

STRANDED IN MALTA

Myriam Thyes, 2008, video DV Pal, 11:04, color, stereo.



The video connects three ways and times of stranding and living in Malta: St. Paul's believed shipwreck in Malta 2000 years ago (celebrated till today); the Knights Hospitaller's naval battles in the Mediterranean (15th till 18th century); today: immigrants from Africa reach Malta in small boats and live in refugee centres. A journey into Europe's (repressed) memories and collective unconscious ...

2000 years ago: St. Paul was shipwrecked on his way to Rome and stranded on a Mediterranean island. The Maltese are convinced it was Malta, where St. Paul immediately began to evangelize the Maltese population. Up to now, every year in February they celebrate „St. Paul's Feast“, a large religious holiday, which culminates with the statue of St. Paul being carried out of St. Paul's Shipwreck Church and through the streets of Valetta.

15th to 18th century: Installed in Malta, the Order of the Knights of St. John were Christian Europe's Mediterranean police, who, on behalf of their member kingdoms and the Pope, defended Christianity and the coasts of the western Mediterranean against the Ottoman Empire (Turks and Arabs) and Islam. This was the time of naval battles and galley-slaves – and whenever a galley sank, all chained rowing slaves drowned.

Today: Immigrants from Africa reach southern Europe (if they survive the journey in the Mediterranean in their small boats). Many of them strand in Malta, and those who are allowed to stay, have to remain in Malta, because the larger countries of „fortress Europe“ don't allow them to immigrate. For years, they live in Malta in provisional refugee centres, sometimes tent villages. Since the times of the Knights Hospitaller, Malta has got many fortresses, but to the refugees it means staying *outside* the wall.

CREDITS

All video and sound recordings: Myriam Thyes, Malta and Gozo 2006 + 2007. Most photographs by Myriam Thyes, shot in Malta + Gozo 2006 + 2007, and at the Venice Naval History Museum, 2007. Thyes has used reproductions of drawings + paintings of ships from the magazine "Sacra Militia" (2002 + 2005) and the book "Navi Venete" (1983).

Script, graphics, animation, editing: Myriam Thyes, 2008.

Sound mix: Denis Rosen, Dusseldorf.

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www.thyes.com/video/stranded-in-malta