

# Tanya Leighton

Press Release

Alejandro Cesarco,  
'THESE DAYS'

12 March – 13 April 2019  
Preview: 9 March, 7 – 9pm

'These Days' seems like a natural follow-up to 'The Early Years', Cesarco's last solo exhibition at the gallery. This show centres around Cesarco's two latest videos, *Learning the Language (Present Continuous I & II)*.

As is indicated in the title, the two works document a way of learning, which is perhaps also a mode of appropriation. Learning, more often than not, occurs through mirroring and repetition. These works, not unlike an act of citation, show the artist reading and pillaging through other people's words. In bringing them into the fold of his own artistic production, Cesarco ventriloquizes, asking his sources to speak back to him. Mirroring is also made explicit by referencing Dan Graham's *Present Continuous Past(s)*, 1974, a seminal work that correlates perception, time and subject formation. 'These Days' includes the following works:

*Learning the Language (Present Continuous I)*, 2018  
16mm film transferred to video, colour, sound, 18:25 min

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, the film portrays Margarita Fernández, an Argentinean pianist, performer, and music scholar. The portrait is constructed through myriad voices: Cesarco's, Fernández's, and also Morton Feldman's. In addition, it includes piano interpretations of a brief section of Franz Schubert's *Andantino* from the *Piano Sonata No. 20 in A Major*, as well as a fragmented rendition of Manuel de Falla's *Pour le tombeau de Paul Dukas*.

*Learning the Language (Present Continuous II)*, 2018  
16mm film transferred to video, colour, sound, continuous loop (15:25 min cycle)

*Learning the Language (Present Continuous II)* recreates a scene from Jean-Luc Godard's film *La Chinoise*, 1967, in which a professor, traveling on a train, engages in conversation with one of his students. The same scene was recreated by Claire Denis in her short film *Vers Nancy*, 2002. In Cesarco's work the professor's role is played by Brazilian psychoanalyst, critic and curator, Suely Rolnik and the conversation centres around the role and uses of repetition within psychoanalytical practice.

*Untitled (Double)*, 2018  
Archival inkjet print, 34 x 42 cm

A photograph depicting a corner of the artist's desk. An insistence on locating the artist's practice as a practice of reading. Another stab at the trope of the studio: as institution, as critique, as perhaps outdated site of production. On the one hand, the title refers to the stacking of books and clippings that are organised in pairs, and speak of the artist's methodology of resignifying through rearranging, reframing and citation. On the other hand, *Untitled (Double)* is also the visual echo, the shadow or double, of an earlier work by Cesarco, *Untitled (Remembered)*, 2014.

*Margarita's Music Book (Spes Vitae)*, 2018  
Archival inkjet print, 95 x 119 cm

A photograph of Margarita Fernández's sheet music for Manuel de Falla's *Pour le tombeau de Paul Dukas*. Fernández chose to perform this work for *Learning the Language (Present Continuous I)*. She 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; Fernández's selection of it models the cross-generational acknowledging that occurs (between her and Cesarco) in the video.

*Direction*, 2019  
Black matte vinyl wall text, 22 x 28 cm

A line from T.S. Eliot's poem, *The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock*, acts as a stage or script direction for an unidentified actor. Written when Eliot was in his twenties but speaking from the place of a middle-aged man, the poem thematises an extreme hesitancy and indecision: a paralysis produced by overwhelming anxiety about the possibility of getting things wrong.

Alejandro Cesarco was born in Montevideo, Uruguay. He lives and works in New York City. His recent exhibitions include Contemporary Art Center, Vilnius; Jeu de Paume, Paris; CAPC musée d'art contemporain, Bordeaux; Rafaella Cortese, Milan and The Renaissance Society, Chicago.

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The gallery is open Tuesday–Saturday, 11am–6pm and by appointment.