

## Neil Beloufa | Works from Lune Rouge Collection

January 18 – June 2, 2018

During the winter of 2018, Art Projects Ibiza and Lune Rouge present a selection of works by Algerian-French artist Neil Beloufa (Paris, 1985). The artworks span from 2014 until 2017 –drawing from Beloufa's latest body of work– and represent a lecture on the artist's extensive practice, which ranges from film to sculpture and installation.

Neil Beloufa's work embodies the current essence of contemporary art; in contemporary artistic practices, the artist has gone from being mostly related to virtuosity to being more reciprocal to its context, to its intellectual environment: an artist nowadays is not judged on his virtuosity but rather on his capacity to portray reality. It is within this transition that Beloufa's work finds its niche.

Beloufa's work prompts many of the questions -enigmas- about why art *is*. Neil did not start his career with the intention of becoming an artist: his first project embraced by the art world was the video "Kempinsky", a documentary film he created at the end of his degree in applied arts. "Kempinsky" set the guidelines for the rest of his practice as it stood as a challenge to the academic context he was part of Beloufa sought to resist using the same tools of that academic method and it is likely that, due to this role-play proposed in the documentary, it fitted so well into the contemporary art system.

One of the premises in the entire practice of the artist is the rejection of hierarchies. This is evident not only in his studio life –where all participants hold the same rank, even economically they work horizontally– but in the more formal aspects of the works as well. He employs debris elements found in his studio as cutting edge technology for video production; his interest always moves from one place to another, running away from comfort, and above all, from control in the shape of a technique or material. In this sense, we can assimilate Beloufa's work as a sign of that transition from virtuosity to something more contextual, more actual. Neil does not consider himself an artist but an editor: his ability to copy and paste –concepts, people, artistic movements and materials– is what defines him as a representative creator of his reality.

While implausible, there still exists the belief that contemporary art is a joke that has broadened for too long. However, it is important that we continue to investigate and delve into everything presenting itself as a symbol of our time, as is the work of Neil Beloufa. From this perspective, the important fact when facing his work is not to ask about its formal or aesthetic qualities, but to go deep into an exercise of reflection and affinity with the whole work. Furthermore, one must not to focus solely on the details or on a specific media: understanding his rejection to hierarchies is easier than expected, we all use a book in the same way and with the same ease as a YouTube video. Similarly, we study an incendiary Twitter by Donald Trump with the same lightness we do a banal but equally mediatic post by Kim Kardashian.

To position Beloufa in the context of contemporary art, we can refer to artists who have preceded him, such as Philippe Parreno or Pierre Huyghe. Moreover, schools of thoughts currently gaining strength and becoming relevant again, as is the case with the *simulacra* and *communication theories* of French philosopher Jean Baudrillard, which unravel the 'modern' systems through which we communicate and how they have affected the way we relate to each other. Baudrillard foresaw communication it in the 80s as a quasi-schizophrenic destiny in which the urge to know everything in real time would push aside what the 'truly' was, understanding this as the materiality of the bodies. In light of such a vortex of 'virtual reality', what remains is only a simulacrum of the truth, a discourse that does not exist but we can actually see (Facebook and its apparent lives). (How does this relate to Neil's work? How do we tie in Parreno and Huyghe? I wouldn't deepen into the reference to Parreno and Huyghe; Baudrillard theories relate to his work cuz all of his videos (and the objects created afterwards) are not 'real' but something different, we could say they're playing with our notion of reality).

Beloufa's work encourages the spectator to stop and meditate about the reality and truth of things, of events, and of ourselves as generators and consumers of knowledge; perhaps it is not a mere coincidence that the artist considers his capacity to communicate as one of his weak spots –he regards communication as one of his greatest enemies. Neil Beloufa brings several relevant unresolved topics to light, and for this reason we should follow his work merely to pursue the traces of our contemporaneity through his oeuvre.