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JOHN BALDESSARI and ALEJANDRO CESARCO

Retrospective, 2007

Screen print on aluminium
12 parts 48 x 36 inches each
edition of 2 + 2 APs

In 2007 Alejandro Cesarco and John Baldessari collaborated on *Retrospective*, a series of twelve screen prints on aluminum works. *Retrospective* deals with the idea of looking back, how meaning is recontextualized through memory framing, selecting, re-telling and continuance of a dialogue, history and the acknowledgment of influence. Implicit in the project is a concern for the difference created by retelling and representing the past in the present. The segmentation of history is an arbitrary and conventional matter, a story for making the present intelligible. What consequence does this have? Who narrates, and for whom? What is included and what is left out of this narrative?

At opposite ends of their careers, Baldessari, born in 1931, is a Los Angeles based, internationally renowned figure with a tome-like résumé; Cesarco, born in 1975, is a New York based native of Uruguay with a relatively short but impressive list of credits. They joined forces in the Rolex Mentor and Protégé Initiative, an international program underwritten by the Swiss watchmaker. Drawing upon their mutual interest in language, Cesarco and Baldessari play with slippery notions of time and memory in book-like images with cryptic messages.

In each print, a solid-color rectangle replaces the text of an open book page, printed on an aluminum panel coated in white enamel. White circles on the rectangles contain numbers corresponding to footnotes that Cesarco has written or extracted from various sources. Below the page are responses from Baldessari, printed in the complementary colour.

In the yellow work, Cesarco states: "The gap left within us by the secrets of others." Baldessari answers: "The space between things is more important than those things." In the beige print, Cesarco offers: "A strategy of renewing the possibility of what was -- that which is impossible by definition, the past." Baldessari counters: "It is better to be a has been than a never was." But in the purple print, he responds with a photographic image pulled from his file of crowd scenes.

