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Thomas Chimes

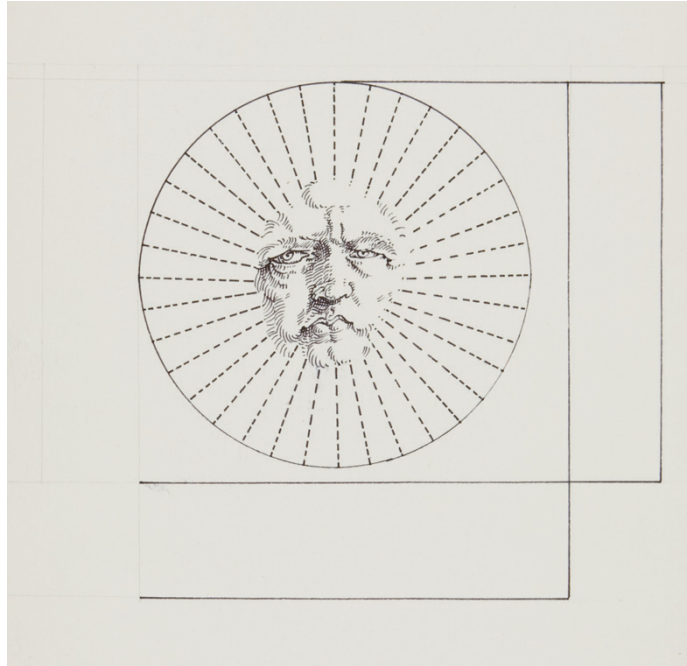
The Body in Spirals

November 7 – December 13, 2014

Reception:

Friday, November 7, 5:30-7:30pm

Locks Gallery is pleased to present *The Body in Spirals* focusing on the explorations of geometry, alchemy, physics, and metals within the career of Thomas Chimes. The exhibition will be on view November 7 through December 13, 2014 with a reception on Friday, November 7, from 5:30 to 7:30pm.



Untitled [Vectors], c. 1960s, ink and graphite on paper

This exhibition offers a unique opportunity to gain a broader perspective on the artist's process and modes of visual thinking, unlike previous period-specific or thematic exhibitions. The installation of these career-spanning works forges new connections between the minimalism that emerged in Chimes's little-seen plexi box constructions and his eventual immersion into his essentialist white paintings, along with an opportunity to look more closely at his idiosyncratic drawing practice and its relationship to his well known paintings and metal boxes.

While much of Chimes work is deeply indebted to literature, each body of work maintained structured systems that dictated the composition— a process-based manifestation of the classicist and symbolist ideals in his work. In *Exploits & Opinions of Dr. Faustroll*, 'Pataphysician' by Alfred Jarry (a seminal book to Chimes and his artistic practice), the narrator states, "For we are both of the opinion that if one can measure what one is talking about and can express it in numbers, which constitute the sole reality, then one has some knowledge of one's subject." This bold statement would become the subject of multiple late white paintings, and simultaneously represents Chimes's own ideology to use geometric compositional systems to manifest Jarry's 'Pataphysics within the visual arts.

In the artist's own exploration of what we believe, perceive, and feel he relied heavily

[continued on reverse]

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on the quantifiable boundaries of the universe in astronomy, the body in anatomy and proportion systems, and composition through Fibonacci's Golden Spiral and classical math formulas. Beyond literature and the arts, Chimes would also take interest in physicists and mathematicians that fused spirituality, philosophy and hard science.

In these works is a world rich in symbolism: metals are personified (Iron as Mars, God of War and Silver as Hecate, Goddess of the Moon); circles can signify shields, mandalas, clocks, compasses, sundials, and the earth; letters and points in abstract constellations are determined by the Golden Section and Jarry's own notions of mathematical formulas; and the body becomes a world of proportions, formulas, and erotic riddles. Chimes deliberately revealed and concealed information through the layers of metal, the intersections of lines and equations, and the skins of white paint in his later work.

This exhibition brings together exemplary works spanning the career of Chimes including drawings and white paintings that have never been exhibited and little-seen metal and plexi box constructions. The show is accompanied by a fully illustrated publication with an essay by Kelsey Halliday Johnson and the first published inventory of the library of the artist.

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 critically acclaimed 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.