

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Alex Jackson

Chrysalis

September 11 – October 30, 2021

Opening Reception

Saturday September 11, 6-8:30 PM
DJ set by Michael Jevon Demps

Conversations on Culture

Alex Jackson In Dialogue with Mark Gibson
Saturday, October 9, 4:00 PM

@alexjacksonartist #chrysalisexhibiton #AlexJackson
#jenkinsjohnsonprojects @jenkinsjohnsongallery

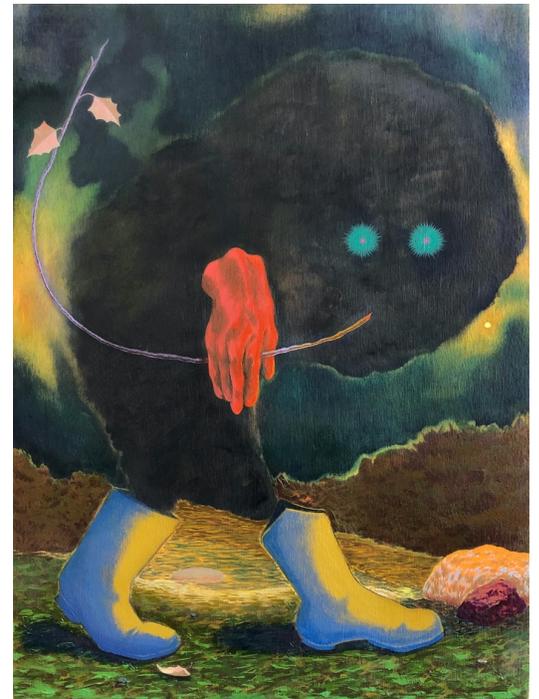


Alex Jackson, *Color Theory For Ghosts*, 2021, oil on Linen, 9 x 12 inches. (Fig. 1)

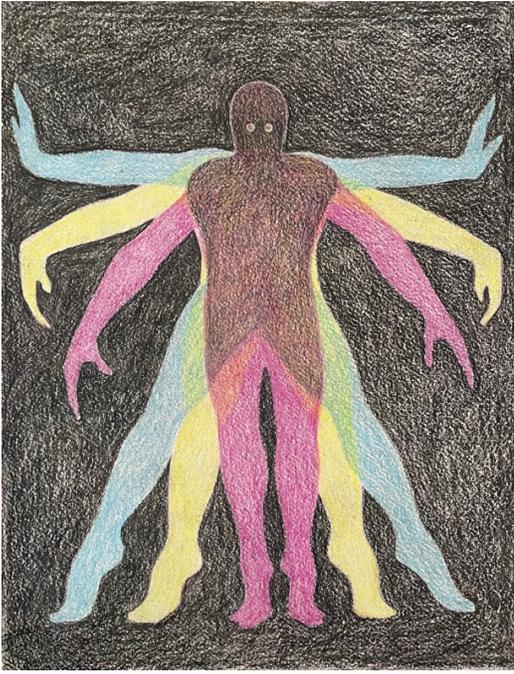
Jenkins Johnson Projects is delighted to present Alex Jackson: *Chrysalis*, the artist's first solo exhibition in New York, September 11 – October 30, 2021. The opening reception for the artist is Saturday, September 11, 6:00 pm – 8:30 pm, with a DJ set by Michael Jevon Demps. As part of our ongoing *Conversations on Culture*, Alex Jackson will be in dialogue with artist Mark Gibson on Saturday, October 9, 4:00 PM ET / 1:00 PM PT via Zoom.

Chrysalis, a culmination of paintings and drawings from the last 3 years, marks a significant turning point for Jackson's practice. Emerging from the narrative space he has developed, this body of work delves deeper into the many propositions put forward since the inception of the project nearly six years ago. The ethos of his practice is committed to maintaining an expansive and emancipatory space both for the formal conditions of the work and for the intellectual and social imagination. Engaged in ideas around speculative storytelling and the fantastic, Jackson considers how the methods of worldbuilding have opened new ways to think about the formal and conceptual conditions of image-making.

Jackson uses narrative painting to probe the entanglement between visual mechanics and experiences—embodied and imagined—of space, history, and the body. The foundation of his practice is anchored in a written text, which he began writing in 2015. The project begins with the supernova of E, a man born with a star in his heart, whose body develops into a black hole, opening up a gateway into the universe depicted in Jackson's images (see Fig. 3). As E begins to experience and explore the scattering of his being, an encounter triggers a second supernova, this time with the creation of an entire ecosystem. In *Chrysalis*, the narrative centers around the lives and conflicts of two particular groups of characters, the Seers and the Lookers. Our protagonists, the Seers, are a group of shapeshifting beings, often identified by their human shape with their patterned and reflective bodies, who have developed a symbiotic relationship with shadow, acting as a primary source of energy. The Lookers, are the floating, amorphous, and gaseous beings, wielding a deadly gaze, often seen attached to boots and floating hands (See Fig. 2).



Alex Jackson, *Land of See (The Pyrolytic Eye)*, 2021, oil, ink, and watercolor on panel, 12 x 9 inches. (Fig. 2)



E, *The Unseen*, 2021, colored pencil on paper, 16 x 12 inches. (Fig. 3)

On his decision-making process, he states:

“How can the relationship between the formal decisions in the work and the conceptual ideas behind the work be embedded in the narrative itself? How do I use the literary method of the metaphor, or the poetic, to build a formal painting language?”

I’m trying to imagine what an alternate space would be like if its principles, ethos, and aesthetics are built from a foundation with an ethic of liberation.

What happens when the practice attempts to embody the freedom it is searching for? When fugitivity is not a gesture of performance or spectacle? When blackness moves beyond the identificatory and into its use as a discursive tool, a method, a strategy of opening up new possibilities?

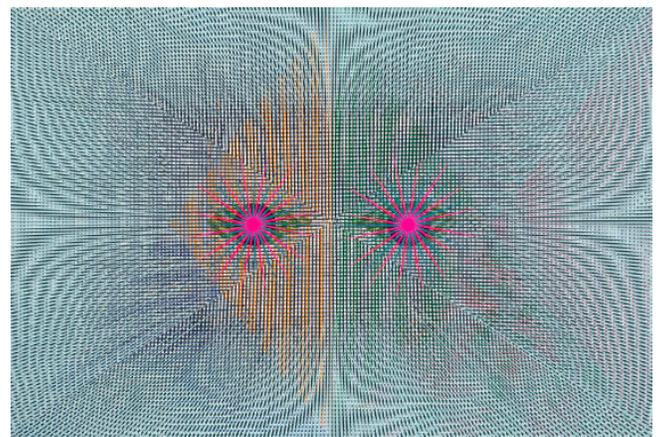
I have been trying to push against the idea of the “veil” as a device of concealment or enclosure distinct from an entity, and instead to think of it as embedded within the entity itself. The body is the veil, it is part of the very condition of the being itself. The veil is an expansive tool, it reveals, not hides. This has been a very useful notion for thinking about

the social imagination in regard to the work. How presence and absence are conceived within the limits of imaginative law. I want to contribute to the aesthetic and ethical formulations of what an imaginative, fantastical, or speculative space looks like.”

Chrysalis includes over 25 drawings created from 2018 to 2021; they are the heartbeat, the drum, the soul of the exhibition. Jackson’s explorations in linework, an element he felt he had taken for granted, led him to incorporate the language and mechanics of drawing into his painting. This development resulted in a group of paintings, known as the See Gate paintings, in which he intricately stacks diagonals, grids, and patterns until they dissolve into a single field of color (See Fig. 4).

Through the process of making this body of work, Jackson began the development of his own color theory, “Color Theory for Ghosts,” in which he thinks about the social and conceptual physics of color as it relates to the characters and the environment (See Fig. 1). “Color Theory for Ghosts” is a temperature-based, secondary, and tertiary-focused system in which hue is haunted or possessed by a spectral primary in an adjacent color. This development began with a small painting, “Color Theory for Ghosts”, which was a two-year process to completion.

Alex Jackson (b. 1993, Milwaukee, WI) has exhibited at institutions including Madison Museum of Contemporary Art, Elmhurst Art Museum, and Chazen Museum of Art. His works are in the collections of The Studio Museum in Harlem and Santa Barbara Museum of Art. He has been reviewed in *The New York Times*, *The Los Angeles Times* and *New American Paintings*. He has attended residencies at Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture, Yale Norfolk, and the Royal Drawing School at Dumfries House. Jackson has an MFA from Yale University, and a BFA from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Jackson lives and works in Philadelphia, PA.



See Gate #6, 2021, acrylic on panel, 24 x 36 inches. (Fig. 4)

For more information on this exhibition please contact Assistant Director, Rachel Chaldu, at 212.629.0707 or nyc@jenkinsjohnsongallery.com.
Gallery Hours: By appointment only, Tuesday – Saturday, 11am – 6pm