

## pascALEjandro

BLUM

By Jody Zellen

The nonagenarian artist Alejandro Jodorowsky is best known as a filmmaker, while his wife, the 40-something Pascale Montandon-Jodorowsky, works as a painter, photographer and designer. Together, they operate under the name pascALEjandro, fusing their names as well as their sensibilities to create colorful works on paper they cumulatively refer to as a “spiritual child born of love.” In these works, Pascale applies color to Alejandro’s illustrative lines. The 20-plus works gathered for this show create fantastical narratives when seen together. Many feature two characters—a male and a female—who traverse surreal settings. There are images of death and love, struggle and escape. As the duo states in the show’s press release, “Our working material is the material of our lives ... pascALEjandro is the synthesis of two beings, who form alchemy’s androgynous union.”

In *The Essential Point* (2016), two figures float on their sides, hovering in a blue-green sky above a green hillside, their outstretched pink tongues meeting at “the essential point.” The woman’s arms have been replaced by yellow-orange wings, which support her tent-like body while her long hair dangles limply below; her eyes and that of her partner, who wears a purple hat, are interlocked. In contrast to this beatific coupling, *The Difficult Union* (2021) depicts a barren desert landscape, in which a man and a woman push gray carts toward each other. One carries a giant orange hand, the other supports a hand that is yellow. The bare feet of both figures have been nailed to the ground, making movement of bodies and carts alike impossible. Yet it appears as though the hands join forces to assist them in some way, as the orange fist belonging to the woman clutches two fingers on the yellow hand emerging from the man’s cart. In this work, pascALEjandro tenderly probes the difficulties and complexities of partnership, and the importance of working together no matter what the situation.

*PascALEjandro Forever* (2021) is a collage that features a black-and-white photograph of the couple hugging. The photo is encased in a drawn tombstone marker that emerges from a beehive populated by 3D facsimile bees that surround the couple in a light blue, cloud-filled sky. This work is hopeful as well as commemorative. It illustrates pascALEjandro’s enduring love, as well as their significant difference in age. This theme is revisited in *March against Absence* (2016), in which two figures battle a wind that causes buildings to tilt and wooden chairs to be tossed and turned in every direction. The man, a clown or jester, holds the hand of a younger masked girl with a red balloon, helping her navigate the elements.

The pictures were installed close together so that related images inform and create a quasi-narrative. While individual pieces stood out, the overarching feeling of love and connection, regardless of circumstance (be it prosaic, imagined or allegorical), shone through most brightly when they were taken as a whole. The works are delightful and enchanting, albeit also uncanny and strange as viewers tried to navigate the particular relationships between man and woman, demon and beast, and real and imagined worlds that are illustrated through exacting and confident lines.



pascALEjandro, *pascALEjandro Forever* (detail), 2021. © pascALEjandro. Courtesy of the artist and BLUM Los Angeles, Tokyo, New York.