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### We Came from the Sea

L. Alexis St. John

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L. Alexis St. John

MFA Thesis Exhibition

“We Came from the Sea”

March 19, 2024

committee: David Amico, Rachel Lachowicz, Michael Reafsnyder







Alexis St. John  
Artist Statement  
MFA 2024

I create worlds. The locations are unconventional, playful, and slow of pace. They are just alien enough to give viewers an escape from the mundane. Recurring themes include the ocean, alchemy, fluidity, diagrams, transition, interconnectedness, and freedom.

Patterns and symbols are an important part of my work. They repeat the painting's meaning and emotion on another level. Shapes blur boundaries between symbol and object and are not readily classified. People, animals, plants, letters, and symbols morph into and out of one another. This place of not knowing drops me into the non conceptual, where boundaries and binaries cease to be.

Complex colors interest me. They challenge me to greater subtlety of understanding. They form intricate relationships to their neighbors. I find this deeply engaging.

I like texture. My latest favorite is sand. I use gesso to glue sand onto the canvas. Different grit sizes produce a variety of surfaces. Oil paint sinks to the background when thinned. It glides along the top of the grains when applied thickly and with a light touch. This gives the painting a richness of color and depth.

I love languages, so I constructed my own. The process has helped me understand how my native language has shaped the way I think and what I believe. By creating my own language, I have discovered unconscious beliefs that constrain my life. The language has its own unique script, grammar, and linguistic history. There are currently over 2000 words in its vocabulary. The words help me describe the feelings and states that shape the way I paint. I often incorporate the symbols and letters into my work. I love the sound when I speak the language aloud. It's strangely empowering. I feel centered and connected to my intuition.

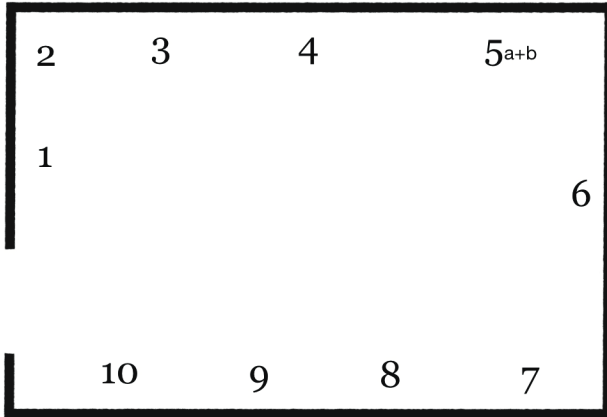
I make my own art supplies. It gives me more control over my materials. It brings consciousness and intention to my process. I get the opportunity to inquire into each ingredient I choose to add. The materials I make are environmentally responsible, archival, and non-toxic.

Making paint is rewarding. I can proportion the the medium, pigment load, and viscosity. I favor oil as my medium for its slower pace. The slow drying time means I can relax and enjoy the process. Its flexibility lets me go from thick impasto applied with painting knives to thin controlled brush strokes.

Papermaking is a messy but enjoyable process. I use natural plant fibers. The method I've developed is basic and requires only hand tools. The entire process takes place outside and the paper is sun-dried.

My work is a manifestation of the qualities, values and priorities I wish to see in the world. My art is not a lens, but a magnifying glass uncovering the unconscious and focusing on the positive qualities and potential we all possess. We become what we put our attention on. The paintings are a gentle reminder for us to keep growing.





1. ႻႻႻႻႻႻႻႻ

*(Alchemical Charts)*

(3) 11.5" x 11.5"

handmade paper (hemp and abaca fiber),  
handmade gouache, 2024

2. ႻႻ ႻႻႻႻ

*(Coral Portal)*

14" x 14" x 5"

ceramic, plant-based acrylic paint, wax, 2024

3. ႻႻႻႻ ႻႻႻႻႻ

*(Amber Jellyfish)*

30" x 24"

handmade oil paint on canvas, 2024

4. ΣΙΝΑΘ

*(Strata)*

30" x 30"

handmade oil paint and sand on canvas, 2024

5a. ΟΟΘΑΝΙΑ ΕΛΡΑΝ

*(Green Sea)*

16" x 20"

handmade oil paint and sand on canvas, 2024

5b. ΑΞ ΒΟΧΑ

*(Coral Sand)*

16" x 20"

handmade oil paint and sand on canvas, 2024

6. ΡΤΕΘ ΒΟΛΟ

*(Signal Flags)*

90" x 180"

(72) 11.5" x 11.5" squares of handmade paper  
(hemp and abaca fiber), handmade methyl  
cellulose paint, 2024

Signal flags are used along roads, ship to shore,  
and in marketplaces. Each flag connotes a single  
idea.



7. ԲԱՈՒ ԿԱՈՆ ԾՅԱԳ

(Many Ways In)

30" x 30"

handmade oil paint and sand on canvas, 2024

8. ԵՂ ԱՆՏՐԱԾՈ ԲԻՂ ԱՆՏՐԱԾՈՅԲԱՆ

(Two Sages with Apprentice)

12" x 10" x 10"

ceramic, plant-based acrylic, wax, 2024

9. ԿՆԿՄԻ ՔԱՂ

(Compass Rose)

30" x 30"

handmade oil paint and sand on canvas, 2024

10. ԺԱԴՅՈՒ

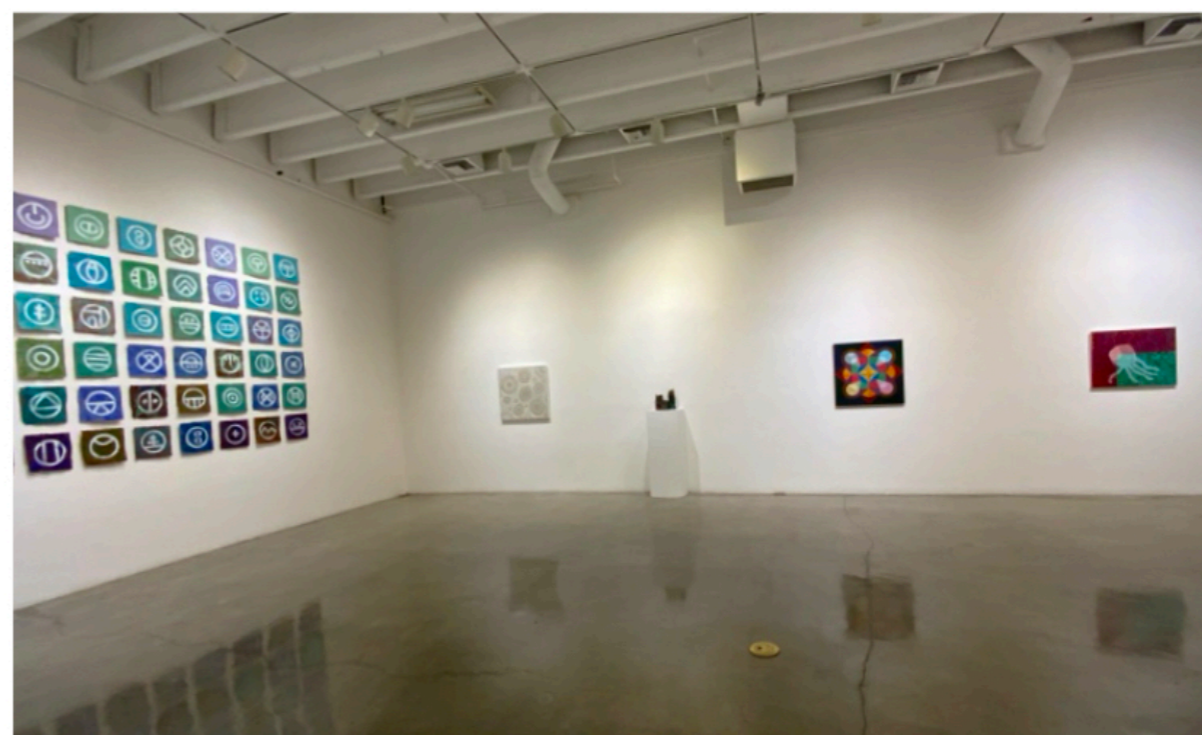
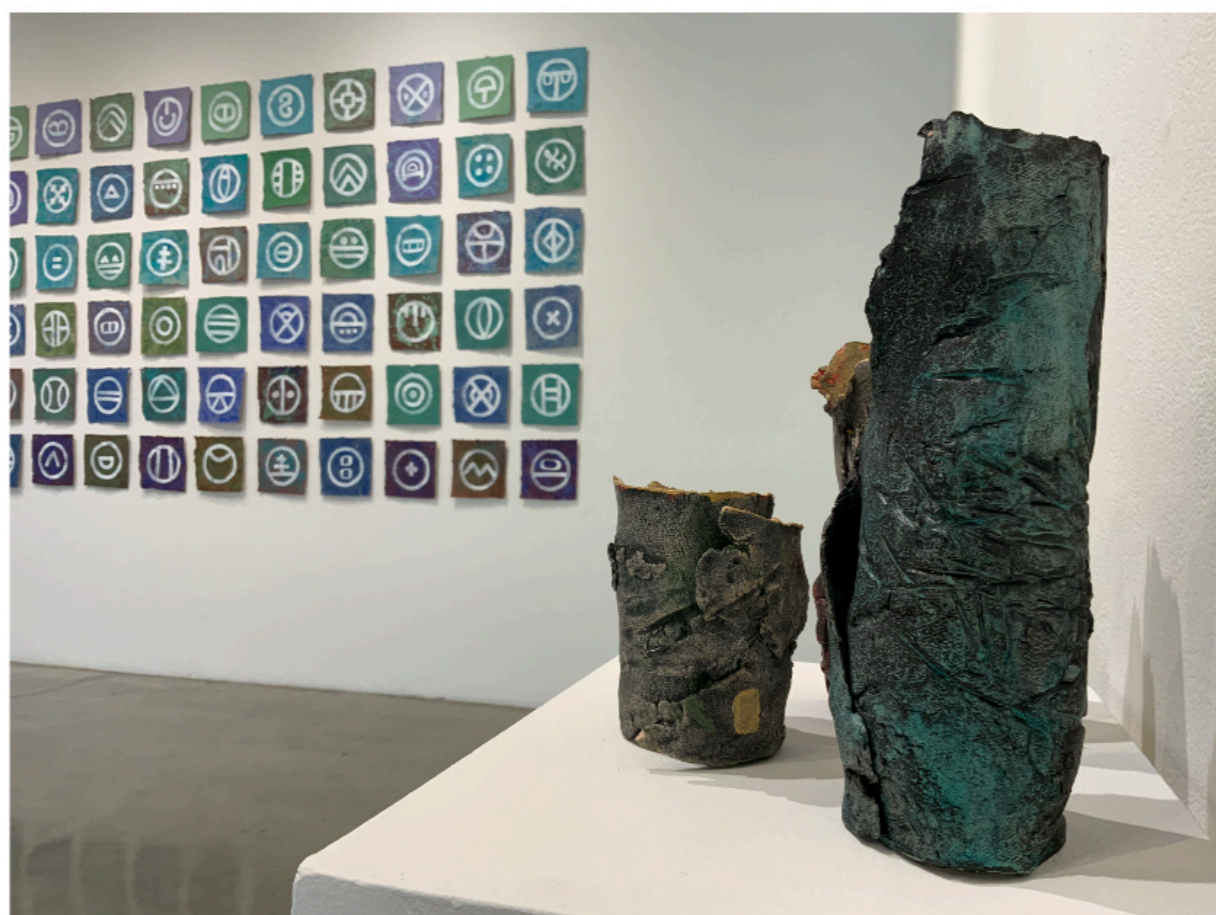
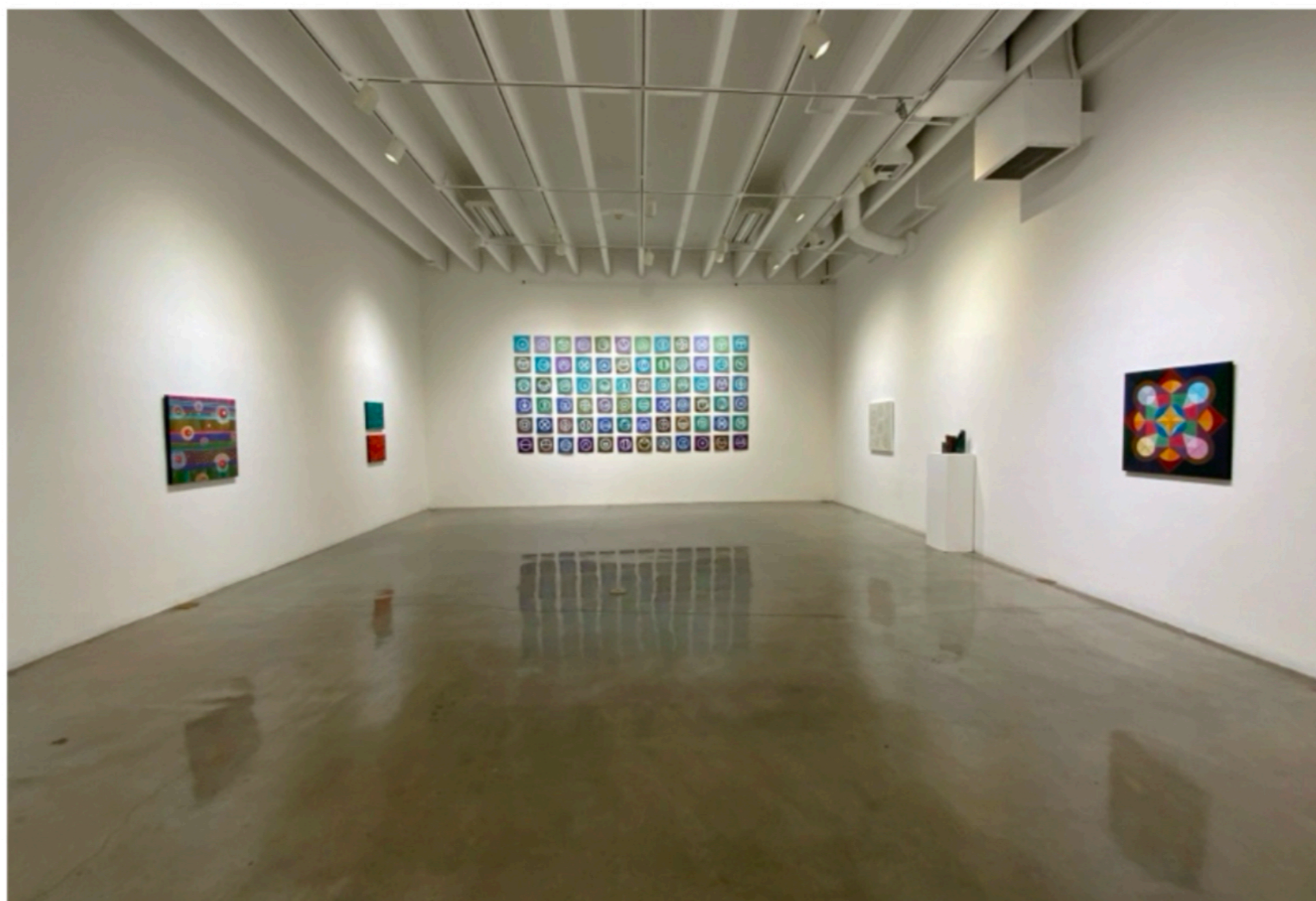
(Passing Through)

24" x 30"

handmade oil paint and sand on canvas, 2024



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1



2



3



4



5a



5b



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6



7



8



9



10