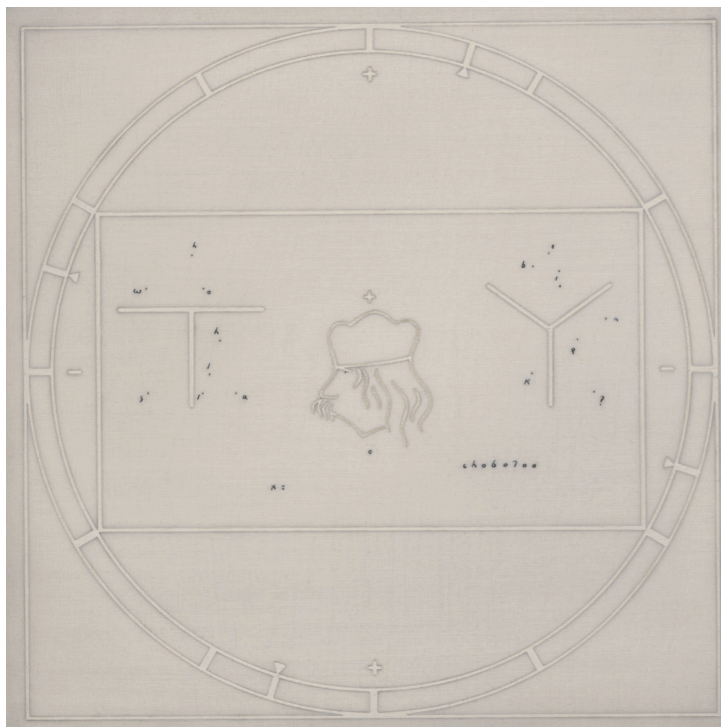


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CH 06.07.00, 2000, oil on wood panel, 11 3/4 x 11 3/4 inches

Thomas Chimes *Centennial*

September 1 - October 2, 2021

Locks Gallery is pleased to present *Thomas Chimes: Centennial*. This exhibition celebrates the 100 year anniversary of the artist's birth, featuring work made from the last thirty years of his life in which recognizable imagery and color gradually dissipates from his canvases and he invents a new mode of working on a small scale.

By the early 1980s, the artist had completed his celebrated panel portraits series of the previous decade, and was reeling from a divorce which impacted his personal life as well as his work. He began to move towards a new phase of work, characterized by misty, ethereal landscapes. His large-scale painting *Waterfall* (1980), created from his memories of a trip to Niagara Falls in happier times, was the first work to mark this transition. The rainbow fascinated Chimes and he began to study optics and color theory in order to

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L O C K S G A L L E R Y





achieve calculated representations of mist/water/atmosphere. The three previously unshown landscape works on view result from this interest in the study of prismatic light.

Chimes gradually drained all color from his landscapes, and by the mid-1980s the white paintings bordered on complete abstraction, echoing the artist's internal quest to come to terms with entropy, memory, and emptiness, as parallel states of being and creation. In his white portrait paintings from the late 1980s, Alfred Jarry oftentimes appears as his own fictional character Doctor Faustroll. In the two Faustroll portraits on view, he is depicted as a head floating in a shroud of white.

By the late 1980s, the works began to integrate ink inscriptions on the surface by Jarry and others whom he previously depicted in his '70s portraits. A trip to Greece in the early 1990s led to a renewed interest in Greek mythology, and Chimes incorporated maps, constellations, and geometric forms such as Fibonacci spirals and the perfect circle. These intimately scaled works deal with ontological questions, whether explicitly through the use of excerpts from pre-Socratic philosophers and sometimes cryptically through mandala patterns and coded symbols.

The *NtroP & Iambic* series from the late '90s and early 2000s are comprised of miniature oil paintings on panel that Chimes grouped into grids or sequences to read like visual poems in an iambic verse. The *NtroP* series is numbered by the artist according to its sequence in the series, the images take the form of medallions and the figure-heads become a form as caricature. As Alfred Jarry stated: "Simplicity does not need to be simple. Instead it should be forged of complexity that has been compressed and synthesized."

Thomas Chimes (1921-2009) was a Philadelphia based artist whose practice was deeply rooted in an engagement with literature, alchemy, and classical Greek math and philosophy. With a prolific career spanning five decades he had four major periods of work: the crucifixion paintings (1958-65), metal box constructions (1965-73), panel portraits (1973-1978), and white paintings (1980-2009). His work has been exhibited at the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York City, NY; The Royal Hibernian Academy, Dublin, Ireland; The Institute of Contemporary Art, Philadelphia, PA; The Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston, TX; The Benaki Museum, Athens, Greece; Galerie der Stadt, Tuttlingen, Germany; and The National Portrait Gallery, Washington, D.C. In 2007, Thomas Chimes was the focus of a major monograph and retrospective at the Philadelphia Museum of Art organized by curator Michael Taylor. In 2013, a subsequent publication *Into the White* was released coinciding with a touring European exhibition, examining his celebrated later work.

Thomas Chimes: Centennial will be on view at Locks Gallery from September 1 through October 2, 2021. Locks Gallery is open Tuesday through Saturday, 10AM - 6PM. For more information, please contact info@locksgallery.com or 215-629-1000.