Diango Hernández
Alexander and Bonin
New York

Exeunt. Of going out. Of leaving. Of running away. It is also the declaration of intentions of the Cuban Diango Hernández in his last show at Alexander and Bonin. Day’s End, the famous piece in which Gordon Matta-Clark cut out a cat’s eye shape in the façade of a New York building could be the escape way that Hernández is looking for. According to his own declaration, the form of the cut, both geometrically and in a metaphysical way, would confirm the exeunt.

And the question is, where is the exit leading to?

If I Send You This proposes a compendium of possibilities, of ways of escape starting from this particular oval form that has been turned into a paradigm by the artist. Thus, the exeunt materializes through the various surfaces and materials in a paradoxical trip which perhaps takes us nowhere.

The magnificent collages that receive the visitor (If a House, if a Cause, 2010) give an idea of it. The cut in the drawing leads to another inner one, to another space which might be possible but which, perhaps, doesn’t lead anywhere.

Born in Cuba in 1970, Hernández started his career as co-founder of Ordo Amoris Cabinet, a group of artists and designers focused on producing designer domestic objects, fighting with the scarcity of materials and goods provoked by the US embargo against the island. A reminiscence of this attraction for design and for the gratification of recovering modernist-style furniture may be appreciated in his show. Indeed, the exhibition, which comprises sculptures and installations, drawings and paintings, proposes escapes through “cuts” in administrative and corporate furniture. This is the case of If a Room, If a Wall, If a Face (2011) where an exeunt has been cut out in several tables which rest on their sides; or If a Desk, If a Rose (2011) where a series of perforations in a desk organize a circular form which contains various Cuban seals.

But the show also speaks of an interrupted communication. The seals, which appear in several pieces, have been bleached (If Yesterday, 2011); the tape of the cash register of If a Tape with a Light, If Silence (2011) and of If a Desk with Words, if a House (2011) has lost the capacity to record and reproduce anything; whereas the flashlight of If an Arrow is Reflected, if the Dark (2011), placed on a wooden pedestal, points at an opaque mirror, incapable of illuminating anything.

If a Letter in a Wall, if a Cut (2011) is one of the most intriguing pieces of the whole show. It is composed of a great exeunt cut directly on the gallery wall – and which allows us to see that nothing exists beyond – next to seven translucent envelopes which contain incomplete parts of an image, in black and white, of an office of the American embassy in Cuba. The first place of escape, possible and dreamt of, of the island, and on whose façade Hernández assures he has seen an exeunt.