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# James Case Leal: *Generative Lexicon*

June 7 – July 20, 2012

Artist Reception: Thursday, June 7th 6-8PM

Magnan Metz Gallery is pleased to announce James Case-Leal’s *Generative Lexicon,* an exhibition exploring transmission, communion, and language. The show will be on view from June 7 – July 20, 2012 with an artist performance and reception on Thursday, June 7th.

*Generative Lexicon*, an allusion to Noam Chomsky's linguistic theory that human language is a force that springs forth from social relations, is the starting point for Case-Leal’s exhibition that creates a physical and psychological space to explore this idea. It is an investigation into the foundations of human social relations beginning with the origins of language and exploring an array of historical social objects and practices - writing, book making, scrolls, television, printing and money all operate as objects of language within this multiverse.

Using a medieval model for the human psyche, the artist has divided the gallery space into three chambers – each having unique duties of memory, emotion/cognition, and sensation/transmission. The central chamber is a small sanctuary built inside the gallery, a free-standing structure, a room within a room. Within this space the origins of language are embodied through objects, video, and performance. The floor is covered in pages hand letterpressed with texts randomly generated by the universe\*. The artist’s performance, visible only through pirated television transmission, enacts the cognitive process of manifesting words from abstraction. The walls are tiled with ceramic plaques which are either empty white shells or filled with loose, abstract drawings, and assemblage.

The outer chamber, the location of sensation and transmission, is here the location of a literal transmission, a pirate television broadcast of the artist performance beaming out into the local neighborhood and receivable only by analog television sets. Sculptural towers grow in crystalline formations from the gallery floors and walls. Book sculptures and magazine scrolls fill the gallery against the backdrop of video projections depicting thousands of people ascending from the New York skyline, paralleling the artist’s continued themes of transmission.

The last chamber of the gallery is filled with relics of the artist’s past. The same frames that filled the inner chamber walls are now filled with copper plates, acid etched in bas relief with images from previous actions. Case-Leal's ascension portraits show images of inverted people continuing to explore the forces of gravity, ascension, and transmission.

Objects are, in themselves, social. They are built as a by-product of our culture and in turn become it. This exhibit uses a psychological environment to lead us in to experiencing how the objects we create illustrate our collective history.

\*When the universe was young, before the formation of stars and planets, it was smaller, hotter, and filled with a uniform glow of a white-hot fog. As the universe expanded, the plasma and radiation grew cooler. As the universe cooled particles mated to form stable atoms. The opaque fog that had filled the universe became transparent. Those particles that could not find mates have continued ever since, colliding for eternity, though growing fainter and less energetic. These particles are the source of what is called Relic Radiation and it is the measuring of these infinitely unpredictable series of collisions that physicists have used as foundation for generating true random numbers. Working in collaboration with the dept physics at Trinity University (UK), Case-Leal has taken those numbers generated from the universe and translated them into letters, and then hand letterpress printed hundreds of thousands of them on to scripture-like pages. For Case-Leal, these pages can be 'read'. By searching through the randomness, words and sometimes syntax begin to appear.

James Case-Leal received his BFA in sculpture from the University of North Texas, 2004. In the fall of 2012 he will begin the MFA program at Columbia University. Most recently, Case-Leal had a solo exhibition “Radical Spirit” installed in the Lutherian Church of the Messiah, Greenpoint, Brooklyn. In 2011 he was a NYFA Fellow and had a residency at the Center for Book Arts; in 2010 the artist was a NYSCA experimental television center grantee and had a residency with Idyllwild Arts 2009. He exhibited “Ascend” as part of the Waterpod Project and participated in Chelsea Visits Havana during the 10th Havana Biennial in Cuba (2009).

For more information or images please contact the gallery at [info@magnanmetz.com](mailto:info@magnanmetz.com) or 212-244-2344