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Chapter 4

Imagining Europe's Borders

Commemorative Art on Migrant Tragedies

Karina Horsti

Mediated images of boats full of migrants, migrants surviving shipwrecks, and bodies on beaches have become iconic ways to represent undocumented migration in Europe since the 1990s. While undocumented migration by boat in the southern European sea borders makes only a very small percentage of irregular migration, it is the most mediatized and dramatized representation of migration.¹ The 1990s are marked as the period when the European Union (EU) began tightening and militarizing its borders, particularly in a phenomenon that the activists call Fortress Europe. European human rights activists estimate that more than twenty thousand people died at Europe's borders between 1993 and 2015 (United for Intercultural Action 2015) and almost four thousand in the year 2015 alone (International Organization for Migration 2015). Increased reinforcement of external EU borders is connected to the Schengen process that has diminished the control at the nation–state border of twenty-six participating countries. In addition, European countries and the EU have extended border management beyond the actual border to neighboring countries. This means exporting border violence outside of Europe in the form of locating detention camps outside of the EU and making agreements with countries such as Libya and Morocco. Moreover, the European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders of the Member States of the European Union (Frontex), has patrolled the seashores of the African continent in order to prevent migrant boats from leaving toward Europe.²

This chapter draws on theorization of the border and the practice of bordering in connection to two publicly displayed art works that touch on undocumented migration by boat in the context of European southern sea borders. The notion of the border is examined by following Étienne Balibar's (2002) thinking on European citizenship and difference and Edward Casey's (2011) work on place and space. Both of these philosophers point to the constructed nature of borders and to the ways in which borders have become increasingly dispersed within contemporary globalized societies. Moreover, the chapter examines critical potential of art in the intersection of European border regimes and mediatized societies.

The first artwork, *At Crossroads* by Kalliopi Lemos, was exhibited at the Brandenburg Gate in Berlin during the twentieth anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall in 2009. This installation of damaged migrant boats collected from the shores of the Greek island Chios and situated at the financial center of Europe in Berlin reminds the celebrating public that exclusions and borderings of a different kind exist in Europe. Moreover, the work visualizes and reterritorializes the so-called border zone to the imagined center of Europe. The second is the *Porta d'Europa (Gateway to Europe)* a memorial monument by Mimmo Paladino, which was created on the Italian island of Lampedusa in 2008. In the form of a gate, this permanent artwork rises from the rugged landscape by the sea to commemorate the migrants who died in their attempted crossing from North Africa to EU territory. The gate evokes visual imagination of a wall within which the gate offers an opening—making visible the border that exists, but is invisible for (most) Europeans. Both works leave the spectator with questions about humanity and humanitarianism, and the ethical treatment of people who fall in liminal spaces between categories.

European Undocumented Migration by Boat

Undocumented migration, which refers to unauthorized entry, residence, or work, became a policy concern across Europe at the turn of the twenty-first century. Simultaneous to the abolition of internal borders between Schengen countries, migration of so-called third country nationals became tighter (Düvell 2011; Triandafyllidou 2010) as did cooperation among the police, customs, and judiciary, particularly through the border control agency Frontex, which was created in 2004 as a “compensatory measure” to Schengen (Vaughan-Williams 2008: 66). Therefore, the recent accelerated bordering of Europe is constitutive of the integration of Europe itself. The dark side of this integration reflects how restrictions in border and migration control have resulted in more-dangerous means of travel, such as migration by small and overcrowded fishing boats through rough seas, along dangerous routes.

For centuries the Mediterranean has been a region of crossover mobility and cultural hybridity, similar to *la frontera*, or the United States–Mexico border. Bordering practices and militarization of the border that have accelerated after North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) of 1994 and 9/11 terrorist attacks in 2001 produce death and suffering of migrants. The U.S. government imagines and constructs the United States–Mexico edge as a linear border. However, it is more like a boundary, and the recognition of the historical—and, as Edward Casey (2011: 385) points out, the most likely future—condition of *la frontera* as a boundary and a borderland would be the most ethical attitude toward the current situation. Casey (2011: 393) argues, “Ultimately, once it [the constructed and imagined border] has outlived its political or economic or symbolic usefulness, every border is destined to become a boundary and to return to an abiding state of nature.” The word *boundary* in Casey’s (2011) theoretical framework is a

more porous and relaxed circumstance than a border. It allows movement and exchange. Boundary is a permeable edge that does not resist crossing from either direction.

The conditions of mobility in the Mediterranean region have changed in the past thirty years, mainly because of structural shifts in the politics and economics in the region. For instance, northern Mediterranean countries gained economic growth and political stability after joining the EU, which eventually shifted emigration patterns in these countries into that of immigration. Moreover, many Arab countries in the region, particularly Libya, became destinations for Sub-Saharan and Asian labor migrants in the 1990s, partly because of Gaddafi's pan-African migration policies (de Haas 2011: 59–63.) Another chapter in the Mediterranean migration by boat began from political upheavals in the North African countries in 2010 and the NATO strikes to Libya that followed in 2011, which generated record numbers of migrants crossing the sea to Europe by boat, as well as an increasing number of migrant deaths at sea. Sub-Saharan migrant workers were no longer welcome in Libya (Council of Europe 2012; Frontex 2012.) Furthermore, human rights violations in countries like Eritrea and armed conflicts in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Syria have continued to be major reasons for increasing numbers of undocumented migrants in the 2010s. In 2015, the numbers of asylum seekers in Europe rose compared to the previous years, particularly in the smugglers' sea route from Turkey to Greece. People avoided registration in Greece that is suffering from austerity measures and they continued to North European countries through Western Balkans.

Shipwrecks of migrant boats have created controversies between European states and other agents, such as the Council of Europe and the European Parliament. There have been several deaths at sea in which the responsibility of rescue has been unclear. The media and the Council of Europe have brought public attention to large shipwrecks and have pressured states

and other stakeholders into taking responsibility (Council of Europe 2012). While unauthorized migration by boat has been visible in the media coverage since the 1990s, only a small percentage of irregular migrants come to Europe this way. For example, in Italy 60–70 percent of irregular migrants overstay their legal permits (Clandestino Project 2009: 74).

Ideas about borders in the Mediterranean are constantly being symbolically constructed in the mediatized coverage of migrations by boat. Images of arriving boats and detained migrants construct an imagined border zone where the European frontier ends. Similarly, the mediatization of policing and Frontex operations construct a sense of European border that is securitized and guarded against migrants who become defined as unwanted, and sometimes dangerous, strangers (Horsti 2008). This circulation of meanings and images assists in defining the concept of a European border, which again legitimates control practices and immigration policies in locations beyond the borderlands (Balibar 2002: 87–88). Thus, mediatization of boat migration and Frontex operations construct an imagined geography of European identity. With this term I refer to Brian Osborne's (2001) concept of geography of identity that he developed in the context of the nation–state. According to Osborne (2001: 1) "Peoples' identification with distinctive places is essential for the cultivation of an awareness—an 'a-where-ness'—of national identity." In addition to landscapes, memorials, and notable buildings that Osborne refers to, such imaginings are also constructed through mediation.

The bordering of Europe has required an increasing investment. Frontex's budget has grown over twentyfold since its establishment in 2004, from six million euros to 143 euros in 2015. The directorate general for Home Affairs of the European Commission used nearly half of its Solidarity and Management of Migration Flows Programme to pay for activities, equipment,

and technological infrastructure for border control and just 17 percent toward asylum procedures and the reception of refugees (Amnesty International 2014).

Moreover, this investment reaches beyond Europe since the EU and individual countries have externalized border control to neighboring countries in order to prevent migrants from reaching Europe. Cooperation arrangements with Libya, Morocco, and Turkey have turned these countries into a European buffer zone. (Amnesty International 2014; Mezzadra and Neilson 2012: 68; Vaughan-Williams 2008: 67). The bordering practices are not unanimously agreed on in Europe, but cause constant struggles and negotiations between countries. The North tends to criticize the South not only for the low human rights standards inherent in their migration controls, but also for being too lax with policies such as the regularization of migrants and registering of asylum seekers. These relocations of borders reflect a double border character of colonial empires where there is a boundary between the metropolis and subjected territory on the one hand, and a boundary between the empire and the rest of the world on the other hand (Balibar 2006: 4). In Europe there is no one linear border, but rather there are multiple heterogenous bordering practices that are aimed to control elasticity and the porousness of boundary regions.

Migrants in European territory often live in a precarious situation, particularly those who struggle without papers or with temporary permits. Human rights organizations report inhumane conditions in detention centers in the southern countries and hardship among those who move north. Migrants are marked as different by culture, economics, ethnicity, and race in everyday situations. The border produces an optic that differentiates migrants into those who might integrate and those who remain external (Mezzadra and Neilson 2012: 68). Following Balibar (2002: 75), Kartik Varada Raj (2006: 517) argues that migrants embody borders and the borders

follow them in their daily lives. Therefore, migrants are forced into liminal spaces, as he expresses: “This violence not only finds its expression in overt violence—beatings, arrest, detention of migrants—but also pervades the social realm in the most quotidian of instances, such that certain classes of people are made to inhabit an everyday limbo of precarity and indeterminacy in which they have to *be* borders” (Raj 2006: 517; italics in the original).

These examples signify how borders are dispersed across societies—both within and outside Europe—in ways that Étienne Balibar (2003: 9) at the turn of the century termed “a barely hidden apartheid.” In European societies, noncitizens who originate both from the global South live in different kinds of precarious situations in which their right of belonging is under constant suspicion, reflected, for instance, in differentiated treatment in health care, housing, and jobs. Moreover, while Eastern European Roma are citizens of the EU they often fall into liminal spaces and are treated as noncitizens. This process of differentiation has only accelerated after Balibar’s analysis.

Contemporary Art in the Intersection of Place, Space, and Commemoration

Within this context, two artists—Kalliopi Lemos and Mimmo Paladino—displayed their public art works that speak volumes about contemporary migration experience and bordering practices in Europe. While irregular migration and bordering are highly mediatized in Europe and artists have worked with the themes,³ a cultural amnesia regarding migrant tragedies has existed at the level of public acknowledgment, particularly at the European level. Attention to commemoration of migrant death has emerged gradually in the 2000s, specifically in connection to large shipwrecks such as the October 3, 2013, accident near Lampedusa in which 369 migrants died. This cultural amnesia is one motivation behind the two artworks: they aim to bring awareness to

migrant tragedies and commemorate those who have suffered. Moreover, images of both artworks have been circulated across mainstream and social media, and through these mediations they reconstruct the “geography of European identity.” I decided to examine these two artworks in particular for two reasons: their rare commemorative aspect and their critical intervention to the notion of the border. Below I examine Lemos’s and Paladino’s works in the intersection of European border regimes and mediatized societies and focus on theoretizations of the border, particularly on the ways in which borders can be understood to have been territorially and socially dispersed. My writing on art is based on my cultural studies–oriented scholarship in media and migration research. This research offers a ground for thinking critically about art but also for examining the cultural, social, and political contexts of the creative process. Nevertheless, for me art always has multiple meanings and openings that can never be explained or reduced into a particular politics or discourse.

In both cases, the sculptures are displayed in public spaces—in a city square in the case of Berlin and in an empty space away from town center in the case of Lampedusa. Thus, a short discussion of spatial aesthetics and politics is necessary. Space and place are crucial for contemporary art in general. Boundaries between art and the everyday are often blurred by exhibiting work outside museums or gallery spaces and by signifying found and everyday objects as art (Papastergiadis 2010: 15). Both works are exhibited outside the museum context, and are read as part of the landscape and the community that surround them. For instance, the location is a crucial dimension of Kalliopi Lemos’s installation. She searched for a specific location that symbolizes a crossroads and designed her installation accordingly (Lemos 2010). While the social, cultural, and historical contexts—the time and space—of an artwork are always crucial for the artist and the audience, they are particularly important for publicly displayed art.

In his discussion on spatial aesthetics, Nikos Papastergiadis (2010: 90) argues, “To understand the meaning of this [contemporary] art, historians and critics need to recognize the significance of spatial elements. The art historian is now compelled to track not just the history, but also the geography of the artwork.” Following this line of thought, the geography of the artwork should be seen as being entangled with the “geography of identity”—that is, the social, cultural, and political contexts in which the art is created and exhibited. Moreover, mediatizations of migrant death and suffering, witnessing *through* media exposure, have urged artists to “do something” and to create awareness to the issue that is both political and humanitarian. Furthermore, both displays went through public decision-making processes prior to their installation. These contexts are constitutive of the artwork and its reception, but, in addition, the artworks themselves construct the landscape, community, culture, and societies in which they are exhibited and interpreted (Gibbons 2007). In particular, permanent artworks become linked to identities through practices such as commemorative or ritual performances (Osborne 2001: 5). In addition to the spatial dimensions of these two artworks, it is crucial to discuss the role of contemporary art in commemoration. Building on Pierre Nora’s notion of a memory site, *lieu de mémoire*, Joan Gibbons (2007: 71) argues that an artwork itself can be a site, or *lieu*, of memory. The artwork is a memory site within a site—the place where it is exhibited.

The tradition of commemorative art in Western Europe has gone through changes that reflect trends in contemporary art more broadly. First, memorialization of war has shifted from remembering “heroes” to remembering victims, particularly after World War II (Gibbons 2007; Huyssen 2000). Holocaust memorialization has crucially shaped the ways in which societies remember trauma (Huyssen 2000: 23). Moreover, recognition of the diversity of those who suffered in Holocaust has expanded to include other populations such as those in the gay

community and the Roma (van Baar 2011). Because of this focus on victims and the tradition of public commemoration, in times of catastrophe people feel the need to commemorate even if the victims were not known to them.

Second, public commemoration is currently taking more participative, creative, and performative forms that engage people of individualized societies and that draw from therapeutic imaginaries (Kantola 2014: 4; Till 2008). Different types of memorial performances and anti-monuments highlight the experiential and site-specificity of remembering that counters and criticizes permanent monuments (Gibbons 2007: 94). These practices are aligned with a broader shift in public art in general toward a more participatory, community specific, and experiential art, what Nicholas Bourriaud (1998) has called “relational aesthetics.” This mode in contemporary art is “taking as its theoretical horizon the realm of human interactions and its social context, rather than the assertion of an independent and private space” (Bourriaud 1998: 14). Public commemoration is what a civilized Western nation and people do, a socially acceptable practice that assists society to move on after tragedy. The artworks analyzed in this chapter deliberately commemorate migrant victims; these artworks, therefore, need to be understood in connection to these broader trajectories.

Third, commemorative practice and monuments are commodified and spectacularized as any cultural production today since “there is no pure space outside of commodity culture” (Huysen 2000: 29). Places and heritage are being marketed in the context of entertainment and tourism; this seems macabre in connection to migrant tragedies, but it nevertheless mediatizes places and narratives draw in tourists. Moreover, in the context of mediatized societies where “everything is mediated” (Livingstone 2009), people experience the world through the lenses of

mobile devices. Lemos's and Paladino's works also circulate as backgrounds of tourist photos and become interpreted in different kinds of off-site situations.

At Crossroads by Kalliopi Lemos in Berlin, Germany

At Crossroads (fig 4.1.) is an installation of nine abandoned wooden boats that undocumented migrants used for travel from Turkey to Greece. The boats had been left on the shores of the Greek island Chios where the artist Kalliopi Lemos (born 1951) found them and collected them in 2003. The boats are displayed upside down in a metal structure that rises to fourteen meters. *At Crossroads* is among a series of three publicly displayed installations in which Lemos used broken migrant boats in 2006–9. The work discussed here was presented at the Brandenburg Gate at the heart of Berlin, Germany, October 12–30, 2009, during the twentieth-anniversary festivities of the fall of the Berlin Wall. The installation was part of Lemos's exhibition at the Akademie der Künste, a major art institution.



The object of boat is crucial for the installation, and it refers to both separation and connection. Scholars concerned with theories about borders and border crossings often stress that edges are zones that differentiate and separate one thing from another, but that in addition edges are points of connection and crossing (Balibar 2002; Casey 2011: 384). As Étienne Balibar

(2002: 77) defines edges, they are “lines or zones, strips of land, which are places of separation and contact or confrontation, areas of blockage and passage.” Therefore, in this artwork the boat signifies the ambiguous nature of borders and boundaries and their ability to both connect and separate places and people. By presenting the physical migrant boats in the power center of the EU and a site of Cold War divide, the installation suggests several connections and divisions: the one between the EU and the global South, the one between the West and the East, and the one between past and the present.

As an object, the boat is bursting with meaning. It is an ancient symbol of voyage, transition, and separation found in many mythologies: for instance, in the Finnish epic *Kalevala* a wooden boat carries a mother across the Tuonela River to her dead son in the underworld. In the more recent collective memory of Europeans, the sea and a passenger ship represent migration to the New World away from war and poverty. However, in the collective memory of European migration, large ships are symbols of industrial achievement. In mediated representations of irregular migration today, the hypervisibility of the wooden fishing boat constructs an antimodern Other who leaves without knowing the risks. While several ethnographic researchers (see Carling 2007; de Haas 2011; Ifekwunigwe 2013) document that migrants have made a conscious decision to take dangerous routes because that route is the only alternative, and that these journeys are just one risk among many others, media representation often depict migration by boat as an irrational act (Horsti 2008).

For Kalliopi Lemos, the boats represent and witness migrant experiences. When she discovered the remains of the boats, she saw them as “relics of human suffering” (Lemos 2010). Thus, in her installations the boat signifies a migrant body that expresses wounds of suffering. The boat becomes a witness to the tragedy of migration and border violence. By collecting the

boats from the shores of the sea, Lemos herself witnesses the tragedy, and through her work she mediates that tragedy to the audience. Finally, the audiences become aware of the issue through this mediated witnessing of the tragedy.

These human relics did not only remind Lemos of the perils of boat migration in general, but also of her own grandparents who were forced to leave the city of İzmir (now part of Turkey) during the Greco-Turkish war in 1919–22. By connecting her own private memories to the present and making a parallel between the past migrations with the present, her work powerfully adds dimensions of a more universal understanding of forced migration. Lemos explains how transition and transformation that are so deeply attached to the symbol of the boat are widely shared, and therefore the boat can be seen as a symbol of humanity. She explains how this meaning appears in her work: “Boats can be seen as the carriers of memories, as metaphors for our journey through life’s different stages or as symbolizing birth or fertility. I have used the boat to suggest a life carrier, a womb, the container of life as well as the passage through which we enter the world and through which we leave this life. The boats carry our experiences, our sufferings and different stages of existence” (Lemos 2010).

Boats carry items and hopes and are able to move people and things from one place to another. However, Lemos presents the boats in an unnatural position. In this work the boats are turned upside down, in a way that for her empties their contents, “symbolising the end of hope and the end of life” (Lemos 2010). An upside-down boat refers to death widely across Mediterranean cultures. Nevertheless, this position of the boat can also protect the people who seek refuge underneath. In any case, the hierarchical positioning of the boats points to inequalities of movement, protection, and the capacity to hope.

Location of the broken boats in the capital of the most powerful EU member state offers another dimension to the notion of border. In European imagination, the border is associated with the South—a deterritorialization that moves the border violence out of sight and mind of Northern Europeans. Militarization of external borders is a joint European decision but the people in the southern European countries are left to deal with the practicalities of unauthorized crossings. The installation brings the border—and the violence of its production—to the financial and political center of Europe in a way that forces Northern Europeans to become aware of the issue. Seeing damaged boats as meaningful artifacts at the most prestigious site of the city, therefore, domesticates the otherwise distanced violence of bordering.

The timing of Lemos's installation, the festivities in remembrance of the fall of the Berlin Wall that divided the city and Europe during the Cold War, brings yet another dimension to her work. The installation was viewed during a celebration of borderless Europe, and therefore presentation of the boats strongly points to the existing borderings and the violence that European migration control produces. The presentation permeates the celebratory atmosphere by reminding the public that borders of a different kind exist in Europe. Simply put, the damaged boats as relics of suffering, and the hierarchical positioning of the boats, make visible how borders treat people unequally. To my understanding, the damaged wood and the unnatural positioning of the boats refer to wounds and suffering and to the ways in which border (violence) sticks to certain bodies. Migrants carry the burden of bordering practices in their daily lives as they are often marked as the Other. The installation makes visible the borders that seems invisible to more privileged, white Europeans.

At Crossroads presented in this particular place, at this particular time, exemplifies the ways in which borders multiply and then disperse into societies. They are vacillating as a matter

of experience both beyond and within Europe (Balibar 2002: 89). In a similar way, Saskia Sassen (2009) argues, “Today, it is becoming evident that even as national territories remain bounded by traditional geographic borderlines, globalization is causing novel types of ‘borderings’ to multiply” (Sassen 2009: 567). This is particularly true in the European context where the relaxation of internal borders coexists with the militarization of external borders. Dispersement of dissymmetrical bordering practices within and outside Europe target irregular migrants. This exemplifies what Sassen means by bordering, or the condition in which traditional borders now coexist with a variety of other bordering dynamics and capabilities (Sassen 2009: 568).

Porta d’Europa by Mimmo Paladino in Lampedusa, Italy

Porta d’Europa/ Gateway to Europe (fig 4.2) memorial rises to five meters in height from the deserted landscape of the southernmost point of Italy, the small island of Lampedusa. The Italian artist Mimmo Paladino (born 1948) who is associated with the Italian transavantgarde art movement of the 1980s, designed and decorated the *Porta d’Europa* that was opened on June 26, 2008, to commemorate migrants who lost their lives at sea. Paladino himself was not so keen on creating a memorial sculpture but rather “to tell a story” that touches people (Boltzoni 2008). He takes a humanist position and wishes that the work “explains something of forced exodus, something that everyone can comprehend” (as quoted in the Italian *La Repubblica*, Boltzoni, 2008). To my understanding, the position of the sculpture in the landscape shapes the story. In the form of an open gate the sculpture faces the Mediterranean toward the shore of Tunisia. Through the gate, one sees turquoise water and boats that pass by. Or the sculpture can also be viewed from the sea as a landmark, almost like a lighthouse. It is made of yellowish ceramic that reflects the light of sun and moon. The sculpture has ceramic objects attached to its surface:

broken cups, hats, and shoes. These objects seem like they once belonged to someone but now remain to evoke memories of them. While being ceramic sculptures, these objects seem like found objects lying on a surface that resembles sand. Comparable to Kalliopi Lemos's found boats, these objects signify migrants' lives and histories, particularly of those migrants who did not survive but whose belongings drifted to the shore.



The form of a gate suggests that there is a wall or a fence into which the gate offers an opening. In so doing, this sculpture inspires European spectators to imagine a wall that, for them, remains invisible. This is much different from the mediated images of crowded migrant boats or floating corpses, which definitively express border violence. Thus, the European gaze of Mediterranean has a double character. For most Europeans, the Mediterranean and visions of the sea signifies beauty and leisure activities. From this viewpoint, the border is invisible or inconsequential. It is the irregular migrants who are stuck between categories, and it is their movements that make the border visible. This edge is not a symmetrical one, but one that changes depending on *who* is moving. The border is felt by undocumented migrants and, even more, it transforms them to unwelcomed and sometimes dangerous strangers—or, as Raj (2006),

argues, into those who embody borders. *Porta d'Europa* brings the border violence into the realm of European awareness and makes this transformative border imaginable for Western audiences.

Paladino's sculpture is framed as a memorial monument to commemorate migrants who died at sea while trying to reach Europe. An Italian poet, Arnaldo Mosca Mondadori, initiated the creation of this sculpture with a nongovernmental development organization called Amani. Paladino donated his time, and a tourist organization in Palermo, Sicily, donated 35,000 euros. The monument was therefore initiated by people and organizations that are not specifically local islanders. The memorial sculpture is a product of a nationwide search for a specific site of commemoration of migrant tragedies. Italian cultural, religious, and humanitarian agents were perplexed because of a lack of public memorialization of tragedies that nevertheless have been visible in mainstream media for years. The director of Amani, Gian Marco Elia, explains that he and his colleagues were shocked to find out that there was no memorial, "not even a simple plaque," in Sicily to commemorate the almost three hundred migrants who had drowned in a shipwreck in Porto Palo in 1996, known as the Christmas massacre (Boltzoni 2008). The commemorative aspect of Paladino's sculpture is important for visitors and locals because it assists them in finding a way to manage the recurring confrontation of migrant deaths and unfinished burials. The mayor of Lampedusa, Giusi Nicolini, has publicly demanded support from Italy and the EU to give proper identification, funeral, and burial to the bodies that have been discovered after shipwrecks. In a statement the Amani group said, "The fundamental significance of this work is to consign to memory this last two-decade period in which we have seen thousands of migrants perish at sea in an inhumane way in an attempt to reach Europe . . . often without burial and therefore without pity" ("Africans Remembered" 2008).

The commemorative significance of the sculpture also reaches beyond the local context. The monument and the whole island of Lampedusa is becoming—and being constructed as—a *lieu de mémoire* (Nora 1989), a memory site that invites different kinds of remembering in relation to migration tragedies. On the one hand, *Porta d'Europa* is a fairly traditional commemorative monument. It honors the victims but does not blame anyone for the tragedy. As a permanent structure it transforms the meaning of the landscape and the community. It suggests an identity of openness for Lampedusans: this is the community that self-identifies as opening the gate. However, the sculpture is located in a rather remote corner of the island and therefore one encounters it accidentally and only from the sea. Moreover, the sculpture is not mentioned as a point of interest in tourist maps or other promotional material of the island. As such, the monument does not necessarily engage people to shared activity or encourage intersubjective encounters that are the new tradition of public commemorative art inspired by relational aesthetics (Bourriaud 1998; Gibbons 2007). On the other hand, however, its existence and particularly its globalized existence through mediation draws in commemorative performances of different kinds. The monumental sculpture reinforces global and local imaginations of Lampedusa as the *lieu de mémoire*, the memory site of irregular migration. It reinforces the island's reputation as a wounded place (Till 2008: 108) that represents the pain of others and difficult social pasts. According to Karen Till, wounded places invite particular attention and create a specific atmosphere where mourning, healing, and commemoration can take place.

Moreover, in a mediated society, some performances of remembering migrant tragedies are remediated in news throughout Italy and globally. Therefore, these memory performances can extend beyond the wounded place itself. For instance, film star and UNHCR Goodwill ambassador Angelina Jolie drew global attention to Lampedusa by visiting the *Porta d'Europa*

monument in 2011. Her speech at the site is circulated on YouTube and images of it are reprinted in various celebrity sites. In addition, Pope Francis paid his first visit outside of Rome to Lampedusa in 2013 where he celebrated a mass near a yard of abandoned migrant boats. In the ceremony he held a cross made of wood taken from a migrant boat.

The arrival of migrants has made the island known to global audiences and media attention has shaped Lampedusa into a (mediated) manifestation of the European border. However, through cultural activism, including Paladino's memorial sculpture, the island's public position as the border is rearticulated. Commemoration aims to turn the articulation of Lampedusa from a borderized island (Cuttitta 2014), or the border control zone, into a humanitarian space where migrant suffering is honored and where migrant death is worth public grief (Butler 2009).

Acts of commemoration are problematic in that they primarily take place among privileged Europeans and these rituals too can be mobilized for politics that result more border related death. The opening ceremony of *Porta d'Europa* itself illustrates how a commemoration procession from the town square to the monument includes almost only white Europeans (Ilacqua 2008). Migrants are kept under surveillance at a detention center on the island or they have been transferred to other centers in Italy, and therefore they could not participate in the commemorative procession. This struggle over who is allowed to participate was also noticeable after a major shipwreck on October 3, 2013, in which 369 victims were found. Eritrean survivors were not allowed to attend the funeral held in Sicily, whereas the Eritrean ambassador—thus, the representative of the regime the migrants had fled—was invited (Zerai and Estefanos 2013). The survivors protested and finally held an alternative memorial ceremony. The controversies around remembering exemplify how commemoration and grieving are not necessarily recognized as

human rights in the regimes that control migration. Paolo Cuttitta (2014) said, “The *Porta d’Europa* is not meant to be a monument to human rights, to humaneness according to law, but rather a monument to humaneness per se, to humaneness even beyond the law” (Cuttitta 2014: 214). In this case, the question of human rights remains: Can human respect for the dead be extended to those who survived? The symbol of a gate is ambiguous because it offers an opening, but just a small, conditioned, and differentiating opening in a wall that can be imagined to continue around Europe.

Conclusions

The two public art works discussed in this chapter critically illuminate the inequalities and violence of European bordering practices. They force European spectators and governance to consider morality in relation to irregular migration. Both works powerfully visualize borders in a critical way: they create an awareness of border violence and make the invisibilities of bordering practices more visible. Kalliopi Lemos’s *At Crossroads* reterritorializes the border zone into the political and economic center of Europe, and critically reminds European publics how borders are heterogenous and arbitrary. Mimmo Paladino’s *Porta d’Europa*, in the form of a gate facing Tunisia, suggests an imagination of the border and its violence to spectators who otherwise might ignore them. These works exemplify how contemporary art can shape the political by expanding the ways of seeing and experiencing borders “through its own internal process of extending the language of resistance and representation” (Papastegiadis 2010: 19).

The artworks transform these spaces into sites of commemoration for people who witness migrant suffering and death, also through media coverage. Although Kalliopi Lemos’s work was temporary, it appeared at a time when migrant tragedies were a pressing issue in the public

domain. After all, public commemoration of migrant tragedies had been scarce in European public spheres at the time. European institutions have rather forgotten the histories and tragedies of irregular migration to Europe. Nevertheless, recent negotiations over commemoration in Lampedusa exemplify how collective memory is always contested and political and how official memorial monuments can become sites of power struggles. The critical question of course is what these types of commemorative art works can offer for migrants and their descendants. Will Lampedusa become such a wounded place (Till 2008) that could offer a space and atmosphere for therapeutic imaginaries? And whose therapy would this be? Migrant tragedies are not in the past but very much in the present, which makes commemorative practices even more political and complex. Contemporary art creates openings for moral meditation, but also spaces for conflict and negotiation. These two artworks recognize the complexity and injustice that often takes place near borders as well as bordering practices in ways that have the critical potential to rethink the migration regimes and border violence in Europe.

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<HDA>Notes

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¹. The term *migrant* used throughout this chapter covers all people who have reached Europe for different reasons and by different means. This chapter, however, focuses on irregular or undocumented migration, which refers to unauthorized border crossing or residence. However, after unauthorized crossing, many migrants may seek asylum and eventually obtain a refugee

status. Many are registered as refugees even before the crossing. Some might find work or begin studies and gain a permit to stay.

². The Schengen Agreement was implemented in seven countries in 1995 and has grown to cover twenty-six countries. People who cross the external border can move to other Schengen countries without documentation. Frontex is the EU agency that coordinates and assists national agents in border control and asylum processing.

³. There are also other European artists whose works concern European borders or irregular migration by boat. Serbian feminist artist Tanja Ostojić's several works have criticized European borders, particularly from a gender perspective, British artist Isaac Julien's audio-visual installation "WESTERN UNION: Small Boats" (2007) concerns irregular migration at southern European sea borders, as did Finnish Maaria Wirkkala's installation "Landing Prohibited" (2007) in the Venice Biennale and Germany-based Finnish artist HMJokinen's installation "On That Third of October" (2014) in a bomb bunker in Hamburg. In addition, Catalan designer Antonio Miro exhibited migrant boats on the catwalk in his 2007–8 fall–winter collection show in Barcelona fashion week.