

Upon my first visit to *Zona Maco México Arte Contemporáneo* in 2005, I became aware of the work of Oscar Cueto while viewing one of his autobiographical multi panel paintings depicting his abusive friends literally beating him into a bloody pulp with art manuscripts and publications. His humor, insight and relentless awareness of the art world readily spoke to me and the triptych became part of my art collection. Later that year I invited Cueto to become part of the roster of artists to be shown at my then newly formed gallery in Los Angeles where he has since presented three solo shows and has been apart of various group exhibitions. Throughout our ongoing artist/dealer relationship I am continually impressed with Cueto's ability to work within a variety of mediums and thoughtful presentations that best apply to the subjects and ideas that are his focus.

Exploring subjects such as the international art world, philosophical literary and world history, Cueto divides his art practice into distinct series that comment on his experiences and overall perspectives of human thought and actions. The show organized by the Museo de Arte Actual Ex Teresa presents four different bodies of work from 2010 to the present that include historical, fictional or factual subjects manipulated and rearranged by Cueto in order to create a new warped perspective within the viewer's mind. The installations vary with the use of graphite and ink drawing, collage and frame by frame video animation. All of the work continues Cueto's obsessive and persuasive notions of rearranging a story to portray a heightened sense of ambiguity and fantastical outcomes. The provocative work is thoughtful in content while always exuding an anticipated sense of humor.

In the series *Había una vez/Once upon a time*, Cueto reveals a false autobiography with a proposed twin who falls in love with his cousin and later learns his uncle is a pedophile. Although the subjects may seem perverse, the main objective becomes an investigation of how the story is retold based on a false memory or more distinctly on how our memory can begin to lie to us. In contrast *The Macedonian phalanx* depicts the Macedonian Army Infantry Formation made famous by Alexander the Great arranged in its formal construction with billboards displaying political rhetoric replacing the original spears. In Cueto's clever version, Alejandro's fight uses the mind and its capacity to organize wordplay as the weapon rather than the force of the spears.

The third series entitled *Ten books* reveals how knowledge is subjective. Cueto chose 10 books that are each modified by a new rule or unique way of reintroducing the information according to his personal preference. For example, the book *Artifice* by Jorge Luis Borges was rewritten and then erased by Cueto and tells the story of the character Funes, the memoirist who had a great memory but he could not think. In another case Cueto presents the *Tractatus logico-philosophicus* in the installation with the content omitted referencing the philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein's notion that the most important part of a book is that which has not yet been written. Working within a similar erudite commentary,

*Las (400) vueltas*, is the newest piece presented in the show and functions as a large installation-scaled book with a digital animation alluding to the French novelist Jean Genet. The character in Genet's novel has been falsely impersonated leading to his paranoia and confines to solitude. The text below the projection falsely attributes the book to James Elroy, the American thriller writer who became psychologically unstable after the death of his mother. The figure paces back and forth through a doorway becoming his alter ego and blurring the boundaries between reality and fiction. On the backside of the enlarged book is a small lit shelf with a copy of Genet's novel.

Cueto's vision challenges his audience to distance themselves from the seriousness within the confines of history, knowledge and art practice thus becoming aware of their dependency on traditional ways of perception. The work evokes a sense of humor that allows the viewer to question the grave importance of reality and how it is documented over a significant period of time.

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