

## **ENVISIONED WORLDS: LITHOGRAPHS FROM THE HOKES ARCHIVES**

### **STATEMENT FROM BEAUVAIS LYONS**

My studio work over the past thirty years has explored various forms of academic parody. Initially I worked in the genre of archaeological fiction, which I defined as the fabrication and documentation of an imaginary culture. In this context I fabricated artifacts that embodied the rituals and myths of hypothetical peoples. These are then documented in hand printed bookplates which utilize both visual depictions and written interpretations of the iconography. For “Reconstruction of an Aazudian Temple” I created an imaginary Mesopotamian civilization from modern-day Iraq, complete with its art forms, writing system and architecture. Responding to the ideas about the human body and medicine, “Hokes Medical Arts” included prints that appear to document medical and anatomical specimens. My more recent project presents prints and taxidermy for the “Association for Creative Zoology,” a fictitious early 20<sup>th</sup> century creationist organization. The projects involve the invention of Everitt Ormsby Hokes, the founder of the Hokes Archives as well as his various collaborators. “Envisioned Worlds: Lithographs from the Hokes Archives” brings together an overview of the lithographs made as part of these three projects.

Artistic precedence for my work may be found in literary and cinematic traditions of mock-documentation. These include Plato's “Atlantis” as conceived by Ignatius Donnelly, Jorge Luis Borges' novella “Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius,” and Woody Allen's film *Zelig*. An additional influence on my work is the history of vernacular art and scientific illustration. As I typically present my work as legitimate science and history, I am also interested in the intersection of pranks and contemporary art.

In my approach to academic parody I place a great deal of emphasis on the interrelationship between the various elements in the exhibition. I strive for visual, thematic and conceptual continuity through the use of repeated stylistic motifs and serial images. While the projects are made from a variety of individual works, I strive to think of each project as an aesthetic and conceptual whole.

As an artist, academic parody provides an elaborate stratagem by which I can employ a diverse range of visual, written and theatrical means to present a work of parafiction. This genre is potentially unlimited, and can take almost any form, style or medium to reflect almost any system of knowledge or belief. Documentary and museological methods can also take numerous aesthetic and technical forms. I believe that the complexity of this genre is not an end in itself, but can only have meaning to the extent that universal human needs and conditions are addressed through the work. With these concerns I intend to create a work of fiction that is also a statement of truth.