

CRISIS

Alberto Casari

Luego inhala y exhala

February 15, 2022 - April 9, 2022

Ex- PPPP 2 / Alberto Casari: Luego Inhala y Exhala

Look around. In front of you. Behind you. Behind the severity of these shapes, behind the forcefulness of the high contrast of this decidedly austere palette, lies a commitment to the subtle, the light, and even the imperceptible. This idea is prefigured in the very title of the exhibition: «Then Inhale and Exhale», a clear allusion by Ex PPPP 2 / Alberto Casari (former member and orthonym of the group of heteronyms PPPP) to practices such as meditation, yoga and Buddhism, which are oriented to the apprehension of the present moment, for example by focusing on primary physiological processes such as breathing. Yet you inhale and exhale every day, without any awareness of it and without anyone reminding you. Like everyone.

The nominal quote to the action of breathing in the title of the exhibition points to an exalted perception of the here and now to which the works invite. Certainly, the simple forms of these pieces made of expanded polystyrene sheets, covered in fabric and painted in black and white seem to evoke the aesthetic models of minimalism (and post-minimalism). However, more than proposing a phenomenological nod to our experience of space-time —that is, paying attention to the way in which our perception of the work of art unfolds in tandem with our spatial itinerary of the exhibition—, Casari also appeals to our stillness. Thus, the artist asks us for two fundamental ways of approaching his work: one that alternates between movement and immobility, and another that oscillates between directed attention and letting oneself be carried away by the situation.

In the gallery we are confronted with large, mostly monochrome objects that project themselves from the ceiling, protrude from the walls and occupy the floor, establishing a dialogue with the exhibition hall by echoing its architectural structures: thresholds, doorways, walls, columns, windows, corners, etc. At the same time, as they are assemblages of various materials (expanded polystyrene, fabric, wooden rods, paint) that make their manufacturing method apparent, these works suggest the idea of construction, and even more, of its possibilities —especially to the extent that the show includes examples of different configurations and ways of coupling these structures—. Nevertheless, given their fragmentary nature (after all, they are made of scraps of overlapping materials), they also bring to mind the image of ruins, albeit neat ones. An image that is reinforced by the sensation of precarious balance that some pieces convey. Thus, dissimilar materials are confronted (natural, such as wood and fabric; and artificial, such as polystyrene and latex), but also opposing concepts: the rigid and the ductile, the heavy and the light, and the dense and light.

The distribution of the artworks in space guides our journey, making us aware of their possibilities and inviting us to trace routes around them, while their almost human scale challenges and confronts us, since we cannot be indifferent to them. But these pieces not only ask to be explored —via our

movement— as sculptural volumes arranged in space. They also beg to be examined as sparing pictorial planes. The randomness of their contours, the reliefs that are created with the superposition of multiple planes, as well as the finish of the pieces, invite us to examine their particular features. The details and subtleties of these works are revealed only to those who approach them to pause to explore their surface with their eyes. The weave of the fabric and its wrinkles, the texture of the polystyrene behind the fabric, the layer of paint and its slight tonal variations, and the effects of light and shadow emerge from careful observation, and yet to some extent, exempt from ambiguities.

Here we must take into account two references in play, on the one hand, meditation and, on the other, the wall. Articulated, they refer us to the idea of a meditation exercise that takes a wall as its focal point, something as specific as it is indistinct. This choice is not accidental, because in a world saturated with screeching images and constantly bombarded by audiovisual stimuli, a white (or black) surface like a wall is precisely what no one gives a second glance to —and that is if it really gets a first glance and not just a hasty look.

This is the core of the bet of «Then Inhale and Exhale», because the works that make up the exhibition, rather than demanding our attention in a narcissistic way, asking to be looked at, make it possible for us to look again. They operate as an invitation to wander with the body and with the eyes and, at the same time, to observe intentionally, although without pretending to discover something and without seductions in between.

In other words, Ex PPPP 2 / Alberto Casari calls us to surrender to the very act of looking as if it were a form of meditation —inhale, exhale—, capturing at every moment the world that surrounds us and our place in it, something which necessarily occurs at the very moment it happens. Yes, now.

- Max Hernández Calvo

ex PPPP 2 is Alberto Casari, while ex PPPP 1 is the heteronym Alfredo Covarrubias.

PPPP (Productos Peruanos Para Pensar) was an artistic project active from 1994 to 2016 and was created by the artist Alberto Casari during his stay in Italy.

PPPP was created as a company in which the artist depersonalizes to disappear as an individual creator, opting for the anonymity of a logo.

In addition to Alfredo Covarrubias, other heteronyms used by Casari in that period have been a.k.a El Místico, Arturo Kobayashi and Patrick Van Host.

Although the PPPP Project concluded in 2016, Alfredo Covarrubias has remained active since then as ex PPPP 1 and Casari as ex PPPP 2.

Possessing defined particular characteristics, each of them operates in different artistic sectors: Covarrubias in the field of literature and Casari in the field of visual arts.

Alberto Casari was born in Lima in 1955. He studied liberal arts at the Pontificia Universidad Católica de Lima (1975-1973) and painting at the Escuela Nacional de Bellas Artes (1977-1975). He lived and worked in Florence, Italy, from 1982 to 1996.

In 1998, back in Peru, he began to experiment with textile and carpet design alongside renowned Andean weavers. In 2001, together with the architect and designer Eva Pest, he founded in Lima PPPPdesign as a branch of PPPP in the real world of commerce and labor. In 2002, PPPPdesign presented at the ICFF (International Contemporary Furniture Fair) in New York.

He has participated in numerous exhibitions in Peru, as well as abroad. He has been invited to art biennials such as the IV Havana Biennial (1990), the XLIV and LIV Venice Biennale (1991 and 2011), the I Design Biennial of Saint Etienne, France (2000), the XXX São Paulo Biennial (2012), among others.