

Tagliafierro, Marco, "William E. Jones, Galleria Raffaella Cortese," *Artforum.com*, March 13, 2015

ARTFORUM

Milan

William E. Jones

GALLERIA RAFFAELLA CORTESE | VIA STRADELLA 1

Via Stradella 1

February 19–April 16

Psychic Driving, 2014, a video projection, is undoubtedly the most significant presence in this show by William E. Jones, offering a succession of colorful vibrating lines where each frame is like an elaborate abstract painting. In the work's sound track, a narrator describes the effects of taking LSD. Other voices that chime in about the drug seem to be those of subjects in an experiment or a documentary. Yet the viewer, who sees only successions of lines—bringing to mind American AbEx painting—comes to eventually understand that what is being discussed is the history of research on mind control that the CIA conducted thirty years ago. Those familiar with Jones's work in recent years will know that the American artist recontextualizes archival materials of various types. For *Psychic Driving*, his point of departure was a VHS recording obtained from the US National Archives and Records Administration. The artist intervened via Photoshop up to six hundred times per frame, altering what time had already transformed, as the original VHS tapes were partially ruined.

Elsewhere, a second video, *Mission Mind Control*, 2012, characterized by images in continuous dissolution between figuration and abstraction, is shown on a vintage television, along with three walls bearing photocopies of declassified CIA documents released under the Freedom of Information Act of 1976, with certain portions blacked out or redacted. Copied several times over, the documents resemble more contemporary styles of painting.

Translated from Italian by Marguerite Shore.

— Marco Tagliafierro



View of "William E. Jones," 2015. From left: Declassified Wallpaper #2, 2015; *Psychic Driving*, 2014.