



Richard Ketley

O | 32 (Point of Order, Braamfontein, May 2018) is the culmination of the themes and discussions in my research and my practice over the last two years. O | 32 (or to be more precise 0°00' : 32°00') are the co-ordinates for the Ssesse Islands in Lake Victoria. The Ssesse islands also serendipitously lie at the centre of the geographical triangle of the cities in which I live and work and that inspire my work– Johannesburg, Lagos and Dubai.

I first visited the Ssesse islands in 1993, which at the time involved a day long journey from Kampala on a decrepit streamer. Then as now the islands represent a romantic enigma – the 84 islands scattered across a huge shallow lake that lies at the heart of Africa. Partly cloaked in forest, that give way to grasslands and sandy beaches – they are tropical islands that would appeal to any latter day Gauguin. But these island are also home to densely packed and desperately poor villages, the people rife with malaria, HIV, and the blue waters of the lake are un-swimmable due to bilharzia. The villagers fish, but smuggling is a more important economic activity. When I first visited the islands, fish stocks were falling due to the invasion of water hyacinths plants that were reducing oxygen levels in the lake, and the income of the villagers. This does not prevent the villagers revelling late into the night to the Nigerian afrobeat, their faces illuminated by the blue screens of their phones. The location and this duality - reality v/s romanticism became an important inspiration for this series of works. Although isolated, the islands are as much part of the modern world as any other part of Africa.

These works are about my experience of this continent. The images are both maps worked till they are unrecognisable and imagined maps formed by the flow of paint. They reflect the experience of the world from the air but are also experiments in paint, which forms shapes that are indistinguishable from the shapes eroded and formed in nature.

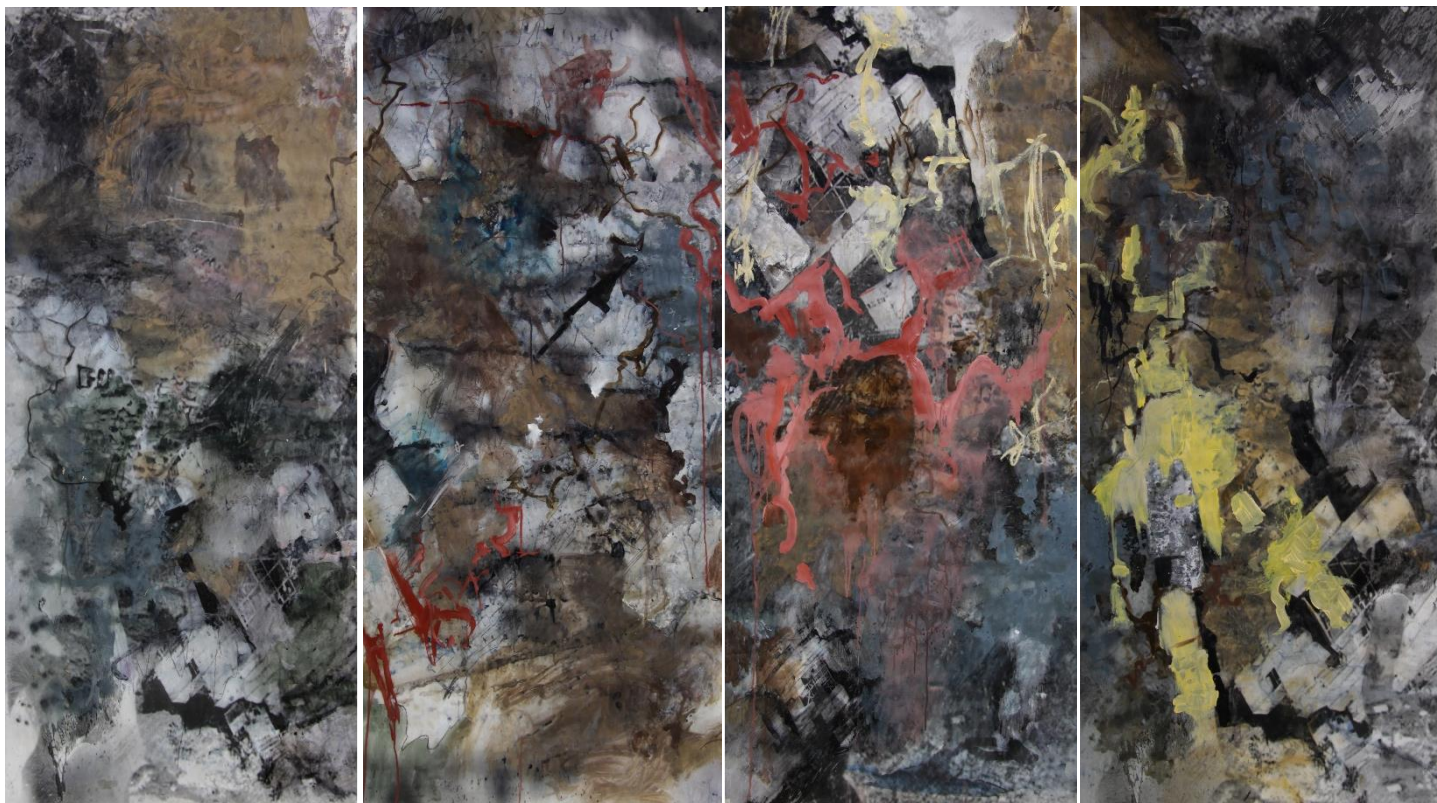
The works for the exhibition extend and combine the techniques explored in the Boda Boda / Bacchus series and in Night Landings and are worked on drafting film and printed photomontage on Sepia film. Given the lightness and durability of the works they are suspended and “float free” from the ground as I often do – being at once paintings and installations.

Richard Ketley
April 2018



O | 32
Oil on Photomontage, and Drafting Film, Three
panels each 840 mm x 1840 mm





Spirit of the Islands
Acrylic on Sepia Film, Four panels each 840 mm x 1840 mm

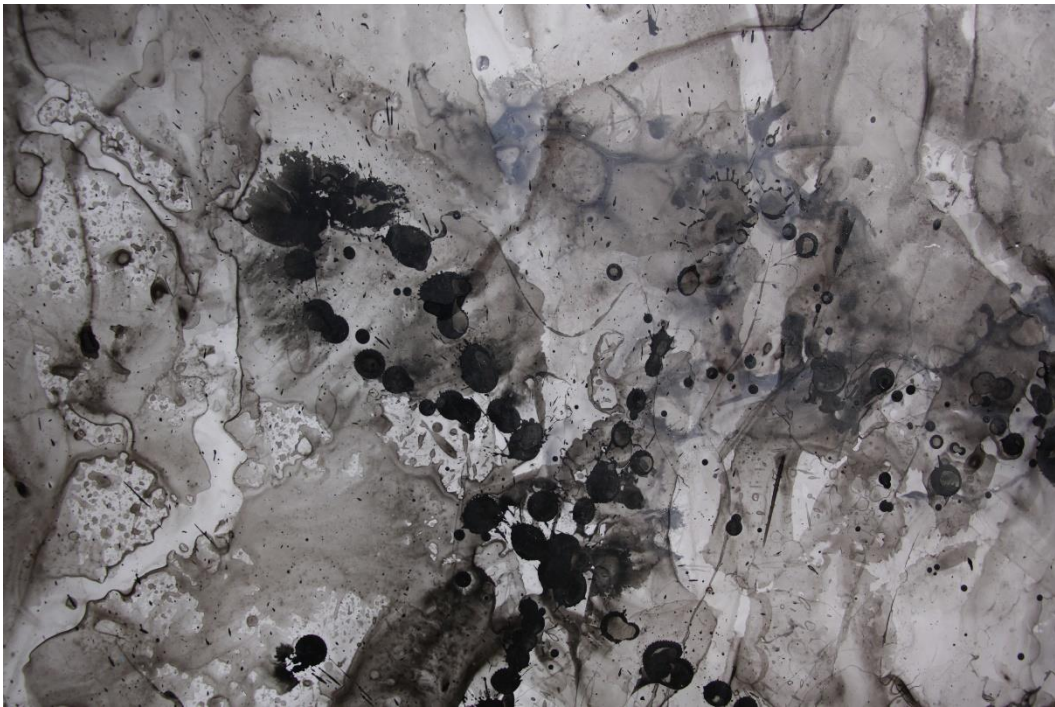
**Spirit of the
Islands (detail)**
Acrylic on Sepia
Film, Four panels
each 840 mm x
1840 mm





Memory

Acrylic on drafting film, Four panels each 1100 mm x 1840 mm





**An allegory of
place**
Acrylic on
Photomontage
on Sepia Film,
Two panels
each 840 x
1840 mm



Island Life
Acrylic on Sepia
Film, Four panels
each 840 mm x
1840 mm

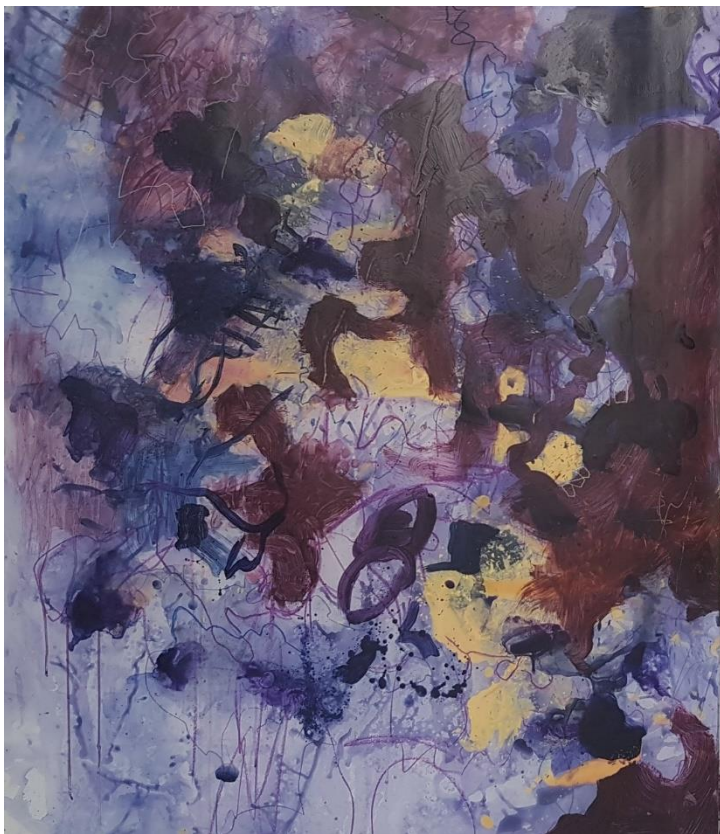






Where do we come from? Acrylic on Sepia Film, Four panels each 840 mm x 1840 mm





Stories of the uninhabited islands
Acrylic on Drafting Film, Two panels each 1100 x 1340 mm





Another country
Charcoal and oil on Drafting Film, 900 x 1200 mm



The fishing village
Charcoal on Drafting Film, 900 x 1200 mm