

## **On the Political Aesthetics of Lampedusa Cross(es)**

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This paper analyses the wooden Cross(es) of Lampedusa as a site of memory and beyond. The Cross(es) of Lampedusa have been carved by a local Catholic carpenter out of the wood of the shipwrecks that originally brought undocumented migrants to the shores of this remote island, in the far South of Italy. Since the time Pope Francis celebrated Mass holding one of these Crosses - in his first official visit in 2013 - they have become not only the trace of sacrifice, suffering and migrant journeys, but also the material imbrication of different aesthetics, politics and urban spaces (one Cross is now permanently exhibited in London, at the British Museum). This paper dwells in the phenomenology of production/mediation of these wooden Cross(es)/relics to interrogate the relation between traces, space, migration and the political aesthetics mobilized by the first ever Pope from the Americas, Francis.