

Final Report – Nessun' Isola. Trame di dignità

Part of HOSPITIUM – The Lampedusa Project • Agrigento Capitale Italiana della Cultura 2025

1) Executive Summary

As part of Agrigento Capitale Italiana della Cultura 2025, the MARP – Museo Archeologico Regionale delle Isole Pelagie in Lampedusa presented the exhibition “Nessun' Isola. Trame di dignità” by Tanja Boukal, curated by Tina Teufel (Museum der Moderne Salzburg).



Exterior shot of MARP © Bildrecht, Wien / Photo: Tanja Boukal

The opening took place on 30 September 2025; the regular run was 1–15 October 2025 with evening opening hours. At the museum's explicit request, the exhibition was extended until 23 October 2025.

The show is the third chapter of HOSPITIUM – The Lampedusa Project, following RiparAbile and La Via dell'Altro. It connects artistic research, textile methods, and site-specific collaboration to address hospitality, vulnerability, and responsibility at Europe's external border.

Audience interest was strong; mediation prioritized low-threshold access and direct conversation. Overall, the exhibition confirms the

project's relevance within the Capital of Culture framework and demonstrates how art can reach new audiences and strengthen institutional dialogue on the island.

2) Goals & Relevance

HOSPITIUM examines Lampedusa as a focal point between tourism, migration, and everyday life.



Installation view of the space entirely dedicated to Boukal's work.

© Bildrecht, Wien / Photo: Tanja Boukal

The goal of the exhibition was to render hospitality visible as lived practice through specific works and precise placements in the museum: Where does reception succeed, where does it fail, and which forms of care, repair, and negotiation emerge?

Relevance stems from Lampedusa's position as a European edge and transit location, where social conflict, administrative routines, and personal destinies converge.

In this context, Tanja Boukal employs textile work as a deliberately “soft” medium that lowers barriers, creates proximity, and makes complex

topics accessible. The approach is dialogical—not as illustration of current debates, but as an independent form of knowledge that arises from material, time, and craft.

For Agrigento 2025 this is central: the Capital of Culture gains profile where it takes local context seriously, builds international connectivity, and opens low-threshold paths to audiences without turning the island into a mere stage.

3) Programme Delivery / Artistic Profile

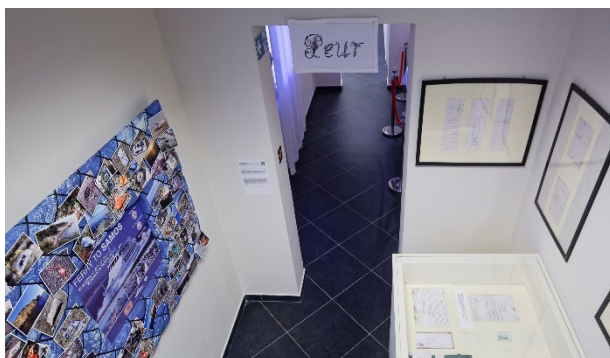
The exhibition combined research, textile craft, and site-specific collaboration into a clear dramaturgy, summing up not only the work on site during the residency, but also a more than ten year long artistic research on the situation of migration in the Mediterranean.



Installation view in the archaeological section
© Bildrecht, Wien / Photo: Tanja Boukal



Installation view in the Sala Papale
© Bildrecht, Wien / Photo: Tanja Boukal



Installation view in the Sala Askausa © Bildrecht, Wien
/ Photo: Tanja Boukal

Curatorially we worked across multiple zones on the one hand integrating works into the permanent collections of archaeological and historical objects as well as contemporary art works, on the other hand creating a room entirely focusing on Boukal's work:

Offshore was installed in vitrines of archaeological objects and *Bayeux 2.0* hung above the marble statue of Fortuna to stage a measured friction between antiquity and the present.

We added two targeted interventions in the permanent displays in the Sala Papale (room on the Pope's visit in 2013) with the works *Mare Nostrum* and *Patterns* that are linked to hospitality, care, and responsibility as core narratives within this exhibition space.

In the room of objects found in stranded boats (Sala Askausa), the intervention prioritized ethical visibility over spectacle.

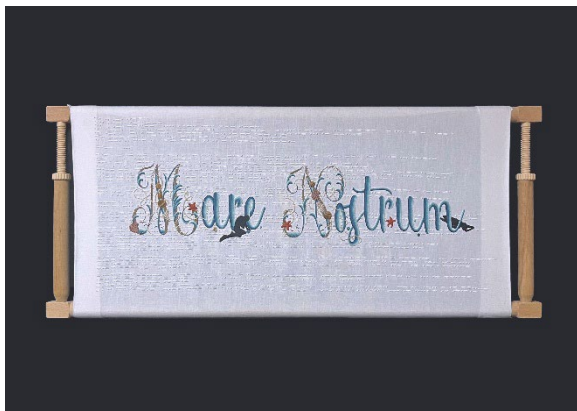
Within the collection of contemporary art in the main space of the museum, we included *European Winter* and *European Spring* to emphasize on the diverse perceptions and concepts of fear.

Single objects of these large series were also installed opposite the entrance to the museum as well as above the corridors to link the different spaces and two floors together.

In addition and as a final "crescendo" of the exhibition, one room was fully dedicated to Boukal's works which enabled a focused observation and reflection of her artistic practice as well as the thematic focus on migration in the Mediterranean.

Highlights of the exhibition were not only the new works conceived expressly for the Lampedusa Project, but also older works that resonated with the works on site:

- *Mare Nostrum* (2024) transfers the 11 October 2013 mayday phone call into a textile surface via Morse code. The distress call becomes literally a fabric of reading, bridging the distance between document and affect. In connection with the visit of Pope Francesco II. in the summer of 2013 it reflected on how the situation on dealing with migrants arriving on the island changed in the past 12 years.
- *Shoes for Nowhere* (2025) articulates, in petit-point, the caring gesture that arrives too late—an intimate format that avoids pathos while marking grief and responsibility. The work related to earlier works made in Samos in 2016 which also refer to this topic, specifically the grief for lost children.
- *Blue Silence* (2025) draws attention to the daily deaths in the Mediterranean, working with tension between emptiness and density that resists a quick look
- *Rampart* (2015) addresses protection and repulsion at Europe's external borders and mirrors the ambivalence between expectations of safety and fortification. Installed in the staircase of the museum, it allowed visitors to arrive on eye level with a person who tries to surmount one of these fortifications, depicted on 4-meter-long Terry cotton cloth surrounded by other elements of a barb-wired fence.



Mare Nostrum
© Bildrecht, Wien / Photo: Tanja Boukal



Shoes for nowhere, Installation view
© Bildrecht, Wien / Photo: Tanja Boukal



Blue Silence
© Bildrecht, Wien / Photo: Tanja Boukal



Rampart, Installation view
© Bildrecht, Wien / Photo: Tanja Boukal

4) Audience, Access & Impact

Mediation focused on low-threshold access because a high-profile exhibition of this kind had not previously taken place on Lampedusa. The explicit aim was to reach people who usually have no access to visual art—and it worked.

Over 700 counted visitors attended, which corresponds to about 10.8% of the islands resident population.



Dialogical tour with the curator Tina Teufel
© Bildrecht, Wien / Photo: Tanja Boukal

More than forty regular guided tours in Italian and English, led by the curator, the artist and a team, enabled deeper insight into both the practice and the works; tours were dialogical—questions, doubts, and contradictions were actively welcomed.

A distinctive marker was the second, stand-alone opening at 00:30 on opening night, tailored to residents working late in tourism; the offer was visibly taken up.

Evening hours enabled unhurried viewing and conversation; attendants proactively supported visitors where needed.

School tours engaged younger audiences. Pay-as-you-wish further lowered barriers, enabling access independent of ability or willingness to pay.

Feedback during tours and on site, as well as requests for additional slots, indicates that audiences read the artistic language as an invitation to understand belonging not only as legal status but as lived practice.

5) Next Steps: Transfer & Talks

Based on the positive response, we are preparing to transfer selected works and formats to European museums, kunsthallen, and culture centres. The focus lies on institutions with a societal programme and suitable space/security infrastructure for textile and installative works.

We intend to implement site-specific adaptations, evening appointments, and a clear mediation line to continue the dialogical approach. In parallel, we will continue lectures and conversation formats—in art institutions as well as at schools. Formats range from Artist Talk / Lecture + Q&A to compact school talks; workshops can be arranged on request. Languages: IT/EN/DE; delivery on-site or online/hybrid.

For Agrigento 2025 this follow-up phase increases European presence and prolongs visibility beyond Lampedusa into professional networks and educational contexts.

All photos, videos, and texts related to the exhibition can be found at:
<https://www.boukal.at/comunicazione-stampa-nessun-isola>