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mennour 

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NEÏL BELOUFA

And the sky was watching that superb cadaver
Blossom like a flower.
So frightful was the stench that you believed
You'd faint away upon the grass.
— Charles Baudelaire,
« Une charogne », Les Fleurs du mal, 1857

1 October – 2 November 2019
kamel mennour
51 Brook Street
London W1K 4HR
&
3 – 6 October 2019
Frieze London · Booth A2
Regent's Park
London NW1 4LL

With Neil Beloufa's first solo show at the gallery (6 Rue du Pont de Lodi) in Paris coming to an end, Kamel Mennour is pleased to present a double exhibition of the Franco-Algerian artist's work at the gallery (51 Brook Street) and at his stand at Frieze.

As it is often the case in Beloufa's work, here it is a question of multiplicity, layers, and assemblages. His intrinsically protean practice involves overlaying strata and levels of interpretation. His work mixes contemporary problematics and multimedia technology, inviting the viewer to go beyond their initial reading of the piece, to observe the work in all of its dimensions and in all its physical and metaphorical density.

In the Mayfair space, Beloufa is exhibiting a series of luminous, brightly coloured flowers and cars in resin. Though they seem to come straight out of an illustrated book, there are surprises to be found in the depths of the resin: all sorts of hidden rubbish from Beloufa's studio, including old six packs, pizza boxes, and wrapping materials. Beloufa has produced a series of compositions like contemporary stained glass windows, in which fragments of our everyday life have been trapped. Like Baudelaire's corpse, the rubbish has been sublimated into bouquets, incarnations of beauty. As for the car (a component he already used in his 2010 video *Brune Renault*), it stands for 'one of the chief sources of waste both daily and long-term, private and collective.'¹ Jean Baudrillard was already writing in 1970 that the consumer society 'needed objects in order to exist, and, more precisely, needed to destroy them. The use of objects only leads to their slow wasting away.'² Beloufa plays ironically here with the notion of a 'civilisation of trash' and the art market's means of production. By bringing this rubbish into the sacralised, antiseptic space of the gallery, he has made a concrete proposal for recycling, and in this way created value by short circuiting the standard regimes of consumption/destruction.

At Frieze, Beloufa invites the viewer to take a plunge into the now vanished summer. We are at the seaside, with bathers, cerulean blue waves, yellow sand, an ochre sun, striped beach towels, multicoloured beach umbrellas.

Neil Beloufa's show is accessible from Tuesday to Saturday from 10am to 6:30pm at 51 Brook Street, London W1.

For further information, please contact Jessy Mansuy-Leydier, Ilenia Rossi, or Marie-Sophie Eiché-Demester, by phone: +44 7391 133243 or by email: galerie@kamelmennour.com

And yet there is another landscape that progressively unfolds here, animated by a video mapping projected onto the works. Consumer products—empty cans, stranded jellyfish, as well as bottles of soda and champagne like the beginning of an inventory by Georges Perec—appear like fossils of post-industrial society, sarcastically evoking ecological design. These bas-reliefs are all equipped with electrical sockets, where the viewer can charge their mobile phone. Their role is ambiguous: are they an attraction for art collectors with low battery in our ultra-connected civilisation, or are they invitations to risk electrocuting ourselves? Not far off, a series of bronze sculptures (Beloufa's first) stand alongside a group of horizontal modules placed on the ground. These also raise questions. Are they futurist sleeping bags, UV beds, or 'coffins on wheels'?³ The playful surface—from camping to tanning—gives way to a critical, less cheerful, more politically engaged subtext.

1. Jean Baudrillard, *La société de consommation*, Paris, Éditions Denoël, 1970, p. 55.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 56.

3. Magali Lesauvage, « Neil Beloufa fait grincer les rouages de la consommation », *Libération*, 27 août 2017.

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Born in 1985 in Paris, NEÏL BELOUFA is a Franco-Algerian artist who lives and works in Paris. He was a student at the École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts and at the École Nationale Supérieure des Arts Décoratifs in Paris; at the California Institute of the Arts, Valencia (USA); at Cooper Union, New York and Fresnoy - National Contemporary Arts Studio, Tourcoing (France).

He was nominated for the Marcel Duchamp Prize in 2015, the Artes Mundi (Cardiff, United Kingdom) and Nam June Paik (Essen, Germany) prizes in 2016. He was awarded the 2013 Meurice Prize for Contemporary Art, the 2011 Audi Talents Awards and the 2010 Agnès B. Studio Collector Award. His work has been the subject of solo exhibitions in France and abroad, notably at K11, Shanghai, 2016; MoMA—Museum of Modern Art, New York, 2016; Schinkel Pavilion, Berlin, 2015; at the ICA—Institute of Contemporary Arts, London, 2014; at the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, 2013; at the Palais de Tokyo, Paris, 2012 and 2018 as well as the Schirn Kunsthalle, Frankfurt, 2018.

Neil Beloufa also took part in the Shanghai Biennale in 2014, the Lyon Biennale in 2013 and the Venice Biennale in 2013 and 2019.

His work is present in numerous prestigious collections including the collections of the Centre Pompidou—National Museum of Modern Art in Paris, the MoMA—Museum of Modern Art in New York, Sammlung Goetz, and Julia Stoschek.

Neil Beloufa's exhibition « La morale de l'histoire » is on show at kamel mennour (6 Rue du Pont de Lodi, Paris 6), until October 5th.