

## BENJAMIN RENOUX

*Dance With Nothing And Repeat*

November 10 – December 22, 2018

Baert Gallery is pleased to present *Dance With Nothing*, Benjamin Renoux's second exhibition with the Gallery.

Renoux's work is an ongoing exploration of the construction and awareness of identity. Photography, and its inherent inability to express reality in full, is often the starting point. He uses various mediums and techniques in dialogue to examine the confrontation between personal identity and the different realities that shape our contemporary world.

The series of painted photographs entitled *Dance With Nothing* shows a life-size dancer in motion. Throughout the series, the dancer gracefully engages, and in other instances, struggles with a seemingly impalpable, geometric form. The form, physically painted with Renoux's hands and riddled with traces of his presence, stands as a metaphor for the virtual world — ubiquitous, often intangible, and something we cannot part with - questioning our reality and temporality and sets up a dialogue between the dancer and himself.

In the two groups of plaster self-portraits, the artist analyzes himself, and his personal confrontation with the fragility of existence. In *Analysis*, the sculptures of the busts are in bas-relief in reference to the antique Trajan's Column in Rome that commemorates Roman emperor Trajan's victory in the Dacian Wars. This ancient reference contrasts with the modernity of the table, which can be likened to a cinema-screen or laboratory equipment, allowing for the different realities to coexist. The sculptures of the busts stand like clones; however each portrait is noticeably not identical. When perceived together, the multiple reproductions of the busts, with their various cracks and broken surfaces, highlight the impossibility of any image obtaining a full representation of the reality of any identity.

The sense of vulnerability is further emphasized in the installation *Repeat*. The plaster torsos sit on top of columns in a state of precariousness. The sculptures of the busts are scaled to be Renoux's exact height. And the columns are a direct reference to particular stones found in the mountains surrounding Renoux's childhood home. This, in essence, sets up an interesting dialogue between an unwavering foundation cemented in childhood with a more fragile, ever-changing present. Each torso is broken in different parts, and yet when seen from specific angles, the torsos merge, becoming one while still simultaneously appearing incomplete.

Benjamin Renoux (born 1986, Abidjan, Ivory Coast) lives and works between London and Berlin. He graduated with a Master of Fine Art from Central Saint Martins College of Art and Design in London in 2014. Recent solo exhibition include *Illusioni Spaziotempo*, Golab Space, Milan, Italy; *Miroirs & Crépuscules*, Twelve Star Gallery, French Institute, Europe House, London, UK. Recent group shows include *14 secondes*, curated by Marie de Paris, Centre 116, Montreuil, France; *Ricordi Futuri 2.0*, curated by Ermanno Tedeschi, Museo del Novecento, Turin, Italy. In 2015, Benjamin was selected for the most prestigious art competition in France for young artists, the 60ème Salon de Montrouge.