

Ship To Shore

International Group Show

Ship to Shore: Art and the Lure of the Sea is an intriguing visual feast of paintings, films, photography and prints alongside archival objects by eighteen international artists, evoking the disorientating vastness of oceans, unusual images of lighthouses, the romance of sea travel and ship-to-shore communication.

The diversity of vision in **Ship to Shore: Art and the Lure of the Sea** spans from Tracey Emin and her neon *She Lay down Deep Beneath The Sea*, to Isaac Julien's powerful *Western Union: Small Boats (The Leopard)*, a contemplation on migration and the hope for a better life. The theme of migration and travel continues with Yinka Shonibare MBE and his *Nelson's Ship in a Bottle* (the full-scale version was placed on the Fourth Plinth in Trafalgar Square in 2010) and Zenib Sedira's film *MiddleSea*, a visual meditation on transit and an evocative soundtrack composed by Mikhail Karikis.

Steffi Klenz's unusual images, specially made for the show, are based on the rhythmic and repeating pulse of the light signal of a lighthouse, and include a sound work made in collaboration with Neil Codling of the alternative rock group Suede.



Installation shot, work by Steffi Klenz

Curator: Jean Wainwright



Installation Shot, with work by Langlands & Bell, Richard Long and Tacita Dean

Catherine Yass's *Lighthouse* is a very different vision - her film with its disorienting perspectives and her beautiful lightbox photograph.

Tacita Dean's image of Donald Crowhurst's beached boat *Teignmouth Electron* is shown alongside his own invention, the *Navigator*, that was partly responsible for his ensuing sea madness. Dean's photograph and voice relate the extraordinary story of Crowhurst's attempt to circumnavigate non-stop around the world in 1968, his 'faked' journey, resulting madness and eventual suicide, pitching himself into the sea and drowning in 1969.

This work is contrasted with the small domestic scale of Dorothy Cross's delightful video *Teacup* and Claire Kerr's exquisite painting *Surface*, where she took a small section of a painting (*Harbour Scene at Sunset of 1643* by Claude Lorraine, 74.3 x 99.4cm) and painted it at 16 x 12cm, in a way that emphasises the painted surface 'as if seen, perhaps, through a ship's telescope'.

Other paintings are huge in scale, such as Humphrey Ocean's *The First of England*, 1998 based on *The Last of England* by the Pre-Raphaelite William Holman Hunt, and is his response to modern maritime Britain.

Magnum photographer and artist Mark Power's *The Shipping Forecast* adds a different perspective. From 1993 - 1996 he photographed the locations broadcast on BBC Radio 4's *Shipping Forecast* and captioned

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Video work by Isaac Julien

them with the forecast for 0600hrs on the day they were taken.

Langlands & Bell's multi-screen work *Into the Blue* meanwhile combines the names of the world's seas with those of international ocean liners, and is the first time they have approached the subject of the sea. Blue and white characters flag time and place and territories, 'obscure latitudes and a familiar present ebb and flow, while the mystery of stray vessels and lost regions supplant one another in a restless search across the world from ship to shore'.

Ideas around navigation are investigated further at with Chris Burden's ambitious project *Ghost Ship* from 2005. This project involved the construction and development of a crewless, self-navigating sailing boat, which undertook its maiden voyage between Fair Isle, Scotland and Newcastle. Questions are posed as to the level of human intervention required in navigating vessels across the oceans, and a potentially alternative method is proposed.

A journey of a different type is shown in Richard Long's works *Tide Walk*, Weston-super-Mare, England, 1992 and *Ocean to River*, France, 2005 which plot his extraordinary lone journeys, while Simon Patterson's *The Undersea World and Other Stories* explores his enduring interest in sea, stars and time in a series of fascinating hanging charts.

As the power of the sea is constantly in the media and on our minds, Susan Hiller's beautiful, tinted series of prints of rough seas taken from Victorian postcards and Thomas Joshua Cooper's black and white photographs of seas (which often take months to plan) show different perspectives of our contemporary relationship with photography and the sea.

This is an exhibition which explores the physical and the physiological, time and distance, the poetic and the brutal. Juxtaposed with the contemporary art works are voice recordings, beautiful historic paintings, maritime instruments, posters, postcards and cruise ship memorabilia and other archival objects from the city's rich collections. For the curator, art historian Jean Wainwright, *Ship to Shore* is also a personal journey: her lifelong fascination with the lure of the sea stems from her own family background in shipping and her experiences of sea travel on various cruise ships since childhood.

Neon Light Piece by Tracey Emin