

The logo for Juxtapoz Art & Culture Magazine is displayed in white text on a black rectangular background. The word "JUXTAPOZ" is written in a large, bold, stylized font with thick, blocky letters. Below it, the words "ART & CULTURE MAGAZINE" are written in a smaller, clean, sans-serif font.

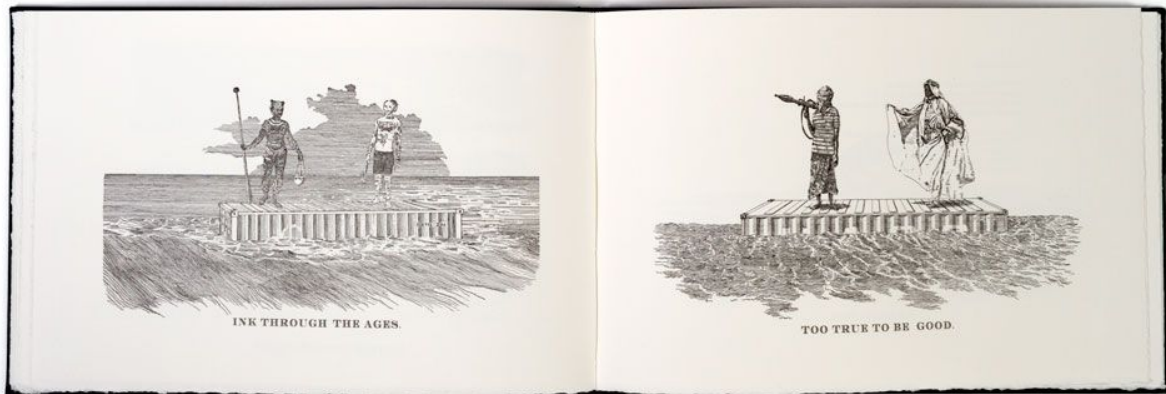
JUXTAPOZ

ART & CULTURE MAGAZINE

MARTIN MACHADO: AN OCEAN BETWEEN US

By Juxtapoz, January 20, 2016

Like a ship's log, Martin Machado's *An Ocean Between Us* is big and important in many ways. Presented like a logbook, there is thoughtful deliberation on every page, paper edges as if ruffled from the churning sea. Machado attended college on the shores of the Pacific Ocean in Santa Barbara, as well as the San Francisco Art Institute, overlooking the Bay, in addition to handling deckhand duty on sailboats and commercial fishing vessels.



A member of the Sailor’s Union of the Pacific, he has shipped out on container ships, crisscrossing the world in long, slow journeys of muscle and meditation, most notably on a six-month stint from New York to San Francisco, as he says, “the long way.” The resulting book, mostly created at sea in his cabin, illustrates his musings on myth and history, modernity and the indigenous, in tiny brush strokes of ink and gouache that evoke archival etchings. Printed damp on River BFK paper from Monotype and hand-set Caslon type, the images are accompanied by his own poems and short stories that illuminate sights, sound and sentiment. The archival depth and quality of *An Ocean Between Us*, published by Oakland’s Prototype Press, bestows the weight and beauty that can only be contained in a book. —*Gwynned Vitello*

...

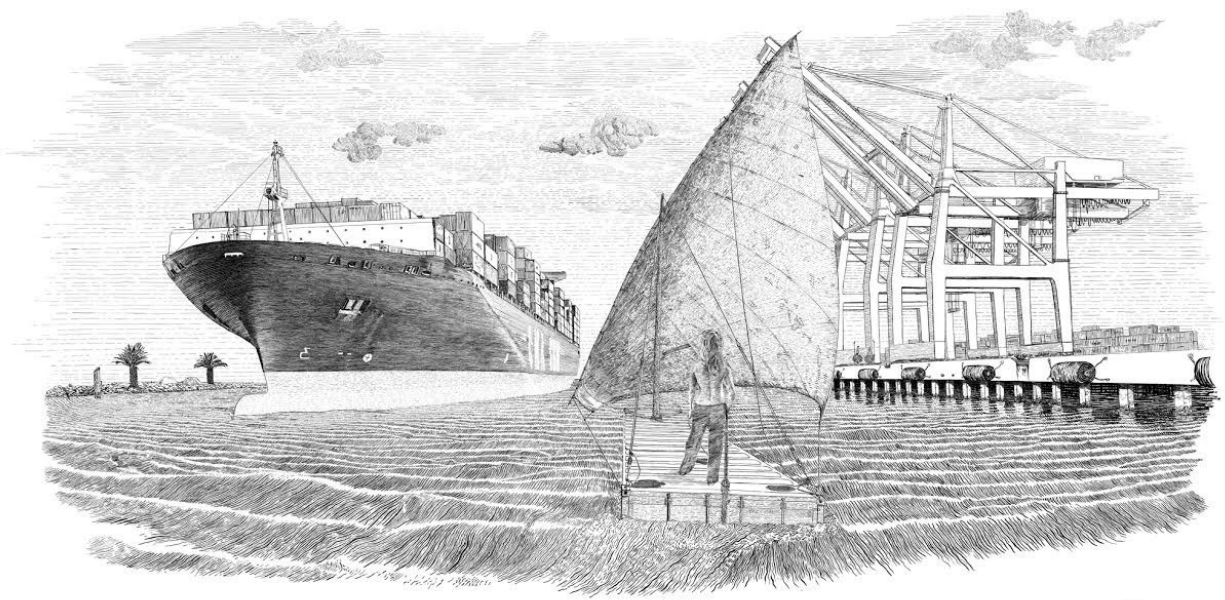
[Link](#)



MARTIN MACHADO "BODIES POLITIC" AT CORDESA FINE ART

By Cordesa Fine Art, Los Angeles, 2017

Martin Machado's *Bodies Politic* at Cordesa Fine Art is a selection of meticulous ink drawings, photography, and large scale sculptures created from a much traveled shipping container. Martin Machado spends at least a quarter of his year at sea working both as a merchant marine and commercial fisherman.



Machado uses photography to document his experience working as a merchant marine on international container ships. These photographs serve as a platform from which Machado ventures further through ink on paper and sculptural works; exploring concepts of colonialism, national identity, exoticism, time, and environmentalism. The thread throughout this body of work is the sea; connecting us all to our past and possible future.

In describing the role of labor in his art Machado states: “We trade portions of our life in exchange for sustenance while doing the bidding of our employers. In today’s global market, pinpointing who that employer is however has become increasingly difficult. In no field is the case murkier than the maritime trade industry wherein flags of convenience, multi-national conglomerates, and government-subsidized shipping have blurred the lines of its sailor’s identities.”

...

[Link](#)



MARTIN MACHADO'S PAINTINGS PORTRAY LIFE ON INTERNATIONAL CONTAINERSHIPS

By JUXTAPOZ, 2018

This April, K. Imperial Fine Art will present its second solo exhibition of the work of Martin Machado. *Modular Moonlight* marks a transition for the artist from several years of drawing back into painting with oil on canvas. Expanding on the narrative of his previous work, Machado offers a more personal approach in this series, portraying life at sea on a modern day international containership.



Painted in a somewhat antiquated post-impressionist style, themes of colonialism, nostalgia, migration, labor, and the sublime of nature, underpin these contemporary maritime scenes of our global economy in motion. The majority of the paintings were in fact recently created at sea, where Martin works as part of the deck crew on containerships; an occupation he has spent large portions of each year laboring in for the past decade and which has brought him to ports around the globe.

Included in the exhibition will be Machado's photography documenting his life at sea. Shot with either a 4x5 or 35mm camera, these gelatin silver prints contextualize the paintings with a continued narrative. Ranging from shipmates and longshoremen to the sea in all its moods, he gives us a glimpse into the lives behind our marketplace.

...

[Link](#)



Martin Machado

Paint What You Know

By Jones, May 2011

There is something slightly tragic about living in the most landlocked city in the UK and missing the sea daily, but that's the life of a Scarborough exile. I know I'm not alone, because friends from Sheffield visit my neck of the woods more regularly than I do. So bear with me. This one is personal.

Machado splits his time between art and various jobs at sea, from cargo ships to crab fishing. The dedication and sole pursuit of something cohesive and real – as my dad (15 years in the Merchant Navy) would say 'proper work' – comes across in every image. Paint what you know.

Vague Turner-isms and a massively keen attention to detail make the complex, exhaustingly painted seas next to abstract skies, and the yawning hugeness of nature with the many ways human enterprise takes them out onto the water, jump out of the page. Stern stuff.

BASICS, PLEASE. WHAT STARTED YOU DRAWING?

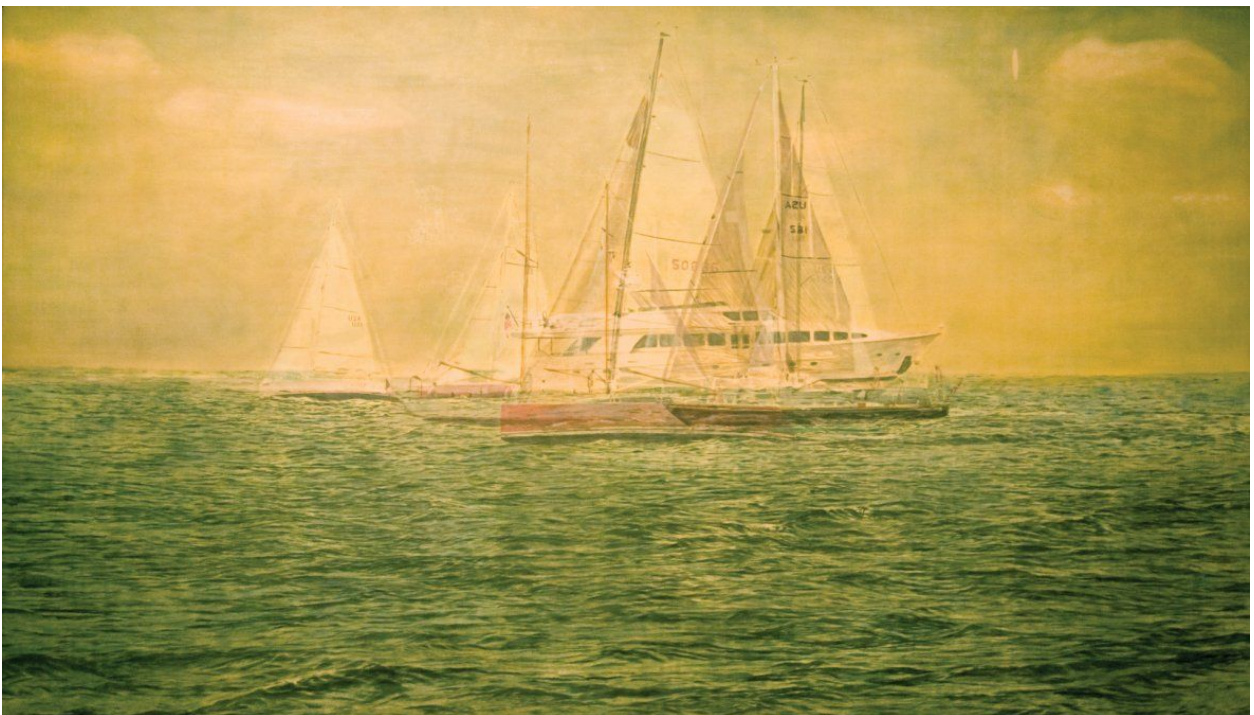
I was lucky to have very encouraging parents – a cartoonist grandfather, a huge supportive family actually. Pretty dorky beginnings. I always had phases growing up, where I thought I was a Native American and only drew them, which then turned into a Robin Hood obsession for a while. I shot a hole in my wall with a homemade bow and arrow, when I was actually having a face-off with Kevin Costner on my poster of the 90s American movie version.

CAN YOU DESCRIBE THE PROCESS OF STARTING A NEW PIECE?

It's always random really. Recently I started about 20 pieces quickly and finally stopped on one to work for a while, but I like to bounce back and forth. I've also been working on more found stuff from some different jobs – nautical charts from a containership, driftwood, old fish packing boxes from an abandoned cannery in Alaska. I like that it gives me a starting point, rather than just a blank canvas.

WHERE DO YOU GET YOUR INSPIRATION FROM?

Mostly from work, travel, the people I meet, the land and the sea.



TOOLS. WHAT DO YOU USE REGULARLY AND WHAT'S YOUR FAVOURITE?

I use a lot of different paints, usually starting with waterbased like Gouache or Acrylic for traveling ease or working in confined quarters. Then I switch back to oils at some point because they're the only paint I can sort of predict. I've worked with epoxy resin for a while, and stacking semitranslucent paintings on fiberglass cloth. I like the effects, like a physical technique of creating Photoshop layers, and the resulting finish like a surfboard or fancy sailboat. But I've been using less resin recently, because I'm trying to get away from the nasty chemicals as much as possible.

WHAT OTHER ARTISTIC MEDIA HAVE HAD AN EFFECT ON YOUR ART?

Photography and film definitely play a huge role in both my process and ideas. I capture most of my images while working at sea, when I can't really break out the easel and paint, so the photos become my sketchbook for many paintings.

HOW DO YOU SPEND YOUR DAYS?

When home in San Francisco, I do my best to stay in the studio as much as possible, but I try get out and enjoy the outdoors when I can – ride a bike, surf, row on the bay. I love this place.

WHICH OF YOUR RECENT PIECES HAVE YOU ENJOYED MAKING THE MOST?

A recent piece was the most agonizing but has now become the most fun towards the end – some fairly detailed water painting. I should have used a projector or grid but was either too stupid or too masochistic.

HOW HAS YOUR ART EVOLVED OVER TIME?

I hope that my images have become a little more developed. I definitely realized I had to work harder to be happy with them. I think I'm more comfortable now making a piece that may be seen as cheesy. I've always liked cheesy really, like the décor in an old harbor fish restaurant or in Christian illustration. To me it is more like research and collection. I'm just interested in seafaring culture in all aspects. My artwork and jobs have always just led from one thing to another, and I've never felt like I could make work about something I didn't really know personally.

HOW HAS ART IN GENERAL CHANGED SINCE YOU STARTED?

I think high art has finally started to realize how stale and isolating it can be. There definitely have been some outstanding painters and photographers getting noticed recently. It seems like it is finally ok to re-present the world around us, to tell stories about life instead of only inside the artist's head.

WHAT ARE YOU CURRENTLY WORKING ON?

Some stuff that is more illustrative, showing places and people from my six months on the containership. They might find their way into a short documentary type video about the same topic.

ANY TIPS ON HOW TO SURVIVE MAKING MONEY FROM YOUR ART? DO YOU FIND IT IMPORTANT?

I can't really say because I've always worked real jobs in chunks to be able to come home and work on art till the cash runs out. I like working outside of art for a while. It allows me some time away from the studio to reflect. I don't think it's vital for an artist to only make art. You definitely have to be disciplined to get back into the studio and make up for lost time, but I think it's grounding to occasionally surround yourself with people who don't give a shit about the art world.

WHAT DO YOU DISLIKE IN ART?

Pretentious, preachy work, silly little puzzles set up for us to figure out, or anything that ignores the viewer or was only created to confuse.

WHAT MAKES YOU SMILE IN ART?

Creative, original work that makes you think, "Hey, a person made that!"

GOOD ADVICE YOU WISH YOU'D BEEN TOLD EARLIER?

If you don't stand for something, you'll fall for anything.

...

[Link](#)

SURFER

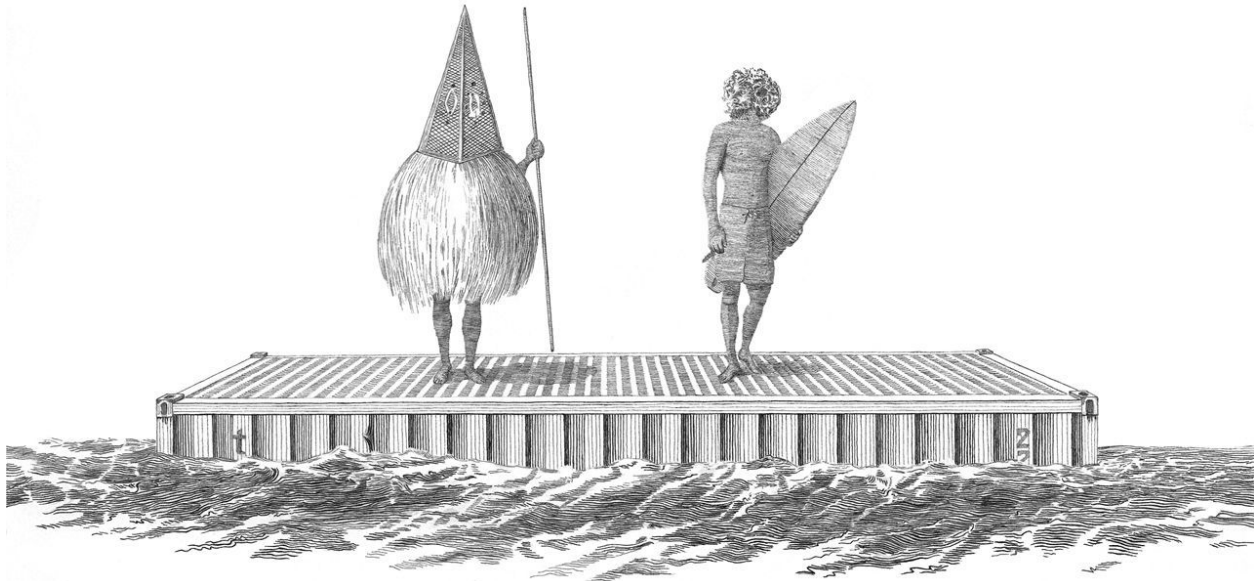
THE ART AND TRAVELS OF MARTIN MACHADO

THE SURFER, ARTIST AND SEAFARER'S OCEANIC RELATIONSHIP REFLECTS IN HIS WORK BECAUSE A LOT OF IT IS CREATED WHILE AT SEA

By Ben Waldron, March 14, 2018

Perhaps, while waiting for a set wave, you've seen the dark silhouette of a containership creep across the horizon. Possibly numbered among that vessel's seafaring crew is San Francisco based surfer and artist Martin Machado. While at sea, between bridge-watch shifts and helmsman duties, Machado spends what little free time he has stowed away in his cabin, where he creates art inspired by his containership surroundings and trans-oceanic travels. The sea steals thousands of shipping containers from these hulking ships each year. A motif in Machado's work are the steel boxes' imagined fates combined with a subtle social critique, occasionally from a surfer's perspective.

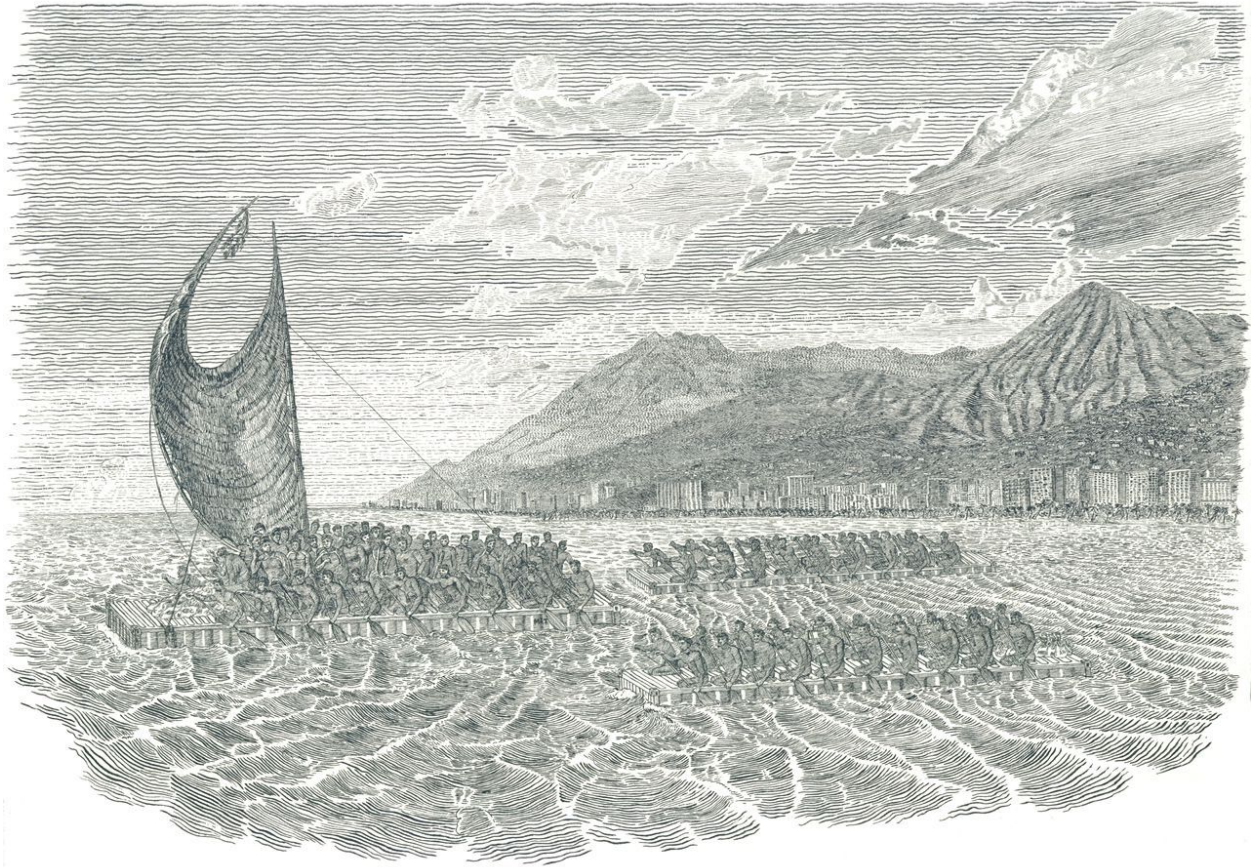
SURFER talked to Machado about his artwork, travels and how he's sometimes able to squeeze in a surf while docked at a port far from home.



“Exporting the Gnar”

One of the first pieces of your work I ever saw was an island warrior standing with a modern day surfer on top of a shipping container. It kind of felt like a critique on the exploitation of surf culture.

Totally, yeah. That’s actually supposed to be Rob Machado. I grew up as a fan of Rob Machado but also with my last name I thought it was funny and I wanted to include him in a piece. I came across this etching of a guy from Papua New Guinea--well that area is called New Ireland, but it’s technically Papua New Guinea. After I made the piece I found a documentary on surfing in Papua New Guinea where these tribes are starting to get into it and Australian companies are sponsoring the top guys from there. It’s just funny to me. It’s like a hoop dream kind of thing where guys from the ghetto try to use basketball to get out of their situation and now surfing can be the same opportunity. It’s just interesting to me how it’s affecting the world and small communities in rural areas.



“Bringing Gifts from ABC to Capt Cook”

How about the “Bringing Gifts from ABC to Capt Cook” shipping container piece--the title is awesome with how prevalent ABC stores are in Hawaii, how did you come up with that?

That whole [shipping container] series really came across because of these etchings I dove into. That piece in particular is based on an etching by John Webber I believe--he sailed with Captain Cook [1770s] on some of his trips. They carried artists on their journeys around the world. I thought it was interesting how much these artists went through and how it was sort of through their eye, through their lens, that people were interpreting these new worlds. So that piece in particular was inspired by... I think it was called ‘The natives bringing Captain Cook gifts from the Sandwich Islands.’ Which is what they used to call the Hawaiian Islands. So I did a twist on it, the gifts most people bring back from Hawaii these days are from ABC stores. They [Webber] would sell these books of artwork to fund future voyages and it’s kind of interesting to me the way these expeditions are tied into the ways that the island communities have developed and have been exploited or however you want to look at it.



"Passing Diamond Head"

Do you ever get to stow a board when you're working on the containerships? It looks like you're pretty busy but do you find time for a surf when you're circumnavigating?

Yeah, for the most part I've surfed on the Hawaii run. That's probably the easiest. I haven't really found the need to bring a board because I'm already lugging all this art gear along with cameras and stuff. So usually when I'm over there though I've got a few friends that will pick me up and take me surfing or I just use a bike, because some of the ships have bikes on them, and I'll just bike into Waikiki and get a rental longboard. I've checked the surf like in Sri Lanka and I've gotten close in Singapore. I got to surf a wave pool, like a standing wave, over there. I tried to catch a ferry over to this Malaysian island because that was the closest surf I could find looking online. I was there for a shipyard deal and it was for two weeks. Unfortunately I haven't gotten really random country surfs. I checked some surf in Oman when I was over there because apparently there are some nice beaches. Most of the trips that I'm on are just going to Hawaii back and forth or now I'll go to Alaska, then over to Asia, back to L.A., and then to here [San Francisco].



“Jack O’neill”

I saw you did that piece of Jack O’Neill.

Yeah that was a little ways back. I think it was a 60th anniversary thing they were doing for O’Neill. They did a big tour where they were basically having a party in a handful of locations around the world. I think it started in Bali or something, but they would reach out to the community there to do an art contest and a handful of artists were on this sort of tour. I think Thomas Campbell was there too. I was able to get a piece into the final leg of that tour in Santa Cruz when they had the Cold Water Classic going on. I got connected to the O’Neill family and was able to drop it off and meet them. It was awesome. Obviously now with Jack passing away it was such an honor to meet him in his last years.



“Thailand Wake 3” 35mm photo

Tell me about the whitewash kind of boat-wake work you’re doing. Are those derived from photographs?

I’ve kind of gone back and forth. Originally I was just carrying a camera on-board as much as I could and I would stare at those wakes. They’re really dramatic out in the open ocean. Basically what’s happening is you’re getting the white water, the air bubbles, and as they spiral down deep where the water is clear it shows off the clarity of the water. So if you’re in a really tropical area with turquoise water it’ll be extra vibrant because you’ll see all this whiteness down in the depths. So the same goes for open ocean when the silt kind of falls out of the water, you get extra clarity. When a container ship goes through the water it has such a big draw and it sucks air down. You get these really incredible wakes.

So I started to try to work with the photograph but in paint. I've kind of gone back and forth where if the photo is good enough I should just show the photo. It's kind of a way to work through the memory of a voyage or something in my mind. I think the wake is this physical record of the passage but it's also so temporary. I'm getting the snapshot of it but it's gone in a split second. It's kind of a funny ephemeral grasp at time or something.

Kind of like a fleeting record of your travel maybe?

Yeah. It's nowhere but it's also somewhere in the middle of the ocean.

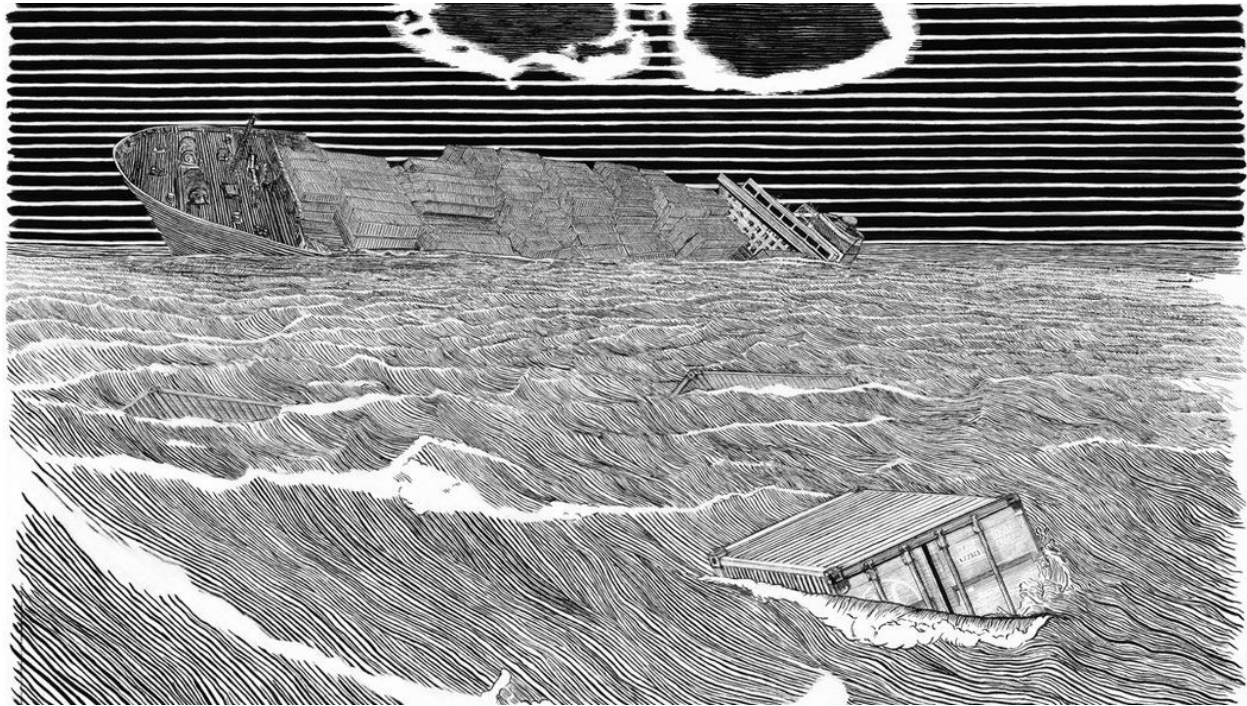
...

Link

The New York Times Magazine

Making Art on the Open Seas

By Bonnie Tsui, Jan.15, 2016



Martin Machado

Ninety percent of the world's goods travel by sea. The efficient movement of all our stuff from the vague *there* to the present *here* is made possible by container ship. The San Francisco-based artist Martin Machado has an unusual firsthand perspective on this tool of globalization: He spends several months of the year working on container ships, on routes that have taken him through the Suez Canal and to ports in cities as far-flung as Honolulu; New York; Dubai; Karachi, Pakistan; Shanghai; and Singapore.

On board, Machado is often hired for watch duty, looking for hazards on the water, and for steering ships in and out of port. But he also draws and paints from his cabin and takes photographs, some of which he posts to Instagram. His latest art, inspired by the 18th-century journals kept by Captain James Cook during his famed “voyages of discovery” around the Pacific, has to do with re-representing the first moments of contact between isolated societies and the Western world.

Machado's recurring theme is the shipping container itself, loosed from its transport and floating on the sea. There is no record of how many containers are lost at sea each year, but maritime organizations estimate that there are probably hundreds of them floating in the ocean at any one time. Last month, 12 containers fell off a ship belonging to Matson, a shipping company headquartered in Hawaii, on its way to Seattle; one container and its contents washed up on San Francisco's Baker Beach.

In Machado's newest series, contemporary figures meet historical ones in a kind of dreamscape. Machado replaces the traditional vessel — a canoe, say, or a tall ship — with the container, which ferries its own very modern ideas into the scene. The images contain deliberate echoes of the explorers and artists who sailed with Cook, because, as Machado explains, this era is fleeting, too. "The containers, ships and runs are all going to change," he says. "I'm trying to capture this moment of time on the sea."

In the slideshow are selections from Machado's new book, "An Ocean Between Us." At press time, he is on a Matson ship on the run linking Hawaii, Seattle and Oakland, Calif.

...

[Link](#)

Urban Barrels

Purveyor of RAD | Martin Machado

By Purveyor of RAD, May 03, 2017



Where are you from?

I was born and raised in San Jose CA

Tell us about your first experience with the sea?

I spent a lot of time over the hill in Santa Cruz as a kid. We had a good amount of family over there so I was constantly at the beach with my brothers and cousins.

When/how did you get into sailing?

I got a little bit of sailing in as a kid, but it really didn't solidify until I got my first job on a tall ship at 19 in the San Francisco Bay.

While living in Santa Barbara, did you build anything awesome like a boat?

I think you're leading the interview here! Ha. NO I actually didn't build a boat, but I was working for a sailboat day charter deal, and my boss basically gave me an old 25 ft sail boat so that he could put someone in that slip. So I spent about a year sprucing it up and sailing out to the Channel Islands, before the anchor snagged when I was on shore and it went up on East Beach. So I spent about another year getting it in shape again then sold it up in the SF bay. I miss that cursed little boat...

Tell us about your job/work on container ships? How did you get into this line of work?

The captain and young crew of that tall ship (the Hawaiian Chieftain, now based out of Seattle) made a huge impression on me and I was encouraged to save sea letters from other boats I worked on in order to accrue credentials that could get me out on any ship. So about 8 years later after working on everything from modern sailboats and commercial fishing boats, to oil spill clean up ships, I finally had what I needed to ship out through a union as part of the deck crew on a containership. That was 2009 and I was on that ship for over 6 months straight going from New York to Singapore and back every 2 months. I've pretty much been shipping out for 3-5 months out of each year since and its gotten me all over the world.



You were just in LA for an art show, Tell us about your newest collection, An Ocean Between Us!?

Yeah, I just had a show downtown LA at a gallery called Cordesa Fine Art. The show was called *Bodies Politic* and I have some big ink on paper drawings as well as a lot of photography from my travels. I also made some sculpture out of a much traveled used shipping container, which I cut, sandblasted, and put a patina on to make the raw steel look like bronze.

Any more shows coming up?

Lots coming up in the fall and winter, to early for details, but I'm very excited for some upcoming projects with an artist I've long admired. Plus a good amount of art fairs through my galleries K. Imperial in San Francisco and Cordesa in Los Angeles.

Moving away from the sea for a moment. I hear the Machado's have a pretty rad round up every year. Is that something you look forward to every year? Why ?

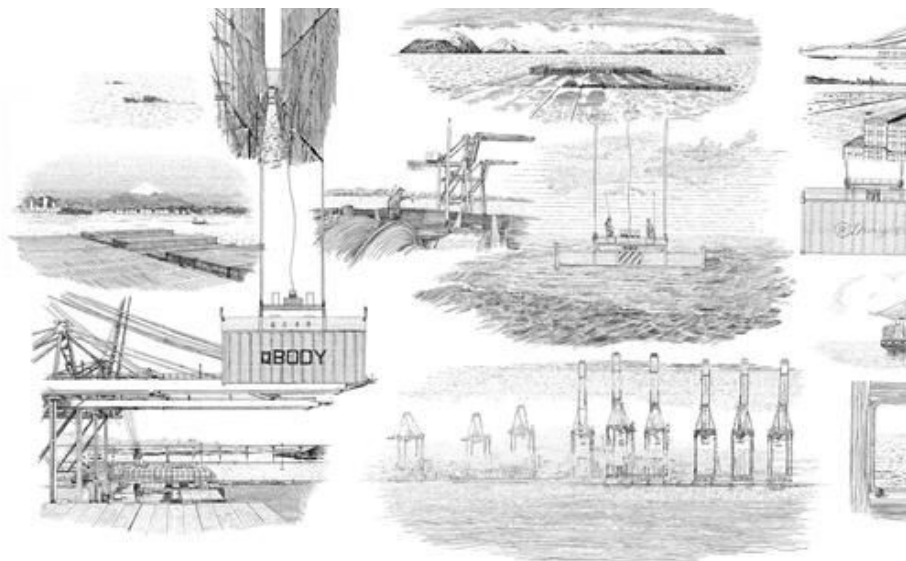
Ha yes. My grandfather on my dad's side of the family is Portuguese from the Azores, and his family had kept the cattle ranching traditions going. Now generations later, most (but not all) of his grandchildren are pretty much city-slickers but we get together at least once a year to help out on the ranch near San Luis Obispo. I handle most of the branding which is sort of a lazy old man's job. I do look forward to it every year though, and every time I'm down there I wonder why I don't live in that area?

What are you most looking forward to this year?

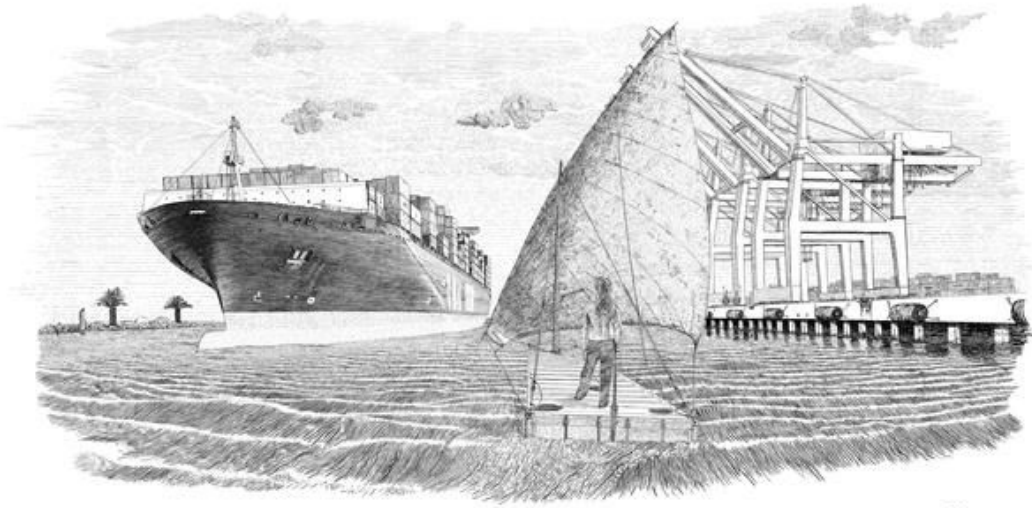
Man I was on a container-ship over the holidays going to Asia and back. I got off mid Jan and then was basically in a cave working non stop for this LA show. So I am most looking forward to right now, finally relaxing a bit, surfing again, and spending lots of time with my wife and toddler son.

What is the best way for us to follow your work?

Probably instagram is the most up to date, or www.martinmachado.com for shows and stuff.



Body and Thought



The Dhow Embarking



Phil



Angel



Los Angeles Show, Cordesa Fine Art 2017

...

Link

IN THE MAKE

Studio visits with West Coast artists



Martin Machado

By In The Make, April 2012

“There have always been romantic and glorified notions about being out at sea that draw people into this idealized 'dream'...I'm curious about the ways in which life at sea embody our fantasy and also counter it.”

We visited Martin at his flat in Russian Hill and though his studio is “officially” in the converted garage space, he pretty much makes work everywhere in his house. Works in progress occupied the front of his living room as well as an office area, and were scattered throughout the expansive, covetable space of his garage. Because Klea and I hadn't started out the morning with quite enough coffee, we showed up at Martin's jonesing for a caffeine fix, and luckily for us he immediately offered to make some. There's something quintessentially

Californian about Martin— he's laidback, welcoming, easy to talk with, and a bit of a free spirit. In his work too, there's an element I've long associated with "Western" archetypes— that wild-eyed imagination and yearning which strictly belongs to the thrill-seekers, dreamers, individualists, and outsiders who constitute a prevalent part of our cultural landscape and identity. Referencing his own experiences working on ships, notions of adventure, physicality, hard work, and an unwavering awe for the forces of nature are central to Martin's art. While talking to him, I found myself asking a ton of questions about his time at sea; I wanted to know the particulars of what it's like to work on a ship, and hoped for long-winded and fantastical stories about his crewmates and the places he had visited. His paintings of churning waves, faraway horizons, and rough-and-ready characters call up a desire most of us have (albeit more latent in some than others): to venture forth and encounter discovery, and to get just close enough to risk to remember what it feels like to be alive.

What mediums do you work with? How would you describe your subject matter? What themes seem to occur/reoccur in your work?

For the most part painting is my medium of choice, but the type depends on the piece and where I happen to be working. If it's a confined space on a ship or something, then I'll avoid oils and use water-based paints like gouache on paper. I also like to work on found materials such as nautical charts, old cannery boxes, and driftwood. The sea is the most common theme in my work, but I also like to explore ideas of labor, leisure, escapism, and personal narratives.

Do you have a day job? What is it? What does it mean to you?

I pay the bills with my work on boats/ships. For the most part that is commercial fishing for salmon in Alaska each summer, but I've also worked on oil spill response vessels here in the Bay, an international containership, and many other smaller boats. I'd like to possibly try some tugboat work later this year, or maybe a shorter contract on another containership— six months is too long! To me it means freedom, inspiration, and of course a paycheck. I think it's grounding to work outside the arts as well, you connect with real people and see new places. The art world can be a bit insular, especially in one city.

Can you recall the first time you saw a work of art that had impact on you?

I think early on in my education, Caspar David Friedrich's work had a big impact on me. He really seemed to find a connection between deep human emotion and nature, which I find interesting— this bond between people and our planet. I think that is part of my draw to the sea; it seems very human at times, partly because we come from it, but also its attributes— like some people, it can be both wild/beautiful and horrible/deadly in the same day.

Is there something you are currently working on, or are excited about starting that you can tell us about?

The show I'm putting together right now for Gallery Hijinks has me excited. I'm working in a lot of different mediums (paint, video, glass, photography), but they are all aiming to expand this narrative about my experience working for six months on a containership.

Each piece goes off on its own little tangent, exploring the past and present of shipping and the romance/realities of a life at sea. In a few pieces I borrowed from the style of the Mexican artist Dr. Lakra, which he sort of borrowed from old film posters and his work as a tattooist. I thought the techniques of overlaying imagery worked perfectly for exploring some of the concepts I wanted to touch on; juxtaposing images of my crewmates with more romantic shipping imagery. I'm interested in people's dreams and influences that shape their lives. I think it applies to us all, really, in any occupation or path, but I focused on why people begin working on ships, which was a question I asked most of my crewmates. All of the imagery has special significance; some are taken from my own photos and others were sourced later from old magazines, the Internet, books, or old Sailor Union of the Pacific newspapers. There are some historical images of key figures in shipping, such as Andrew Furuseth and Harry Lundenberg, both Norwegian sailors who came to America and fought for sailors rights here in San Francisco. There are also references to Sailor Jerry's tattoo work, which has been so widely popularized, but was originally made for these sorts of characters to stumble into his shop in Honolulu, Hawaii and find a connection with the art.

There have always been romantic and glorified notions about being out at sea that draw people into this idealized "dream" of what it's like, but the reality is quite different, and yet it does still encompass some alluring aspects— travel, community and solidarity with your shipmates, a sense of freedom, a closeness to nature. I'm curious about the ways in which life at sea embody our fantasy and also counter it.

What are you currently reading, listening to or looking at to fuel and inspire your work?

Last month I was on a random but wonderful expedition called The Clipperton Project where we sailed three boats and about 20 international artists and scientists out to a remote atoll way off Mexico. The trip was inspirational in itself, but one of the artists from Mexico, Carlos Ranc, put together a huge library (in French, English, and Spanish) for the three-week trip, but covered the books and blacked out all references to each title and author. So I don't know all of what I read, but it was a great collection, *The Lord of the Flies* by William Golding was in there, and John Steinbeck's *The Pearl*, as well as a bunch of other great works.

I get a lot of inspiration from sea stories, such as the chronicles of Bernard Moitessier, Richard Henry Dana, and Joshua Slocum. I like texts about people leaving society for "paradise." I'm drawn to these kinds of stories because I've always wanted to do that— but I recognize that there are consequences. In thinking about people who leave society for "paradise" I'm forced to confront my boyhood dreams and somehow try to honor them in a way that's feasible and responsible. There is a coming of age theme hidden in there; a real attempt to grapple with a longstanding inspired goal and what pursuing that would actually mean for my life, my work, my relationships, etc. The truth is, I'd love to just buy a sailboat and get out there, and be at sea and see the world and make art.

What does having a physical space to make art in mean for your process, and how do you make your space work for you?

Over the years I've gotten used to working on the go, sometimes out of a suitcase, crashing with friends or something. So I've learned to do a lot with a little. It can be really hard though, there's nothing better than a good workspace. I'm lucky to have tons of room where I'm at now; my current space can accommodate different projects and their needs pretty easily.

Do you see your work as relating to any current movement or direction in visual art or culture? Which other artists might your work be in conversation with?

I think there has been a recent movement back towards nature. Which seems pretty silly that that can even be said, since it is the world we live in, but I think there is some truth to that. I also think that with so many first world countries outsourcing their labor, white-collar people are interested in physical jobs in a curious way, even if they are just watching it on TV. I think folks are inspired by people who choose to work outside of the office. I guess it's timely for me because my work has that angle, and is looking at sea-faring culture and labor, which most people aren't too familiar with but they seem to be curious about.

How do you navigate the art world?

I frantically try to keep up, going to openings, magazines, and all that. But there is a good amount of acknowledging that I don't want to make art about art, usually I'd prefer that my crewmates like my work over the art critics.

What risks have you taken in your work, and what has been at stake?

When I was in art school I finally switched to making work about the sea, even though I'd labored in the maritime industry for years and had surfed most of my life. Before that I had focused on all of these negative aspects of my surroundings. Having grown up in Silicon Valley, office parks popping up all around me really affected me. I wanted to focus on something positive in my life, even if it is escapist or nostalgic. It may sound like a cop out, but I see it as a challenge to make work about a subject that has been overused so much and is innately seen as beautiful. But I hope that people see that I am not just making pretty pictures to sell, that the sea has always been a part of my life, both professionally and personally, and I am genuinely interested in all aspects of sea-faring culture.

A commonly held conception is that artists often make their best work during periods of personal turmoil, have you found this to be true?

I read somewhere that when Willie Nelson was asked, "Why are all of your songs sad?" he answered that when you're happy you...ride the ride, spend the dough, love the person, etc. but when you're sad you take the time to reflect on it. I am paraphrasing of course, but I think that it's true. I am sure that I've sadistically suffered for my art at times, hoping it will make it more significant; whether it is spending months at sea or rowing around Alcatraz in a hail

storm. But I also really find inspiration from strong people, who move on through rough times with a smile on their face, instead of whining about how bad their life is.

Do you have a motto?

I'm trying to make, "If you don't stand for something, you'll fall for anything" my motto, but I'm still trying to figure out exactly what I stand for. I do know that I try to be real and honest in my work. I try to really get to know a subject matter before representing it in my art. I do my best to be conscious of trends, but not necessarily follow them. I also try to create new techniques and methods rather than hashing out a lot of the same thing.

What has been your biggest disappointment and greatest joy thus far in life?

I come from one of those "anything is possible if you put your mind to it" sort of upbringings. So the blessing and the curse is following through on all of the silly dreams that plague my brain.

Are you involved in any upcoming shows or events? Where and when?

My first solo show will be in San Francisco on May 5th, 2012 at Gallery Hijinks.

In June I will have some work in the first show for The Clipperton Project at Glasgow Sculpture Studios in Glasgow, Scotland.

...

[Link](#)

San Francisco Chronicle

Modern maritime artist in SF plies high seas, then
his brush

By Jessica Zack, June 5, 2018



San Francisco artist Martin Machado says it's a toss-up which came first, his love of art or of the sea. Growing up in San Jose, he was a creative kid who drew and painted, and also dreamed of one day becoming a marine biologist. He learned to surf during visits to Santa Cruz to spend time with his grandfather, a newspaper cartoonist, who would take Machado out on small fishing boats.

"Finally, in college (at UC Santa Barbara) I was at this crossroads," Machado, 37, said on a recent morning at his Russian Hill home. "Do I follow the art path or do I go marine biology? I went towards art."

The walls and table surfaces of Machado's basement studio were covered with his fastidiously detailed fine-line drawings of ships, ports and sailors reminiscent of centuries-old etchings, and surprisingly tranquil black-and-white photographs of enormous container ships cutting through the churn of the open ocean. Machado was readying art he's created over the last five years for the exhibition "Martin Machado: Fluid State," on view now through Aug. 19 at the San Francisco Art Institute's Fort Mason campus. (A reception with the artist is being held on Friday, June 8.)

With hindsight, Machado admits it's a telling coincidence that in 2007 he received his master of fine arts from the institute and also joined the 127-year-old Sailors' Union of the Pacific. He started two careers at once — as a professional artist and a merchant mariner. "I thought I'd see if I could work on the big container ships because maritime themes and imagery, and issues around global trade and industry, had started to peek their way into my artwork," he said. "I wanted to be true to that world, and not just represent a community that I wasn't part of."

For the past 11 years, Machado has spent three to four months of every year working on container ships that haul goods from the Port of Oakland to Asia and the Middle East and back. His transoceanic voyages on the kind of immense 1,000-foot vessels one sees creeping through the Golden Gate regularly have become both the inspiration and the subject of Machado's captivating body of artwork.

As an art student, Machado was put off by the emphasis on conceptualism. "I don't want to make art about other art, as much as art that speaks of my lived experience. You know how land artists like Andy Goldsworthy and Richard Long would take a walk and then make art about that walk? I started thinking about my sea voyages that way."

On board, he works as deck crew and a "watch stander," scanning the water from the bridge for dangers and anomalies, and navigating the ship safely into port.

After the hard work of doing things like tightening the lashing gear on the high stacks of containers, Machado spends his limited downtime creating art in his cabin. "I rearrange my room to have more wall space," he said. "My wife gave me these really thick, strong magnets, which are key" to adhering paper to the cabin's steel walls.

Since his first voyages, Machado has brought art supplies (and occasionally a surfboard): ink, gouache and oil paints, and "a 4-by-5 camera that was my grandfather's from World War II. It's been fun photographing the new technology of modern shipping with these really old cameras."

Machado's work alternates between being grounded in the realities of labor (drawings of fellow merchant mariners and various ports' giant hammerhead cranes) "when I'm in documentary mode," he said, and then "it becomes more fantasy-based. I imagine containers falling off the ships, and them getting rigged up with sails and sailing off into the night."

In some drawings, contemporary containers float beside historic figures and tribal seafarers. "I sort of see myself in this long chain dating back to the artists like (John) Webber who traveled with Captain Cook" on his famous South Seas voyages in the 1770s, Machado said.

As for the ubiquitous image of the steel shipping container itself, Machado said it's "representative of our new global paradigm. It's the most obvious modern symbol of consumerism and global trade."

"Fluid State" inspires viewers to think about the "invisible industry" that transports 90 percent of the world's goods by sea. Men like Machado (the industry is still overwhelmingly male) most likely brought our toothpaste, cereal, television and car across thousands of miles of open ocean, yet "people assume it all happens naturally, or automatically," he said, pointing to a detailed black-ink portrait of a fellow hard-hatted crew member standing on the deck of a ship. "But there are real people's lives behind everything. Without them, globalization is just an idea."

Machado recalled being involved in one "Captain Phillips"-like incident in "what's called the 'pirate corridor' off Yemen. High-speed skiffs came up on us really quickly. Everybody went to the safe room, and I was on the bridge, steering, doing these evasive turns."

Notwithstanding potential dangers on the high seas, Machado said being on a ship for weeks on end, especially on watch duty, is overwhelmingly calm. "You get into this hypnotic mode where you just stare at the ever-changing-but-the-same water movement. On watch, it's like endless meditation because eight hours of the day you're staring at the water. And you've got to stay awake. So drink some coffee. Stargaze. Stare some more. And then, at least for me, make some art."

...

[Link](#)