

IMAGE NOT FOUND

THE BOOK

01/13

LITVEN DR BOROK

Cover page: Image not found, 2012

Right: The world unmade, 2012



Lieven De Boeck

The Copy and the Original Lieven De Boeck at Meessen De Clercq
Pieter VAN BOGAERT

Lieven De Boeck shows new work at Meessen De Clercq. Since 'The Archive of Disappearance' in 2010, this is the second time the gallery exhibits the Brussels-based architect/artist. The title of his new show is 'Image Not Found'. Recurring themes make each presentation a reflection of the other, to the artist and to the viewer. This exhibition, this archive, turns round and round until you can no longer tell which is the copy and which is the original.

'Copy of Original'. He had it tattooed on his arm during his residency stay in LA. This is where - in the dream factory of Hollywood, the mirage of the US, the mirror of the world - most of the show was conceived. But the idea was of course already present in earlier works such as 'Typology House' which he showed in 2004 at Witte de With in Rotterdam. Or in his books 'Wonen' and 'Housing' written around the same time at the Jan van Eyck Academie in Maastricht. Here he uses the personal as a measure for the general. That is what 'Copy of Original' is about: the endless return of the (non-)identical as a measure for the objects themselves. Lieven De Boeck classifies. He gives things a place. In space, he is an architect. In the imagination, he is an artist. In the world, he is an observer. While in 'The Archive of Disappearance', he references Belgian artists such as Magritte and Broodthaers, in 'Image Not Found' they become Californians such as Chris Burden or Matt Mullican.

I meet Lieven De Boeck in the studio where he lives and works. We talk, surrounded by recent works. On the wall there is a neon sculpture with the words 'Let us be US'. I recognize it, then again not. I once saw a white version and another one in the Belgian tricolour without the last two letters. This neon is all black. The paint is peeling off in places, giving it a patina.

Lieven De Boeck: "A black neon is beautiful because it doesn't exist. The purpose of neon is to make something seen, not to hide it. The black paint on the neon is an echo of the white Tipp-ex I used in earlier works to erase things. But you get the opposite effect. By painting the neon black, it comes to light. At Meessen De Clercq the original white version is also displayed. Black as a mirror of white. In 'The Archive of Disappearance', I explore ways to disappear whereas in LA, it's all about appearance. The title of the show plays with the tension between disappearance and appearance: 'Image Not Found'. The image is there but you can't see it. During my residency, each day I took a photo of the bright blue sky of California. Those images bring to mind the blue of a video projector. Here I show that with a slide projector. This creates a delay, a return to a former medium."

Blue is an important colour in film and television. It's the colour of the blue key, the background you can project anything onto. Or of blue movies, porn films which are all about desire and projection.

"The image that cannot be found. This returns in 'pour lire la solution renverser l'image'. That work is a rebus that uses images from LA. The castle at Disneyland for instance - itself a copy of the castle Neuschwanstein. Or the lion from 'The Lion King'. The last image of the rebus, 'l'image', is a mirror. That makes it individual every time. Each viewer sees themselves."

Many of your works are self-portraits in which the viewer sees themselves. That clever way you make each disappearance into a new appearance. You are the picture, you as the artist but - if you turn the picture around - also you as the viewer. That brings us back again to a work such as 'let us be US', we are we.

"That's how a mirror works: it's a picture that reverses itself. You find that also in the other neon, 'I lie'. This stands for the paradox of the liar, but also for the first three letters of my name, 'Ik Lie(ven)'"

'I lie' is also a phonetic echo of LA. The dream factory as lie factory.

"Lying is very important in art. The interpretation of reality as lies. Lying can be very beautiful."

Very Hollywood.

"Indeed. It's one of the main subjects of Hollywood movies. Lies as a vehicle, as the very core of fiction. A picture you can turn and reverse. This work also returns in different forms and appearances, lying against a wall or on a pedestal."

The copy, repetition, is very explicit in your exhibition.

"This (he shows me the tattoo on his arm) is the first copy. The original. I had it made on my arm in LA. Here (he points at the floor of the studio) you have more 'copies of originals', 20 blank sheets of paper I found in different places. Here it's no longer about the content but about matter. Each piece of paper is different and therefore original. The original is questioned, the copy is made tangible. The works that I make are also often copies of originals. The basketball as a globe is a copy of a work by Matt Mullican. His work is a print. Here it's a real basketball in 3D. My archive works with codes, a language system also often used in film. Here it's about the meridians. The Prime Meridian, the original one, runs through Greenwich. Here the meridians have become the lines of the basketball one of which runs through LA."

Your 'Hollywood Alphabet' then again is a subjective copy of Chris Burden's 'Atomic Alphabet'. Once again, the arbitrary, which is related to a person and a place.

"All words in this alphabet have to do with Hollywood and thereby have become part of everyday speech. Often the words are also reflections for me. The word 'editor' for instance, that's the person who puts together the movie, but it's also what I do in my archive. I give things a place. All the words refer to works in the exhibition. X-rated, that refers to the blue movies that we just spoke about. US, that refers to the neon.

You use many different media in your exhibition. You have built a billboard of reflecting lamellas. Your 'Pepper Ghost Machine' goes back to a theatre technique from the 19th century. You work with slides, books, typologies. Often, it's about stripping off the medium.

"Or a transformation. A rebus for instance is usually seen printed on paper. Here it looks more like a maquette in 3D. By making it into an object, I translate the concept. It is the maquette of a meaning. The meaning as an object. I find that interesting. The visualization of the concept is questioned. That goes back to the typology, to what precedes in the picture, to the translation. Like with the alphabet. It's visualized letters that you can read, but also interpret, in different ways. It's a visualization of the words that precede the picture. Like a copy that precedes the original."

Interview Pieter Van Bogaert / Lieven De Boeck, H-art magazine, jan 2013



Billboard, 2013



Billboard, 2013



Billboard, 2013

Lieven De Boeck

I Lie, 2012

neon presenting the paradox of the Lie





Mire, 2012
test screen painted on spy-mirror



POUR LIRE LA SOLUTION, RENVERSEZ L'IMAGE



POUR LIRE LA SOLUTION, RENVERSEZ L'IMAGE

Image not found, 2013, installation view
Meessen De Clercq / Brussels / Jan-Feb 2013



Image not found, 2013, installation view
Meessen De Clercq / Brussels / Jan-Feb 2013

let us bells



POUR LIRE LA SOLUTION, RENVERSEZ L'IMAGE



Lieven De Boeck

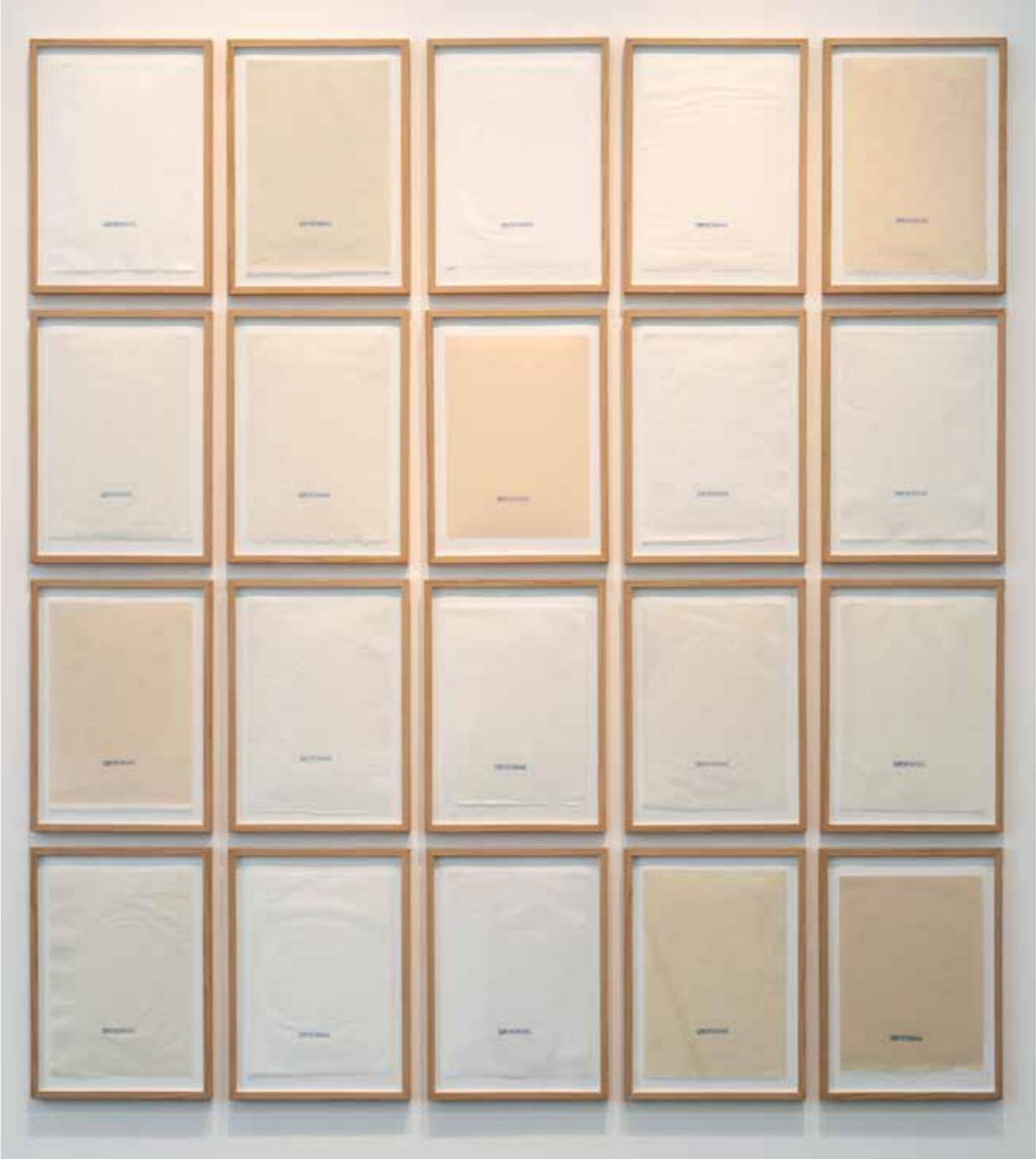
Let us be US, 2012
white neon covered with black paint on the front half



Image not found, 2013, installation view
Meessen De Clercq / Brussels / Jan-Feb 2013



Lieven De Boeck



Copy of Original, 2012
stamp on found empty paper, detail

Lieven De Boeck



I Lie, 2012

neon presenting the paradox of the Lie



GHOST, 2012
pepper ghost illusion machine : ghost = guest + host

GHOST, 2012

pepper ghost illusion machine : ghost = guest + host, detail



GUEST
GHOST
HOST

Lieven De Boeck

Image not found, 2012
text printed on a slide of a blue LA sky





LA alphabet 2012
26 cut outs of polyester tracing paper



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