

THOMAS  
NICKLES  
PROJECT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

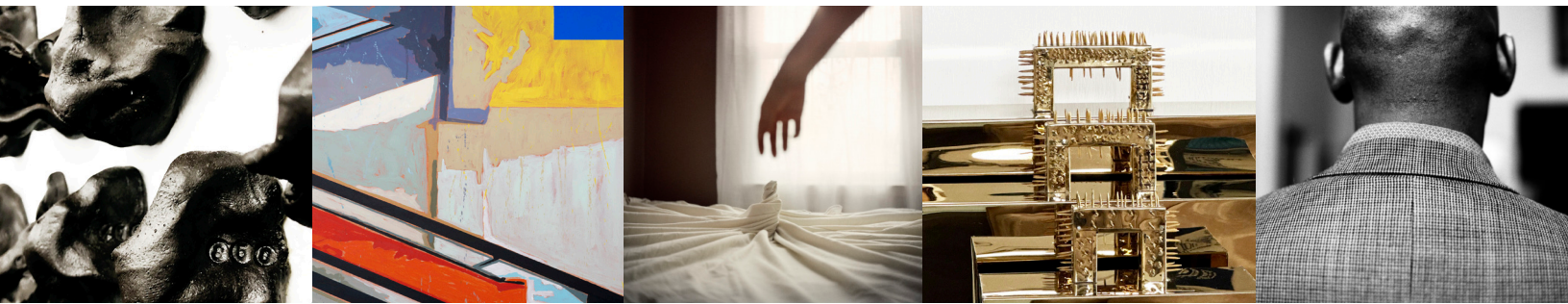
## HOW TO RETURN TO A PLACE THAT ISN'T THERE

JUAN CARLOS ALOM | JAVIER CASTRO | PAOLA FITERRE | HANDER LARA | QINZA NAJM

47 Orchard Street, New York City

Dates: September 11 – October 27, 2024

Opening Reception: Wednesday, September 11, 6-8 PM



Details of Javier Castro, *Negro's Nose* | Hander Lara, *Nothing is abstract anymore # 7* | Paola Fiterre, *An Early 2020 Story series* | Qinza Najm, *Worked Some and Loved Some (Kuch Ishq Kiya, Kuch Kaam Kiya) I, II, III* | Juan Carlos Alom, *Cómo regresar a un lugar que ya no está ahí*  
Images courtesy of the artist and Thomas Nickles Project

*Memory believes before knowing remembers.  
Believes longer than recollects,  
longer than knowing even wonders.  
W. Faulkner, Light in August*

New York, NY – Thomas Nickles Project is pleased to announce *How to Return to a Place that Isn't There*, a collective exhibition curated by Haydée Oliva Valle, that delves into memory as a generative force. Featuring sculpture, performance, photography, installation, video, and painting, the common language of the artists in this exhibition is a shared and undefined statement: *How to Return to a Place that Isn't There* – A collage of sights and sounds, a puzzle in which there are stories and lives, roots and remnants of the artist's personal places and history.

The exhibit also expands on postmemory, in the voice of Marianne Hirsch: “the relationship that the ‘generation after’ bears to the personal, collective, and cultural trauma of those who came before”. *How to Return to a Place that Isn't There* is situated on the tenuous line between postmemory and nostalgia. While postmemory deals with trauma and heritage, nostalgia is a recollection of the past that romanticizes or turns it into myth. Nostalgia is a longing to return home, despite the possibility

THOMAS  
NICKLES  
PROJECT

that this home no longer exists. Through their featured works, Juan Carlos Alom, Javier Castro, Paola Fiterre, Hander Lara and Qinza Najm search, question, and reflect on their own capacity for returning, individually or collectively—ultimately attempting to make sense of their own path in the world.

Whether in Fiterre’s intimate photographic recollections of the landscape of her body inside her tiny pandemic room, or in the collective iterations of loss and forced travel that come with rupture and dissolution of identities, followed by new beginnings expressed by the sculptural installations of Castro and Najm, or in the subtle windows to recent pasts through the fragmented nostalgia within the paintings and photographs of Lara and Alom (respectively); this exhibit communes with the idea of art as a mnemonic tool. The importance of art and its relationship with memory does not necessarily lie in the resulting object itself, but rather in its capacity to engender connection to a sense of belonging, to empathize with the artist’s stories.

*How to Return to a Place that Isn’t There* begins as a question about the possibility of returning, becomes a dip into Heraclitus’ waters, a sentence without beginning or end, showcasing (dis)illusions. The crossroads of art and nostalgia can create a space for caring about the memories, invented or not, that we (artists and viewers) carry through life; memories of people, places or idiosyncrasies – we love, and their weight in our minds.

Accompanying and completing the exhibition, journalist Carla Colomé (b. Baracoa, Cuba 1990) shares the routes of non-return in a personal essay, in which family experience, migration, and friendship are intertwined.

**Press Inquiries:**

Kristen Thomas  
kt@thomasnickles.com  
917-902-6682

Haydée Oliva  
hov@thomasnickles.com  
917-972-0290

**Additional images available upon request.**

THOMAS  
NICKLES  
PROJECT

**JUAN CARLOS ALOM** (b. Havana, Cuba, 1964) is a filmmaker and photographer who has exhibited throughout Cuba, the Americas, Europe, and South Africa. Starting his career as a photojournalist in 1990s Cuba, Alom developed an artistic vision that was informed by the need for spontaneity demanded by that period of crisis. Among the films that Alom has directed are *Una Harley recorre la Habana* (1998), *Habana Solo* (2000), *Evidencia* (2001), *Iroko* (2004), *Diario* (2009), and *No Limits* (2013), with Ismael de Diego and Armando Suárez Cobián. A retrospective of his 16mm films was screened at the 2018 Los Angeles festival “Ism, Ism, Ism: Experimental Cinema in Latin America.” Recent group exhibitions include *Without Masks: Contemporary Afro-Cuban Art*, Audain Gallery, Museum of Anthropology, Vancouver, Canada (2014) and *On the Horizon*, Pérez Art Museum, Miami, FL (2017), among many others. Solo exhibitions have taken place at the San Francisco Art Institute, Buzz Art Gallery, Miami; University of Connecticut Jorgensen Gallery; and El Apartamento Gallery, Havana. His work is held in permanent collections at Cuba’s Museum of Fine Arts; Los Angeles County Museum of Art; Ludwig Forum for International Art, Germany; Fototeca de Pachuca, Mexico; the Pérez Art Museum; the University of Texas’s Blanton Museum of Art; Tate Modern, London; Frost Art Museum, Miami. He lives and works in New York.

**JAVIER CASTRO** (b. Havana, Cuba, 1984) produces a multifaceted array of creative work, including video and video installation, environments, photography, sculpture and drawings intertwined with concepts of marginality, race, religion and broken paradigms. His work focuses on the human experience and modes of survival inspired by history and Socio-political dynamics. The provocative dimension of his work introduces a reflection on the complex condition and psychological struggle of the human being. Castro Studied at the National Academy of Fine Arts and University of the Arts (ISA) in Havana. The contrast between ISA and the struggle of marginalized communities in San Isidro, Havana, where he grew up, defined his artistic voice. Castro has been awarded several notable grants and commissions. His work has been exhibited globally and is part of the permanent collections of the National Museum of Fine Art in Havana, Cuba; Daros-Latinamerica Collection, Zurich Switzerland; Kadist Art Foundation, San Francisco, CA and the Perez Art Museum, Miami, FL, among others. He lives and works between Havana and New York.

**PAOLA FITERRE** (b. Havana, Cuba, 1992) explores expanded photographic and performative practices focused on the representation of the female subject traversed by the experience of migration. She studied at the University of the Arts (ISA) in Havana until 2017 and graduated from the International Center of Photography (ICP) in New York in 2019, having been awarded both the ICP Director’s Fellowship and the ICP New Media Fellowship. Fiterre was recently awarded the Cintas Foundation Sondra Gilman Gonzalez-Falla Fellowship in Photography 2023-2024 and previously received The Reed Foundation Fellowship for Cuban artists to attend a residency at The Vermont Studio Center (2022); the En Foco Photography Fellowship (2022); and the ICP x Tory Burch Artists Fellowship (2021). Her works are part of the collection of the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. She lives and works in New York.

THOMAS  
NICKLES  
PROJECT

**HANDER LARA** (b. Havana, Cuba, 1984) moves between sculpture, installation, photography, painting and drawing. He graduated from the San Alejandro Academy of Fine Arts in 2003 and began his studies at the University of the Arts in Havana (ISA) in 2004. During his student years he won the First Prize in the European Union Art Competition, a Special Mention in the Photography Competition organized by the Dutch Embassy in Cuba, and the Antonio Grediaga Creation Scholarship. In 2008, he obtained a Scholarship at the Royal University of Fine Arts (Kungl. Konsthögskolan) in Stockholm, Sweden and in 2010, began a master's degree in Symbolic Production at the University of the Arts in Havana, which culminated in 2011 as a Postgraduate Degree. From 2012 to 2016, he headed the Sculpture Department at ISA and served as a professor until the end of 2018, when he settled permanently in the United States. Since 2022 he has worked as a Visual Arts professor at the Miami Arts Charter School. Lara's work has been exhibited globally in museums, international fairs and festivals, biennials, galleries, foundations and cultural centers. His work is held in private and public collections. He lives and works in Miami.

**QINZA NAJM** (b. Sargodha, Pakistan, 1976) is a Pakistani American artist with a practice that spans New York City, London, and Lahore. Trained at Bath University London and the Art Students League of New York, Najm's interdisciplinary approach encompasses painting, installations, sculpture, and performance. Her work has been exhibited globally at prestigious venues such as the Queens Museum, Christie's Art, Art|Basel, and the Museum of the Moving Image, and has been featured in major publications including ArtNet News, Hyperallergic, Huffington Post, and International Business Week. With a Ph.D. in Psychology focusing on emotional intelligence, Najm explores the intersection of the human body, identity, and power, particularly within the experiences of women and immigrants. Her work transforms everyday materials into immersive experiences that evoke empathy and prompt critical reflection. Najm's goal is to foster understanding and dialogue among diverse communities by addressing social issues and cultural traumas. She lives and works in New York.