walden naturae

07 Feb
— 06 Apr 2025

Alejandro Cesarco

Sustantivos
Alejandro Cesarco

This exhibition does not necessarily aim to narrate what has happened, nor to begin from scratch. The intention is rather to begin in the middle, *in medias res*. Or, "Half-way through the journey of our lives I found myself in a dark forest", etc.

The show has a lot to do with questioning being in midcareer. What does the shadow of ourselves that we have constructed over the years enable and frustrate? What can be done now with this "style"—that which is recognizable, repeatable or expected? How can the old questions be updated, and how can we allow new responses to be formulated?

In the selected works, these questions appear in different ways, and are generally handled as strategies or attempts at getting past oneself. In other words, as means of overcoming obstacles.

Included in the show are false starts, rejections, lists, and moments just prior to finding a form that congeals. In fact, it would seem that what we artists do is to insist on trying to give shape to meaning. The exhibition comprises the following pieces:

Errata (Continue), 2024
Inkjet print. 57 × 40 cm

To begin by asking for forgiveness, attempting to correct past errors.

Studio Wall (What Is Not but Could Be If), 2023
Inkjet print. 110 × 66 cm

Studio Wall (What Was Not but Could Have Been), 2023
Inkjet print. 110 × 66 cm

Studio Wall (With All Associated Risk), 2023
Inkjet print. 110 × 66 cm

The studio wall presents itself as a place of latent possibilities. The work starts from the given and moves toward the non-given, comparing what is with what could be. The series insinuates how some things, when seen in retrospect, can appear to be both the beginning and the end of something. The series documents or freezes instants within a process. What is presented is as much a system of references as it is an affective genealogy, or possible characters in an imaginary conversation. The first image is seemingly filled with references to the self, and more specifically, to the construction of the artist's persona: Paul Thek's *Dead Hippie*; a frame from an Yvonne Rainer film; notes by Theresa Hak Kyung Cha included in her book *Dictée*; a poem by Amiri Baraka; a photo by Louise Lawler, reutilized as a cover illustration for a book by Flaubert. The second image refers to the studio space itself, Jack Pierson's *Diamond Life* installation; a text by Mary Oliver; Anne Frank's wall; a cold, winter light; two books of poems by John Ashbery piled on top of one another. The third image is more frankly self-referential: two pairs of Sherrie Levine's shoes; an image of a previous work, *Untitled (Remembered)*—which would seem to be the self-citation to which the series refers—; an invitation to a recent show; a list of possible titles; a series of kisses; words by Sturtevant.

Midcareer, 2023
Video, color, sound. 8:30 min

A description of a phase in my artistic career—real, self-imposed and unnecessarily adopted—by way of fears, memories, the reappearance of ghosts and possibilities. It is a phase of life treated as though it were a matter of punctuation. The video is composed of material recorded over the course of more than twenty years and never used before: discarded shots, remnants and leftovers. It is said of music that its effect is not to explain something, but to explain itself.

Fears, 2024
Inkjet print. 48.5 × 40 cm

Diagnostic, 2024
Inkjet print. 48.5 × 40 cm

Ambition, 2024
Inkjet print. 48.5 × 40 cm

To list is an accessible, functional and productive discursive technique which, among other things, facilitates mediation of the everyday. Lists offer the promise, perhaps the illusion, of monitoring, of control, of being able to bring confusion to a halt. Lists soothe because they delimit, reduce or condense something—knowledge, culture, memory, information, chores, affects, meaning—things that are infinite, that never cease to overflow, that are always growing and escaping in flighty directions. In this case, the three lists collectively begin to define a character. One is an enumeration of fears. Certain personality traits are clinically described in another. The third list is made up of the artists represented by Matthew Marks gallery.

Every Word Was Once a Poem: Questions Hidden by the Answers, 2024
Inkjet print. 19 × 11 cm

Every Word Was Once a Poem: The Exact Resemblance as Exact Resemblance, 2024
Inkjet print. 19 × 11 cm

Every Word Was Once a Poem: Therefore This Curving to Tell You, 2024
Inkjet print. 19 × 11 cm

These small works contain the world, all worlds. Everything already written and everything that can possibly be written. To explain it, we can make use of the epigraph Borges used in "La Biblioteca de Babel": "By this art you may contemplate the variation of the 23 letters ..." [*Mediante este arte podrás contemplar la variación de las 23 letras.*] (Robert Burton, *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, part 2, sect. II, mem. IV).

The Murray Guy Years, 2024
Inkjet print. 105 × 62 cm

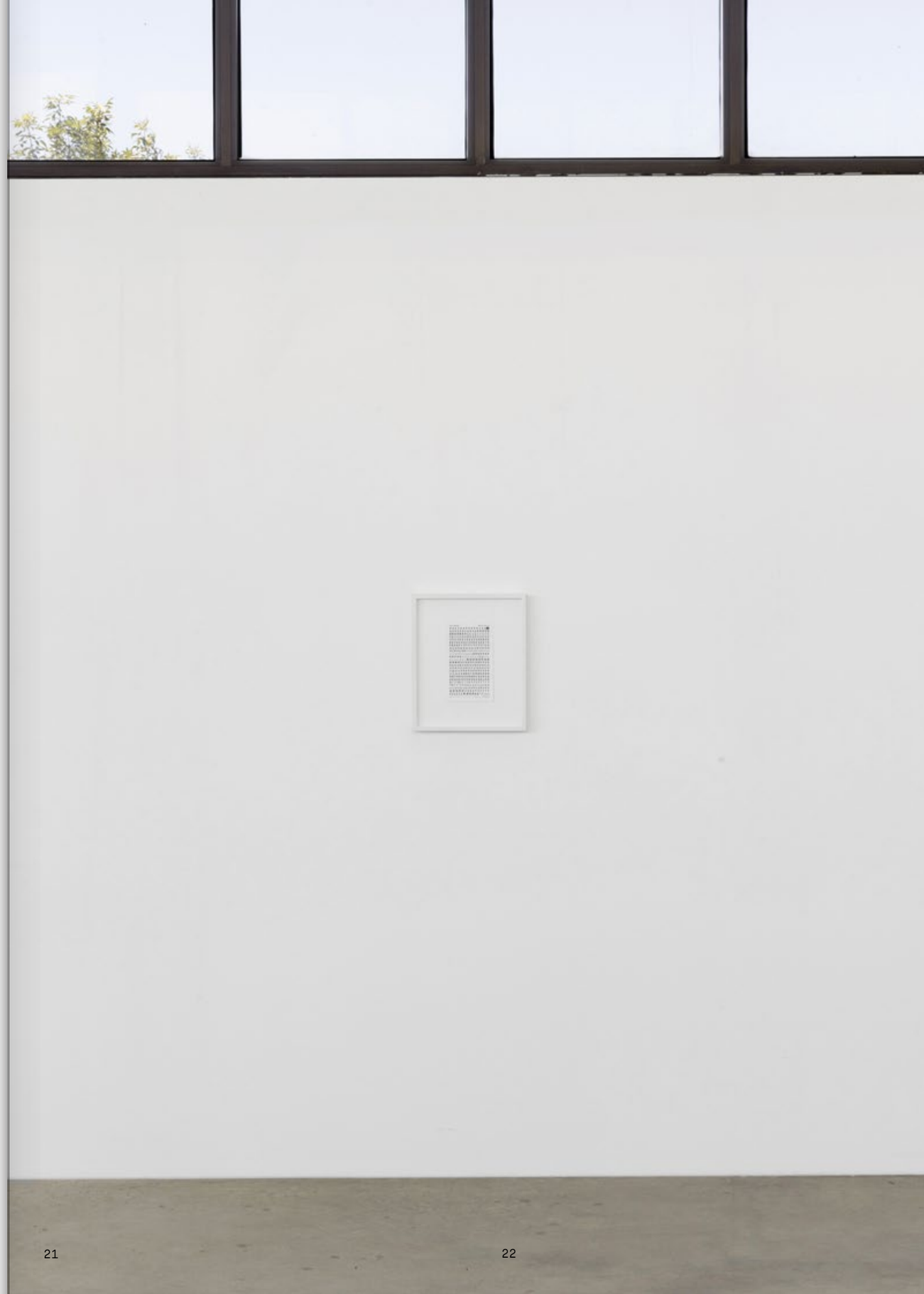
An inventory of my participation in Murray Guy, the mythic New York gallery I worked with during eleven of its nineteen years. It is a different form of list, a different form of portrait, a different form of genealogy. In other words, and paraphrasing Gertude Stein, what good are roots if you can't take them with you?

False Start (The Social Life of Affects), 2024
Inkjet print. 90 × 62 cm

The beginning of an index for a book I have not yet written and most likely never will. Indexes (of books to be written) are an ongoing project that map the development of my interests, readings and preocupations, and in this way, they have become a form of self-portrait that unfolds over time. As indicated by the work's title, this particular index is an unfinished project, a false start. What is presented are the beginnings of a book that directly references affect theory, in particular Lauren Berlant's last book, *On the Inconvenience of Other People* (2022). "*The social life of affects*" is a phrase from that book, and has to do with how people adapt and tolerate different pressures and frictions of being in relation.

An Angry Silence, 2022
Wall painting. Dimensions vary

A wall painting in consonance with previous forms of "muted melodrama" [*Here Comes the Sun* (2004), *A Truce Mistaken for Surrender* (2014), *The Dreams I've Left Behind* (2015)]. In this case, it is a visual equivalent of the consequences of sweeping things under the rug.



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Of Power and Time

Alejandro Cesarco
(Uruguay, 1975)

Artist, editor, and curator. He has exhibited in museums and galleries across Latin America, the United States, and Europe, including the Museum of Modern Art (NY), Museo Rufino Tamayo (Mexico), Tate Modern (London), The Renaissance Society (Chicago), Frac Île-de-France/Le Plateau (Paris), Malba (Buenos Aires), Mumok (Vienna), Salomon R. Guggenheim (NY), Artium Museo de Arte Contemporáneo del País Vasco (Vitoria), Walker Art Center (Minneapolis), and Kunsthalle Basel (Basel). He represented Uruguay at the 54th Venice Biennale (2011) and participated in the São Paulo Biennial on two occasions (2012 and 2018). He is the Director of the non-profit organization Art Resources Transfer.
Among his most recent solo exhibitions are Conditionals at Tanya Leighton, Berlin (2023); Subtitulado at Galería Elba Benítez, Madrid (2023); Otros ejemplos recientes at Lumiar Cité, Lisbon, and ARTIUM, Vitoria-Gasteiz (2023); The Ongoing Story at Galleria Raffaella Cortese, Milan (2022); Triangulation at Tanya Leighton, Los Angeles (2022); and Todo en negro, los ojos cerrados por el exceso del desastre at Teatro San Martín, Buenos Aires (2021).
He has participated in group exhibitions such as Language/Text/Image at Draiflessen Collection, Mettingen (2024); READ at Kunsthalle Praha, Prague (2023); I see no difference between a handshake and a poem at Mendes Wood DM, Paris (2023); 50 años at El Centro de Exposiciones Subte de la Intendencia de Montevideo, Uruguay (2023); and Chosen Memories: Contemporary Latin American Art from the Patricia Phelps de Cisneros Gift and Beyond at the Museum of Modern Art, New York (2023). He lives and works in Madrid.


fig 01


fig 02


fig 03


fig 04

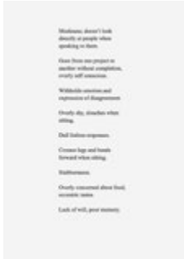
fig 05


fig 06


fig 07


fig 08


fig 09

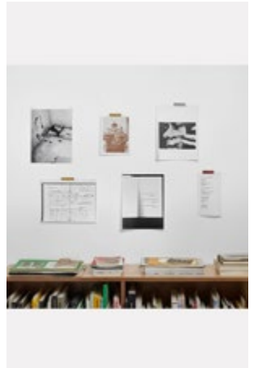
fig 10


fig 11


fig 12


fig 13


fig 14


fig 15

ALEJANDRO CESARCO
Sustantivos
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fig 01
ALEJANDRO CESARCO
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2024
Inkjet print
17.7 x 10.2 in

fig 02
ALEJANDRO CESARCO
Every Word Was Once a Poem: The Exact Resemblance as Exact Resemblance
2024
Inkjet print
17.7 x 10.2 in

fig 03
ALEJANDRO CESARCO
Every Word Was Once a Poem: Questions Hidden by the Answers
2024
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17.7 x 10.2 in

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ALEJANDRO CESARCO
Ambition
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2024
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2023
Video
8:30 min

fig 10
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2024
Inkjet print
43.3 x 25.9 in

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fig 13
ALEJANDRO CESARCO
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2024
Inkjet print
41.3 x 24.4 in

fig 14
ALEJANDRO CESARCO
False Start (The Social Life of Affects)
2024
Inkjet print
41.5 x 24.4 in

walden naturae

walden naturae is an exhibition space set in the enclave of Pueblo Garzón (Maldonado, Uruguay).

Close to the sea, it is surrounded by hills, olive groves and vineyards in a more secluded Uruguay.

Its annual programming combines historical and contemporary exhibitions in all disciplines and media, in its own 5000 square meter space.

walden naturae activates and cultivates its unique setting with agricultural, ecological and artistic initiatives, creating an idyllic context.

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I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived. I did not wish to live what was not life, living is so dear; nor did I wish to practice resignation, unless it was quite necessary. I wanted to live deep and suck out all the marrow of life … HENRY DAVID THOREAU "Walden; or, Life in the Woods"