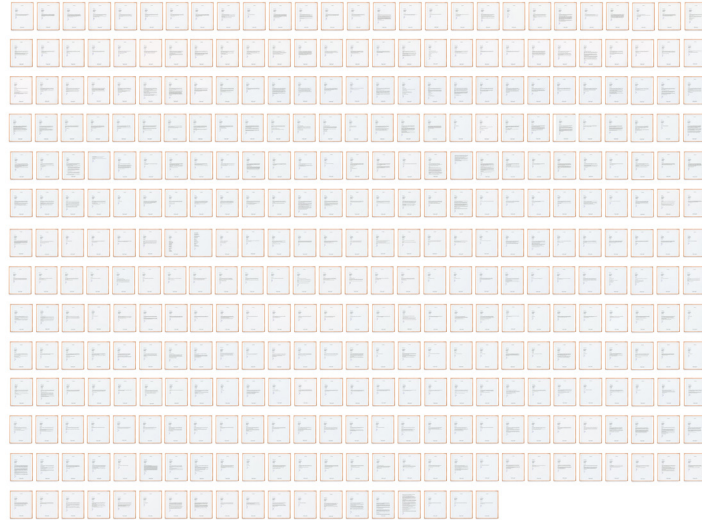


P R A Z
D E L A V A L L A D E

COLE STERNBERG
a forest of thoughts in quick succession
21 October – 2 December 2023



a diary sent to an imagined friend
a discipline for an idle mind circles
printed on corporate letterhead jokes
and anger and angry jokes
recipes
sunsets, quails, floods, and fires
365 days of letters to gerhard richter

Praz-Delavallade Los Angeles is pleased to present *a forest of thoughts in quick succession*, the gallery's second solo exhibition with conceptual artist Cole Sternberg. The exhibition's epicenter is a series of 365 letters the artist wrote to Gerhard Richter in 2017 in which Sternberg explores the shifting models of parley systems, delving into an unrequested, unrequited dialogue with an artist he's never met. The epistolary series, installed in its entirety in the gallery's main room, is bookended by what is, in essence, both a prologue and epilogue to the underlying themes of the letters. The works of the front room and project space invite viewers into a multi-media expression that beckons for the same inquisitive and varying analysis as the letters. There are sculptures of recycled alabaster that Sternberg unearthed and combined in Tuscany, a tree growing from a new ceramic work, environmentally-exposed photographs and paintings, and a blank letter to Herr Richter, which asks the viewer to think for themselves. *a forest of thoughts in quick succession* opens Saturday, October 21, 2023, with an opening reception held from 3-6 PM. The exhibition will be on view through December 2, 2023.

Part meditation, part ritual, Sternberg began his quest to converse with the famed German after stumbling upon his home address in Cologne, unassured that his letters would be received, read, or answered. In a time when

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innumerable virtual messages and emails are sent every year, engaging in epistolary communication is so passé that it has reemerged as an art form of its own. Obediently drafting, printing, and sending the writings on a daily basis, regardless of his location, Sternberg took on the role of a faceless raconteur, sometimes poetic, sometimes banal, sharing daily thoughts and life happenings with a stranger who never replied. His intimate letters read as faithful prayers, mindful declamations, and political rants that summarize a year in the life of a traveling artist, offering a glimpse into his feelings and thoughts, as well as a trace of his whereabouts. In totality, we are left with an intentionally vague societal and personal commentary, rife with puzzles and layered meanings.

Sternberg's rigorous practice assumed the following rules:

1. The subject matter would never be preconceived.
2. The letters would never be created in advance.
3. Geographic locations would never be mentioned, except metaphorically.
4. Each letter would sign off with 'Talk soon.'
5. Each letter would be printed on a custom letterhead with a portable printer, enclosed within an embossed envelope, and placed in the mail before midnight each day.

These parameters resulted in a narrative that reads as though you've jumped into the middle of a conversation between old friends—at least on the surface—while creating a puzzle of language in need of deciphering. Visitors to the exhibition are encouraged to embark on this challenge, with bound copies of Sternberg's 365 letters available for their review.

Cole Sternberg: *a forest of thoughts in quick succession* marks the first occasion that the artist has exhibited recycled sculpture and ceramics; Sternberg's new mediums, presented in concert with his environmentally-affected photography, painting, and literary works, demonstrate the adventurous, conceptual, and diverse nature of his thoughts, as is reflected in the exhibition's title.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Cole Sternberg is a conceptual artist who lives and works in Los Angeles. His practice contemplates humanity's existential quandary: that of being hopelessly destructive, yet forever and inevitably linked with nature. Through varied media (including painting, sculpture, installation, performance, photography, film, and writing), Sternberg positions the aspirations of humankind against the dominant and regenerative forces of the environment and the arbitration of time. For the artist, the conclusion is unavoidable. Human enterprises -- art, language, history, law, and republic -- are ephemeral / illusory endeavors that attempt to reflect, parallel, and challenge the ascendancy of nature to no avail. His works are held by major collections throughout the world, such as the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA), the Pérez Art Museum Miami (PAMM), the El Segundo Museum of Art (ESMoA), the American University Museum (AUM) and Deutsche Telekom.

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ABOUT THE GALLERY

Praz-Delavallade is enjoying a long standing relationship with both American and European artists whose work span different mediums. The gallery was founded 1995 in Paris with an inaugural exhibition including Paul McCarthy, Mike Kelley, Richard Petitbon, Jim Shaw and Benjamin Weisman. In 1997, Praz-Delavallade was behind the creation of an art scene joint project in the Eastern part of Paris (13th district) along with Air de Paris, Almine Rech, Art: Concept, Jennifer Flay, and Emmanuel Perrotin. Having a strong tie to artists in Los Angeles, the gallery was known for bringing an international program to the burgeoning art scene with LA artists such as Sam Durant, Jim Isermann, John Miller, Analia Saban and Marnie Weber among others. In 2010, the Paris gallery moved to its current space 5 rue des Haudriettes in the Marais, continuing their long standing support of LA based artists by exhibiting a new generation Matthew Brandt, Heather Cook, Nathan Mabry, Joe Reihsen, Ry Rocklen, Amanda Ross-Ho, Brian Wills along with European talents such as Soufiane Ababri, Philippe Decrauzat, Pierre Ardouvin, Thomas Fougéirol and Fabien Mérelle. In the fall of 2016, Praz-Delavallade opened a new outpost on the symbolic spine of Los Angeles 6150 Wilshire Blvd, renowned as the Miracle Mile right across from LACMA in an effort to create a bridge between both art scenes.

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