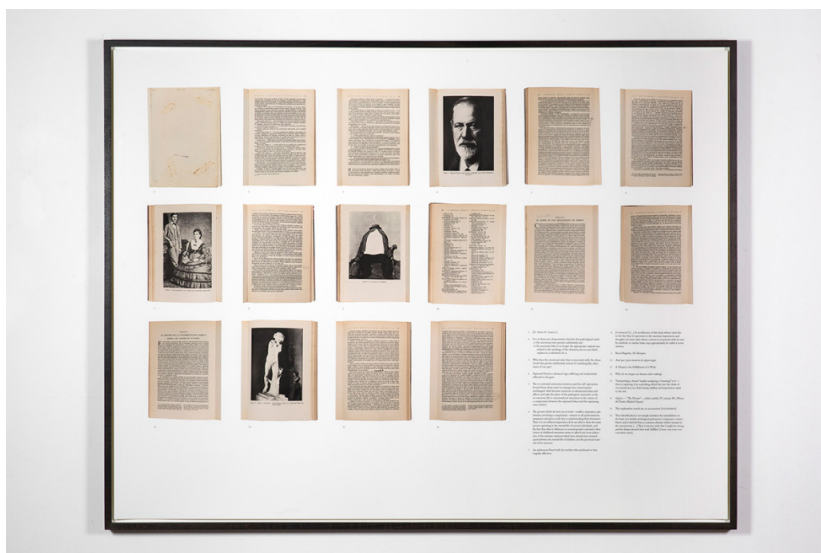


Alejandro Cesarco



All images Courtesy of the Artist and Galleria Raffaella Cortese, Milan

In the past two decades Alejandro Cesarco has been making art as well as publishing books and curating exhibitions. Using film, photography and text, Cesarco's practice investigates the agency of meaning, and how the expression of that agency is embedded within the practices of writing and reading, translating and misreading, repeating and remembering.

The formal strategies of Cesarco's (isolating a footnote from its context, the ongoing compilation of indexes for an as-yet unwritten book, a video whose narrative structure is based on secrecy, for example) are often marked by an emotional register, where affect colludes with language to produce a series of metanarratives in dialogue with the histories of Conceptual Art. In addition to his studio practice, the artist has curated several exhibitions and is director of Art Resources Transfer (A.R.T.), a nonprofit organization that publishes books by artists and distributes free books on art to public schools, libraries and prisons.

From Marcel Duchamp's or Stanley Brouwn's meters, to Andre Cadere's round bars of wood, to Guy Mees, or the Surface/Support group, these works carry a long line of references. However, they also refer to my own work portraying couples, their relationships, and the limits of language. The work stubbornly insists on questioning the sustainability of desire in the long term. In this case through allegorically measuring or quantifying the comforts of intimacy, its distance.

Tique, December 2020

Tanya Leighton



The Long Term (A Measure of Intimacy II)
2020, archival ink-jet print, 147 × 57 cm

This is the most recent in an ongoing series of indexes for books I have not yet written and most probably never will. The indexes are an ongoing project that map the development of my interests, readings and preoccupations and thus become a form of self-portraiture that unfolds over time. "Long Casting (A Page on Regret)" is particular within the series in that it does not go from A-Z and that there is a text ("Under The Sign of Regret") that loosely shadows it.

The NYPL Picture Collection contains well over one million original prints, photographs, posters, postcards, and illustrations from books, magazines, and newspapers, classified into more than 12,000 subject headings. Cesarco's series of photographs looks into its organizing principles. The Subject Heading Binder is in some way the precursor to Google Image's algorithm, but it is also a trace or a portrait of the librarians who have worked in the collection. The headings enable the navigation and use of the collection, while simultaneously signaling what is included and excluded from it.

Learning the Language (Present Continuous I) (2018) is part of a series of video portraits in which Cesarco borrows the vocabulary of the person portrayed to address some of his own recurrent concerns (memory, repetition, regrets, etc.). In this case who is portrayed is Margarita Fernández, an Argentinean pianist, performer, and music scholar. The portrait is constructed through a myriad of voices: Cesarco's, Fernández's, but also Morton Feldman's. In addition, it includes a fragmented rendition of Manuel de Falla's *Pour le tombeau de Paul Dukas*. Fernández had never performed the piece publicly, and due to her deteriorating eye-sight, had to exhume it from memory. She describes the work as if the chords are metal curtains that are falling or closing. The theme of finality and death are obviously central to the music, as is an insistent optimism and hope. Fernández's selection of it models the cross-generational acknowledging that occurs, between her and Cesarco, in the video.

Tanya Leighton



Learning the Language (Present Continuous I), 2018
video, color, sound
18'25"



Installation View:
Alejandro Cesarco, The Measures of Memory, Galleria Raffaella Cortese, Milan, 2017
Photo: Lorenzo Palmieri

Der Familienroman (The Family Novel) (2017) is a photographic re-reading of the artist's father's Spanish edition of The Complete Works of Sigmund Freud. In this series Cesarco simultaneously reads Freud through the lens of autobiography and looks at his father's underlining and notations of Freud's texts as a script (both descriptive and predictive) to his own family history and dynamics. In the series Pictures, Cesarco inverts the act of "reading" an image through its translation into text. Pictures are photographs of clippings, from magazines and journals, in which critics describe other people's work.