

The James Gallery

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CITY UNIVERSITY
OF NEW YORK

New Yorker, October 10, 2016

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Art

“THE HOUSE OF DUST BY ALISON KNOWLES”

September 7 2016 – October 29 2016

In 1967, Knowles, a Fluxus artist, composed one of the first computerized poems, written in Fortran code, with randomly assembled verses. (An example: “A house of steel / Among high mountains / Using candles / Inhabited by people who sleep almost all the time.”) This significant, jam-packed exhibition revives Knowles’s poem on an old-school dot-matrix printer, and includes related ephemera, including a film by Allan Kaprow. The show also highlights forebears of Knowles’s aleatory composition, with a never-completed book by Mallarmé whose pages could be reordered at will, as well as Marcel Broodthaer’s 1969 homage to it. There are also successors: Nicholas Knight’s intricate paintings of overlapping colored curves were generated by an algorithm, and Katarzyna Krakowiak’s audio piece remixes Knowles’s original poem into skittering musique concrète.

[James Gallery, CUNY Graduate Center](#)

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