

## MATTEO LORUSSO

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Through this collection of paintings, my aim is to intricately interrogate the connotations entwined with the term "Immigrant." When discourse veers towards immigrants, societal perceptions often conjure a distinct image, yet seldom do we consider that our proximate acquaintances may also harbor immigrant narratives.

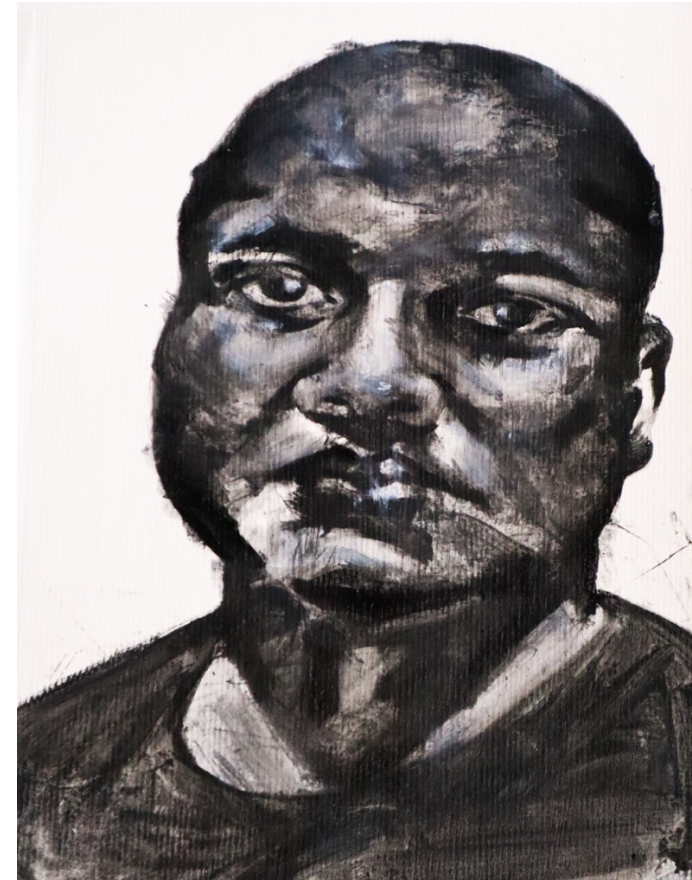
As someone who's been through immigration, I want to share the stories of these people. The stories come from different backgrounds, and the main goal of the series is to give a voice to those who proudly identify as immigrants. It also sheds light on the tough situations they sometimes face.

There are deliberate choices that I made in this series; the application of successive layers of oil paint, the inclusion of transparent paper, and the strategic omission of segments in the text. These decisions are instrumental in portraying the nuanced and intimate nature of the stories being conveyed.

As an artist, my journey began as a student at the University of the West of England in Bristol, where I immersed myself in the world of "Drawing and Print." It was during these formative years that I nurtured my love for art and discovered a deep-rooted fascination with the timeless creations of the old masters.

For me, light is not just a tool; it's a crucial component of my paintings and drawings.

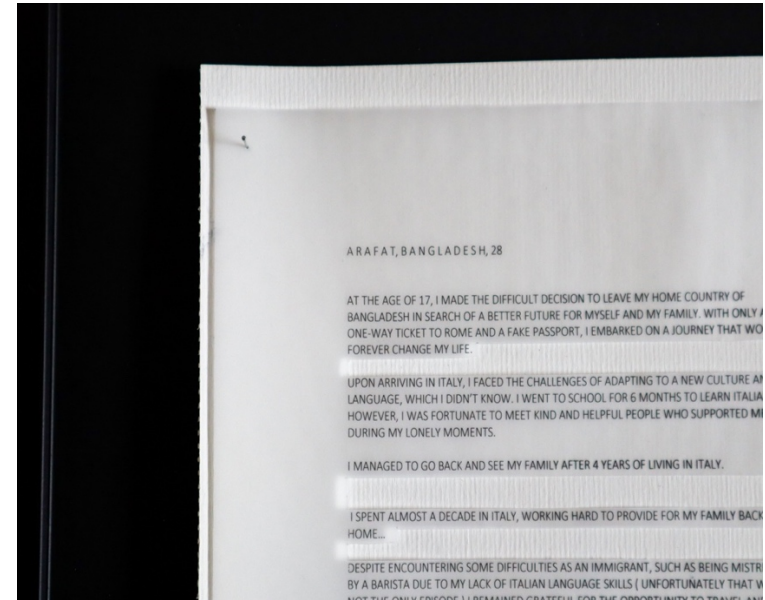
Light grants a theatrical ambiance to my works, allowing the narratives to unfold in a captivating manner. The interplay of light and shadow adds



Close up of "Arafat", oil paint on gesso paper, 2023

depth, drama, and a touch of mystique, evoking a sense of wonder in the viewer.

As part of this series, the immigrants are interviewed, and an extract of the interview is added as text onto transparent paper next to the portrait. Some sections of the text are cut out because I wanted to give the audience the opportunity to interact with the artwork and complete the story based on the information given.

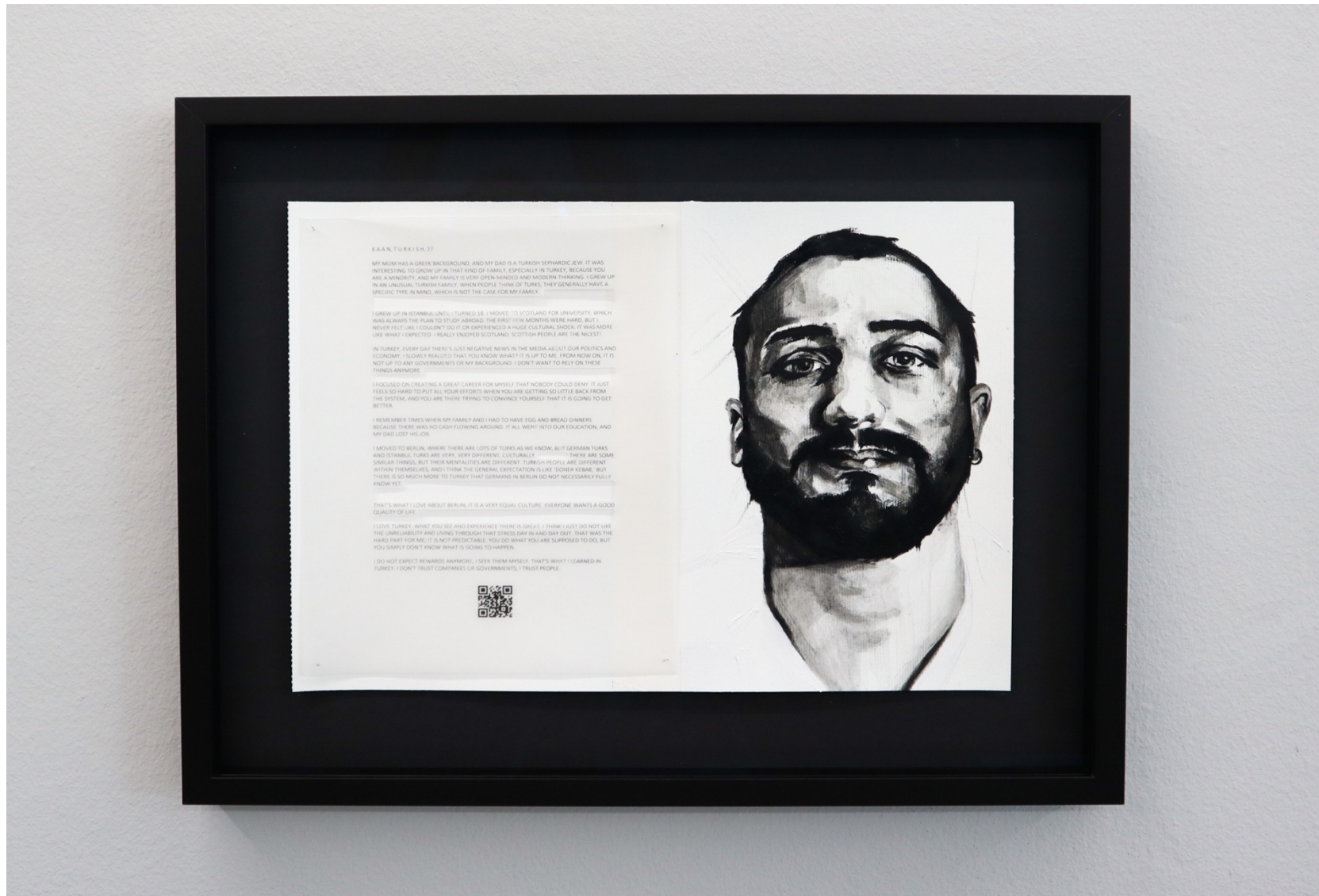


Close up of "Arafat", transparent paper with text on gesso paper, 2023



"I am an Immigrant" series, picture of installation





KAAN, TURKISH, 27

MY MUM HAS A GREEK BACKGROUND, AND MY DAD IS A TURKISH SEPHARDIC JEW. IT WAS INTERESTING TO GROW UP IN THAT KIND OF FAMILY, ESPECIALLY IN TURKEY, BECAUSE YOU ARE A MINORITY, AND MY FAMILY VIEWED OPEN MINDS AND MODERN THINKING. I GREW UP IN AN UNUSUAL TURKISH FAMILY. WHEN PEOPLE THINK OF TURKS, THEY GENERALLY HAVE A SPECIFIC TYPE IN MIND, WHICH IS NOT THE CASE FOR MY FAMILY.

I GREW UP IN ISTANBUL UNTIL I TURNED 18. I MOVED TO SCOTLAND FOR UNIVERSITY, WHICH WAS ALWAYS THE PLAN TO STUDY ABROAD. THE FIRST FIVE MONTHS WERE HARD, BUT I NEVER FELT LIKE I COULDN'T GO OUT OR EXPERIENCE A HUGE CULTURAL SHOCK. IT WAS MORE LIKE WHAT I EXPECTED. I REALLY ENJOYED SCOTLAND. SCOTTISH PEOPLE ARE THE NICEST!

IN TURKEY, EVERY DAY THERE'S JUST NEGATIVE NEWS IN THE MEDIA ABOUT OUR POLITICS AND ECONOMY. I SLOWLY REALIZED THAT YOU KNOW WHAT? IT IS UP TO ME. FROM NOW ON, IT IS NOT UP TO ANY GOVERNMENTS OR MY BACKGROUND. I DON'T WANT TO RELY ON THESE THINGS ANYMORE.

I FOCUSED ON CREATING A GREAT CAREER FOR MYSELF THAT NOBODY COULD DENY. IT JUST FEELS SO HARD TO PUT ALL YOUR EFFORTS WHEN YOU ARE GETTING SO LITTLE BACK FROM THE SYSTEM, AND YOU ARE THERE TRYING TO CONVINCE YOURSELF THAT IT IS GOING TO GET BETTER.

I REMEMBER TIMES WHEN MY FAMILY AND I HAD TO HAVE EGG AND BREAD DINNERS, BECAUSE THERE WAS NO CASH FLOWING AROUND IT ALL WENT INTO OUR EDUCATION, AND MY DAD LOST HIS JOB.

I MOVED TO BERLIN, WHERE THERE ARE LOTS OF TURKS AS WE KNOW, BUT GERMAN TURKS AND ISTANBUL TURKS ARE VERY VERY DIFFERENT CULTURALLY. THERE ARE SOME SIMILAR THINGS, BUT THEIR MENTALITIES ARE DIFFERENT. TURKISH PEOPLE ARE DIFFERENT WITHIN THEMSELVES, AND I THINK THE GENERAL EXPECTATION IS LEE DONER KIBAR, BUT THERE IS SO MUCH MORE TO TURKEY THAN GERMAN IN BERLIN DO NOT NECESSARILY FULLY KNOW YET.

THAT'S WHAT I LOVE ABOUT BERLIN, IT IS A VERY EQUAL CULTURE. EVERYONE WANTS A GOOD QUALITY OF LIFE.

I LOVE TURKEY, WHAT YOU SEE AND EXPERIENCE THERE IS GREAT. I THINK I JUST DO NOT LIKE THE UNRELIABILITY AND LIVING THROUGH THAT STRESS DAY IN AND DAY OUT. THAT WAS THE HARD PART FOR ME, IT IS NOT PREDICTABLE, YOU DO WHAT YOU ARE SUPPOSED TO DO, BUT YOU SIMPLY DON'T KNOW WHAT IS GOING TO HAPPEN.

I DO NOT EXPECT REWARDS ANYMORE. I SEE THEM MYSELF. THAT'S WHAT I LEARNED IN TURKEY. I DON'T TRUST COMPANIES OR GOVERNMENTS. I TRUST PEOPLE.

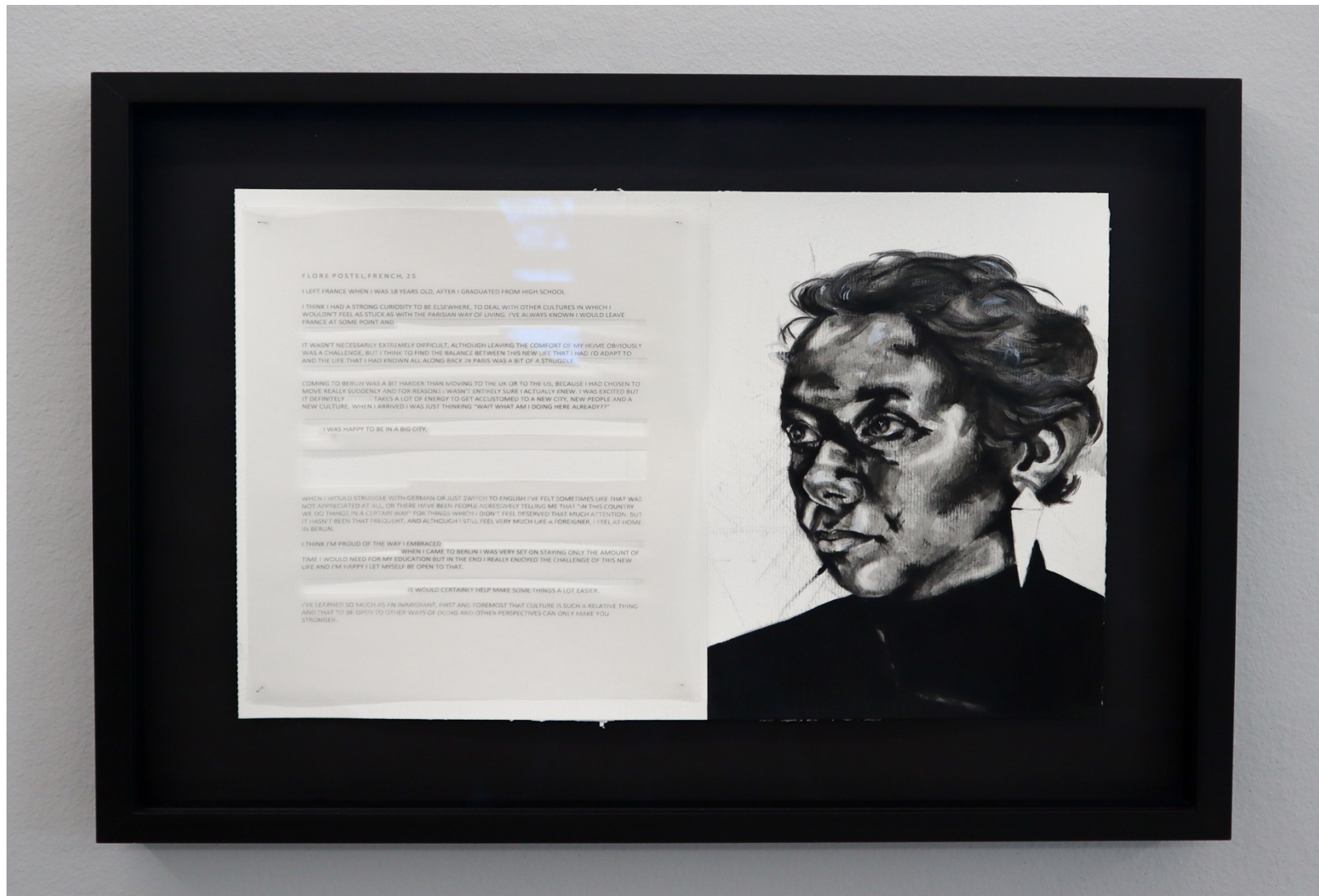


“KAAN” Oil paint on paper and Transparent paper with text, 2023 45cm x 55cm



“ARAFAT” oil paint on paper and Transparent paper with text, 2023 45cm x 55cm





FLORE POSTEL-FRENCH, 25

I LEFT FRANCE WHEN I WAS 18 YEARS OLD. AFTER I GRADUATED FROM HIGH SCHOOL

I THINK I HAD A STRONG CURIOSITY TO BE ELSEWHERE, TO DEAL WITH OTHER CULTURES IN WHICH I WOULDN'T FEEL AS STUCK AS WITH THE PARISIAN WAY OF LIVING. I'VE ALWAYS KNOWN I WOULD LEAVE FRANCE AT SOME POINT AND

IT WASN'T NECESSARILY EXTREMELY DIFFICULT, ALTHOUGH LEAVING THE COMFORT OF MY HOME OBVIOUSLY WAS A CHALLENGE, BUT I THINK TO FIND THE BALANCE BETWEEN THIS NEW LIFE THAT I HAD TO ADAPT TO AND THE LIFE THAT I HAD KNOWN ALL ALONG RACK IN PARIS WAS A BIT OF A STRUGGLE.

COMING TO BERLIN WAS A BIT HARDER THAN MOVING TO THE UK OR TO THE US, BECAUSE I HAD CHOSEN TO MOVE REALLY SUDDENLY AND FOR REASONS I WASN'T ENTIRELY SURE I ACTUALLY KNEW. I WAS EXCITED BUT IT DEFINITELY TAKES A LOT OF ENERGY TO GET ACCUSTOMED TO A NEW CITY, NEW PEOPLE AND A NEW CULTURE. WHEN I ARRIVED I WAS JUST THINKING "WAIT WHAT AM I DOING HERE ALREADY??"

I WAS HAPPY TO BE IN A BIG CITY.

WHEN I WOULD STRUGGLE WITH GERMAN OR JUST SWITCH TO ENGLISH I'VE FELT SOMETIMES LIKE THAT WAS NOT APPRECIATED AT ALL, OR THERE HAVE BEEN PEOPLE AGGRESSIVELY TELLING ME THAT "IN THIS COUNTRY WE DO THINGS IN A CERTAIN WAY" FOR THINGS WHICH I DIDN'T FEEL DESERVED THAT MUCH ATTENTION, BUT IT HASN'T BEEN THAT FREQUENT, AND ALTHOUGH I STILL FEEL VERY MUCH LIKE A FOREIGNER, I FEEL AT HOME IN BERLIN.

I THINK I'M PROUD OF THE WAY I EMBRACED

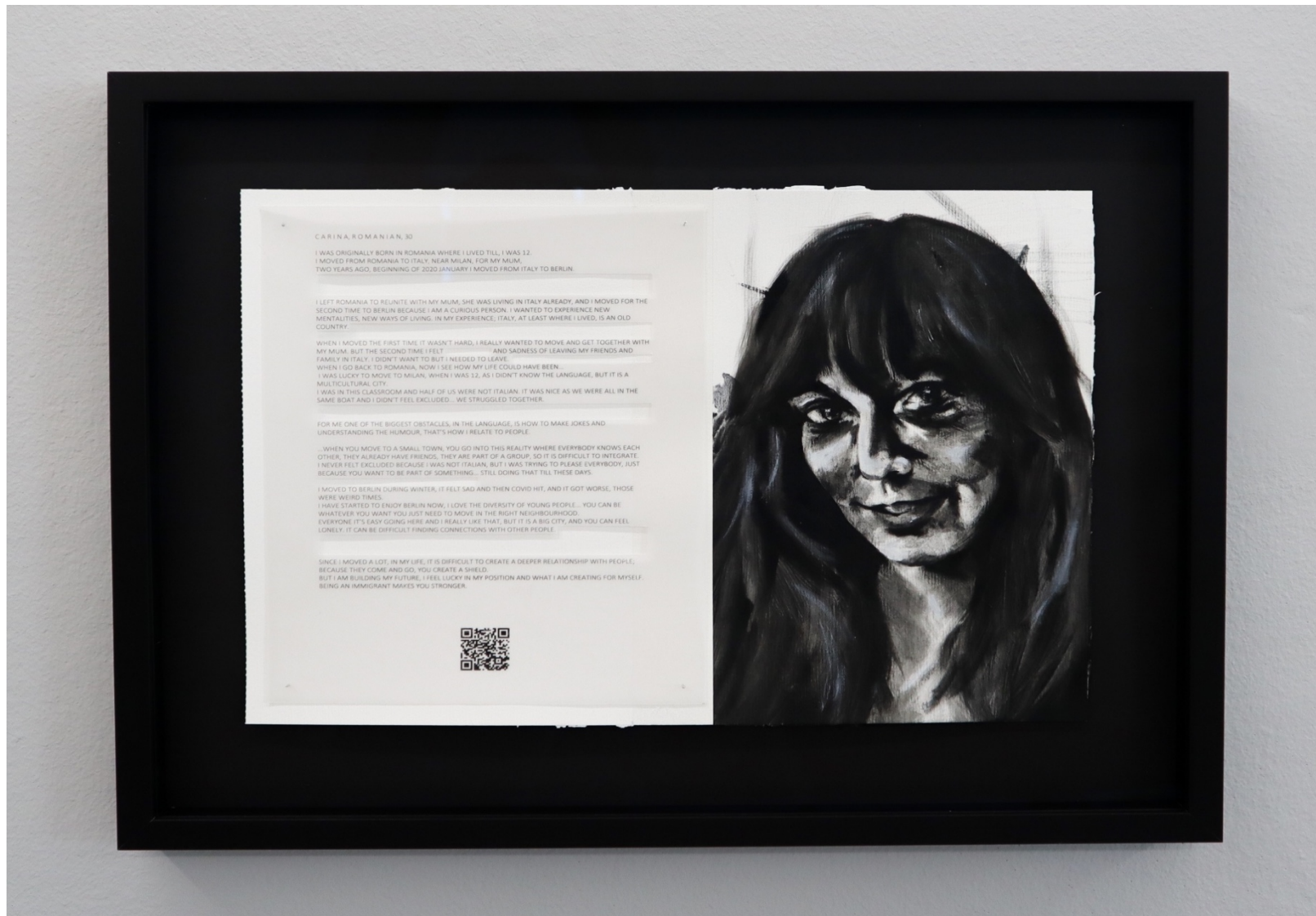
WHEN I CAME TO BERLIN I WAS VERY SET ON STAYING ONLY THE AMOUNT OF TIME I WOULD NEED FOR MY EDUCATION BUT IN THE END I REALLY ENJOYED THE CHALLENGE OF THIS NEW LIFE AND I'M HAPPY I LET MYSELF BE OPEN TO THAT.

IT WOULD CERTAINLY HELP MAKE SOME THINGS A LOT EASIER.

I'VE LEARNED SO MUCH AS AN IMMIGRANT, FIRST AND FOREMOST THAT CULTURE IS SUCH A RELATIVE THING AND THAT TO BE OPEN TO OTHER WAYS OF DOING AND OTHER PERSPECTIVES CAN ONLY MAKE YOU STRONGER.



“FLORE” Oil paint on paper and Transparent paper with text, 2023 45cm x 55cm



“CARINA” Oil Paint on paper and Transparent paper with text, 2023, 45cm x 55cm





FRANCESCA, ITALIAN, 33

MY FIRST EXPERIENCE OPENED UP MY MIND A LOT. BEFORE I LEFT ITALY, I WASN'T USED TO HANG OUT WITH PEOPLE COMING FROM DIFFERENT PLACES AND LIVING IN A MULTICULTURAL ENVIRONMENT... STARTED COMMUNICATING IN A DIFFERENT LANGUAGE WAS THE BIGGEST FEAR THAT I HAD.

WHEN I SAW THERE WAS MUCH MORE FOR ME OUT THERE IT TOOK ME A SECOND TO DECIDE I WAS LIKE "I CAN NOT SEE MYSELF LEAVING HERE I NEED TO GO SOMEWHERE ELSE".

BERLIN IT WASN'T PLANNED... I DON'T KNOW WHAT BERLIN WAS. LONDON DID WELCOME ME WITH QUITE A LOT OF WARM. GERMANY IS NOT ENGLAND... THE LANGUAGE BARRIER WAS WAY HARDER... IT TOOK ME WAY LONGER TO ADAPT TO THIS CONTEXT, BUT AFTER 8 YEARS I CAN SAY THIS IS MY

I ARRIVED IN BERLIN, 2014, IN GENUARY, IT WAS -16, THE COLDEST WINTER THAT I CAN REMEMBER, SNOW UP TO MY ANKLE, REMEMBER THINKING WHAT AM I DOING HERE? I WAS TOTALLY UNPREPARED... LEAVING IN A ROOM WITH MY KNOW FRIEND, SHARING THE HOUSE WITH OTHER PEOPLE... THE HOUSE HAD MICE IN IT... IT WAS REALLY HARD... IT WAS A CHALLENGE BUT THAT'S THE BEAUTY.

IN GERMANY SOME PEOPLE WOULD LOOK AT ME WEIRD, MAKE RUDE COMMENTS ABOUT THE FACT THAT I COULDN'T SPEAK GERMAN, MOSTLY OLDER PEOPLE.

I FEEL LIKE FOR MY GENERATION THERE ARE NOT MANY OPPORTUNITIES, AND IT IS REALLY SAD... ITALY IS FOR OLD PEOPLE... ALL THE YOUNGEST LEAVE BECAUSE THE GOVERNMENT DOES NOT SUPPORT US... WHY THERE IS NOT EFFORT TO GET YOUNGER PEOPLE TO COME UP WITH FRESH IDEAS, THERE ARE ALL THESE POLITICIAN THAT ARE ALL SOO OLD AND THEY DO NOT LEAVE THEIR SEATS AND DON'T CARE AND IT IS SOO FRUSTRATING.

WHY WOULD I LEAVE? IF I HAD THE CHANCE TO LEAVE A GOOD LIFE IN ITALY I WOULD NOT LEAVE MY COUNTRY, IF I HAD THE CHANCE TO FIND A JOB EASILY AND EARN ENOUGH MONEY OR GET SUPPORT IF I WANT TO GO BACK TO STUDY, WHY WOULD I LEAVE ITALY... I FEEL LIKE IT IS REALLY EASY TO JUDGE, POINTING FINGERS, SAYING "HE IS A FOREIGNER, SHE DOESN'T BELONG HERE" WITHOUT KNOWING WHY, THE REASON BEHIND SHE LEFT, WHAT'S MY STORY



“FRANCESCA” Oil paint on paper and Transparent paper with text, 2023, 45cm x 55cm



# MATTEO LORUSSO - “ NEOPHILIA”

## “ NEOPHILIA ” SERIES 2021/ 2022 (enthusiasm for what is new)

### **GENERAL IDEA:**

With these drawings I wanted to represent particular social events that happened around the world and represent these groups of people in a specific time in history and their suffering, anger and fear for their future.

These 4 groups of drawings, made with mix media (biro pen, markers, spray paint etc.), are the representation of 4 social events that happened in the past:

- **“ TO THE OTHER SIDE OF THE SEA”**, 2021, these drawings are inspired by photos found in news outlets and online that captured 6000 people swimming from Morocco to Spain, in Ceuta.
- **“IN THE MIDDLE OF UNFULFILLED PROMISES”**, 2021, these drawings represent the women that attempted to flee Afghanistan after the Taliban takeover that happened after the USA military left.
- **“BETWEEN FIRE AND LIES”**, 2022, these drawings captured the people running away from Ukraine after the Russian invasion and the beginning of the war.
- **“WAVE OF VIOLENCE”**, 2022, these drawings are a reflection on more than 600,000 migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers in Libya, and the majority are not in detention. In Tripoli, many are among the more than 59,000 people forced to flee their homes by the fighting, which has pitted general Khalifa Haftar’s Libyan National Army against forces loyal to the UN-backed Government of National Accord.

**“TO THE OTHER SIDE OF THE SEA”, 2021 Biro, marker on paper**



50cm x 62cm





59cm x 50cm



60cm x 62cm



**“IN THE MIDDLE OF UNFUFILED PROMISES”, 2021 Biro, marker on paper**



60cm x 70cm



60cm x 70cm





60cm x 70cm