

REBECOMING THE OTHER EUROPEAN TRAVELLERS

CURATED BY TIM CLARK OF 1000 WORDS

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PRIVATE VIEW
TUESDAY 9 SEPTEMBER 6 - 8PM

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Rebecoming brings together newly commissioned works from four artists Virgílio Ferreira, Henrik Malmström, Tereza Zelenkova and Lucy Levene. Focusing on migration patterns between 1950 and 1980 from southern to central and northern Europe, it depicts fragments of the stories and environments of individuals who left their countries of birth to start a new life in new lands due to economic reasons.

The works explore issues related to family, labour, mobility, boundary, cultural heritage and social expectation. They also connect to instances of courage, upheaval, opportunity, unfreedom, self-respect, heroism and the dream of returning 'home', not withdrawing exploitation and poverty; the ultimate capitalistic ethic. By offering personal visions of lived experience, *Rebecoming* examines the contradictory nature of how the stage for temporary migration often became permanent.

An installation by Tereza Zelenkova (b.1985, Czech Republic) comprises photographs from *Girls & Gloves* shot in the former London Brick factory in Bedford, England - a company that recruited 7,500 men from Italy to fill undesirable and repetitive jobs during the post-war reconstruction boom. Workers' gloves and posters of women form Zelenkova's topology. Alongside portraits and images of the neighbouring housing estate Stewartby, they become imbued with emotional encryptions, offering relics of desperate optimism.

In *The Spaghetti Tree*, Lucy Levene (b.1978, UK) also responds to Bedford's Italian community, the largest concentration in the UK at 14,000 people. Attending events and accepting invitations to people's homes, she developed attachments and became involved in the families' narratives. Her photographs call into question mythologies of what it means to be 'Italian', the nostalgic ideal of La Bella Figura while revealing the tensions in conventional modes of portraiture; the perfect and imperfect image.

Being and Becoming by Virgílio Ferreira (b.1970, Portugal) brings out the inner feelings of his Portuguese subjects to open up a space for considering hybrid-identities and the polarity of living in-between cultures, languages, landscapes and borders. Using multiple exposures and diptychs, and by loading his imagery with metaphor, Ferreira's images evoke a sense of duality and lend tangible form to the condition of remembering.

Through the short film *Life's Work* Henrik Malmström (b.1983, Finland) reflects on the mundane situations of various Portuguese inhabitants in Hamburg, Germany. Getting as close as possible yet aspiring to a neutral position, Malmström conjures up the vivid presence of cleaners, sex workers, laundrette staff, religious worshippers and commuters. With deadpan humour and an unremitting gaze, the artist engages in the multitude of individual dreams that form one universal wish - to find happiness in life through comfort and material security.



Virgílio Ferreira, *Being and Becoming*, 2013, ink jet print, 70 x 47 cm

Collectively the artists in *Rebecoming* offer insight into the complexities of the migrant experience at a charged and contentious moment in the evolution of modern Europe. It is an ode to those travellers who dared to make the journey, for better or worse.

Rebecoming is part of The Other European Travellers project, a co-production by 1000 Words, Cobertura Photo and Atelier de Visu with the support of EACEA programme of the European Union.

NOTESTO EDITORS

Opening Hours: Tuesday - Saturday 10am - 6pm

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Tereza Zelenkova, *Girls and gloves*, 2013, 8x Archival Inkjet prints in metal frames, 37x30 cm



Lucy Levene, *Statue 1*, The Sharnbrook Hotel, Bedford, UK, 2013, C-type print, 55cm x 55cm



Lucy Levene, *Woman dancing*, Tara & Vito's Wedding, Bedford, UK, 2013, C-type print, 55cm x 55cm