

CAConrad

May 1 - June 1, 2025  
Champ Lacombe London

This exhibition centres on a new body of work by poet, professor and author CAConrad, comprising a series of poems forged in the alchemy of life, loss, and love. These texts, written over the past few years, continue Conrad's commitment to ritualised writing, poetic activism, and the restless pursuit of presence. They open a threshold into an intimate terrain – each poem an artefact of transfigured grief, a celebration of queer love, and a call to remain alert to tenderness at a time of ceaseless violence.

Thirty years into the poetry practice that began in 1975, CAConrad made a big change. They started using (Soma)tic rituals to anchor themselves in the present. "I needed a new relationship to time," they remarked, recalling their state of disconnection before. Turning poetry into a (Soma)tic ritual – daily invocations designed to tune the body into the frequencies of the Earth – Conrad harboured a different relation to being present.

The work resists conventional narratives of grief or romantic closure. Instead, it constructs an alternative temporality – a poetic time in which presence and absence coexist, and where language becomes a conduit between dimensions. The "I" in these poems is porous, often disappearing into animal, mineral, or landscape, revealing a cosmology where everything grieves, and everything speaks. In the exhibition, poetry is not confined to the page but occurs in the ritual act itself. It is in this sense a relational art form – an address, a call, a site of encounter. It is this commitment to poetics as an ethics of attention that defines Conrad's work, and which continues to position them as one of the most vital voices in contemporary American poetry.

Exhibited alongside the poems is Augusto Cascale's film *The Obituary Show*, based on a homonymous play written by Conrad, where collective and individual suffering are registered as a blurred continuum in which love, camaraderie, humour and sorrow illuminate the constant political, ecological, existential and alienating crisis in our contemporary landscapes, through an act of radical protest and queer Liberation.

CAConrad has worked with the ancient technologies of poetry and ritual since 1975. They are the author of numerous collections of poetry, including *Listen to the Golden Boomerang Return* (Wave Books, 2024), *You Don't Have What It Takes to Be My Nemesis* (Penguin UK, 2023) and *The Book of Frank* (Wave Books, 2010), recipient of the Gil Ott Book Award. They also authored a book of nonfiction essays, *Advanced Elvis Course* (Soft Skull Press, 2009).

CAConrad also exhibits their poems as sculptures. They were the subject of two solo shows at fluent, Santander (2022), and MOCA Tucson (2024). They teach at Columbia University in New York City and at the Sandberg Art Institute in Amsterdam, and live in Greenfield, Massachusetts.

This project marks Conrad's 50th anniversary of writing poetry, and 20th anniversary of writing with (Soma)tic poetry rituals.

As part of the exhibition, Champ Lacombe will host a reading with CAConrad on the eve of the opening, followed by Q&A with Summer Moraes from *Worms Magazine* from 6-8 pm.

Champ Lacombe would like to extend a special thank you to Alex Alonso Díaz for their support, whose original exhibition at fluent, Santander in 2022, is the genesis for this current presentation.