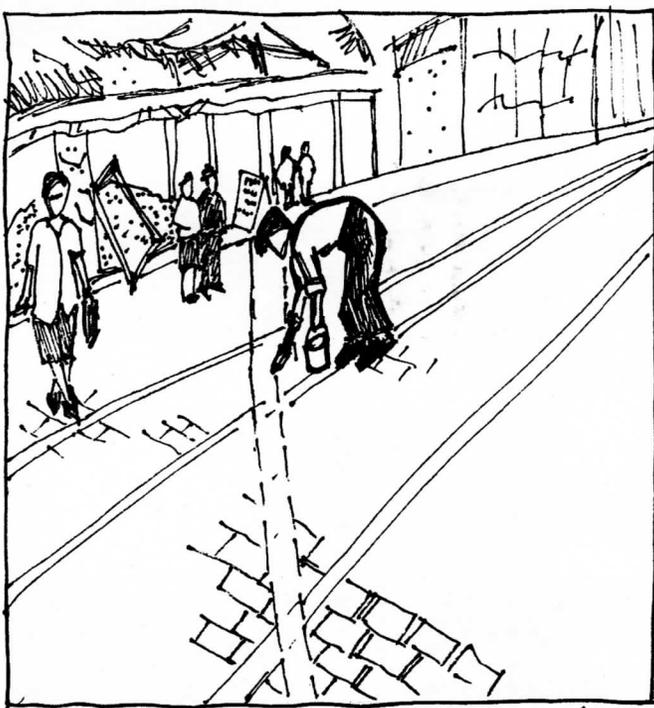


MIGRATION

LAW &

THE IMAGE



1. *Border Line*, 1947, Keyston, Hulton Archive, Getty Images. This image was featured on the cover of Phillip Cole, *Philosophies of Exclusion: Liberal Political Theory and Immigration* (2000) — Rendered by Lois Klassen (2016).

*Reading the Migration Library*\* presents  
a read-aloud text on the occasion of  
“Access Denied: Creative Responses to Borders”  
(Santa Fe Art Institute, April 20, 2016)

## Migration, Law, and the Image: Beyond the Veil of Ignorance

By W.J. T. Mitchell

As read by the author at the Consortium for Interdisciplinary  
Research, University of California Berkeley on March 18, 2010.

<https://soundcloud.com/cirucberkeley/migration-law-and-the-image-beyond-the-veil-of-ignorance-wjt-mitchell-3182010>

Images have been rendered from the print version of this lecture, found in *The Migrant's Time: Rethinking Art History and Diaspora* (Clark Studies in the Visual Arts Series, Yale University Press).

# MIGRATION

## EMIGRATION

Exit

Departure  
Exile, Nomad

Expulsion

Refugee

## IMMIGRATION

Entrance

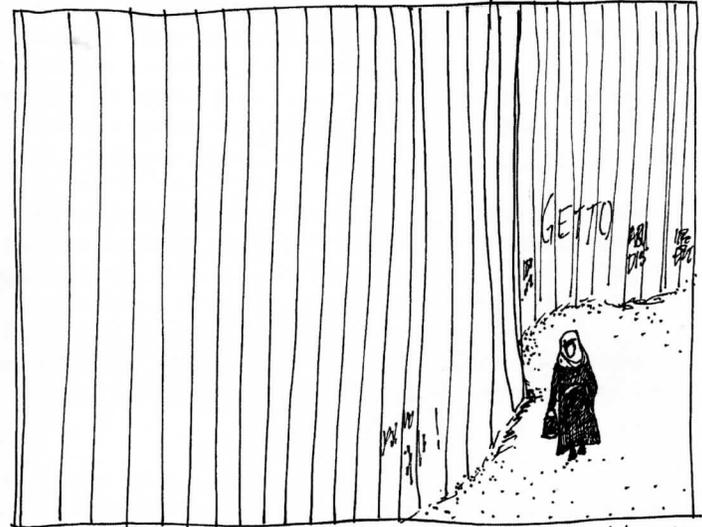
Return  
Settler, Colonist

Invasion

Detainee

Borders  
Frontiers  
Checkpoints  
Internment Camps  
Ghettos

2. The Dialectics of Migration (Mitchell) - Rendered  
by Lois Klassen (2016).



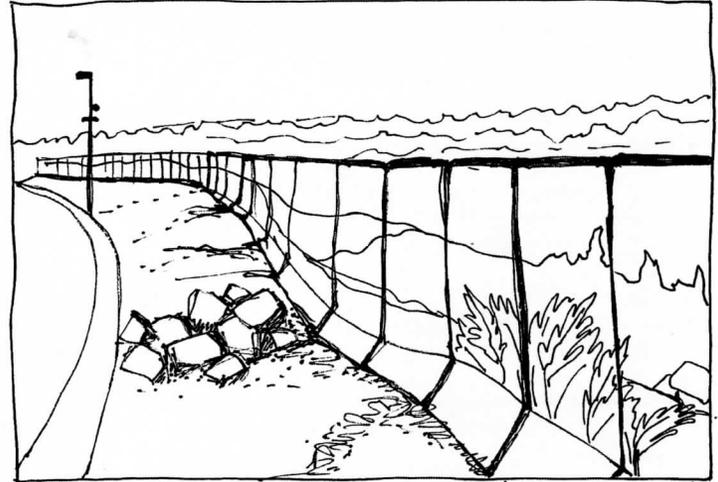
3. Miki Kratzman, ABU DIS (2003) - Rendered by Lois Klassen  
(2016)

Originally produced in 2009, this exploration of “failed migration” by image theorist W. J. T. Mitchell takes up the challenge to understand law and migration in the context of images. Written some years before the morning when a picture of a child’s lifeless body retrieved from Turkish waters<sup>1</sup> seemed to wake the public to a crisis of failed migration (as if such a crisis had just materialized), this text describes how an abstracted “veil of ignorance” is inherent in western law, and how it collides with migration experiences through images. These collisions are particularly present at borders, and in all of the places that borders are enforced.<sup>2</sup> Mitchell ends by considering Tania Bruguera’s art project, *Immigrant’s Party*, which at the time of his writing was just beginning. Speculating on the way *Immigrant’s Party* mobilizes image making, he writes –

The objective is not merely to change the way people see immigrants but the way they see themselves, enabling the production of new, self-generated images and words to articulate the common interests of immigrants, both legal and illegal [“illegalized” is the more accurate term that Mitchell uses throughout the rest of the text]. And to do so not just in order to create new icons but in order to generate new situations and performances, from the immediacy of the mass assembly to the staging of events for the mass media. (page, 74)

<sup>1</sup>The highly circulated image of Aylan Kurdi’s tiny, 2 year-old body being retrieved from the Turkish coast disrupted political campaigning during a federal election in Canada in the fall of 2015. Accompanying the image was the presence in the Canadian media of the boy’s aunt, Tima Kurdi, who spoke publicly about the impossible legal barriers that members of her family faced in trying to find safe asylum in Canada, or anywhere but the shores of Turkey. Also visible was a flurry of community organizing including protests that articulated the increased barriers to migration that the Canadian Government had recently put in place (legislation including C50, C31, and cuts to health funding for refugees).

<sup>2</sup>Mitchell describes the “flying checkpoints” that he experienced while researching and traveling through the West Bank. Canadian-based artist and activist, Tings Chak, in a recent presentation (“Creative Placemaking Panel,” Santa Fe Arts Institute, April 11, 2016) emphasized that for undocumented people, the border is experienced repeatedly as they negotiate social and health services, public transportation, police presence, and more.



4. Miki Kratzman (Israeli, b. Argentina, 1950), *Gilo No. 2* (2001).  
Rendered by Lois Klassen, 2016.

**\*Reading the Migration Library** is a new project that aims at improving literacy surrounding current crises of failed migrations. An imagined Library of Migration is enormous. This project invites people to spend time, with others, in that library. So far, **Reading the Migration Library** has introduced readers at Santa Fe Art Institute (SFAI) to its texts through reading-aloud seminars, a studio-based reading room, and publications like this one.

Additional texts available for listening, on the topic of migration, law and the image, are:

DOCUMENTING THE UNDOCUMENTED: CARCERAL ARCHITECTURE AND MIGRANT BODIES: Conversation recorded with **Tings Chak** in New York on May 30, 201  
<http://the-archipelago.net/2014/06/17/tings-chak-documenting-the-undocumented-carceral-architecture-and-migrant-bodies/>

INTRODUCTION TO PRISON ABOLITIONISM: Conversation recorded with **Nasrin Himada** between Paris and Montreal on January 27, 2016  
<http://the-archipelago.net/2016/03/11/nasrin-himada-introduction-to-prison-abolitionism/>

Free City Radio Interview: **Harsha Walia** on Canada and Border Imperialism (2015)  
<https://soundcloud.com/freecityradio/interview-harsha-walia-on-canada-and-border-imperialism-1>

**Thank You for your assistance & inspirations -**

Tings Chak | Emma FitzGerald | Sheena Hoszko | Santa Fe Art Institute

Lois Klassen  
[Readingthemigrationlibrary.com](http://Readingthemigrationlibrary.com)

ISBN 978-1-988895-15-4

April, 2016