




2024



Studio LDB+



Portrait Lieven De Boeck, 2022
Photo Sofie Smets

Artist Statement

I am an artist challenging heteronormative attitudes in contemporary art, offering alternative avenues for presentation and consumption of art while interrogating societal gender expectations. As a queer individual, I explore the transformative potential of queerness in challenging entrenched associations between gender and artistic expression.

My doctoral research, titled 'The Archive of Disappearance: A Field Guide to Getting Lost', operates on the premise that our comprehension of art has long been overshadowed by rationality, neglecting its profound emotional dimensions. Drawing inspiration from Brazilian artist Hélio Oiticica, I advocate for an understanding of art that transcends its physical manifestation, emphasizing the role of emotional resonance in the viewer's experience. In adopting and adapting Oiticica's concepts through a queer lens, I challenge conventional notions of authorship and cultural appropriation, sparking critical dialogues about the limitations imposed by heteronormative spaces and the transformative potential inherent in queerness itself.

I pose a provocative question: "What if queerness could serve as a blueprint for an alternative art world, one that disrupts the status quo and invites viewers to reimagine and embrace the transformative power embedded within queerness?"

LDB+

Queering HO

In revisiting Hélio Oiticica's Parangolé Capa 21, the question of how Oiticica chose materials and colors remains unresolved. However, in a contemporary reinterpretation, the focus shifts to personal expression, particularly of queer and gender identities. Studio LDB created seven sample Parangolés inspired by gender flags, facing challenges like matching fabric colors and combining multiple hues. They painted fabrics to overcome these difficulties, expanding the color palette. This approach honors Oiticica's original vision of expression while celebrating modern identity diversity through artistic creation and self-representation.

Transgender Costume, 2024
Photo A. Doetsch



Collection Gender Costumes, 2024
Photo A. Doetsch

Exhibition

Emergent, Veurne

Frank Maes

*Cliquer ici
pour
accepter
tou(te)s.*



Exhibition view, 2024
Photo Emergent, Veurne

Lieven De Boeck presents two new installations that explore the fluidity of gender, translated into a rich palette of forms and colors. During the opening, one of the installations will come to life through a performance that will determine its final form in the space. Additionally, the exhibition includes existing works that enhance and deepen the theme of identity and color, using various media such as textiles, neon, and sound.

more info [here](#)



Exhibition view, 2024
Photo Emergent, Veurne

Performance

Cloud Seven, Brussels

Bayo Hassan Bello



Becoming, performance, Cloud Seven
Photo M. De Sanctis

Becoming.

Curated by Bayo Hassan Bello, the upcoming group show will feature Lieven De Boeck's work *Becoming*. On Saturday, May 24th, seven of De Boeck's sculptures will be on display and activated during the preview. The activation will include a reading of a letter from the artist's *Publication Letters* (2009) by one individual, while another person interacts with one of the sculptures in the space. These letters, addressed to the artist, attempt to create an impossible portrait of him and explore themes of gender and sexual contradictions.

By listening to these texts, the audience will engage with the work, which aims to establish parameters for judgment and appreciation, encouraging openness to diverse stories and projections. De Boeck uses the Mobius ring in his work to symbolize gender fluidity and non-binary identity. The continuous twist of the loop reflects the ongoing movement and transformation inherent in gender identity and expression.

more info [here](#)

Text

The Copy is Original.

Bradley Wester

When dusted off and re-exhibited from the archive, historical artwork is meant to cement or occasionally alter the so-called historical narrative and distinguish it from the now.

What disappears, however, is the nowness that once was. The artwork as artifact is more like an exhumation. We may still appreciate it as art, but we must imagine its power and relevance for its time and context. In this way, it becomes more like an exact copy of itself.

When a historical art performance is performed again out of its time, it, too, is a copy of itself, a re-enactment, surrounded by historical context. Just because it's performed live, unfolding in real-time, does not mean the work is still 'living.'

The archive, after all, is meant to catalog, preserve, and save the artwork in perpetuity. But might the distressing irony be that the archive is where the artwork disappears and is lost?

Not always. I recently had the opportunity to witness and participate in a living, resuscitated archive. This may seem like an oxymoron, but that is precisely what Belgian artist/architect Lieven De Boeck proposes—how to remain faithful to a work of art from the past while making it relevant and alive in the present.

When is art? is the question Lieven De Boeck asks in his PhD thesis called "The Archive of Disappearance, a Field Guide to Getting Lost," developed at the Hortence

Research Centre of the Faculty of Architecture La Cambre-Horta of the Université libre de Bruxelles. His attempt to answer that question took the form of a performance that began when he, his studio assistant, a saxophone player, and a dozen Queer students from Ringling College of Art & Design in Sarasota, Florida, walked into the giant beach tent of the Untitled Art Fair in Miami Beach on December 6th, 2023. They performed The Parade, What's going on?—De Boeck's reactivation of a work by the late Hélio Oiticica, Brazilian artist and leader of the Neo-Concrete Movement (1960)—as if to demonstrate that the when of art is in the live remaking, not-reenacting, of it—in the impermanence of the present moment, but relevant to it.

From 1964-79, Oiticica created his Parangolés series consisting of colorful, multi-layered capes or 'costume paintings' made of layers of plastic and fabric, sometimes with objects and words, meant to be worn and danced in by everyday people to samba music, then the music of the underclass. Oiticica was obsessed with samba and learned to dance in the Mangueira favela. He wanted to make visible the vibrant but marginalized, mostly Black culture that embraced him there through dance, which allowed one to be free of "excessive intellectualization." As a Queer man living in a heteronormative society made even less tolerant by the 1964 U.S.-backed military

“We mediate the work, but the reality of meaning lies in one’s own inter-relational presence between object and subject” LDB+

dictatorship in Brazil, being marginalized was a condition Oiticica felt and understood.

How can we perform the Parangolés today and make it relevant to the present vis-à-vis contemporary Queerness within another native tropical environment like Brazil’s?

De Boeck’s solution was to apply Oiticica’s experience to his own Queer identity and the politics of the now, including his recruitment of a dozen Queer-identified Ringling students across disciplines to create their own Parangolés based on personal interpretations of Queer flags in their tropical state of Florida. The Ringling students’ joy was palpable as they began to move improvisationally, their

bulky, somewhat awkward-looking Parangolés (which the students made themselves) unfolding and billowing into lavish sensuousness within the neoliberal contemporary art fair space, where merchandise, primarily in the form of paintings, hung lifeless in comparison. Joy engulfed the onlookers, too, and some became performers when several students removed their capes and proffered them.

Most striking to me, also a Queer artist and writer, was the full-circle, cross-generational aspect of this living reenactment. Four generations of Queer sensibility were contained in this project: Oiticica’s 1960s, my 1970s-80s

(both of us experiencing our Queerness when the acts were still illegal), De Boeck’s 90s-00s, and the undergraduate Ringling students today, many of whom only recently out. Completing the conceptual circle is Florida’s current state of conservative politics, closer to Oiticica’s Brazil every day. A recent Pen America study shows that 40% of all banned books in America’s school libraries occurred in Florida, with thousands of those books by or about Black or LGBTQ authors or characters. Two of Florida’s most famous presidential candidates speak in the language of dictatorships.

And yet, I don’t see the work of Lieven De Boeck as being about ‘Identity Politics.’ It is far more expansive and philosophical than that self-reflexive reduction. A shared Queerness was simply a way to revitalize Oiticica’s work. But I am interested in how the logics and methods of his larger body of work are Queer.

De Boeck likes to say of himself that he is “a copy of the original.” Indeed, the words are tattooed on his left arm. His impulse to trouble the archive connects directly with his interest in reimagining his own art, often a staging of relational objects for continual renewal via various performative strategies. De Boeck: “We mediate the work, but the reality of meaning lies in one’s own interrelational presence between object and subject.”

To not disappear into the archive, his work must be ‘copy-able’ for use in a continual state of nowness, of relational presence. Perhaps he really means ‘the copy becomes the original,’ that each new iteration of the work becomes the original again and again. An un-archivable work that resists classification and calcification! I identify this formal device of continuous renewal as utopic and Queer. Unable to fit in, the work is encountered, expelled, and renewed.

When remembering his childhood, De Boeck speaks of an early sense of not belonging, an almost universal story for the Queer-identified across generations. Even before cognition is the sense of not belonging, the threat of violent repercussions, and the profound pressure to disappear. For some, suicide is an extreme choice. The Queer Closet, historically, is a more common response that creates a copy of oneself for external consumption and self-preservation. Here, life is performance to preserve life, less a copy and more a counterfeit—for many, the original is lost forever, archived. For others, especially for creatives like De Boeck, these early Queer experiences reinforce Queer desire. They are transformed into powerful tools for potential world-making—making an improved copy of the original. No, De Boeck’s work is not about Queer Identity politics; it’s much too generous and democratic than that. What is a



Workshop Performance the Parade What's Going on, 2023
Ringling College for Art and Design, Sarasota
Photo B.Wester

copy if not for everyone?

De Boeck is interested in making a thing that can never be archived because potential is something yet to be created. There can be completions, but only to be replayed/renewed by the following participant/observer. Such a work radically resists the 'archive of disappearance.' This is the Queer architect in him, too—a building is immaterial unless as a living, breathing expression of its use and interaction with its inhabitants and what they create inside it. Indeed, in one work De Boeck creates components for participants to arrange—building blocks. We become builders of Lego-imagined architectures that can be assembled and disassembled—the pleasure of this experience is contingent on favoring the question over the answer. Nothing is fixed; all things are transmutable. There are only questions ripe with potential.

I am writing this from Venice while also covering the pre-opening of the 60th Venice Biennale Arte Exhibition titled "Foreigners Everywhere," curated by Adriano Pedrosa. He includes many groups in the diaspora of foreigners—refugees, indigenous, the 'global south,' so-called "naive," "outsider," and the "self-taught." Pedrosa also includes Queer populations. I believe Pedrosa intends to show us the agency of Queer desire, its utopic

impulse. Ostensibly, to show us the agency of all so-called 'foreigners.' Alas, I'm certain artists of the Global South, Indigenous and Queer artists don't see themselves as foreign. So what happens to that agency of 'the foreign' when the exhibition is meant for the Global North's gaze, when its design and format are so familiar, established, and institutionalized as the Venice Biennale? Making the foreign familiar (to the Global North) defeats the purpose.

This is the same format mistake made by the LGBTQ+ movement (powered by mostly affluent gay white males) to make heteronormative marriage rights a priority. It's the same mistake made by many well-intentioned, post-BLM monuments of inclusion that attempt to mark the victims, unsung heroes of the global slave trade—bronze plaques and statues in the same format as the oppressor. Like the statues recently torn down, only with thicker-lipped faces and by artists of color. What does an un-monument look like? A truly Queer union? And how does a Queer or Foreign exhibition be queer and foreign while giving everyone access? We may find a clue within the strategies of artist Lieven De Boeck.

text by Bradley Wester

Performance

Horst Festival, Vilvoorde

Louise Goegebeur



The Parade, What's Going on? - Horst Festival 2024
Photo Sascha Salzig

Parade, What's Going on?

The “What’s Going On?” Parade embodies the essence of self-exclusion, promoting personal fulfillment and reconnecting participants with their authentic desires.

It encourages critical thinking, freeing participants from conformity and empowering them to challenge norms.

This collective act of liberation transforms the parade into a powerful catalyst for societal change, urging viewers to confront biases and embrace human diversity.

The parade reimagines roles for artwork, artist, curator, visitor, gallerist, and art critic, transforming static objects into dynamic, participatory experiences.

See more [here](#)

Exhibition

El Gallery, Welle

Johan September

What's your name again?

In the installation “The Circus of the Art World,” the new roles for—art-work, artist, curator, visitor, gallerist, and art critic—are embodied in uniquely designed but interchangeable costumes. In “The Circus of the Art World,” any visitor, whether curator, artist, art critic, or casual attendee, can assume any role by donning the corresponding costume. This dynamic blend of participants blurs the lines between creator and observer, celebrating the fluidity and diversity of identities within the art world and challenging traditional hierarchies. The costumes are presented as a sculpture and visitors of the exhibition are activating the installation in a spontaneous way.

The Visitor and The Archive, 2024
Photo Johan September

See more [here](#)



The Circus of the Art world, 2024,
Activated sculpture-installation, Photo Johan September



The Artwork, The Art Critic, The Curator and the Artist, 2024
Photo Johan September



The Gallerist 2024
photo H. Duré

The Circus of the Art-world.

The Circus of the Artworld explores the parallels between the circus and the art world as sanctuaries for societal outsiders. Inspired by a visit to the Ringling Circus Museum, the project reimagines traditional roles within the art world—artist, curator, critic, and viewer—through dynamic, participatory experiences. Visitors can assume different roles by wearing interchangeable costumes, symbolizing the fluidity of identity, status, and authorship. This interaction blurs boundaries between creator and observer, celebrating diversity and challenging established hierarchies. By embracing this fluidity, participants engage in a collective journey of self-discovery, reflecting on the art world's potential for social transformation.

See more [here](#)



The Curator, 2024
photo H. Duré



The Artwork, 2024
photo H. Duré

Art Festival Mons Lumière

Fondation Mons 2025

Lieven De Boeck: Being Present Absent

Disappearance, absence, and invisibility have been key survival strategies for the artist since a young age, navigating life as a queer individual in our heteronormative and neoliberal society. The same strategies apply within the art world, though his artistic practice has always been a means of existing as an “other,” embracing difference.

A contemporary artist’s position is grounded in four fundamental principles: their name or reputation, their personal and formal language, their relationships with other artists, and the refusal to depict things realistically. In line with these principles, the works presented in this exhibition reflect how an artist’s positioning reveals their absent presence.



Défense d’Afficher, 2024, Installation view Mons Lumière
Photo Festival Mons 2025

Performance

Sarasota Art Museum, Sarasota USA

Rangsook Yoon

Untitled Art Fair, Miami

Omar Lopez-Chahoud and

Clara Andrade Pereira



Parade What's Going on ? Sarasota Art Museum Plaza, 2023
Photo Nancy Cardiff

Parade, What's Going on?

The parade What's Going On? is a vibrant performance and celebration of mixed gender and queer identities, blending art with queerness in a dynamic public display.

This lively event unfolds as an animated spectacle, creating a sense of sudden, energetic confusion and engagement among the audience. Featuring 12 performers in specially designed costumes, the parade is both a visual feast and a ritual dance. These costumes, which are wearable paintings representing various queer and gender identities, are accompanied by musicians and carry objects and banners meant to challenge and provoke. While the performance is driven primarily by the 12 performers, some costumes may be taken up by members of the public, inviting them to participate in the event.

The parade draws conceptual inspiration from the Brazilian artists Hélio Oiticica and Lygia Clark, emphasizing art as an interactive experience that requires personal engagement. This performance marks the culmination of the PhD project *The Archive of Disappearance: A Field Guide to Getting Lost*.



Parade What's Going on ? Untitled Art Fair, dec 6 2023
Photo Bradley Wester

Exhibition

Studio Indépendance, Brussels

with Jonathan Sullam



Peinture-Sculpture, Genderflux, 2023
Photo S. Deschrijver

Die Zeit hat uns.

The duo exhibition featuring Lieven De Boeck and Jonathan Sullam brings together works that delve into themes of time, decay, and the politics of identity.

Many of the pieces explore the interplay between imagery and surfaces, whether by embedding visuals within the material or wrapping them around. Other works showcase the subtlety of drawing across surfaces, covering them entirely, and embodying the passage of time.

Overall, the exhibition exudes a sense of lightness and freedom, with elements punctuating the space reminiscent of punk rock aesthetics. The vibrant colors and striking images carry a sonic quality, even in the midst of silence.

more [here](#)

Group exhibition

Maison des Arts, Schaerbeek

Anne Cécile Marechal

Couleur- Lumière.

In this group show, Lieven De Boeck presents three works:

At the entrance, his neon piece *Let Us Be (Rainbow)* marks the beginning of a new series focusing on gender and LGBTQ+ themes. This work explores concepts of identity, challenges binary thinking, and critiques modern divisions that separate rather than unite.

In the living room, *Sunbeam* features a photo transfer capturing the reflection of sunlight on semi-transparent fabric, which waves like a flag. This work symbolizes unity, with its vibrant yet subtle colors referencing both the light spectrum and the LGBTQ+ rainbow flag. It serves as a contemporary artifact, reflecting the society we live in within the context of the exhibition space.

The third piece, *Without Title*, is a photograph that captures the color reflection of another work on a concrete floor. Through the interplay of light, reflection, color, and texture, this piece transforms these elements into a new artwork.

See more [here](#)



Let us be - rainbow, 2022
Photo Candice Athenea



Sunbeam, 2017, Photo transfer on Organza
Installation view Maison des Arts, 2022, photo Candice Athenea

Performance

Documenta Fifteen, Kassel

With Christina Fuchs

The World as Museum.

The experiment explores the significance of re-enacting the activation of my Copy of the Original Copy of the Parangolé, Capa 22, Xoxoba by Hélio Oiticica within the context of Documenta 15. Oiticica's Parangolés are designed to create social environments where people come together to engage in a collective activity. His approach emphasizes aesthetics that foster human interactions and transform social contexts. Rather than creating imaginary or utopian realities, Oiticica's work serves as a way of living and a model for action within the real world, according to the scale chosen by the artist.

Additionally, the Parangolés offer an institutional critique: their activation occurs in the world itself, turning the world into a museum.

See the [video](#)



Parangolé, Capa 22, Xoxoba, re-enactment of the copy of the original copy, 2022
Entrance Hall Fridericianum, Kassel, Documenta fifteen, video still

Exhibition

White House Gallery, Lovenjoel
with Stephanie Baechler



The Broken Mikado, 2022
photo HV Studio

Where did it go?

Every exhibition captures a moment in time and offers an opportunity for art to emerge. In *Where Did It Go?*, Lieven De Boeck reimagines his work as a new encounter, inviting both himself and the viewer to explore meaningful connections within his oeuvre and in dialogue with Stéphanie Baechler's work.

De Boeck approaches his sculptures as if they were pieces of a puzzle or elements in a game of Mikado, presenting them in various forms without repetition. *Where Did It Go?* includes both new and previous works and is the third iteration of his exhibition *Image Not Found*, which was first shown at FRAC in Marseille in 2016 and then at Museum Dhondt-Dhaenens in 2017 under the title *Objet Trouvé*. The exhibition centers on his puzzle works, which translate his self-designed alphabet into formal structures. *Puzzle #2: Demount* features seven letters, with the letter E representing Le Corbusier's anthropomorphic scale, the 'Modulor'. De Boeck's art combines enigmatic elements that challenge the perception of objects and engage with the viewer's comprehension. He presents his works on classical plinths, making them instantly recognizable due to their accessible scale. This approach simplifies the perception of three-dimensional space, which is fundamental to describing objects in our everyday surroundings. Yet, it also prompts deeper reflection on the more



Exhibition view *Where did it go?* Whitehouse Gallery, Lovenjoel, 2022
photo HV Studio


fluid dimensions of our observable world. For instance, Le Corbusier's ideal proportions are juxtaposed with immeasurable phenomena like the melting of ice, the pauses in a chess game, or the ripple of a flag. Additionally, *Ocean Chart* highlights humanity's impact on nature, presenting plastic debris floating in the ocean as though examining a rare diamond under a jeweler's loupe.

De Boeck's diverse media—including glass, paper, textiles, neon, fire, water, wind, and sand—contribute to the magic of his work, which is also deeply influenced by the absence of matter. Each new work emerges from an extensive period of material research.

In his creation process, De Boeck often employs reduction, as seen in *Letter O*. Here, he uses a laser to remove the surface layer of paper, revealing the underlying wood fibers according to the rules of his own alphabet. This process emphasizes light and transparency through the absence of material and disruption of patterns.

This tension between volume and contour is also evident in *Five Rings*, *Found-Transported-Restored*, where luminous circles enclose a segment of three-dimensional space. De Boeck's practice often explores the fourth dimension: time. His work frequently involves transformation or performative actions linked to the moment of exhibition. This action of absence is exemplified by *Mikado sticks*, which represent construction, dismantling, and fragility. In De Boeck's world, viewers are faced with elements that may initially seem difficult to piece together, but this complexity invites deeper exploration. Understanding dimensions takes time, and time, in turn, requires space.

Exhibition text by Louise Goegebeur



*“The magic of his
oeuvre is equally
indebted to the
absence of matter.”*

Exhibition view Where did it go? Whitehouse Gallery, Lovenjoel, 2022
photo HV Studio

Performance

Cloud Seven, Brussels

Frédéric de Goldschmidt



Performance, Le Désir, Le Collectionneur, Cloud Seven
Photo Cloud Seven

Le désir dans l'art; the collector.

The Inaspettatamente exhibition, curated by Frédéric de Goldschmidt and Grégory Lang, kicked off with a lively long weekend featuring tours, performances, and a concert by Ibrahim Ibrahimi and his sons. During this opening weekend, Le Désir by Studio LBD was performed by Charlotte Quinonero and Frédéric de Goldschmidt. You can view highlights from the opening and the performance of Le Désir by clicking the button below.

The exhibition also featured The Hollywood Alphabet (A, B, C), acquired by Frédéric de Goldschmidt in 2013. Created during an artist residency in Los Angeles in 2011, this work references Chris Burden's Atomic Alphabet and showcases words introduced into our language by the film industry.

video [here](#)

Art Festival Watou 2021

Chantal Pattyn and Benedicte Goesaert

The 40th edition of Kunstenfestival Watou embodies movement, harmony, humanity, and intensity.

‘Watou 2021’ extends an invitation to engage deeply with poetry and visual art, stimulating both the mind and the senses with the multifaceted nature of art.

For this edition, Lieven De Boeck presents three works:

The World Unmade #5, making its debut in Belgium,

Besides Everything - Everything Besides, a new neon piece created during lockdown,

Ocean Chart, which captures the reflection of sunlight on floating plastic particles in the ocean, printed on organza.

more [here](#)



The World un-made #5, Installation view The Loverie, 2021
Photo D. Pauwels

Exhibition

White House Gallery, Lovenjoel

The Curator is Absent.

Lieven De Boeck's work often exists as an imprint, a trace, or a fleeting moment. He uncovers these moments by combining various techniques, crafts, and materials, envisioning the built environment as a dynamic space where art, people, and ideas collide, shaping and giving meaning to one another. His ongoing project, "The Archive of Disappearance," delves into the life cycle of a work of art, challenging the stability of its status by exploring when and how art truly exists. In this exploration, De Boeck examines the fluctuating states of disappearance and reappearance, emphasizing that even when a work is stored away, it holds the potential for reactivation. De Boeck's practice redefines conventional terms: presentation becomes iteration, and exhibitions become sites of activation, generating a space where a work comes into existence. He encourages us to consider the various factors—agencies, spaces, and modalities—that lead to the appearance of a work. Through this approach, De Boeck views appearance not as a fixed form but as a layered process, brought to life through performativity.

One example is his series *Richard Of York Gave Battle in Vain*, featuring neon lights that diffuse the seven colors of the rainbow, each color linked to a letter in a mnemonic acronym. This series, which replicates De Boeck's handwritten signature, plays with the concepts of authorship and authenticity, echoing Marcel Broodthaers' exploration of his initials. The signature, while asserting presence, also questions its legitimacy—is it a call for validation or simply a hollow repetition?

In another piece, a two-person knitted jumper connects two individuals, Lucie and Rachael, through symbols that unfold as they move apart. As they enumerate defining attributes—favorite color, nationality, totem animal—the work hints at the



Exhibition view, *The Curator is Absent*, 2021
Photo HV Studio

Performance

Le désir dans l'art.

underlying silence and unspoken truths that shape identity. In *I am I?*, De Boeck portrays identity as a malleable construct, free from rigid forms and norms, where singularity challenges the very notion of a norm.

De Boeck's work often involves transforming language and symbols, questioning what happens to reality when language is distorted or reimagined. He creates his own measuring scales and alphabets, like one made from New York street tags, evading universal systems. Citation plays a crucial role in this layered language game, with signs appearing, disappearing, and reappearing, activating space in the process. This theme of endless repetition is also evident in the Mobius shape central to his project *Le Désir*, a form with no beginning or end, symbolizing the unfulfilled longing of desire. The work's bright sculptures and knitted texts are linked by a playful challenge to materials and techniques. The Mobius Strip, particularly challenging for glassblowers, requires a choreographic skill that appeals to De Boeck's interest in unpredictable outcomes.

In *Le Désir*, seven protagonists represent the key figures of the art world—the artist, curator, patron, gallerist, collector, critic, and visitor. Their desires are knitted into blankets, sealed in glass, and expressed in performance, blurring the lines between the performative and the sculptural. Through this piece, De Boeck explores the lexicon that surrounds art-making and circulation, seeking to redefine agency in the process of an artwork's appearance and disappearance.

— Summery Text by Sofia Dati

more info [here](#)



Le Désir, performance Groot Pak, Lovenjoel, 2020
Photo Bert Verlinden

“A site in space and time or a context for the work to come into existence”



Exhibition

MDC Gallery, Art Brussels

Olivier Meessen

The Border is a State of Mind.

Lieven De Boeck's work consistently navigates the complex interplay between the universal and the individual, exploring the tension between national and personal identity. He highlights the intrinsic connection between societal issues and personal narratives, showing that defining identity often involves exclusion. The idea of a border—whether geopolitical or personal—becomes essential in how identity is perceived.

At the center of the booth, a billboard alternately reveals and conceals what lies beyond, offering glimpses without allowing passage. This physical barrier reflects the limitations inherent in identity formation.

A neon sign reading Let us be US speaks to the powerful emotions tied to belonging and inclusion, both of which are central to the creation of identity. Beyond the billboard, six additional works display motifs of Native American fabrics printed on dollar bills. What initially appears as a stark clash between two different Americas is, in fact, a poignant reminder of the violent displacement of native societies by a nation driven by capitalism. These works offer a reflection on different concepts of territory, where the nature of borders takes on a completely different meaning.

more info [here](#)



Exhibition view booth Art Brussels, 2019
Photo P. De Gobert

Group exhibition

Chini Foundation, Venice

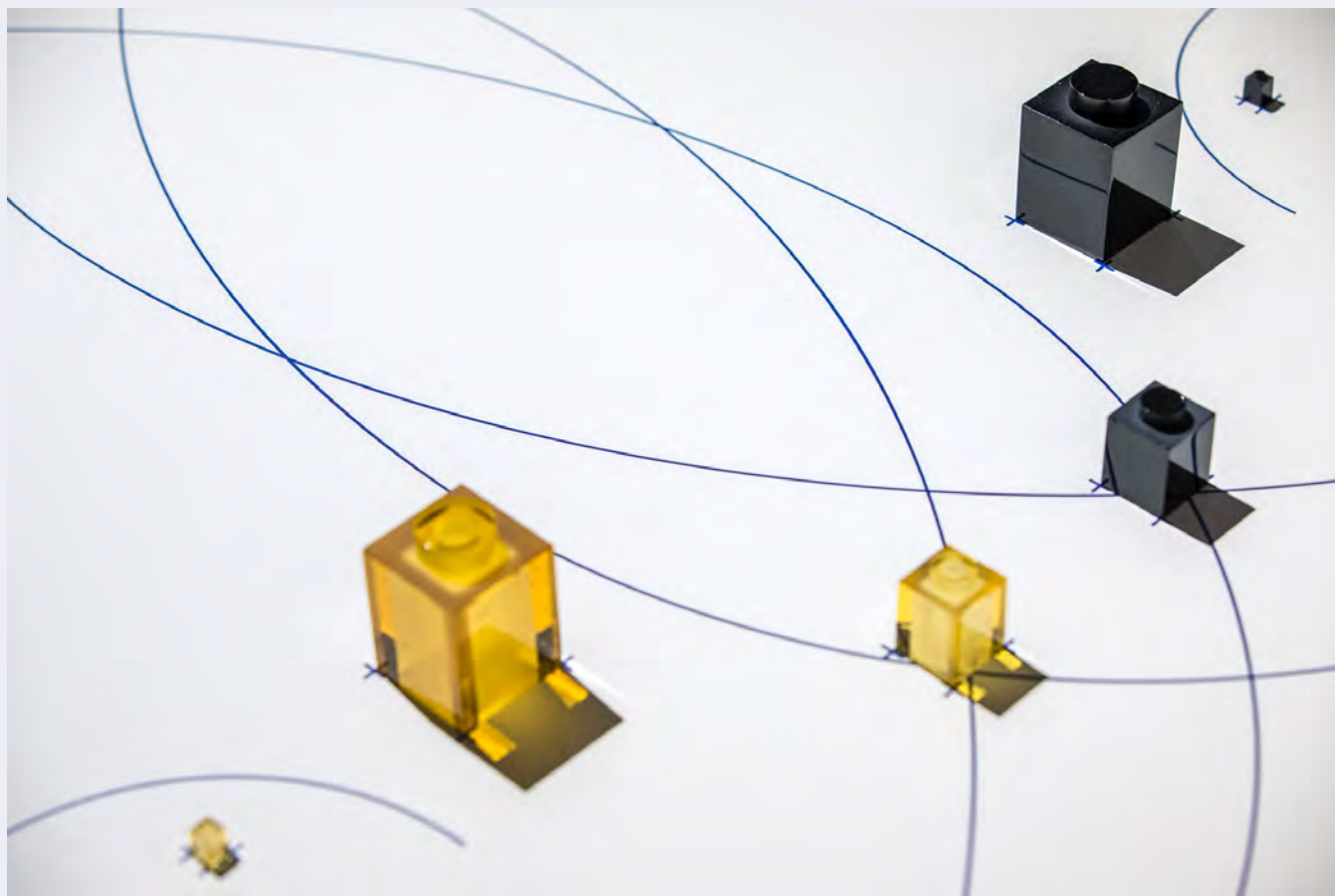
Isabelle Rehier and Chiara Bertola

Una Fornace a Marsiglia

This exhibition at Le Stanza del Vetro in Venice showcases a curated selection of works developed over the years at CIRVA. In 2012, Lieven De Boeck was selected by an international jury for the artist-in-residence program, where he was invited to explore the artistic potential of glass. Over three years, De Boeck embarked on an intensive research journey, culminating in the creation of four remarkable artworks.

Three of these works are featured in the exhibition, accompanied by a video made during his residency at the House Van Wassenhove in Belgium. This video not only documents his process but also introduces the resonant sound of glass into the exhibition space, adding a sensory dimension that deepens the experience.

more info [here](#)



Sã (100 Legos), detail installation
Photo E. Fiorese



Exhibition view *Una fornace a Marsiglia*, Chini Foundation, Le Stanze del Vetro, Venice, 2018
Photo E. Fiorese

Performance

APA Vanderborght, Brussels

Liv Vaisberg

I am I.



I am I, performance during APA, Royal Galleries, Brussels, 2018
Photo Olivier Meessen

Exhibition

MDC Gallery, Brussels

I am I.

Lieven De Boeck's work spans a variety of techniques, incorporating traditional crafts like knitting, tapestry, and glasswork. In *I Am I*, a knitted scarf features symbolic motifs from two of his friends, while *I am Shane* expands this concept into a vertical tapestry, suggesting that one person's portrait can become another's landscape. These motifs represent aspects of identity such as nationality, gender, physical traits, and more.

Despite using diverse methods, De Boeck's work is unified by a continuous exploration of identity. His art weaves together implicit elements and fragmented narratives that reveal deeper meanings when viewed as a whole. This continuity is evident in works like his neon series *Richard Of York Gave Battle In Vain*, which explores identity through signatures, fingerprints, and DNA.

De Boeck often encrypts and translates codes, such as DNA structures or poems, to avoid literal interpretations. His work balances revealing and concealing, probing themes of selfhood and existence.

In one exhibition space, De Boeck arranges the Pantone colors from national flags, juxtaposing a Belgian flag in gradations of white with a tricolored flag of his own design. On the floor, these colors blend in a wave-like pattern, creating a scene that downplays national identities in favor of anonymity and interconnectedness.

more info [here](#)



Exhibition view *I am I*, 2017, Meessen De Clercq Gallery
Photo P. de Gobert



Exhibition view I am I, 2017, Meessen De Clercq Gallery
Photo P. de Gobert

Exhibition

Museum MDD, Deurle

Tanguy Eeckhout



Moule en Verre, 2015
Photo M. Van Rossen

Objet Trouvé.

“Objet Trouvé” is a continuation of the exhibition “Image Not Found,” which was previously displayed at the Frac in Marseille. Although both exhibitions feature much of the same work, their presentations are radically different. This contrast is emphasized by Lieven De Boeck through the seemingly contradictory titles: “Image Not Found” versus “Objet Trouvé.”

For De Boeck, each exhibition is an opportunity to explore meaningful relationships between his works and to consider how they interact with the space and the viewer. To avoid falling into repetition, he approaches each project as a new encounter. At Frac in Marseille, De Boeck created the piece “Puzzle, Image Not Found,” which served as the centerpiece of the exhibition but is now stored in what the artist refers to as the exhibition’s archives.

De Boeck’s work often involves playing with the meanings of various characters and typologies, from language and symbols to units of measurement and architectural systems. Through minimal alterations, he transforms social or political signs into poetic characters or reinterprets them according to his own logic. For example, he stripped the flags of the 193 United Nations member states of their bright colors, reducing them to white compositions. These no longer reference nations or their claims to power, but instead become subtle, abstract forms that wave peacefully above our heads, creating an intimate atmosphere.

text by Tanguy Eeckhout

more info [here](#)



Exhibition view *Objet Trouvé*, Museum Dhondt-Dhaenens, 2016
Photo R. Vanevel



Exhibition view *Objet Trouvé*, Huis Van Wassenhove,, 2016
Photo R. Vanevel

Exhibition

Frac Paca, Marseille

Pascal Neveux



Exhibition view Image not Found, Plateau 1, 2016

Photo J. Lett

Image not Found.

For this solo exhibition, Lieven De Boeck has developed a project specifically designed for the Frac, titled “IMAGE NOT FOUND,” which spans three entire floors.

Rather than presenting a retrospective or a chronological inventory, the exhibition offers a chance to explore ten years of his work while questioning the very nature of the exhibition format and the role of the hosting institution.

In this exhibition, De Boeck presents a blend of new works alongside pieces created between 2013 and 2015 during his residency at Marseille’s Cirva. The exhibition also includes “Hollywood Alphabet,” acquired by the Frac in 2013. De Boeck frames the exhibition as a manifesto, challenging the conventional functions and spaces of the museum, as well as the status and typologies of artworks—whether formal, stylistic, or conceptual. Through a creative manipulation of concepts and a layering of these typologies, De Boeck guides visitors along a path filled with thought-provoking questions that are both poetic and political in nature. Themes of identity, language, and combinatory play emerge, evoking aesthetic, mathematical, and political ideas.

De Boeck’s exhibition is a testament to a free spirit, challenging established norms and encouraging visitors to take the time to liberate themselves from the structured universe they typically encounter. On the second floor, the exhibition unfolds as a fourteen-week intervention, questioning the traditional expectations of how we engage with museum spaces. This description is an excerpt from the exhibition text by Pascal Neveux.

more info [here](#)



Exhibition view Image not Found, Plateau 2, 2016
Performance, Photo J.Lett



Exhibition view Image not Found, Plateau 2, 2016
Photo M. Van Rossen

Text

Extract from

The Revolution of Appearances

Pascal Neveux

To offer De Boeck's artistic agenda to the eye and the mind in a single publication is to bring into sharp focus his fidelity to the personal grammar underlying the pronounced inner consistency of his work, from the initial projects through to the numerous exhibitions and residencies now fuelling his career. This deep thematic unity has its roots in a singular conceptual world which the oeuvre deploys via a no less specific iconography.

However, thematic consistency and repeated use of the same tools have not resulted in repetition of a formula or resort to a given generic territory. On the contrary, the striking thing about De Boeck is his extraordinary stylistic variety, as if the completion of each work entailed coming up with entirely new formal devices for facing fresh challenges and revealing new levels of interpretation. Following the development of this artistic approach chronologically allows us to assess his astonishing allegiance to areas of experimentation which borrow their semantics and tools from the worlds of the social sciences, architecture, and politics in the etymological sense. Whether involving objects often addressed in series, or videos, sculptures and installations, De Boeck's output apprehends the real in its most immediate form through the image. So, it is very much a question here of a representation of the world. Indeed, his works interrogate the value we have for so

long, and naturally, attributed to works of art as an index of the real: their capacity for veracity or verisimilitude. The De Boeck oeuvre allows us to summon up a representation of the real in a different way, by potential images other images of images.

These latter thus stand revealed as an interface for the reconciling of the real and the imaginary, the two poles Edgar Morin situates at the origin of all representation:

"The image is not only the nexus between the real and the imaginary." [...] The real emerges into reality only when it is interwoven with the imaginary, which solidifies it, gives it consistency and thickness in other words reifies it."¹

De Boeck's renewal of the procedures for summoning up our representations of the world re-embodies the images in question and so makes possible a renewal of the experience.

His artistic explorations offer a close fit with one of the few acceptable definitions of Art: a way of ideating the world, all disciplines included, a thought mode fuelled from the outset by a personal lexicon made up of families of objects and images that call for a reconsideration of the formal language of an artwork in the light of its symbolic system, its perceptions and its tension between sign and language.

1. Edgar Morin, *The Cinema, or the Imaginary Man*, trans. Lorraine Mortimer (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005), p. 227. Original translation slightly modified.



***“There is
no thinking
without form”***

Letter U, NY Alfabet, 2016
Photo A. Roncada

De Boeck's work also takes words as its raw material in graphic as well as semantic terms, exploring the interstices between them, between their letters, between the word and its translation, between the word and the space containing it, between word and image. This is done in installations which take issue equally with the exhibition venue and the exhibition itself. They transform the exhibition space into a research laboratory, using procedures inspired by scientific and academic systems and cultivating a type of presentation like that of the archive – but a living archive, at once personal and universal, to be reactivated according to the exhibition contexts concerned.

In concrete terms his exhibitions propose choreographies of objects, systems, and itineraries whose principal function is to set his thinking to work via the medium of the site. Every exhibition is shaped by a work in progress that takes account equally of the site's specific givens and the reactivation of earlier works. It should perhaps be mentioned here that his works possess the rare quality of autonomous existence and, seemingly without end or purpose, can be invested each time with fresh meaning according to the presentation context. Thus, the exhibition is firstly the appropriation of a place in its con-

crete physicality and its geographical, historical and even symbolic reality. De Boeck designs his interventions as narratives which can never be completely grasped, but which set out to foreground and dissect modes of perception while seeking to involve the viewer in an experience combining the physical and the conceptual.

“There is no thinking without form”, claims artist Jean-Luc Moulène, a statement De Boeck could readily espouse, given that he accords as much importance to the research and production phases as he does to the designing of his exhibitions. He is characterised by an imperious need to take the time to fabricate and test new materials and new media, while surrounding himself with craftsmen and technicians who accompany him into the unknown terrain whose boundaries he loves to push back further and further.

Exhibition

Darling Foundry, Montreal

Emmanuel Lambion

*Let Us Be Us Again and Again *and* Always.*

“Let us be us again and again and always” features two installations that engage in a dialogue with each other, both formally and conceptually.

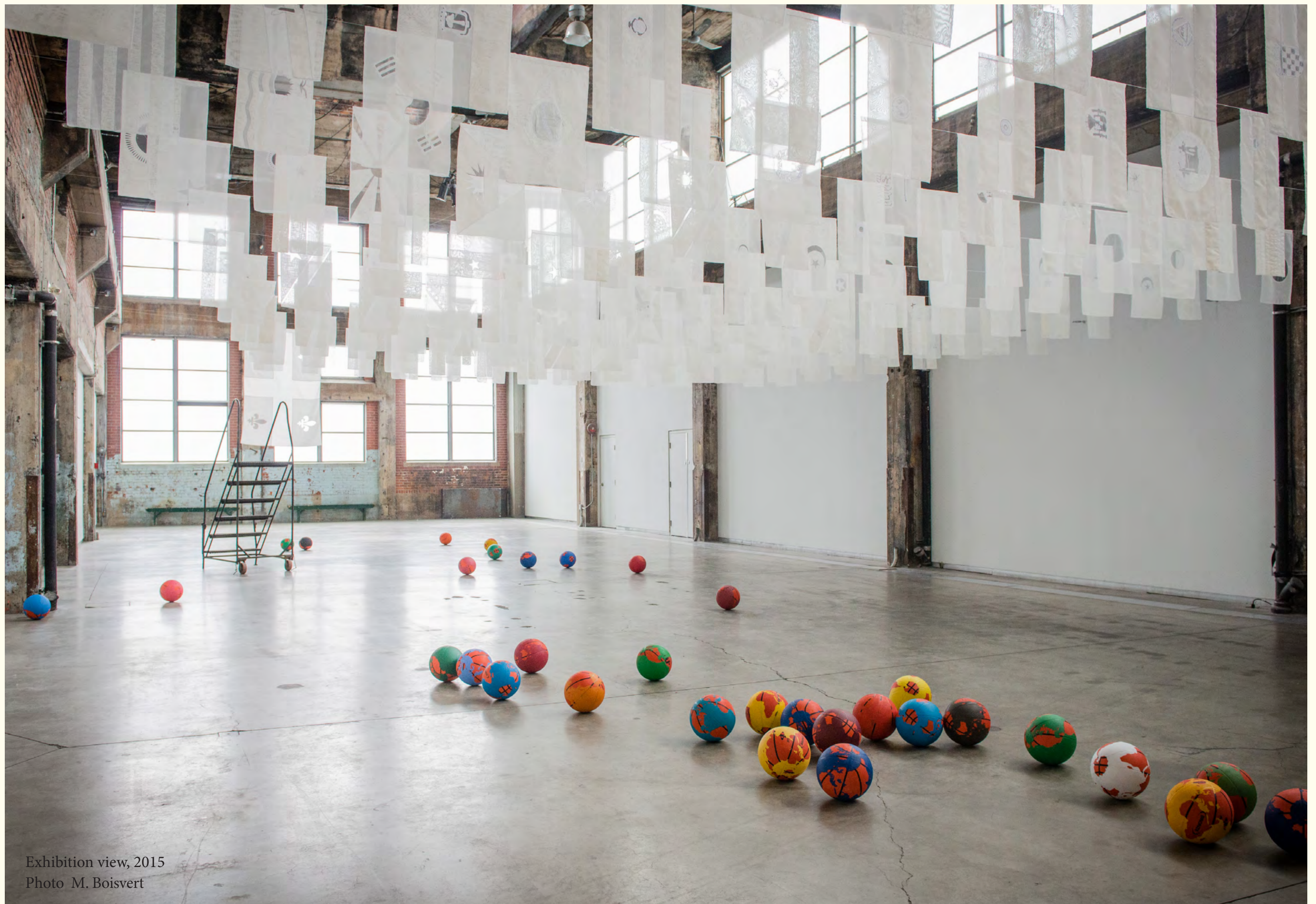
The first installation, White Flags, consists of 193 scaled versions of the flags of the United Nations member states. Made from white tulle with cut-outs and added embroidery, each flag has as many layers as the colors originally present in its design. Purified and bleached, these ersatz national flags, made of paper, are stripped of their original specificity and function.

The second installation, The World Unmade #5, occupies the floor with 43 painted basketballs. These basketballs are painted as globes using the 43 Pantone tones originally present in the 193 flags above, representing the oceans of our world.

more info [here](#)



The World Un-made #5, 2014
Photo M. Boisvert



Exhibition view, 2015
Photo M. Boisvert

Exhibition

Extra City, Antwerp

Anselm Franke



Exhibition view, 2009
Photo Kristof Vrancken

L.E.T.T.E.R.S.

In this project, Lieven de Boeck has refined his approach to interpreting existing works or events by “translating” and transposing them into his own visual language. Specifically, for this project, de Boeck has recreated works that are themselves interpretations, focusing on themes of identity and specific forms of public space. In the slide projection *pense-bête* #1 (which means “reminder” and also references a 1964 work by Marcel Broodthaers), he presents a series of portrait drawings—such as those of Maria Martins, the muse of Marcel Duchamp—and characters like the eagle and the crow, both nods to Broodthaers.

Additionally, the slide series features “constructed” readymades, anonymous letters, and signatures of artists that de Boeck has erased using Tipp-Ex. In the 16mm projection *ldb*, he also erases his own signature, referencing Broodthaers’ *Une seconde d’éternité*, which was inspired by Charles Baudelaire. By exclusively creating copies of copies, Lieven de Boeck ultimately erases himself as the author—disappearance itself becomes his identity.

more info [here](#)

Exhibition

Witte de With, Rotterdam

Catherine David



Exhibition view, 2004
Photo Lieven De Boeck

Making Things Public.

Lieven De Boeck's first solo exhibition, titled "Making Things Public," took place in 2004 at the Witte de With Center for Contemporary Art (now known as Melly Art Institute) in Rotterdam, under the direction of Catherine David. The exhibition featured works from his "Dictionary of Space" research project, which he developed at the Jan Van Eyck Academy in Maastricht from 2002 to 2004. The installation was designed as an archive, allowing visitors to explore the various elements of the project. It was brought to life weekly through performances, lectures, and actions that demonstrated different ways of engaging with the archive. This exhibition continues to influence Lieven's work today.

more info [here](#)



Exhibition view, 2004
The Typology House, open, photo Lieven De Boeck