



VITAMIN

P3

NEW
PERSPECTIVES
IN PAINTING

PHAIDON

To understand Serge Alain Nitegeka's rigorously austere paintings it is necessary to engage with the story behind his spiky, confrontational installations. Based in South Africa, Nitegeka is a forced migrant from Burundi, the diminutive war-torn nation sandwiched between Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of Congo. His installations manifest his traumatic childhood; works that ask viewers to become active participants by encouraging them to physically clamber through a network of oblique wooden beams and packing boxes. Nitegeka's art is not merely biographical, rather it speaks of wider globalized forces of human migration spurred by poverty, war and ecological change, as well as the more positive forces of trade, travel and cultural exchange. His work takes part in the thoroughly international discourses of contemporary art, borrowing from the high modernist heritage of abstraction – the formal rigour of Piet Mondrian's grids come to mind – and rethinking it from the point of view of a contemporary African artist.

Nitegeka's paintings often depict elements of his installations in close-up, collapsing the spatialized energy of painted wooden beams and panels into a graphically intense surface. If his installations seek to conjure the migrant's experience of transience and disorientation in the body of the gallery goer, his paintings are instead attempts to preserve and memorialize works of work that are often site-specific. The painting *Barricade I: Studio Study VIII* (2014), for example, references a work presented at the Armory Show in New York in 2014: a veritable spider's web of black-painted wooden beams and coffin-like packing crates filling the booth. His paintings have a complex, reciprocal relation to these environments. Indeed, his installations can themselves be considered to be exploded paintings, enveloping the viewer in visual slabs of pine painted in black, red or simply left raw.

Nitegeka's works can be considered vital dialogues that fuse painting and sculpture into allegories of migration and modernity. In the exhibition *Black Passage* at Stevenson Gallery in Cape Town (2015), Nitegeka presented a series of painted boxes, resembling packing crates, alongside an array of wall-mounted paintings. Here, the painting *Fragile Cargo XI: Studio Study IV* (2015) related directly to the sculpture *Fragile Cargo* (2015), operating as an extension of the work onto the plane of the gallery wall. The very title of the work 'fragile cargo' suggests that, here, art may be a proxy for human bodies on the move. In this sense, Nitegeka's art is an instance of what has been termed 'migratory aesthetics' – a term used in the writing of Mieke Bal or T.J. Demos, which explores the conception of modernity as a force of displacement (from country to city, from poverty to opportunity), and in which art objects are a synecdoche for the uprooted individual. While it would be crass to compare the luxurious realm of art objects to the traumas of forced migration, we may surmise that both are nevertheless subject to the same forces of global unrest, desire and displacement. Nitegeka's work powerfully situates some of the multiple tensions of globalization today within the field of an expanded notion of painting.

– Colin Perry

SERGE ALAIN NITEGEKA Born 1983, Burundi. Lives and works in Johannesburg. Selected Solo Exhibitions: 2016 – 'Colour & Form in BLACK', Marianne Boesky Gallery, New York; 2015 – 'BLACK Passage', Stevenson, Cape Town; 'Structural-Response II', Pamela E. Poetter Gallery, SCAD Museum of Art, Savannah, GA; 2014 – 'Morphings into BLACK', Boesky East, New York; 'Into the BLACK', Stevenson Gallery, Johannesburg; 2013 – 'Black Cargo', Stevenson Gallery, Cape Town. Selected Group Exhibitions: 2015 – 'A story within a story', Göteborg International Biennial of Contemporary Art, Gothenburg, Sweden; 'What remains is tomorrow', South African Pavilion, 56th Venice Biennale; 2013 – 'The Space Between Us', Ifa Galleries, Berlin. Selected Bibliography: 2015 – Nancy Dantas, 'Mining the Rich Interspace Between Painting, Sculpture, and Architecture', *Hyperallergic*, November; Julie L. Belcove, 'Crossing Borders', *Architectural Digest*, May; 2013 – Sean O'Toole, 'Bodies of Evidence', *Frieze*, May; 2011 – Raél Salley, 'No One Size Fits All', *Art South Africa*, Fall.



1.



2.



Barricade I: Studio Study VIII, 2014
Paint on wood
202 x 244 x 7.5 cm / 79 1/2 x 96 x 3 in

Fragile Cargo XI: Studio Study IV, 2015
Paint on wood
100 x 110 x 14 cm / 39 3/8 x 43 1/4 x 5 1/2 in

BLACK SUBJECTS: Still II, 2014
Paint and charcoal on wood
Three panels, each: 244 x 122 x 8 cm /
96 x 48 x 3 1/8 in

ETEL ADNAN
AHMED ALSOUDANI
MICHAEL ARMITAGE
LUCAS ARRUDA
MATH BASS
SADIE BENNING
KATHERINE BERNHARDT
MCARTHUR BINION
ZANDER BLOM
DANIEL BOYD
JOE BRADLEY
SASCHA BRAUNIG
SARAH CAIN
JUAN JOSÉ CAMBRE
MASAYA CHIBA
MARIETA CHIRULESCU
LEIDY CHURCHMAN
MATT CONNORS
MARY CORSE
NJIDEKA AKUNYILI CROSBY
CUI JIE
VALENTINA D'AMARO
DEXTER DALWOOD
JULIA DAULT
DAVID DIAO
PETER DREHER
MICHAELA EICHWALD
JANA EULER
GENIEVE FIGGIS
MARK FLOOD
LOUISA GAGLIARDI
SANDRA GAMARRA
APOSTOLOS GEORGIU
FERNANDA GOMES
HULDA GUZMÁN
ZACH HARRIS

CELIA HEMPTON
HELEN JOHNSON
JENNIE C. JONES
JAMIAN JULIANO-VILLANI
EWA JUSZKIEWICZ
HAYV KAHRAMAN
SANYA KANTAROVSKY
EMIL MICHAEL KLEIN
ELLA KRUGLYANSKAYA
LAURA LANCASTER
MERNET LARSEN
JANE LEE
LEE KIT
LIU WEI
NATE LOWMAN
CHRIS MARTIN
MARWAN
PATRIZIO DI MASSIMO
BARTEK MATERKA
HUGO MCCLOUD
ELIZABETH MCINTOSH
PRABHAVATHI MEPPAYIL
YUNHEE MIN
DONALD MOFFETT
MELEKO MOKGOSI
SABINE MORITZ
RYAN MOSLEY
ULRIKE MÜLLER
OSCAR MURILLO
ELIZABETH NEEL
BLESSING NGOBENI
ALIZA NISENBAUM
SERGE ALAIN NITEGEKA
MAIREAD O'HEOCHA
ÉDER OLIVEIRA
ALEX OLSON

ANNA OSTOYA
BRUNO PACHECO
NICOLAS PARTY
YELENA POPOVA
NARBI PRICE
DÉBORAH PRUDEN
IMRAN QURESHI
MARY RAMSDEN
RAÚL RECIO
K.P. REJI
MARINA RHEINGANT
ZBIGNIEW ROGALSKI
JULIA ROMMEL
MICHAEL SIMPSON
AVERY SINGER
ARPITA SINGH
DANIEL SINSEL
CHRISTINE STREULI
RYAN SULLIVAN
MARIA TANIGUCHI
RODEL TAPAYA
HENRY TAYLOR
TOREY THORNTON
CARAGH THURING
RAFAEL VEGA
CAROLINE WALKER
MARY WEATHERFOR
STANLEY WHITNEY
JACK WHITTEN
MICHAEL WILLIAMS
METTE WINCKELMAN
ROSE WYLIE
XU QU
YU HONG
YUAN YUAN

PHAI