

ARTSY

Hew Locke's Dangling Fleet Sets Sail in "The Wine Dark Sea"

FEB 24TH, 2016 11:22 PM
KAREN KEDMY



Hew Locke

The Wine Dark Sea, DD, 2016

Edward Tyler Nahem Fine Art LLC

As refugees continue to take to the sea in droves, mixed-media artist Hew Locke evokes their perilous journeys with his installation of sculptural seafaring vessels at Edward Tyler Nahem Fine Art. In "The Wine Dark Sea," Locke's first solo show at the New York gallery, the artist considers humankind's relationship to the sea and the many reasons we have sailed it.



Hew Locke

The Wine Dark Sea, Group 7, 2016

Edward Tyler Nahem Fine Art LLC

“We’re all floating on the same ocean,” Locke has said in relation to his work. “As a child and young man I sailed the Atlantic. At sea, a twist of fate can send a super-yacht down—it can be an equalizer between rich and poor.”

From among the different media in which he’s versed—including painting, photography, and tapestry—Locke chose sculpture and installation to express his ideas. Twenty-five vessels hang from the ceiling, each telling a story. With their varied details and unique loads, the ships touch upon themes of colonialism, migration, displacement, and notions of home, as well as the codes of culture and power inscribed into their forms and uses.



Hew Locke

The Wine Dark Sea, BB, 2016

Edward Tyler Nahem Fine Art LLC



Hew Locke

The Wine Dark Sea, Group 4, 2016

Edward Tyler Nahem Fine Art LLC

The works are modeled after modern and historical vessels: container and battle ships, yachts, dinghies, cruise ships, rowboats, and houseboats. For example, with its wooden hull and tall masts rigged with capacious sails and lengths of rope, *The Wine Dark Sea, BB* (2016) recalls the ships of pirates, explorers, or colonialists. The powerful frigate is shrouded in diaphanous white muslin sewn with images of wiry black figures. Nearby in the fleet, two luxe contemporary

cruise ships have vegetation and mesh covering much of their surfaces, with looping brass chains hanging from their mossy decks.



Hew Locke

The Wine Dark Sea, Group 3, 2016

Edward Tyler Nahem Fine Art LLC

Among the humbler vessels afloat in Locke's sea is a small, wooden rowboat. Its form is timeless: Early humans made boats like these, the same type that now appears regularly in the news. Except now, the boats are bursting with residents of the 21st century, seeking safety and a new home.

"Hew Locke: The Wine Dark Sea" is on view at Edward Tyler Nahem Fine Art, New York, Feb. 24–Apr. 1, 2016.