

Newsweek

PARTING SHOT



'Villa Iolas, 1982'

WILLIAM E. JONES

THE LEGENDARY gallerist Alexander Iolas gave Andy Warhol his first solo show, in New York City in 1952. The Egyptian-born curator, who owned a villa in Athens, Greece, collected painting, sculpture, ceramics and people. "He was afraid of being alone," says William E. Jones, who was invited to the villa in the summer of 1982, when he was a freshman at Yale (his classmate was the gallerist's grandniece).

Iolas greeted his young visitor from a bed flanked by two bronze horses. Jones recalls the atmosphere in the house as faintly sinister: "I was afraid that something not strictly legal was going on." But that summer inspired Jones to become an artist—the award-winning experimental filmmaker and photographer he is today.

One day at the villa, while Iolas was out, Jones photographed its contents. The most valuable work had already been sold—it felt, he says, as if he was documenting the end of something—but pieces like these sheep by François-Xavier and Claude Lalanne, a Georges Mathieu abstract and Moroccan decorative art remained. Iolas died not long after, in 1987, and the villa was ransacked.

"When I saw the aftermath of the looting," Jones says, "I became physically ill." These photographs record its pristine state: Tutankhamen's tomb as Howard Carter first entered it. "It's true," Jones says. "I have become an archaeologist." —MATTHEW SWEET

Hand-coated inkjet print, 20 x 16 inches, edition of six with two artist's proofs, \$7,500; DAVIDKORDANSKYGALLERY.COM.

New photographs and a film by Jones are on view at the David Kordansky Gallery in Los Angeles through August 26.

WILLIAM E. JONES/DAVID KORDANSKY GALLERY/LOS ANGELES, CA