

**Serge Alain Nitegeka: *Personal Effects in BLACK***  
**January 11 – February 24, 2018**

Marianne Boesky Gallery is pleased to present *Personal Effects in BLACK*, Johannesburg-based artist Serge Alain Nitegeka's third solo exhibition with the gallery. The exhibition features a new body of work, created in 2017, that continues Nitegeka's examination of color, form, and space. *Personal Effects in BLACK* is presented across both the gallery's Chelsea locations, connecting them with a site-specific installation in one of the interior corridors.

The paintings featured in Nitegeka's exhibition highlight the artist's ongoing engagement with the ways in which manipulations of line, color and volume affect our experience and understanding of space. This new body of work can be traced to Nitegeka's earlier large-scale, site-specific installations, which he began in 2008 and were composed of variously scaled painted and unpainted wood panels. These sculptural works reconfigured the spaces in which they appeared, and choreographed the viewer's path and movement through them, creating a directed, and at times forced, encounter with the environment.

These immersive installations gave way to a series of paintings that mimicked the physical experiences in two-dimensional space. The use of unprimed plywood surfaces, bisected by bold swaths of color creates a dynamic interplay between depth and flatness, inviting the viewer to step into the frame only to then block the seeming point of entry. With his new paintings, Nitegeka moves further into abstraction, focusing in particular on the effect that the color black has on both the visual and emotional perceptions of his work.

The geometric compositions arise spontaneously, with Nitegeka shaping the lines, colors, and geometric volumes organically on the wood panels. Matte and glossy blacks appear in wide strokes and in fine, delicate lines across crisp whites, warm yellows, and cool blues, creating a complex web of layers that seem to reach further and further beyond the surface field. Perceptions of depth are further complicated by the incorporation of additional wood panels and forms, producing a physical depth in some works that is only perceived in others. The flow between the real and imagined is further heightened by the installation in the gallery's corridor, which references the site-specific works that first yielded these investigations.

At the same time, Nitegeka's incisive use of black evokes a psychological depth. Where his earlier installations suggested the conditions of forced migration, which the artist himself experienced, his current engagement with black relates to emotions of solitude, emptiness, and the sensation of being weighed down. Of his work with black, Nitegeka said: "Black is brute darkness. An intangible destructive mass that is dense and viscous, weighing me down deep into silence. It puts me into a state of overwhelming appreciation and meditation—a space of unknown emptiness and depth. There is an uninterrupted silence, and nothing is familiar. It is there as I drift in and out of sleep, where I wander blindly, arms stretched outwards trying to clutch onto something. I move about in a majestic solitude of colors and forms. My mind blank and hands busy. The once straight lines bend evenly into curves as I learn to surrender."

In considering the work outside of himself, he also noted, "I know that no one is exempt from the heaviness of the unknown. At the end of the day, while we close our eyes asleep in the black, the heaviness catches up. No one is spared. Black is ever constant."

—

Serge Alain Nitegeka's practice comprises abstract painting, sculpture, large-scale installation, and figurative drawing, repurposing modernist preoccupations with line and the picture plane to address larger cultural and political issues. Nitegeka's work has been shown throughout South Africa, Senegal,

## MARIANNE BOESKY GALLERY

509 West 24th Street, New York, NY 10011

Europe, and the United States. His first solo exhibition at Marianne Boesky Gallery, *Morphings in BLACK*, opened in November 2014 at the gallery's Lower East Side location. In 2015, Nitegeka's work appeared in the South African Pavilion at the 56th International Art Exhibition of the Venice Biennale, as well as at the Goteborg International Biennial of Contemporary Art, Gothenburg, Sweden. In spring 2015, he presented his largest site-specific installation to date, *Structural Response II*, at SCAD Museum of Art, Savannah, GA. In 2016, Nitegeka presented his second solo exhibition at Marianne Boesky Gallery, titled *Colour & Form in BLACK*. In 2017, his work was included in numerous group exhibitions, including *Solidary and Solitary: The Joyner/Giuffrida Collection* which will travel to institutions such as the Baltimore Museum of Art, Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive at University of California, Nasher Museum of Art at Duke University, and the Perez Art Museum Miami. Nitegeka (b. 1983, Burundi) currently lives and works in Johannesburg.

*Personal Effects in BLACK* is on view from January 11 through February 24, 2018 across both the gallery's Chelsea locations, at 509 and 507 W. 24th Street. For more information about Serge Alain Nitegeka, please contact Gallery Partner and Director Ricky Manne at [ricky@boeskygallery.com](mailto:ricky@boeskygallery.com) or 212.680.9889. For press inquiries, please contact Alina Sumajin, PAVE Communications and Consulting, at [alina@paveconsult.com](mailto:alina@paveconsult.com) or 646.369.2050.

[boeskygallery.com](http://boeskygallery.com)

telephone 212.680.9889

fax 212.680.9897