



SHIMON ATTIE *The View from Below*

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The View from Below

Through his work, Shimon Attie explores migration, displacement, and more broadly, the search for home. Created in places where cultures, ethnicities and identities converge, Attie's site-specific media installations merge ideas of geography, memory and the people whose individual stories shape the cultural history of a place.

In many works, Attie directly engages local communities that have been persecuted, displaced or traumatized to find new ways of representing their history and memory, present and potential futures. In other pieces, Attie juxtaposes the histories and narratives of these marginalized and forgotten communities with the physical landscape of the present, animating sites with images of their lost histories or speculative futures.

The Paul W. Zuccaire Gallery at Stony Brook University is proud to present Attie's videos and photographs from six major projects over the last twenty-five years including: *The View from Below* (2021), *Night Watch* (2018), *The Crossing* (2017), *The History of Another* (2002-3), *Between Dreams and History* (1998) and *Portraits of Exile* (1995).

Karen Levitov
Director and Curator

JULY 20 - OCTOBER 14, 2023 | PAUL W. ZUCCAIRE GALLERY | STONY BROOK UNIVERSITY



The View from Below, video still, 2021

***The View from Below*, 2021**

Single channel video, 3 minutes, 20 seconds

The View from Below is a series of video portraits, seen as illuminated reflections in water, of twelve individuals whose lives have been saved by recently being granted political asylum in the United States.

Night Watch

Hudson and East Rivers, New York City, 2018

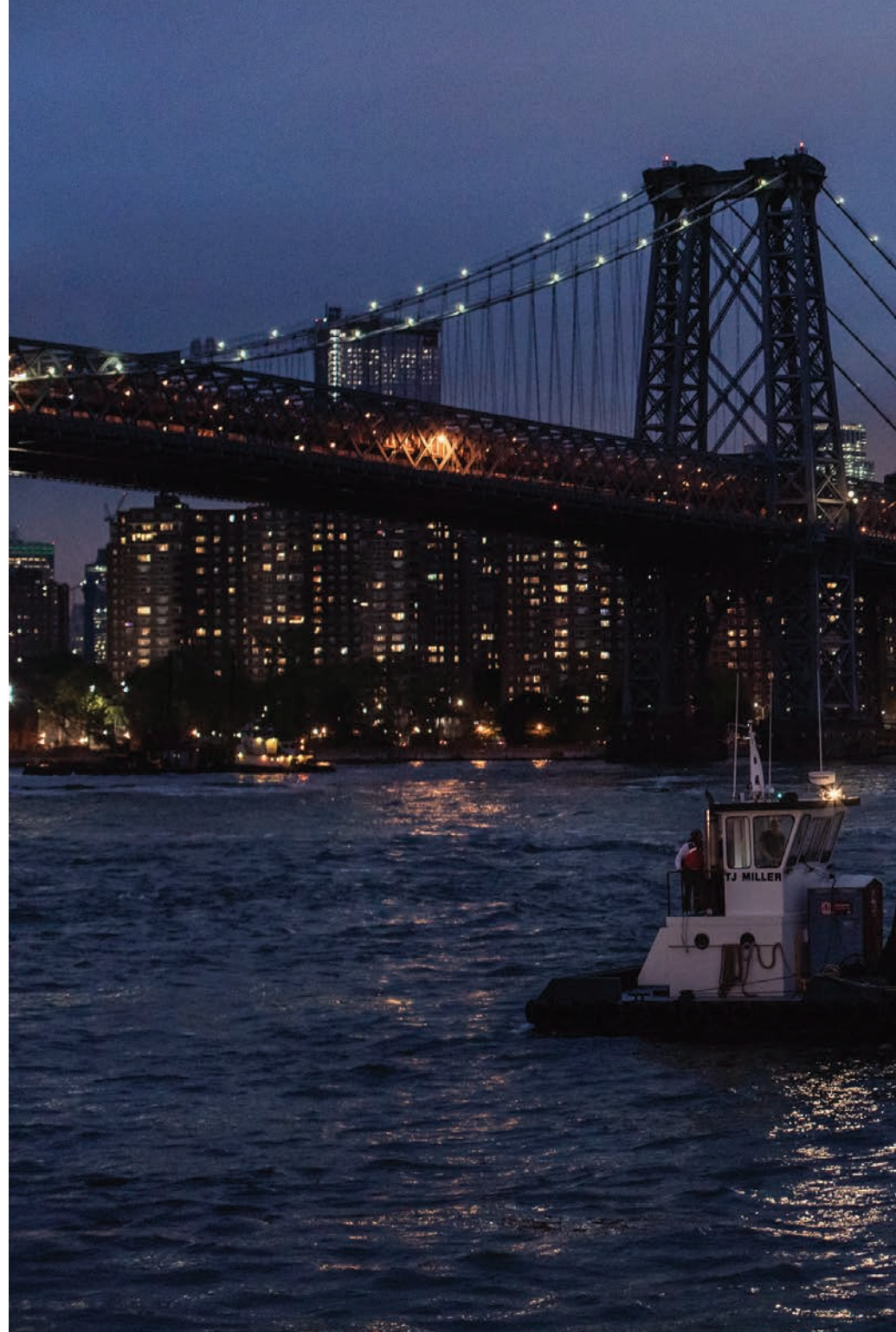
Night Watch featured a 20ft-wide hi-resolution LED screen which traveled New York City's waterways aboard a large, slow-moving barge and tugboat. Displayed on the screen were silent close-up video portraits of twelve new New Yorkers, individuals whose lives have been saved by recently being granted political asylum in the US.

The participants are largely members of the international LGBTQI communities, as well as unaccompanied minors, who fled tremendous violence and discrimination in their homelands. The individuals arrived from Nigeria, Honduras, Columbia, Russia, Kazakhstan, Jamaica and Peru.

Night Watch activated and animated NYC's waterways as both literal and metaphoric sites and landscapes for escape, rescue, safe-passage and the offering of safe-harbor for those most vulnerable. The artwork engaged one of the most urgent issues of our time—that of welcoming or closing our doors to asylum seekers and refugees.

Night Watch was produced and commissioned by More Art, an arts organization and nonprofit that focuses on creating socially engaged artworks in close collaboration with local NYC communities. Additional partners included Immigration Equality and Safe Passage Project, Queer Detainee Empowerment Project and RIF Asylum Support.

Night Watch (Sergey with Bridge), 2018





Portraits of Exile

Copenhagen, Denmark,
1995

For *Portraits of Exile*, nine large light boxes mounted with transparency images were submerged underwater in Copenhagen's Borsgraven canal just in front of the Danish parliament building. The project presented two human rights stories and challenges: the heroic Danish rescue of their Jewish community on fishing boats to Sweden in 1943, and the more ambivalent Danish response today to present-day refugees. As the shared thread between these two stories of rescue is water, the underwater installation embodied these issues over a six week period.



Portraits of Exile, installation shot, 1995

The History of Another
Rome, Italy, 2002-3

Using ancient Rome as a backdrop and foil for the grand history of the West, *The History of Another* features historical photographs of individuals projected onto these sites in order to raise questions about who is inside and outside of this history. The projected photographs of individuals of Roman Jewish background were taken at the turn of the 20th century, in many cases near the projection sites. The ghostly and evocative images invite reflection on the history and intersection of these two ancient cultures, raising broader questions about "otherness" within the history of the West.



At the Coliseum (Looking towards the Arch of Titus) from The History of Another, 2003

Between Dreams and History

New York City, Lower East Side, 1998

Between Dreams and History illuminates the New York immigrant experience by giving visual form to the personal and collective memories and imaginings of residents of Manhattan's Lower East Side. Seventy-five long-time residents from diverse ethnic backgrounds and age groups wrote down—in their mother tongue—their favorite childhood songs, poems, sleeping dreams, night time prayers, intuitions and memories of the neighborhood from their youth. Using animated laser projections, excerpts from these texts were then written out on the buildings, letter by letter, in blue laser light—in English, Chinese, Yiddish and Spanish—over a several week period on Rivington and Ludlow streets, inscribing the architecture of the neighborhood with the handwritten memories of its residents.

Between Dreams and History

I remember when we lived in a tenement on the top floor in very bad condition. It was like a dream...., Lasers Writing Out Jewish Senior's Memory, 1998





on the top floor in very
bad conditions

It was like a dream...

95 H H 95



The Crossing, video still, 2017

The Crossing

Single-channel video with 4.1 audio, 2017

The Crossing is a film made with Syrian refugees who had recently arrived in Europe, many on rafts over the Mediterranean. In a series of slow-moving

tableaux, a group of elegantly dressed young men and women inside a casino are engrossed in a game of roulette. The metaphorical tale that unfolds is based on the participants' individual experiences of exile and flight. *The Crossing* reflects on the extraordinary risks migrants are forced to take in

times of crisis, literally gambling for their lives. With each passing tableau, one person disappears from the game without a trace or explanation. By the film's end, only one participant remains, perhaps a living monument to the thousands who have been left behind, dead or alive.

SHIMON ATTIE is an internationally-renowned visual artist whose artistic practice includes creating site-specific installations in public places, accompanying fine art photographs and immersive single- and multiple-channel video and mixed-media installations. Much of Attie's work explores how a variety of contemporary media may be used to re-imagine new relationships between space, time, place and identity.

Shimon Attie's work has been shown in group and solo exhibitions in museums and galleries around the world, including at New York's Museum of Modern Art, the Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston, the Centre Pompidou in Paris and the National Gallery of Art in Washington, DC, among many others. Six monographs and several films have been produced on his work. He is the recipient of numerous fellowships, including the Guggenheim, The Rome Prize, Harvard University's Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study, the National Endowment for the Arts and the Lee Krasner Award for lifetime artistic achievement. Attie was the inaugural Charles C. Bergman Endowed Visiting Professor in Studio Art at Stony Brook University (2020-2022).

shimonattie.net

Cover: *Night Watch (Mikaela with Liberty)*, 2018
Back cover: *The View from Below (Marvin)*, 2021

The View from Below is curated by Karen Levitov, Director and Curator of the Paul W. Zuccaire Gallery. The exhibition and programs are supported by the Paul W. Zuccaire Foundation, the Friends of Staller Center, the Humanities Institute at Stony Brook and the Pollock-Krasner House and Study Center.

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Courtesy of Jack Shainman Gallery, New York

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