ARTFORUM

Alejandro Cesarco, *Midcareer* (still), 2023, video, various formats, color, sound, 8:40 min.

MADRID
Alejandro Cesarco
GALERÍA ELBA BENITEZ
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In his novel *The Man Without Qualities* (1930/42), Robert Musil wrote, "Unfortunately, nothing is so hard to achieve as a literary representation of a man thinking," because the outcome "no longer has the form of the thinking process as one experiences it, but already that of what has been thought, which is regrettably impersonal." Rising to the task, Alejandro Cesarco's new video *Midcareer*, 2023, the central work of the solo show "Subtitled/*Subtitulado*," takes the form of active thinking, tethered by language and not much else. A journey through the purgatory of midcareer, the video follows the artist's alter ego as he looks back twenty years at his former self, writing without the "determining weight of a previous trajectory," striving to find the difference within the sameness imposed by "style," oscillating between recursion and the hope to encounter a full-stop punctuation mark.

Moving between alterity and identity, "Subtitled/*Subtitulado*" stages the self as a place haunted by memories (the documentary photograph *All the Doors of My Mother's Home*, 2022); artistic influence (the six mock book pages *The Style It Takes [Excerpts]*, 2014); and the need to right past wrongs (*Errata*, 2020, a list of revisions that replaces the word *intimacy* with *fragility*). The selection of works negotiates the relation between style as a coded modality of world-making and a subject who is initially wordless or whose world is made of speech and affect. To call "Subtitled/*Subtitulado*" "poetic" falls short of understanding its meaning. To call it "personal" is nothing but a platitude. Rather, to draw on Musil, the exhibition is a reflexive interplay between indeterminacy and consistency, capturing the affinities and (in)coherence of the things that meet inside one's head.

— *Ana Teixeira Pinto*

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