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*King Solomon's Mines*, 2016  
HD video

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## TOMMY HARTUNG JINNS

February 26 – April 2, 2017

Opening reception: Sunday, February 26,  
6 to 8pm

On Stellar Rays is pleased to present Tommy Hartung's fourth solo exhibition with the gallery, *Jinns*. A new video, entitled *King Solomon's Mines*, will be presented alongside a series of new sculptures.

Closely related to Hartung's recent videos *THE BIBLE* and *The Lesser Key of Solomon*, *King Solomon's Mines* further explores the deep-rooted influence of Abrahamic religions in contemporary thinking and notions of the foreign. Central to Hartung's new work is the mythology of King Solomon, and tales of his coveted riches, as well as exoticized views of the Middle East and the Northern Sahara.

An installation of figurative sculptures represents 'jinns,' or demons. *The Testament of Solomon*, a pseudepigraphical text dated from the First Century, describes Solomon's conjuring of demons to build the Temple of Jerusalem and his kingdom. Jinns have captured the imagination of followers of Christianity, Islam, and Judaism alike; their characteristics often corresponding to wider-held prejudices that encourage ethnic, racial, or religious rifts.

Legacies of colonization and the reconstruction of history through popular media are recurring themes in Hartung's work. Much of *King Solomon's Mines* is set in the Tibesti Mountains in Chad, a former French colony and a region teeming with both Western tourists on safari and rampant human trafficking. Hartung explores tourism as a soft invasion of territory, reworking found travel footage with the laborious process of rotoscoping. This technique layers hand-drawn animation over digital video, and was historically used to create hoax images in film. Here, Tibesti is presented through a pseudo-futuristic sci-fi lens that views the local population through the distanced, privileged vantage point of the camera.

Combining multiple narratives that rely on myth and magical thinking, and further complicated by deeply held cultural views of religious, ethnic, and racial differences among peoples, Hartung lends a satirical take on embedded notions of the foreign, and to the power structures that benefit from the demonization and subjugation of entire communities of people.

Hartung's work is currently the subject of a solo exhibition at the Rose Art

## MORE ON TOMMY HARTUNG

Museum in Waltham, MA, and is included in the *2017 Whitney Biennial* at the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York, NY.

Hartung's *THE BIBLE* was the focus of a solo exhibition at On Stellar Rays in 2014, and was featured in subsequent solo presentations at the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, CA (2015); Bonnefanten Museum, Maastricht, the Netherlands (2015); Rose Art Museum, Waltham, MA (2015); Flint Institute of Arts, Flint, MI (2015). Other recent exhibitions include Braverman Gallery, Tel Aviv (2017); University Art Museum, SUNY, Albany, NY (2016); Jewish Museum, New York, NY (2015); White Flag Projects, St Louis, MO (2012); MoMA/PS1, Queens, NY (2010); Queens Museum of Art, Queens, NY (2008); and screenings at the Rotterdam Film Festival, the Netherlands (2011) and Anthology Film Archives, New York, NY (2008).

His work is in the collection of the Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY; Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, CA; Rose Art Museum, Waltham, MA; and the Dimitris Daskalopoulos Collection, Athens, Greece. Hartung was the recipient of the Louis Comfort Tiffany Foundation Biennial Award in 2015 and the Painters and Sculptors Grant from the Joan Mitchell Foundation in 2011. He was born in Akron, OH in 1979, and lives and works in New York.

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## HOURS

Wednesday through Friday  
10am - 6pm

Saturday and Sunday  
12pm - 6pm