

**Sabrina Amrani is pleased to present "BLIND",
Carlos Aires' second solo exhibition at the gallery**



The world drowns in light, a ceaseless flood of images crashing into our collective consciousness. Every device glow with the detritus of disasters, trivialities, and histories compressed into an unrelenting now. This torrent demands our attention and numbs it all at once, leaving us scrolling endlessly, searching for meaning in the wreckage. The strychnine glow of screens, like a billion sleepless eyes, casts its indifferent gaze. We cannot look away; we do not want to. In the relentless accumulation, we glimpse something—truth, perhaps, or its shadow.

In this suffocating haze, 'BLIND', the titular work of Carlos Aires's exhibition at Sabrina Amrani Gallery, cuts through the inertia. A rhythm of illumination and darkness animates the space. Fragile paper lanterns, adorned with archival images of global catastrophes sourced from different archives and newspapers, flicker in sync with the gallery's pulsing light. Every four minutes, the lights extinguish, plunging the room into darkness for one minute. This brief, rhythmic void invites confrontation, a moment to reflect on what remains unseen when the lights return. It is not a simple pause but a schism, a visceral interruption in the numbing continuity of perception. Here, the act of seeing becomes fraught, layered with the guilt of knowing and the compulsion to forget.

The material fragility of the lanterns underscores the precariousness of the images they bear. These catastrophes are suspended in a liminal state, neither preserved nor obliterated, just as our attention teeters between recognition and denial. The work does not merely document disaster; it holds us accountable for our gaze, reminding us that awareness is both burden and responsibility.

Aires's personal experience with blindness underpins 'BLIND' in ways that are both literal and metaphoric. Following a corrective eye surgery in March 2024, his lifelong condition of sleepwalking led him to inadvertently damage his retinas, requiring subsequent emergency operations. For months, he faced the terrifying prospect of losing his sight entirely. This sudden

proximity to blindness, a theme he had explored for years, became an embodied reality. The rhythm of *Blind*—the alternating presence and absence of light—mirrors his own fragile journey through sight and darkness, certainty and dissolution.

The lanterns themselves hold a deeper significance, drawn from Aires's childhood in Andalusia, where they adorn the celebratory *Feria de Abril*. Originally inspired by Chinese lanterns, they became a symbol of Spanish tradition, marking spaces of festivity and communal joy. In *Blind*, Aires inverts their function, transforming an emblem of celebration into a mechanism of unsettling reflection. The juxtaposition of flickering catastrophe within an object meant for revelry heightens the tension between spectacle and oblivion, between beauty and horror.

Aires's dialogue with mortality extends beyond *Blind*. With the piece 'The End: A Love Song', a meditation on capitalism, violence, and the collapse of meaning. The triptych features the complete lyrics of The Doors' song painstakingly composed from banknotes, adorned with golden pins. The intersection of money, desire, and music transforms the song into a lullaby for a world intoxicated by power and consumption. 'The End: A Love Song' pulses with contradiction: material wealth collapses into existential emptiness. Aires's works operate in the realm of irreconcilable truths, holding tension between the corporeal and the ephemeral, intimacy and estrangement, beauty and abjection. Another iteration of 'The End' is silkscreened with Aires's own blood, weaving his corporeality into the work. The process itself became ritualistic: his blood was drawn, mixed, and printed onto the sheet music, a final gesture of embodiment and mortality, rendering the song's lyrics both an act of creation and a confrontation with the limits of the body.

The exhibition continues its meditation on disappearance and fragmentation in 'Mirrors', a set of large-scale compositions of cut-outs that siphon recognisable images—war, pornography, maps, fairy tales—into monochromatic silhouettes. These works confront history's detritus through the lens of absence and occlusion. The shadow imagery leaves gaps where the human eye instinctively seeks continuity. Aires uses the mirror concept as both a literal and metaphorical void, a space where perception folds back on itself. The mirror has long served as a psychoanalytic device—an emblem of self-recognition, but also of fragmentation, the site where identity and illusion collide. In 'Mirrors', the void recalls dream states and sleepwalking, teetering between awareness and oblivion.

The experience of death and transformation is central to this body of work, an idea that is underscored by Aires's personal reckoning with loss. The title 'BLIND' was tragically augured following the recent suicide of a close friend, who left behind a letter requesting that her loved one's dance to 'Blind' by Hercules and Love Affair. This final gesture—an invocation of movement, of surrendering sight to the visceral intensity of rhythm—echoes through the entire exhibition. Aires, in a year punctuated by loss and bodily vulnerability, turns towards the space between presence and absence, light and darkness, knowing and forgetting. This existential tension is reflected in Rainer Maria Rilke's words, which were also quoted in his friend's final note:

"Before us great Death stands
Our fate held close within his quiet hands.
When with proud joy we lift Life's red wine up
To drink deep of the mystic shining cup
And ecstasy through all our being leaps—
Death bows his head and weeps."¹

Rilke, who once found solace in Aires's hometown of Ronda, understood that death does not arrive as an intrusion but as an ever-present companion to life. His poetry wrestles with impermanence, tracing the contours of the void not as an absence but as a force that shapes our

¹ Rainer Maria Rilke, *Death*, in *The Book of Images*, trans. Edward Snow (New York: North Point Press, 1991)

existence. Aires's works do not offer resolution, nor do they seek to provide comfort. Instead, they navigate the spaces in between—where light flickers, where images dissolve, where meaning remains just beyond our grasp.

'BLIND' is an invocation of contradiction: beauty and horror, presence and erasure. In an era defined by the simultaneous collapse and proliferation of images, his work demands that we look—unflinchingly, uneasily, honestly. In this series of works, as in much of his practice, the question is not only what we see but what remains obscured, and how the gaps in our perception shape our understanding of the world. Aires's practice operates as a counterpoint to the daisy chain of cultural complacency and is a refusal to perpetuate the hollow rituals of aesthetic conformity. His works demand resistance: to power, to governance, to the surveillance that blurs individuality into data points. In their gritty materiality and poetic audacity, his installations carve out spaces for subversion and self-determination.

This is art as urgency. A refusal to succumb to inertia. Aires's insists that we remain inside the tension, that we allow discomfort to take root, that we recognise the contradictions we carry within us. In these moments of rupture, his art becomes a pulse—a force that insists on life in the face of overwhelming darkness, compelling us to engage not only with the images before us but with the inexorable conditions of fragility and complexity.

BLIND

Carlos Aires

28 February - 12 April 2025

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