

Alejandro Cesarco — *Prescribe the Symptom*
March 6 – April 18, 2015

Prescribe the Symptom, Alejandro Cesarco's solo exhibition at Midway Contemporary Art, presents new photographic works and a recently completed video. The title refers to a form of reverse psychology used in family psychotherapy decades ago, and alludes to various conditions and methodologies of memory and the shape of autobiography within the exhibition.

Shot on 16mm film and then transferred to digital, *Allegory, or The Perils of the Present Tense*, is constructed using silent vignettes and inter-titles. Atmospheric sequences of images of water, rain, sky, and saccharine flower arrangements contrast with close up portraits of a woman reading Alberto Moravia's *Contempt*. At one point an inter-title reads "The story is a surface", alluding to the fleeting images of surfaces as abstract sites of connection for desire, memory, and fragments of future histories. The tone throughout hints at longing and desire, promises not kept, and questions about the division of the self into past and future.

There is a similar fragility of surface, silence, and memory in *The Dreams I've Left Behind*, in which a faint image of the wall behind the artist's bed is silkscreened directly onto the gallery wall. What appears at first as a dry tautological exercise subtly reveals itself to be a vulnerable and deeply emotional displacement. Cesarco describes his use of color in this work, and in the wall treatment for *Allegory, or The Perils of the Present Tense*, as "muted melodrama."

In contrast to this elusive work, *Index (With Feeling)* forms an expansive generative genealogy using a diverse array of literary, artistic, and philosophical figures. The use of paratext has been a consistent narrative device in Cesarco's work — whether footnotes, dedication pages, or his indexes, such as this new nine panel photographic work. Through a carefully organized collection of entries he imagines an unrealized novel titled *Crocodile Tears*. He has referred to these indexes as a form of self-portraiture, and in this new work anxiety, nostalgia, lost youth, and paranoia build an intense tone. A tone that is counterbalanced through more cerebral references to affect theory, aesthetics, authenticity, style, and repetition that complicate and question the cultural conditioning of our emotions, feelings, and memories.

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Alejandro Cesarco (b. 1975 Montevideo, Uruguay) lives and works in New York. He has a M.A. in Studio Art from New York University/International Center for Photography, New York and a B.A. in Economics, UCUDAL, Montevideo, Uruguay. He currently has a solo exhibition at Murray Guy in New York. Recent solo exhibitions include: *Secondary Revision*, Frac Île-de-France/Le Plateau, Paris (2013); *A Portrait, A Story, And An Ending*, Kunsthalle Zürich, Switzerland (2013); and *Alejandro Cesarco*, MuMOK, Vienna (2012). Group exhibitions include: *Under The Same Sun*, The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York (2014); *Tell It To My Heart: Collected by Julie Ault*, Museum für Gegenwartskunst, Basel (2013); and *The Imminence of Poetics*, 30th Bienal de São Paulo (2012). Cesarco is director of the non-profit arts organization, Art Resources Transfer. He has published a number of books, including *Between Artists*, an ongoing series of pocket-sized conversation-based books published by A.R.T. Press, New York.