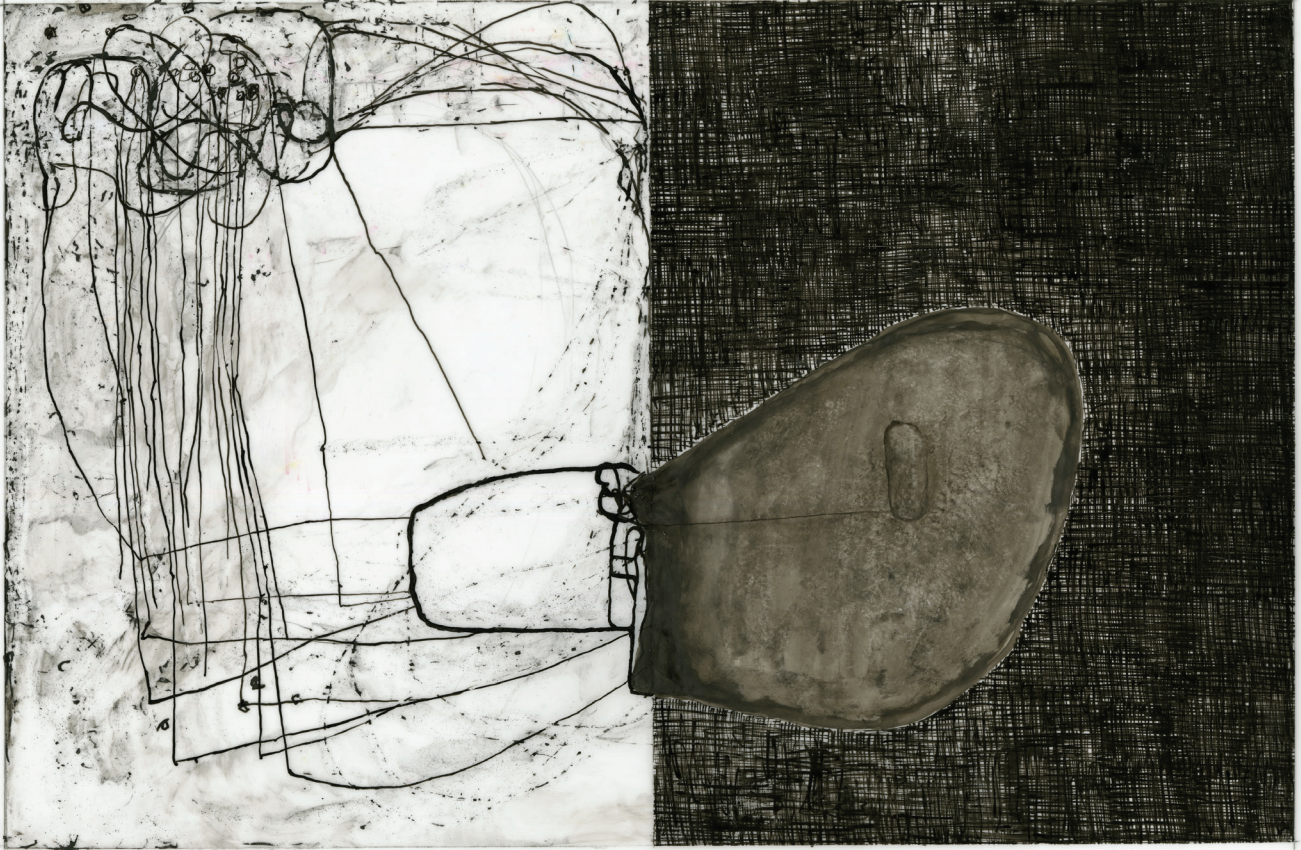


Jim Morris, *On the Nature of Things*

June 24 – September 3, 2022



Imaging Power and Flux_108, 2021, ink on both sides of matte Mylar, 8.5" x 13"

Meandering Paths

Curatorial Essay by Shirley Verrico

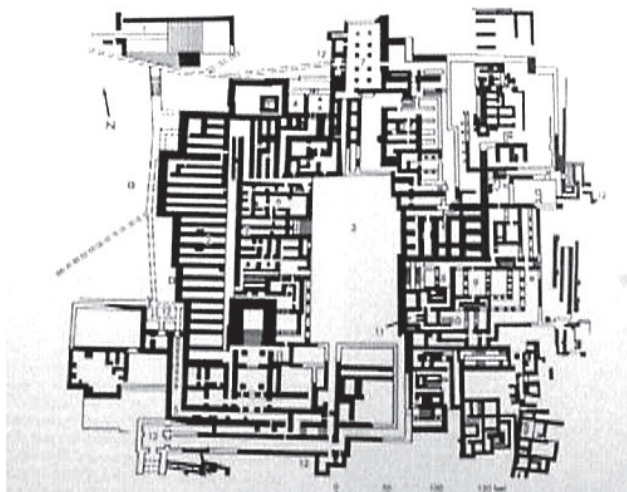
Jim Morris's work explores how dynamic real-world events can be visualized to capture states of volatility, turbulence, and transformation. The title of the exhibition, *On the Nature of Things*, comes from a poem by Lucretius, a first-century Roman philosopher. Throughout the poem, Lucretius unfolds a narrative that testifies to humankind's curiosity and search for knowledge and understanding of the world. According to Morris, Lucretius believed the world can be analyzed and best understood through inquiry and observation. The poet asserts there is no need to believe in magic, gods, demons, or participate in superstition—we are just a whole bunch of atoms combining and recombining in an infinite space.

Morris's own inquiry focuses on themes of power and flux as he searches print and digital sources for varied examples of the ways information is visualized to communicate the dynamism of events—the spread of a virus within a community or the porosity of a disputed border between hostile states. Morris finds the data, including graphical visualizations, descriptive reports, and photographs in the media sources he consumes daily. He then applies an intuitive investigative process allowing his curiosity to lead him along diverging informational paths. During his research, he makes ink drawings and simplifications of the graphics, reports, and images. This step takes him from specific information to a wider, more circumferential view, and allows Morris to interpret the information through his own language of abstraction.

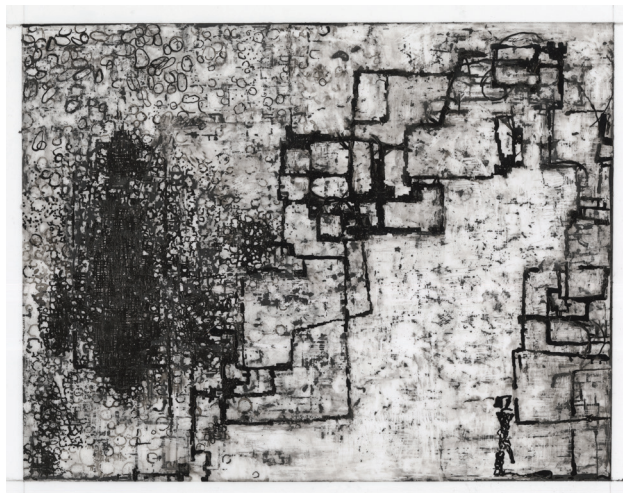
Morris's drawings manipulate the information by reorganizing and representing the initial sketches to reveal and amplify qualities that he sees concealed within the graphics and the cognitive assumptions he is interrogating.

Morris is most interested in provisionality, and how it gives rise to transitions, fragility, and randomness. Although the 23 new drawings in this exhibition echo the ancient philosophy of Lucretius, they also capture the contemporary, constant flux that seems to surround us today. The drawings that utilize more organic shapes, like *Imaging Power and Flux_103*, seem to isolate and abstract cellular structures as seen through high powered electron microscopes. Other drawings, like *Imaging Power and Flux_120*, are more geometric, recalling the bird's-eye view of archeological sites such as the ancient palace compounds at Knossos. As a body of work, the drawings capture the tension of contemporary information systems, and even contemporary life, perpetually zooming in and out and then back again.

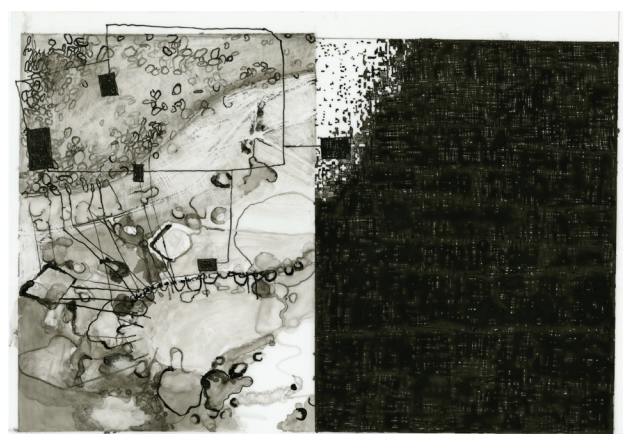
Fortunately, Morris's work is not didactic. Rather than preach or teach, Morris nudges the viewer to reach into their visual database and in doing so, make individual connections to his drawings. Like particles themselves, both the viewer and the artwork become charged, moving along paths determined by some subconscious compass. Morris hopes to create a spark that sets off visual associations within the viewer as they meander through their own mental landscape.



Plan of the Palace of Knossos



Imaging Power and Flux_120, 2022, ink on matte Mylar, 8.5" x 11"



Imaging Power and Flux_103, 2021, ink on matte Mylar, 8.625" x 13"

Artist Biography

Jim Morris received his MFA from the University of Massachusetts at Amherst and is an alumnus of the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture. Morris has received fellowships that include a summer Fulbright to Malaysia and Singapore, a Pollock-Krasner Fellowship, NEA/Mid Atlantic Artists Fellowship, the George Sugarman Foundation, and a fellowship from the Southeast Center for Contemporary Art in North Carolina. He has participated in artist residencies at the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts, The Institute for Electronic Arts at Alfred University, The Triangle Arts International Workshop in NYC, Sculpture Space, and the Pyramid Atlantic Art Center Print Studio. His work has been featured in solo exhibitions at the Delaware Center for Contemporary Arts, Draper Gallery; Gallery Q in Rochester, NY; and Anadolu University in Eskisehir, Turkey. He currently lives in western Massachusetts and maintains a studio in Holyoke, Massachusetts.

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