

DAVID KORDANSKY GALLERY

For immediate release

William E. Jones

Heraclitus Fragment 124, Automatically Illustrated

January 11 — February 22, 2014

Opening reception: Saturday, January 11, 6:00–9:00pm

Heraclitus in Limbo, William E. Jones in conversation with Richard Fletcher: Saturday, January 11, 5:00pm

David Kordansky Gallery is very pleased to announce *Heraclitus Fragment 124, Automatically Illustrated*, an exhibition of new work by William E. Jones. The show will open on January 11 and run through February 22, 2014. An opening reception will be held on Saturday, January 11 from 6:00 until 9:00pm. Prior to the opening, at 5:00pm, the artist will give a talk, *Heraclitus in Limbo*, with Richard Fletcher, Associate Professor of Classics at The Ohio State University. The exhibition is accompanied by an illustrated book, *Flesh and the Cosmos*, with essays by the artist, Fletcher, and renowned Classicist Jonathan Barnes.

Over the course of more than two decades, William E. Jones has created films, videos, photographs, prints and texts that reorganize and recontextualize archival materials of all kinds. He combines research with formal experimentation, revealing the passions and sublimated political forces at work in documents of the state, forgotten or overlooked popular media, and official (and unofficial) visual histories.

Heraclitus Fragment 124, Automatically Illustrated is the latest of Jones's projects in which he mines the aleatory possibilities of the Internet to assign imagery to existing literary texts. For the first time, however, he turns to an ancient source: a single, one-line fragment by the pre-Socratic Greek philosopher Heraclitus (c. 535 – c. 475 BC).

The exhibition consists of six print-based works, made up of anywhere from one to five panels. To produce them, Jones entered six different translations (executed by a range of scholars and writers including Martin Heidegger) of the Heraclitus fragment into Google Image Search. Aside from refining the search to images of a particular size, he did not select or otherwise edit the results: each work includes all of the images automatically associated with the text of one translation, arranged in grids. Horizontal images alternate with vertical ones. When the search returns more images of one format than the other, the string of "leftover" images appears without alternation at the end of the sequence.

Subtle distinctions between translations bring back dramatically different results. For instance, the largest work in the show includes hundreds of images, while the smallest includes only one. In addition to the strangeness, beauty, and banality that define these images, the viewer is left to confront a kind of conceptual negative space, a ghostly snapshot of the algorithms employed by Google to organize visual information.

Jones's brand of automatic illustration creates the conditions for the Internet to narrate what he describes as the "unspoken manias and taboos of contemporary society," reformulating the Surrealist practice of automatic writing for a digital age. The project also takes on the inherently fraught nature of translation (both between languages and between media), and poses questions about the status of authorship in contemporary culture. Jones, via Heraclitus and his translators, provides a structure through which to view a seemingly random grouping of images, themselves created by an unwitting collaboration of anonymous and disembodied cultural producers whose pictures have found their way online. As such, the show sheds light on the ways in which the intellectual production of an entire society can be instrumentalized, for economic benefit, in the name of technology and power.

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In 2013, William E. Jones was the subject of recent solo exhibitions at the Saint Louis Art Museum and the Wexner Center for the Arts, Columbus, OH. His work has also been featured in solo exhibitions and programs at the Museum of Modern Art, New York; Anthology Film Archives, New York; ar/ge kunst Gallery Museum, Bolzano, Italy; and Tate Modern, London, among others. Recent group exhibitions include *The Past is Present*, Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit; *Les Dérives de l'imaginaire*, Palais de Tokyo, Paris; *More American Photographs*, CCA Wattis Institute for Contemporary Arts, San Francisco, Wexner Center for the Arts, Columbus, OH and California Museum of Photography, University of California, Riverside; *Desire*, Bergen Kunstmuseum, Norway; *RAY 2012 Fotografieprojekte Frankfurt/RheinMain*, MMK Museum für Moderne Kunst, Frankfurt; *"Untitled" (Death by Gun)*, 12th Istanbul Biennial; *Time Again*, SculptureCenter, New York; and *The Spectacular of Vernacular*, Walker Art Center, Minneapolis. Earlier this year he curated *Imitation of Christ* at the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles; the book that accompanied the exhibition, published by MACK, was recently named by *Time* as one of the best photo books of 2013.