

Kannenfeldplatz 6
CH-4056 BASEL
+41 61 322 10 00

Pasteursvej 8
DK-1799 COPENHAGEN
+45 31 66 86 96

info@vonbartha.com
vonbartha.com

Landon Metz: I Cut The Hairs On My Head Yesterday But...

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The appreciation of art is universal, as is commuting, getting a haircut, or drinking a cup of coffee—in Landon Metz’s case, a cup of dark Americano. For his solo exhibition, *I Cut The Hairs On My Head Yesterday But...*, the New York-based artist presents a six-part installation, sensitively articulating the remarkably everyday life in and around his Tribeca studio and home in Brooklyn Heights. “It doesn’t have to be all fireworks!” he says, offering the visitors the opportunity to step into his “headspace” and experience the subtle performative gestures that lay at the periphery of his artistic practice but embody the philosophical motivation of his oeuvre.

The poem, which constitutes the show’s full title, is silk-screen printed and gifted to visitors from a stack of paper at the exhibition’s beginning. What started as a private writing practice, a sort of journal or diary, takes the readers into the artist’s daily routine, and around the exhibition, as each phrase references one part of the following room-filling installation.

A series of four photographs, *A Paper Cup Of Coffee Warmed My Hands*, 2023, articulates a sequence or loop, forward and backward, in which a cup of coffee fills up, or the person holding it, drinks up. A simple gesture is turned into something of value, charged, stimulating our minds and imagination, like caffeine. It may remind of a scene from Jurassic Park, when a close-up shot of a glass of water announces the arrival of Tyrannosaurus rex, only here, Landon Metz is not interested in the iconic, shocking, and new but rather the laconic routine of the ordinary. Think of Pop Art or Marcel Duchamp’s readymade, but in reverse, instead of celebrating the mundane or putting it on a pedestal, he accentuates the silence and emptiness around it.

Cinematic in its very form stands the 16-part video, *I Organized The Studio Before*, 2023, across the room. In this cycle, we watch a choreography of steps, as the artist slowly moves, almost as if dancing, around his studio tables. Frame by frame, the sequence jumps from one screen to the next, inviting the audience to pass in a mimetic manner. Here, parallels to his paintings can’t be unseen. In both cases, there is a collapse of duality, form and formlessness, subject and object, and the forms move from one panel or screen to the next. As with all of his work, Metz honors the marginal, not by force, but by offering a space to the viewers, in which they hopefully arrive on their own terms.

A sound piece, *I Walked Over The Bridge*, 2023, occupies the whole exhibition space. The 90-minute recording starts in the artist’s apartment in Brooklyn, while he is taking a shower, and follows his path over Brooklyn Bridge to his studio in Manhattan.

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It ends in almost silence, just as it began. A crescendo occupies the middle part, when traffic noise and voices blend into something like a city symphony, a soundscape that somehow feels familiar even though it takes us 6250 km across the Atlantic ocean. Again, the performative aspect of commuting is transcended only via an audible experience; as with his paintings, our imagination completes the piece.

Further into the exhibition, four photographs taken from the backside of Metz's studio onto Walker Street in New York, catch a moment when cars and the artist himself cross the lens on the bottom of the metropolis' gorge. *It Was Cooler Than It Had Been So I Wore A Jacket For The First Time In A Long Time, 2023*, turns on our voyeuristic gaze: we observe without being seen.

Two screens constitute, *I Cut The Hairs On My Head Yesterday But They Grew Back So I Cut Them Again Today, 2023*. The artist, or rather his bold shaved head, plays a central role in this piece. A flag waves in the wind, traffic is heavy, and pedestrians go their ways in slow motion. Time is a bodily experience, an omnipresent and universal feeling. We are unable to stop it or turn it back. And while we watch the artist's hair grow, we all die a tiny bit.

In the back of the exhibition, an arrangement of six images, installed on top of each as if mimicking their contents, show a staircase (the artist's studio is located on the sixth floor), in which a person, assuming it is the artist himself, seems to be trying to run away. But the title explains, *The Elevator Never Works So I Took The Stairs, 2023*, underlining the void of a stairwell, the seriality of daily rhythms, and like a thread running through the exhibition: the constant flow of time passing by—to infinity.

About Landon Metz

Born in 1985 in Phoenix, USA, he lives and works in Brooklyn and Manhattan, New York. Landon Metz's practice revolves around the activity of painting, yet also incorporates the vocabulary of sculpture, installations as well as performance. By spreading thin washes of dye on raw canvas, the artist achieves varying degrees of coloristic saturation. Moreover, through the repetition of the same compositional arrangements, often in a sequence and beyond the margin of the canvas, Metz evokes visual dynamism and a sense of movement.

You can find more information, more artworks, interviews and stories with Landon Metz, as well as press images at vonbartha.com.

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