by the Askavusa’s members as a “macabre” journey, difficult to 247  
 cope with: 248

Every day we found something that was leaving us speechless: pictures, 249  
 diaries, shoes, cooking tools [...] ghosts and all sorts of energies were wan- 250  
 dering in the landfill, the chorus of the last ones was reaching our bowels; 251  
 they were looking for bodies to stand with, mouths to shout with, fists to 252  
 fight with, eyes to cry with, eyes to smile with.<sup>16</sup> 253

It is in that very moment that the artist and the other members of 254  
 the Collective realize that that casual search, that Sferlazzo defines as an 255  
 “archaeology of the soul”, highlighting the spiritual component of that 256  
 experience of search and recovering, was bringing them towards a more 257  
 political journey. As Sferlazzo states: “the ruins I found were political 258  
 ruins, the ruins of a European continent still founded on the dominion of 259  
 the other”.<sup>17</sup> Only after numerous reflections and discussions, a decision 260  
 was taken that these objects should be shared with the public, according 261  
 to a strategy that has evolved over time and in various and complex ways. 262  
 At the end of 2010 an installation with migrants’ objects was arranged in 263  
 the first Askavusa’s headquarter (see Fig. 10.2). 264

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The objects were displayed randomly and free from any attempt to 265  
 define their story, belonging or function. No labels, no cases were used 266  
 to ‘protect’ them, to fix them in an ordered space and time. Worn shoes 267  
 were hanging from a blue ceiling, floating on an imagined sea/sky, sug- 268  
 gesting a space in-between life and death. The objects were there as wit- 269  
 nesses of an incomplete past, as mementos of a journey where Lampedusa 270  
 is more than a simple destination, it is a place that participates in and 271  
 shares the marginality and displacement experienced by the migrants and 272



**Fig. 10.2** F. Mazzara, *Museum of migration in the first Askavusa headquarter*

refugees. In the same room Sferlazzo's work of art, *Nell'aria, nella terra, nel mare* (In the Air, on the Earth, in the Sea) (Fig. 10.3), that recycles the wasted objects of migrants, was displayed as suggesting a possible rebirth from the waste, the outcast, the forgotten.<sup>18</sup>

As Alessandra De Angelis suggests:

Sferlazzo reassembles and reworks what he finds with incredible care, an almost loving devotion, always ready to find new meanings in the encounter between his artistic vocations and the others' desire for self-expression. His goal is also to give voice to the remains of a spiritual travel from both sides of the sea, which is confined to silence because of the political, and primary urgencies of the situation.<sup>19</sup>

In the following years Sferlazzo and the collective were approached by several people who started developing an interest in the project of



**Fig. 10.3** *Nell'aria, nella terra, nel mare*, Giacomo Sferlazzo (F. Mazzara screenshot)

recovering the “migrant objects”. Among them, the Sicilian art restorer 286  
Giuseppe Basile started a dialogue with them in 2011, about the pos- 287  
sibility of archiving and preserving these objects with the idea of even- 288  
tually displaying them in a local museum. This genuine interest led to 289  
a fruitful collaboration that was interrupted by the death of Basile in 290  
2013 and after the collective changed its view about the possibility of 291  
engaging in a museum project, due to a series of unfortunate events, that 292  
discouraged *Askavusa* to pursue this project.<sup>20</sup> In July 2013, as a result 293  
of the collaboration between *Askavusa* and Basile—which also involved 294  
other organizations that had showed a serious commitment to the heri- 295  
tage of the Mediterranean passage and to the realization of a museum of 296

migration in Lampedusa<sup>21</sup>—a temporary exhibition was organized with some of the objects. The exhibition called *Con gli oggetti dei migranti* (With the objects of migrants) represents the very first attempt to put in place a more structured exhibition practice in relation to the “migrants’ objects”, found in the cemetery of boats in Lampedusa by Askavusa. This exhibition, organized by Gianluca Gatta and Costanza Meli,<sup>22</sup> was considered the germ of what was already defined as an Archive and Centre of Documentation in the Mediterranean, the Museum of Migration of Lampedusa and Linosa,<sup>23</sup> which aimed at including a very well-planned series of activities, such as the collaboration with international artists in residence, who were expected to make use of some of the migrants’ objects in their works of art,<sup>24</sup> according to the strategy of recycling already adopted by Sferlazzo. Yet despite this modest approach proposed by the *Associazione Isole*, and all the others who were sharing the enthusiasm for the creation of a Museum of Migration of Lampedusa, *Askavusa* quit the project at the end of 2013, in order to pursue the original idea of an uncompromised display of objects that should not count on any form of institutionalized commitment and on any attempt at categorization and fixation.

This choice marked the birth of *Porto M* in 2013, which, according to *Askavusa*, is a place that must reflect first of all the political commitment of the collective’s members inside the island, their effort to make their voice heard for the migrants’ and locals’ rights. *Porto M*, the anti-institutional museum is defined by the collective as a space in which to pursue “practices of memory, politics and community”, and where to exhibit the objects of the migrants. *Porto M* is now located inside a cave—once used by shipwrights—that faces the little dock commonly used on the island for disembarking the migrants.<sup>25</sup> This location is particularly meaningful for the project pursued by Askavusa, which is to recover a memory that is related on the one hand to the current experience of Lampedusa as a destination of the African and global diaspora, on the other to the gradually lost identity of the island as a fishing spot with a strong tradition of boat crafting. As in their first exhibitory attempt in *Askavusa*’s first base, in *Porto M* the migrants’ objects are displayed without following a specific scheme. When entering the space through



**Fig. 10.4** F. Mazzara, *Main entrance of Porto M*

the massive door covered with colourful wooden boards from the boats found in the landfill (Fig. 10.4), one gets the impression to be, as Gianluca Gatta suggests, inside a lost and found office, where the objects seem to wait for their owners to bring them back home.<sup>26</sup>

They are objects that suggest a humble domestic environment: On the left side, a few wooden shelves with objects that suggest personal care: toothbrushes, toothpastes, deodorants, wet wipes, combs, brushes and medicines; on a lower shelf is found a series of mobile lamps presumably used at night in the boats. Above the main door, other shelves display some food items, mostly canned food and pasta. On the right side, we find an interesting exhibit of objects made of pots, pans and teapots, all arranged symmetrically (Fig. 10.5), giving a sense of an ordered and tidy domestic space.

Next to this, a series of sacred books (including worn Bibles and Korans), with their torn pages open, are framed above by a golden iso-thermal blanket, one of those used to wrap the migrants after their rescue, and a little wooden statue, the whole forming a sort of shrine reminiscent





Fig. 10.5 F. Mazzara, *Pots and pans in Porto M*

of the prayers of hope and sorrow that migrants must perform during their journeys (see Fig. 10.6).

The latter arrangement suggests that behind what seems to be a random juxtaposition and positioning of objects, there is a very careful and diligent way of proceeding, a precise aesthetics that even if it does not rely on labels or textual explanations, still reflects the complicated relationship that *Askavusa* has developed with the objects that, according to the Collective, “keep and release energy”.<sup>27</sup> The energy released by the objects is, according to *Askavusa*, impossible to define and fix and therefore it interrupts any logic of archiving. The objects talk back to different viewers, as symbols of a historical global passage, but also as tangible memories of the individuals behind these objects, who have carried them in their journeys and imbued them with hope and affection. This is well shown in the short documentary by Somali journalist Zakaria Mohamed Ali, *To Whom It May Concern*,<sup>28</sup> that follows his journey back



**Fig. 10.6** F. Mazzara, *A temporary installation of religious texts and an isothermal blanket*

to the island of Lampedusa, where he had previously arrived as a boat ref- 364  
 ugee, in order to recover friends' objects lost or taken by the police once 365  
 rescued and disembarked on the island. Mohamed Ali goes back to the 366  
 centre, where migrants and refugees are taken after being rescued, to ask 367  
 about those objects: "where can the belongings of the people who landed 368  
 be found? They are the memories that we've lost, the materials we are 369  
 looking for. Is there any place where things get thrown away, or maybe set 370  
 aside?" (Mohamed Ali, 2013).<sup>29</sup> The guards of the centre have no answer 371  
 to Zakaria's questions. They do not know where these objects are, they 372  
 cannot admit these objects are commonly taken to the landfill, because 373  
 considered as waste, and—even worse—potential carriers of disease. 374

This is how the role played by *Porto M* becomes crucially important. 375  
 Despite the criteria of improvisation and random juxtaposition, the col- 376  
 location of the "migrants' objects" in *Porto M* suggests a sense of care 377



that reflects the collective's commitment to protect these objects. The *Askavusa* members define themselves as the "guardians" of the objects displayed,<sup>30</sup> while pursuing a political action that targets global injustices. The subjectivities of migrants, the personal stories behind these objects, is less prioritized in the latest approach the collective has developed with the objects, and with the issue of migration in general; however, they clearly state that the journey is not over and that their refusal to archive, name or restore the objects is not necessarily the right one, but it is their subversive way to frame a very complicated issue that deals with memory, ethics and trauma:

With this, we are not trying to say that studying the objects, identifying and naming them, is a wrong thing. We do not know what is right and what is wrong. We do not know what other people should do. We only know what is the direction we want to take in relation to these objects (something that is never definitive). Everyone has their own motivations, arguments to bring forward.

We are simply searching for the road that brought us to that landfill.<sup>31</sup>

As part of the future development of *Porto M*, *Askavusa* intends to provide some informative boards that will further help an understanding of their political commitment and agenda and document an uncomfortable shared memory. As specifically explained in the website for the current crowd-funding of *Porto M*:

Alongside these objects, the collective will put together information boards to illustrate the causes that lead thousands to flee their countries, to explain neo-colonialism, to inform viewers of the processes of *militarisation* and *media abuse* that have been operating on the island of Lampedusa, and to shed light on the conditions within migrant detention centres.<sup>32</sup>

*Porto M* as a heritage space has therefore the potential to offer a different view on the current experience of migrating towards the Western world, a different and subvertive narrative that reveals the potential to interrupt the archive. Apart from being an expository space, *Porto M* is also a place where other cultural initiatives take place, including book presentations,

performances and debates, while a small library in memory of Thomas Sankara has been located.<sup>33</sup> In other words, *Porto M* suggests a more fluid configuration of memorialization that implies, first of all, a less institutionalized layout of the museum space and a redefinition of the practices of representation by performing an aesthetics of that prioritizes the performative dimension of the memorial event.

From the perspective of this article, heritage spaces have the potential to offer a different view on the current experience of migrating towards the Western world, a different narrative that reveals an open archive, constantly negotiated for and with the migrants and refugees in an attempt to promote acts of dissent towards any effort to institutionalize memory. This subversion should aim at activating the gaze of the observer and the objects displayed. In *Artforum Features* Tania Bughuera, a Cuban installation and performance artist, suggests that in the not-so-new twenty-first century we should look for a museum:

that abandons the idea of *looking* for the idea of *activation*; one that is not a building or even a fixed space but a series of events and a program; one where the institution gives up authority; one that is dedicated to research into the practical usefulness of art; one where art entails actual social transformation [...]. One where [...] objects are contextualized instead of historicized. One where things are not exhibited but activated, given use-value instead of representing it. One that is not a structure but a moment; that is not a place to visit but a presence.<sup>34</sup>

A process of activation is what can make a heritage space, such as *Porto M*, highly political, where the expository process is open and evolves and where, the performance of the “complex rite of memory”,<sup>35</sup> can find a possible expression.

## Notes

1. Mela Project: <http://wp2.mela-project.eu/>. Accessed 28 September 2015.
2. “Brochure of Mela Project. RF02—Cultural Memory, Migrating Modernity and Museum Practices.” Accessed 28 September 2015: <http://wp2.mela-project.eu/wp/pages/research-field-02-final-brochure>, p. 9.

3. Iain Chambers, "The Museum of Migrating Modernities," in *Cultural Memories, Migrating Modernities and Museum Practices*, ed. Beatrice Ferrara (Milan: Politecnico di Milano, 2012), 23.
4. Chambers, "The Museum of Migrating Modernities," 31.
5. Lidia Curti, "Beyond White Walls," in *Cultural Memories, Migrating Modernities and Museum Practices*, ed. Beatrice Ferrara (Milan: Politecnico di Milano, 2012), 188.
6. Curti, "Beyond White Walls," 188.
7. Federica Mazzara, "Spaces of Visibility for the Migrants of Lampedusa: The Counter Narrative of the Aesthetic Discourse." *Italian Studies* 40, no. 4 (2015): 449–465; Federica Mazzara, "Subverting the Narratives of the Lampedusa Borderscape." *Crossings. Journal of Migration and Culture* 7, no. 2 (2016).
8. bell hooks, *Yearning. Race, Gender and Cultural Politics* (London: Turnaround), 149.
9. Iain Chambers, "Voices in the Ruins", in *The Ruined Archive*, ed. Iain Chambers, Giulia Grechi, and Mark Nash, (Milan: Politecnico di Milano, 2014), 11.
10. To learn more about this complexity see, Gatta Gianluca, "Stranded Traces: Migrants' Objects, Self-Narration and Ideology in a Failed Museum Project," *Crossings. Journal of Migration and Culture* (2016).
11. The concept of 'Border Spectacle' was first introduced by Nicholas De Genova in the context of the Mexican American border (see Nicholas De Genova, "Migrant 'Illegality' and Deportability in Everyday Life," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 31 (2002): 419–447 and *Working the Boundaries: Race, Space, and 'Illegality' in Mexican Chicago* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005).
12. To learn more about the genesis of the Festival, see Ilaria Vecchi, 'The Experience of the Askavusa Association: Migrant Struggle with Cultural Activities,' *Crossings. Journal of Migration and Culture* (2016).
13. Brambilla Chiara, 'Navigating the Euro/African Border and Migration Nexus through the *Borderscapes* Lens: Insights from the LampedusaInFestival,' in C. Brambilla, J. Laine, James W. Scott, and Gianluca Bocchi, *Borderscapes: Imaginations and Practices of Border Making* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2015), 111–122.
14. Askavusa, *Porto M*: <https://askavusa.wordpress.com/con-gli-oggetti/>. Assessed 1 August 2016. My translation.
15. Zygmund Bauman, "Wasted Lives: Modernity's Collateral Casualties," in *Breaching Borders: Art, Migrants and the Metaphor of Waste*, ed. Juliet Sreyn and Nadja Stamselberg (London-New York: I.B. Tauris, 2014), 29.

## 10 Objects, Debris and Memory of the Mediterranean Passage...

16. Askavusa, Porto M: <https://askavusa.wordpress.com/con-gli-oggetti/>. 483  
Assessed 1 August 2016. My translation. 484
17. Giacomo Sferlazzo, "Un'idea di museo. Il progetto di archivio e documentazione sulle migrazioni di Lampedusa," in *Bibbia e Corano a Lampedusa. Il lamento e la lode. Liturgie migranti*, ed. Arnoldo Mosca Mondadori, Alfonso Cacciatore and Alessandro Triulzi (Brescia: Edizioni La Scuola, 2014). My translation. 485  
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18. In the meantime, *Askavusa* obtained permission to recover and expose 490  
three intact boats that became part of the journey of subversion that 491  
started with the collection of individual objects. As Gatta observes: "The 492  
boat—in this context—becomes the symbol of a condition of precari- 493  
ousness that leads to solidarity [...]. The boat is the symbolic tool used 494  
in order to affirm, here and now, a different way of experiencing the 495  
relationship with those engaged in the crossing of the black 496  
Mediterranean". Gianluca Gatta and Giusy Muzzopappa, "Middle 497  
Passages', Musealizzazione e soggettività a Bristol e Lampedusa," *Eстетica. 498  
Studi e ricerche* 1 (2012): 178. My translation. 499
19. Alessandra De Angelis, "A Museum at the Margin of the Mediterranean. 500  
Between Caring for Memory and the Future," in *Cultural Memories, 501  
Migrating Modernities and Museum Practices*, ed. Beatrice Ferrara (Milan: 502  
Politecnico di Milano, 2012), 37. 503
20. The whole story is described in detail in the *Porto M's* homepage, where 504  
the Askavusa collective tries to explain the series of complicated events 505  
that led them to the decision not to create a museum of migration in 506  
Lampedusa (<https://askavusa.wordpress.com/con-gli-oggetti/>). Also see 507  
Gianluca Gatta's recent article that provides a criticism of the decision of 508  
the Collective to abandon the project (Gatta Gianluca, "Stranded Traces: 509  
Migrants' Objects, Self-Narration and Ideology in a Failed Museum 510  
Project"). 511
21. Including Fondazione Migrantes, Legambiente, the Archivio Memorie 512  
Migranti and the Associazione Isole. 513
22. The exhibition showcased some objects, including some texts (diaries 514  
extracts and letters) restored by the Sicilian Regional Library according 515  
to the directions of Basile. 516
23. The museum received administrative approval in February 2013. 517
24. The first artist in residence was the Palestinian artist Emily Jacir. 518
25. The dock is called *molo favaloro* and is now fenced and patrolled. 519
26. Gatta, Muzzopappa, "Middle Passages," 172. 520
27. Porto M homepage: <https://askavusa.wordpress.com/con-gli-oggetti/> 521

28. Mohamed Ali Zakaria, *To Whom It May Concern*, video, Rome: 17', Archivio Memorie Migranti, 2013.
29. From the English subtitles of the film.
30. This expression was used by Giacomo Sferlazzo, during my interview with him in July 2015.
31. Askavusa, Porto M: <https://askavusa.wordpress.com/con-gli-oggetti/>. Accessed 1 August 2016.
32. Askavusa, Porto M—spazio di lotta, memoria e storie di mare: <https://www.produzionidalbasso.com/project/portom-spazio-di-lotta-memoria-e-storie-di-mare/>. Accessed 1 August 2016.
33. Sankara was a Burkinabè political leader. The library is made of books donated by those who sustain the Askavusa's collective project and *Porto M*. The books mainly revolve around issues of neo- and postcolonialism.
34. Tania Bruguera, "Features. Tania Bruguera," *Artforum*, XLVIII, 10 (2010): 299.
35. Curti, "Beyond White Walls," 188.

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[AU5]

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