

LIEVEN DE BOECK

Image not found

18 January - 16 February 2013

Lieven De Boeck's new exhibition at the gallery presents a majority of works dreamed up or created in Los Angeles during a recent residence by the artist. The visitor is greeted by two neon lights stating *LetusbeUS*, one black, the other white. Whether in the colours or in what is being said (the "us" can be read as the pronoun "we" or "United States"), the artist has introduced a duality that runs throughout the exhibition. Playing with the symmetry of space, he deliberately repeats certain works but systematically using an offset, as if things were what they are as well as their own reflection. We therefore find several works incorporating a mirror in their design. In the right-hand room, *The Hollywood Alphabet* meticulously evokes terms related to the Hollywood mirage, which can be related to the neon light stipulating *I lie* and recalls that all fiction is accompanied by some degree of lying. This neon light is shown in three different ways playing on the notion of device and its meaning ("I lie" or "I Lie[ven]"). Opposite the alphabet, a work consisting of 20 blank sheets stamped with the expression *copy of original* (originally a tattoo on the artist's forearm) perfectly illustrates the concept of classification which is a backbone of Lieven De Boeck's work. The exhibition *Image not found* refers both to disappearance and appearance with works such as *Pepper's ghost*, a former theatre device which in this case creates the appearance of a word through a contraction of two other words (guest + host = ghost) via a mirror effect. The work that gives the exhibition its title is a projected slide carrying the standard phrase that appears on a blue screen when the projector is unable to read content from a DVD, for example. This could be described as an image announcing the non-appearance of an image. In the case of the slide, the blue background is a photo of the sky chosen from a series taken daily in Los Angeles by the artist. A blank image, but not that empty if you think of Duchamp's beloved "Paris Air", the theories of Yves Klein or some works by John Baldessari (*Throwing three balls in the air...*) or Douglas Huebler's (*Location Piece #1*).

In the left-hand room, a large billboard, similar to those used in the advertising industry, is activated revealing a reflective side and another translucent side, while a large rebus partly consisting of Californian symbols (the tower of the Disney castle, the Lion King) suggests that we turn the image around to read the solution. Reference to Marcel Broodthaers, as well as some Duchampesque enigmas when it comes to translating one's own reflection by the word "image". The target painted on a "two-way mirror" raises the issue of the ambiguous relationship between television, control mechanism and self-image.

The work of Lieven De Boeck is scattered with self-questioning as well as interpretations of symbols or systems like this planet Earth, dreamed up with a new system of meridians and a rotation speed of virtually zero.