

Alejandro Cesarco

Sustantivos

By 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 construc-

tion 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. 20 × 14.5 cm

Diagnostic, 2024

Inkjet print. 20 × 14.5 cm

Ambition, 2024

Inkjet print. 20 × 14.5 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. 105 × 72 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 preoccupations, 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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SUSTANTIVOS
07.2 -06.04.2025
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Pueblo Garzón, Uruguay
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