

by [Matt Lutton](#)

JANUARY 12,

2015

[PERMALINK](#)

CATEGORIES:

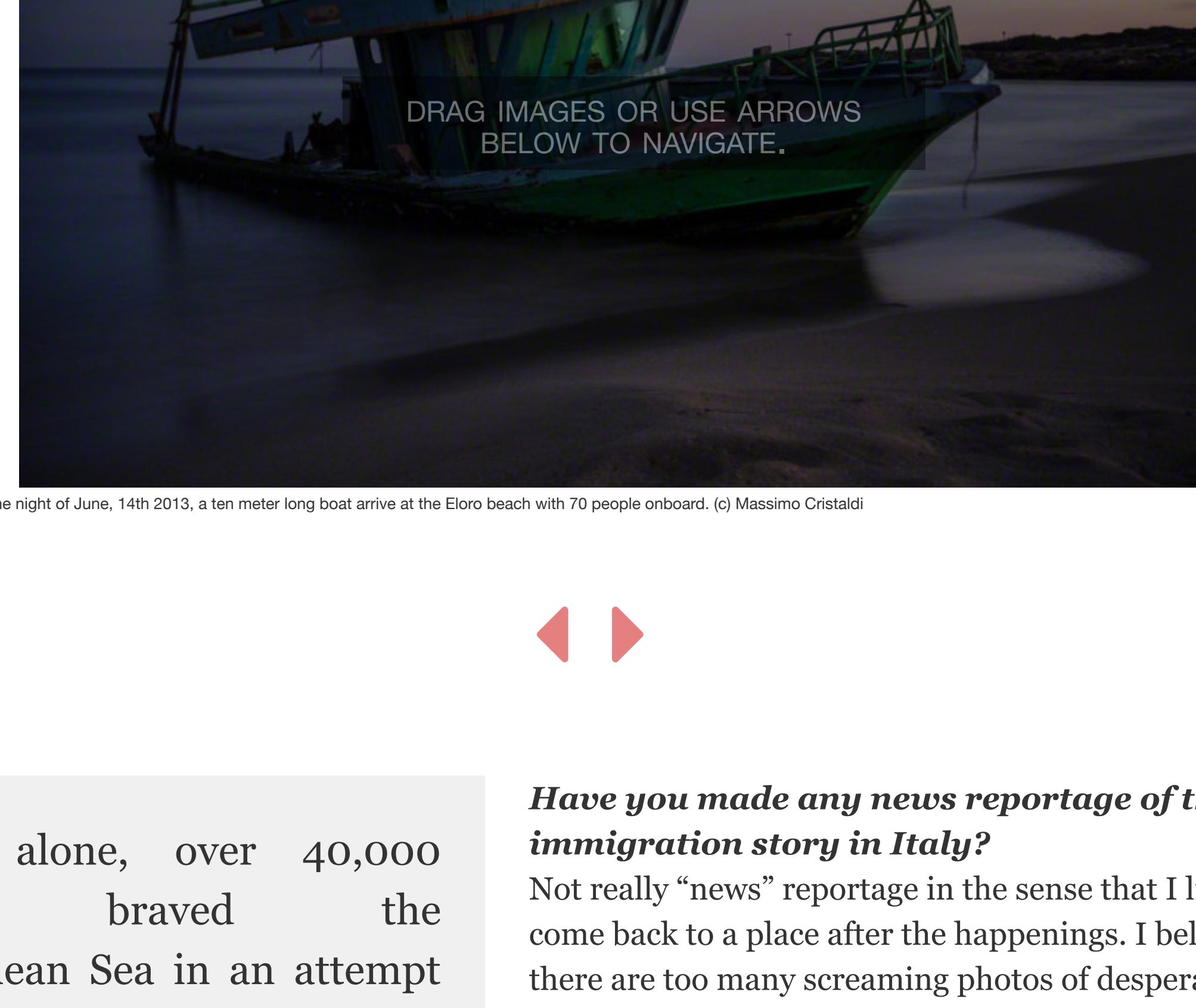
ART, DO IT YOURSELF,
FROM THE MAILBAG,
JOURNALISM,
PICTURES, PROJECTS,
RECENT WORK, WORTH
A LOOK

[Tweet](#) 5

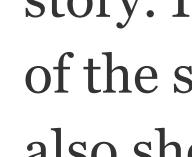
[Like](#) 2

MASSIMO CRISTALDI'S TOUCH GROUND

Massimo Cristaldi recently [submitted](#) his wonderful project [Touch Ground](#) to us at dvafoto and today we are featuring this work and a short interview with him about his project.



In the night of June, 14th 2013, a ten meter long boat arrive at the Eloro beach with 70 people onboard. (c) Massimo Cristaldi



“

In 2013 alone, over 40,000 migrants braved the Mediterranean Sea in an attempt to reach Italy (and Europe). Many of these migrants ended up in Sicily and the surrounding islands. The route was a familiar one, as thousands of these people have previously traveled this route in years past during previous attempts. In “Touch Ground,” I photographed beaches, harbors, cliffs—the places where, in recent years, migrants have first reached the shores of Europe from their original homes in North Africa. The photographs form an exploration of the idea of “Terra Firma”, a coveted place, object of hopes, tragedies, happiness, disillusion, and sometimes, death.
— Massimo Cristaldi's [introduction to Touch Ground](#)

Have you made any news reportage of the immigration story in Italy?

Not really “news” reportage in the sense that I like to come back to a place after the happenings. I believe there are too many screaming photos of desperate people on those “hope boats” and, as often happens, we’re becoming indifferent to those images as they’re part now of the usual way of telling this immigration story. I would like to suggest to people a perspective of the sea from those who are coming to Italy, but still also show the perspective of those who live close to the sea. The limit between sea and earth gets a completely differently meaning on the basis of where you look at it.

How did you come to take this approach to documenting this large and important story about immigration?

In 2009 in Lampedusa I was blown away by what was happening. The traces of the arrival of immigrants were everywhere. So I started a long process of documenting the beaches, shores and the places where immigrants arrived. And started to take photographs of those places where there were many events, often fatalities, happened.

Is there something specific about landscape images at night that helps to tell your story?

Night is often the moment when they arrive. Night can be scary and the lights of the towns you see finally from the sea could mean a lot for who is on those boats.

Do you have a personal relationship to any of the communities where these boats have landed? Or with the sea?

Yes I do. I had long conversations with many immigrants that arrived to try to understand what they are feeling when arriving. What are those trips, what is the experience. Those conversations improved my idea of working on this project. The sea, on another hand, is magical for me. I love it. I was born in a city on the sea (Catania) and swim a lot. For me feeling the sea from a different perspective was a great experience.

Bio:

Massimo Cristaldi was born in Catania, Italy in 1970. After receiving a degree in Geology, he began managing international research projects. Art is the environment he grew up in and photography is the way he set his creative side free. The driving concern of his work is focused on traces that man and time carve over nature and things, representing effects and signs on “what remains”, with a particular interest to the “metaphor of the borders” (see more in [the artist statement](#)). He was awarded in many international photography competitions such as the International Photography Awards, the B&W Spider Awards, the Photography Masters Cup, the Travel Photographers Of the Year and the Prix de Photographie de Paris. Massimo has exhibited in Europe and in the US, in solo and group shows and at photography festivals. He is represented by galleries in Belgium, France, UK and Italy. He lives and works both in Catania and Rome. Massimo’s photographs are part of the permanent collection of the George Eastman House, International Museum of Photography and Film in Rochester, NY (USA).

Leave a Reply

Name (required)

Email (will not be published) (required)

Website

Comment

[Submit Comment](#)