

REGEN PROJECTS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:



TAVARES STRACHAN *INVISIBLES*

NOVEMBER 2 - DECEMBER 22, 2018

OPENING RECEPTION: FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 2, 6:00 - 8:00 PM

GALLERY HOURS: TUESDAY - SATURDAY, 10:00 AM - 6:00 PM

Before the post-nation state of Google there were empires. Knowledge and borders were contested – the one with arms the other with books. For the British Empire, of which

The Bahamas were a small part, those books came in two forms. One was religious the other secular, and where the Bible fought the battleground of the soul, the Encyclopedia Britannica made claim to the mind. Its many shelved volumes telegraphed to the world an investment in enlightenment and education – an imperialist's interest in cultures and places other than their own. Compiled almost exclusively by white men from distant seats of academic learning and power, it presented a view of the world shaped by conquest. Here knowledge became both map and territory. Equally descriptive and prescriptive its entries outlined both a state of place and a state of mind.

Tavares Strachan's *Encyclopedia of Invisibility* is one person's attempt to unravel the Borgesian web. Its fifteen thousand entries describe people, places, objects, concepts, artworks, and scientific phenomena that are hard to see and difficult to ascertain. Some of the topics of these entries are rare or intangible, existing only through their replication in literature or cultural references; some have been changed or altered beyond recognition. Much like the format of the Encyclopedia itself, they are rarely used as contemporary references—and yet in a similar way they also carry gravity and weight. Ralph Ellison reminded us that invisibility comes from a refusal to see. By pitting the invisible against the visible, the unseen against the seen, Strachan's epistemic exploration re-defines the territory of the known.

Like a sphinx, the Encyclopedia itself stands sentry to an interior world in which its contents have become an exploded diagram of what lays within. Pages lifted directly from the Encyclopedia line the antechamber before giving way to a series of assemblages, sculptures, and neons that literally give body to the book itself. Here fragments of knowledge are collaged together to create a dimensional map of post-colonial possibility. Just as his intervention for the 57th Carnegie International saw the names of those who have gone unacknowledged by history illuminated in neon in between those of the philanthropists and robber barons who first laid claim to the pediment, this series of so called *Hidden Histories* uses opposing narratives as bookends propping up volumes selected by the artist himself. Deeper within the space a neon wall text outlines the story of Robert Lawrence, the first African American to be trained as an astronaut. Behind it the pulsing neon outline of a body is visible, suspended in indeterminate space. Emerging from darkness each of these works carry with them the possibility of islands emerging from an invisible sea of knowledge.

—Neville Wakefield

Regen Projects is pleased to announce an exhibition of work by **Tavares Strachan**. Titled *Invisibles*, this marks his first solo presentation with the gallery, and the first time his work is being shown in Los Angeles since 2008.

REGEN PROJECTS

Tavares Strachan (b. 1979 Nassau, The Bahamas lives and works in New York. Strachan received a B.F.A. from Rhode Island School of Design, Providence and a M.F.A. in 2006 from Yale University, New Haven.

Strachan's ambitious and open-ended practice examines the intersection of art, science, and the environment, and has included collaborations with numerous organizations and institutions across the disciplines. He is currently the Allen Institute's inaugural artist-in-residence. He was awarded a 2014 LACMA *Art + Technology Lab Artist Grant* and has been working on a project with SpaceX that will take place in the near future.

His work has been featured in numerous solo exhibitions including *You Belong Here*, Prospect 3. Biennial, New Orleans; *The Immeasurable Daydream*, Biennale de Lyon, Lyon; *Polar Eclipse*, The Bahamas National Pavilion 55th Venice Biennale, Venice; *Seen/Unseen*, Undisclosed Exhibition, New York; *Orthostatic Tolerance: It Might Not Be Such a Bad Idea if I Never Went Home Again*, MIT List Visual Arts Center, Cambridge; *Orthostatic Tolerance: Launching into an Infinite Distance*, Grand Arts, Kansas City; and *You Can Do Whatever You Like (Orthostatic Tolerance Project)*, Institute of Contemporary Art, Philadelphia; among others.

Strachan was recently appointed to the MIT List Visual Arts Center advisory committee as well as the RISD board. He has been the recipient of numerous awards and accolades including the 2018 *Frontier Art Prize*, 2014 LACMA *Art + Technology Lab Artist Grant*, 2008 *Tiffany Foundation Grant*, 2007 *Grand Arts Residency Fellowship*, 2006 *Alice B. Kimball Fellowship*.

An opening reception will be held on Friday, November 2, from 6:00 – 8:00 pm.

For all press inquiries, please contact Ben Thornborough at +1 310 276 5424 or benthornborough@regenprojects.com.

For all other inquiries, please contact Jane McCarthy, Irina Stark, or Isha Welsh at Regen Projects.