



At the castle, the boat embodies the hope of the exiles

As part of the exhibition “Icons, treasures of refugees”, the Greek artist Kalliopi Lemos presents *Pledges*, an allegory of travel. Until November in the castle courtyard.



Kalliopi Lemos presents, in the courtyard of the Dukes' castle, a poetic work, an allegory of travel and the hopes of the exiles. |

West France

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An installation sparkles in the middle of the courtyard of the castle of the Dukes of Brittany, in Nantes, work of the artist Kalliopi Lemos. Named *Pledges* (promises, in English), this Turkish boat, abandoned after having transported migrants to the Greek islands and covered with thousands of metallic votive offerings, is a symbol of man's struggle for life.

The Greek artist drew on his family past to focus his work on the daily difficulties endured by thousands of migrants in search of a better life. His grandparents were Greek and lived in Izmir, Turkey, in early XXth century.

On July 24, 1923, the Treaty of Lausanne, considered one of the last peace treaties of the First World War, was signed to end the conflict between Greeks and Turks. It imposes the exchange of civilian populations and defines the terms of this forced migration on both sides of the Aegean Sea. Thousands of

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"Like a jump into the void"

"The root of my work lies in the feeling that people who are forced to leave their country may have. Seeing all his boats stranded on the Greek coast in recent years, it brought back the tears buried in me, says the artist. These objects carried both the despair and the hope of the exiles.

Kalliopi Lemos has been recovering, since 2003, these makeshift boats consigned by the Greek State. Its goal ? Use them as testimonies of this story that his grandparents knew and which is repeated today.

"These boats are a bridge between all those who have not made these trips and everyday reality , " she says.

The artist's approach went beyond the simple recovery of these stranded boats. She went to meet the migrants locked up in the detention centers, **"to gather their feelings and the causes"** .


The return of these discussions is edifying. **"They need \$ 3,000 to \$ 4,000 to cross the Mediterranean. There are many pitfalls: mafias rob them, children are kidnapped, not to mention people whose whereabouts are lost without explanation ... It must be understood that these trips are, for migrants, like a leap in the air to to save. "**

It is these migrants that Kalliopi Lemos wanted to honor on the 10,000 "tamata" that adorn the work. On each of its votive plaques, religious offerings made to overcome the challenges of the uncertain journey, is inscribed the name of a migrant who successfully crossed to Greece, his country of origin, his date of arrival.

Kalliopi Lemos uses this symbolism to dress his installation with these metal plates, recovery of soda cans forgotten on the coast, symbol of the excessive pollution of the Western world. The loop can be considered closed. And the artist concludes: **"Closing the doors is not a solution, because these mountains will grow at our doors. We must face up to our responsibilities, not flee. Nor can you give a solution with a work of art. "**

Until November 13, from 8:30 a.m. to 7 p.m., in the courtyard of the Chateau des Ducs de Bretagne, in Nantes. Free.

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 Kalliopi Lemos présente, dans la cour du château des Ducs, une oeuvre poétique, allégorie du voyage et des espoirs des exilés.

Au château, le bateau incarne l'espoir des exilés [Ouest-France.fr](#)    



#Nantes

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