

# METRO PICTURES

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## Isaac Julien

*WESTERN UNION: Small Boats*  
25 October – 17 November 2007

Isaac Julien's film installation "WESTERN UNION: Small Boats," a meditation on migration and the hope for a better life, opens at Metro Pictures on October 25<sup>th</sup>, 6–8pm.

To escape deplorable economic and human rights conditions, thousands of African and Asian "clandestines" depart each year from North Africa on the 100-mile journey across the Mediterranean Sea to the southern coast of Sicily. Setting off in larger boats they are transferred mid-sea to highly overcrowded smaller fishing boats where they are left to drift for days on end until they are sighted by the coastguard or sink. Local fishermen often spot the boats first and have been complicit in what is frequently described as the "Sicilian Holocaust."

Known for his extravagantly beautiful filmmaking, Julien depicts the picturesque seaside village of Agrigento and the grandeur of Palazzo Gangi (famed location from Visconti's masterpiece "The Leopard") in stunning juxtaposition to the deadly voyage. Employing a suggestive, non-representational cinematic style, "Western Union" subverts strict narrative, creating a collage of sound and image. Throughout the film, choreographer Russell Maliphant has created a series of vignettes echoing and rearticulating these dramatic voyages.

"WESTERN UNION: Small Boats" is the final installment of Julien's trilogy about journeying across continents and cultures that includes "True North" (2004) and "Fantome Afrique" (2005).

Recent solo exhibitions include the Pompidou Centre in Paris (2005), MoCA Miami (2005) and the Kestner Gesellschaft, Hanover (2006). Julien is represented in the Tate Modern, Centre Pompidou, Guggenheim and Hirshhorn collections.

Julien's theatrical collaboration with Maliphant, "Cast No Shadow," will be presented at BAM, November 6 and 8-10. The work is a commission by Performa, the international biennial of performance art.

Metro Pictures hours: Tues – Sat, 10am – 6pm, T: 212 206 7100, [www.metropicturesgallery.com](http://www.metropicturesgallery.com)

Upcoming exhibition opening Friday 30 November: Jim Shaw

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