

David Kordansky Gallery is pleased to announce an exhibition of new work by William E. Jones. The exhibition will feature a major new video, *Fall into Ruin*, in which the artist gives a personal account of the life, home, and collection of Greek art dealer Alexander Iolas. It will also include a series of still photographs of Iolas's villa taken by Jones on the occasion of his first trip to Greece in 1982.

For over three decades William E. Jones has been producing films, videos, photographs, and books that re-examine and repurpose existing cultural materials. While some of his sources are images and texts housed in archives, he is equally at home out in the world taking pictures and conducting interviews. He has explored the decline of America's industrial Midwest, the representation of gay men in sources as diverse as Eastern European pornography and police surveillance footage, the psychedelic visual potential of Cold War military footage, and poetic connections between the randomized nature of the Internet and ancient philosophy.

Fall into Ruin consists of a sequence of still images taken during visits Jones made to Greece in 1982 and 2016. These images depict the home and art collection of Alexander Iolas (1907-1987), a gay, Egyptian-born former dancer who was one of the 20th century's most iconic art dealers, as well as scenes of present-day Athens and images of antiquities on view at the National Archaeological Museum. In an essayistic voice-over, Jones tells the story of his connection to Iolas and reflects upon the circumstances resulting in the villa's ruin. Equal parts memoir, celebration, and lament, the video examines the value systems that made Iolas's rarefied milieu possible and those that eventually allowed it to fall apart.

Perhaps best known as a dealer specializing in work by the Surrealists, and for his work in shaping the collection of John and Dominique de Menil, Iolas also represented major 20th century artists like Yves Klein and Paul Thek, and gave Andy Warhol his first solo exhibition. He was an international figure who spoke several languages (his galleries were located in New York, Paris, Milan, Geneva, Madrid, and Athens) and he moved with ease in a variety of social settings. "Villa Iolas," as his Greek home was affectionately called, was a place where he could display artworks as well as host a rotating cast of eccentric characters. Jones's pictures of the house in its heyday prompt recollections of a time when the art world privileged intimacy and personal contact. They also serve as opportunities to reflect on the committed relationships Iolas fostered with his artists, treating them as others might treat friends or even family, and his willingness to support them financially and emotionally when they fell upon hard times.

Iolas's own collection, filled with antiquities and furniture in addition to works by the modernist

masters he showed, was the product of a wide-ranging and highly personal sensibility. Objects made thousands of years apart were often installed side-by-side. Seeing this as a young man traveling abroad for the first time, Jones discovers a vital link to the ancient past and a reminder that the classical tradition is not a monolithic phenomenon but rather a messy, living, evolving force in which he too can play a part.

Jones invokes a parallel example in the figure of the poet C.P. Cavafy (1863-1933), who re-imagined scenes and characters from the past in a modern, frankly sexual idiom; like Iolas, Cavafy was a gay Greek man from Egypt who embodied an era of cosmopolitanism already on the wane. The video's images of classical sculpture in a contemporary museum setting reinforce the fact that cultural memory is always subject to revision.

Jones further erodes any sense of easy nostalgia with images of the villa in its current dilapidated state, and of an Athens beset by problems associated with global capitalism. This juxtaposition underscores the profound changes that have taken place during the 34 years that separated his two trips to Greece. While these would seem to be cause for despair, the details of Iolas's life offer a kind of melancholy hope, as he managed to thrive even when faced with geopolitical problems beyond his control (including fascism and financial collapse), problems that continue to reverberate today.

The still photographs on view were taken by Jones in 1982 but only printed and exhibited for the first time this year. Returning to them now becomes not only an occasion to revisit his memories of Iolas, but to revel in the lavish idiosyncrasy of the dealer's approach to art and design. Paintings, sculptures, flowers, books, and furniture function in these works as if they were sentient beings posing for the camera. The pictures are more than documents of a time and place. They bring objects and spaces alive, reawakening a timelessness that can go dormant, but never die.

William E. Jones (b. 1962, Canton, Ohio) has been the subject of many solo exhibitions and retrospectives at institutions, including the Wexner Center for the Arts, Columbus, Ohio (2015); Saint Louis Art Museum, Missouri (2013); Austrian Film Museum, Vienna (2011); Anthology Film Archives, New York (2010); and ar/ge kunst Galerie Museum, Bolzano, Italy (2009). Recent group exhibitions include *Remastered -The Art of Appropriation*, Kunsthalle Krems, Donau, Austria (2017); *IHME Contemporary Art Festival*, Helsinki (2017); *On Limits: Estrangement in the Everyday*, The Kitchen, New York (2016); *Ordinary Pictures*, Walker Art Center, Minneapolis (2016); *Les Rencontres de la Photographie*, Arles, France (2015); *The Heart Is the Frame*, Los Angeles Contemporary Exhibitions (2015); *In ___ We Trust: Art and Money*, Columbus Museum of

Art, Ohio (2014); *Elements of Architecture*, 14th International Architecture Exhibition, Venice, Italy (2014); and *The Past Is Present*, Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit (2013). Jones lives and works in Los Angeles.

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