

Foreword

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Though he is drawn to a variety of media, including video, installation, and objects, Marcos Chaves has found the most fertile ground for the development of his artistic practice in his experiments with photography. With a loving gaze and a sharp wit, Chaves uses his camera to breathe life into the quotidian, refusing an indifference to everyday encounters and insisting on the inexistence of banality itself. Through his lens, traces of urbanity or domesticity transform into unexpected scenes of intimacy and intensity, blending serendipitous observation with careful formal impact. His images are like mirrors—for human dramas, feelings, memories, and fantasies—that reveal the inner lives of their observers while also endowing their subjects with agency, intelligence, experience, and desire. *“I Looked, and It Looked Back”* highlights this *pedagogy of perception* that approaches the decentering of human experience and the embrace of a more mindful experience of coexistence. With Chaves as our guide, we can discover a new form of attention, of directing, editing, and interpreting the gaze, one that is enchanted, humorous, and mythical—a way of looking that we can never unlearn.