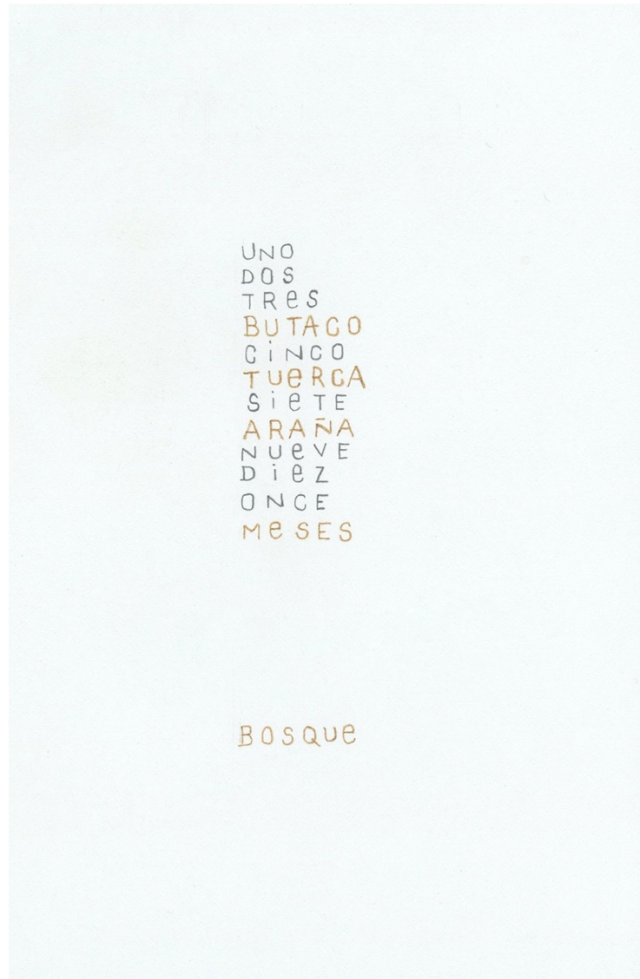


# Galería Elba Benítez



**nicolás paris**

protobosque

o un intento para estar juntos

may – june 2023

Teaching and learning, as any good teacher knows, cannot be disentangled from one another. Although often presented otherwise, pedagogical activity is not so much a unidirectional process of transmission and reception but rather is akin to an estuary, where the flow is not linear but rather circular, even symbiotic, drawing on the play of multiple currents and dynamics. In this sense, pedagogy, which is so often taken to refer to methods of teaching, can equally be thought of as referring to methods of learning. One cannot exist without the other; or rather, none can exist without the others.

Pedagogy, and specifically pedagogy in an expanded sense, is central to Nicolás Paris's artistic practice, as can be seen in his current exhibition *Protobosque o un intento para estar juntos* (Proto-forest, or In Pursuit of Being Together) at the Galería Elba Benítez. Unlike traditional academic pedagogies, Paris's 'pedagogy' is not one of instruction, but rather of inquiry; learning is question-based and open-ended, not goal-oriented; the operative methodology does not lead along a prescribed path toward a pre-established goal but rather seeks to follow the detours and crossroads that may be encountered along the way.

In keeping with this point of departure, rather than utilizing the exhibition space as an ostensibly neutral container in which individual art works can be 'experienced,' in *Protobosque o un intento para estar juntos* Paris approaches the space as an opportunity to create an environment in which to facilitate generate, individually and collectively, a learning experience. The exhibition's 'content' within that environment consists of a selection of objects — drawings, videos and architectural elements — and a public program of encounters or 'conversations.' The drawings and videos serve as visual aids or prompts; created in Paris's spare, plain-spoken aesthetic and structured around simple poetic juxtapositions of content and scale, they allow the viewers to establish their own, almost private connections and sequences of connections, their own 'paths.' The public program, on the other hand, involves a series of collaborative, unscripted, workshop-like encounters, open to the public and held in the gallery's central space, in which specialists in various fields — arts, sciences, crafts and others — are paired with musicians performing on wind instruments in a free exchange of language and of languages.

Paths cross, even as they are being made. Ultimately, none can exist without the others.

George Stolz

With his subtle yet meticulous interdisciplinary projects, Nicolás Paris (Bogotá, 1977) generates a heightened awareness of the everyday, an intensified interaction with surrounding environments, and an enhanced sense that art is rooted the experience of understanding as well as an understanding of experience. Central to Paris's practice is the role of pedagogical strategies, via which he encourages collaborative, open-ended research with participant-spectators. In the process, Paris converts the exhibition space into a locus of egalitarian, communal and investigative exchange and collective dialogue; for Paris, the medium of art is not an end-result, but rather a starting point and catalyst for a more elusive, ephemeral and polyvalent experience.

His work method is mainly based on dialogue, incomplete architecture and the act of drawing and cultivating. He seeks to build environments for exchange, the production of reflections and finding new ways of being together. Since the beginning of 2017, he founds the Institute For Radical Learning (InPAR), a place to mobilize collaborative processes and facilitate the activation of study groups.

Paris has had individual exhibitions at the Banco de la República / MAMU (Bogotá, 2023); Govett-Brewster Art Gallery, New Plymouth, (Aotearoa / New Zealand, 2019); CaixaForum (Barcelona, 2017); NC-Arte (Bogotá, 2016); Museu Coleção Berardo (Lisbon, 2015); Kadist Art Foundation (Paris, 2013); MUAC (Mexico City, 2012); MUSAC (León, 2008) among others. He has also participated in The Havana Biennial (2015); New Museum Triennial (New York, 2012); Chicago Architectural Biennial in collaboration with El Equipo Mazzanti (2015); 54th Biennale di Venezia (Venezia, 2011); Lyon Biennale (Lyon, 2011).

After his first solo exhibition *El diálogo, el rumor, la luz, las horas o (lugar para contemplar la transformación)* in 2015 and the project *Laboratory for curiosity* with the Lourdes Fuhem School in Madrid in 2018/19, *Protobosque o un intento para estar juntos* is the artist's third project together with Galería Elba Benítez.