

The background is a complex, abstract composition. It features a dark blue field overlaid with intricate, golden-yellow lines that form a dense, web-like pattern of irregular shapes and concentric lines. Interspersed within this pattern are various shades of green, from bright lime to deep forest green, creating a layered, almost topographical effect. The overall aesthetic is reminiscent of a stylized map or a microscopic view of a complex structure.

Bo Joseph
Chasing Ghosts



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SLAG&RX



On Chasing Ghosts

*What happens after I catch them and listen to their stories?
I am safe. I am seen. I will be remembered.
And that may be all there is. For any of us, alive or dead.*

Kay Bolden, “The Art of Catching Ghosts”

In an article I once read, a woman who has seen ghosts since childhood asked a Voodoo priestess “what do they want?” The priestess responded, “to be remembered.”

While I don’t see ghosts per se, I do sense the residual energy—call it *spirit, anima, mana, qi, prana, ase, numen*—that is imbued in cultural symbols throughout time. There is a very long history of these charged cultural icons coming and going: being abandoned to the elements and falling into decay, being buried and unearthed, being entombed and exhumed, being stolen and sold, being pillaged and exhibited. Despite these machinations, their charge somehow persists, evident in their soul-like forms lingering on this plane as if to reconcile their unresolved pasts.

Like the woman who sees ghosts, I sense in these objects a kind of longing to be remembered; or rather than a longing,

more an exertion, an outwardly-projecting manifestation of presence, that speaks, that lures, that lingers, compelling acknowledgement and affirmation. I respond to their call by transforming these enigmas and convening them in arenas where they unite as agents of what I call “subliminal reconciliation”—reconciliation for themselves, for me and for anyone who witnesses.

As an artist, I relate to the notion of chasing something akin to a ghost: creating art can feel like a paranormal pursuit in which intangible enigmas appear and vanish, nearly always slipping through my grasp. If you are motivated by outcomes, this may sound futile. However, if like me, you are motivated by unfolding experiences focused more on the journey than the destination, you may resonate with this characterization of an artistic practice the way I resonate with the objects that inspire and inhabit that practice.

When I abstract these cultural icons into my work, it is, like chasing ghosts, an effort to grasp a phantom-like presence, and bring it into communion with other phantoms, where bonds might form over the commonality of transience. It is my way of remembering them and, in turn, of being remembered, of being seen, and finding substantiation amidst impermanence.

Bo Joseph
January, 2026

Chasing Ghosts at SLAG&RX

SLAG&RX New York is pleased to present *Chasing Ghosts*, Bo Joseph’s debut exhibition with the gallery. Through paintings, works on paper, and sculptural wall reliefs, the exhibition examines cultural objects across time and geography as vessels of history shaped by cycles of loss and reclamation.

For Joseph, artmaking is akin to chasing a ghost—an effort to apprehend intangible presence, residual energy, and inherited meaning embedded in cultural icons. Drawing from auction catalogs, digital museum archives, colonial-era interiors, and his own photographs, Joseph abstracts and reconfigures imagery from African, European, Islamic, Native American, and other global traditions. Through cycles of tracing, layering, washing, scraping, and repainting, presence and absence are held in tension as images emerge, erode, and reconstitute themselves. Abstraction becomes a connective bridge between symbols and icons, allowing meaning and common ground to surface across cultures and generations.

These labor-intensive, process-based methods function as ritualized acts of cultural reckoning, engaging histories of loss, appropriation, and survival. They democratize cultural hierarchies by reducing everything, from a Dogon mask to a



Roman sculpture, to the same linear treatment, creating an equivalency of units. By using water to literally wash away imagery, Joseph both simulates cultural entropy and excavates buried connections between seemingly disparate traditions.

The exhibition includes *Holding Spaces: Self-Appointed Custodians*, Joseph's large-scale work on paper first exhibited at the Brooklyn Museum. The work reinterprets photographs of modernist and colonial-era interiors displaying collections of tribal art and other cultural symbols, such as those associated with Helena Rubinstein, Peggy Guggenheim, and Wifredo Lam, unified through abstraction. Joseph transcribes and layers these interiors in oil pastel onto paper patchworks, then subjects them to scraping, coating, and rinsing before reworking the surface into an abstract field of free association.

Joseph's paintings on paper mounted on canvas extend this approach through intuitive layering of imagery drawn from his studio archives. Using water-soluble tempera, acrylic washes, and resist techniques, he builds images that are partially dissolved and transformed into negative impressions of their original forms. The washing away of imagery leaves traces and stains that erode the original image while simultaneously transforming it into a negative silhouette of what once was.

The two newest paintings in *Chasing Ghosts* translate layered imagery drawn from Western historical sources into materially complex compositions that reflect on cultural displacement, complicity, and survival. Executed on a patchwork of cloth and finished in oil, the works employ

processes of layering, erosion, and chance to evoke history as an unstable, sedimented field—one in which dominant regimes are symbolically absorbed and neutralized. Bright color and radiating line act as both visual counterpoint and connective force, offering an inviting surface through which deeper questions of power, memory, and cultural transformation quietly unfold.

Completing the exhibition is Joseph's ongoing series of wall reliefs, begun in 2020. Like the works on paper and canvas, these reliefs continue Joseph's use of cultural composites, now taking the form of mask-like silhouettes. The sculptural works depict composite forms drawn from historical, religious, and ritual objects across global cultures and are fabricated from foam, fiberglass, resin, and finished with an iron oxide coating or with casein, a milk-protein medium with medieval origins. Several of these works explore Jungian archetypes such as *Catching Ghosts: Personae*. These works examine the concept of the social mask—the public face individuals present to the world as a mediator between inner self and external environment. By overlapping the imagery, their cultural specificity becomes universal, inviting viewers to encounter reflections of themselves within the silhouette.

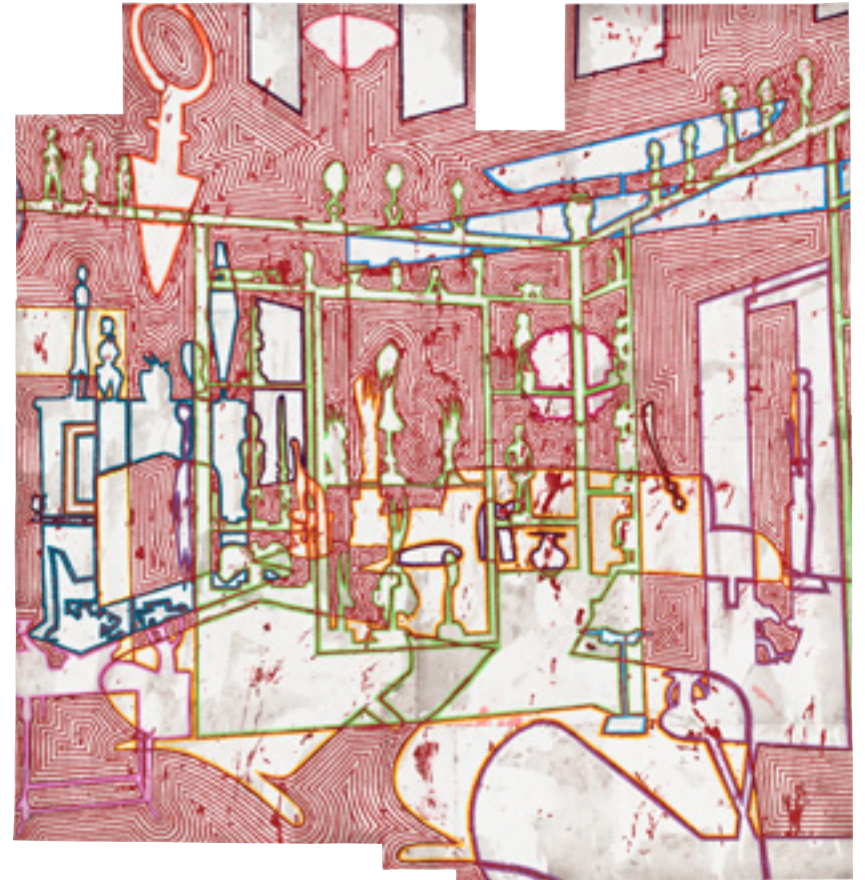
Together, the works in *Chasing Ghosts* create a space for reflection. By centering absence, erasure, and transformation, Joseph invites viewers to confront how cultural symbols persist, mutate, and demand remembrance through cycles of loss and reclamation. Like ghosts, they call to be seen and remembered.

About the Artist

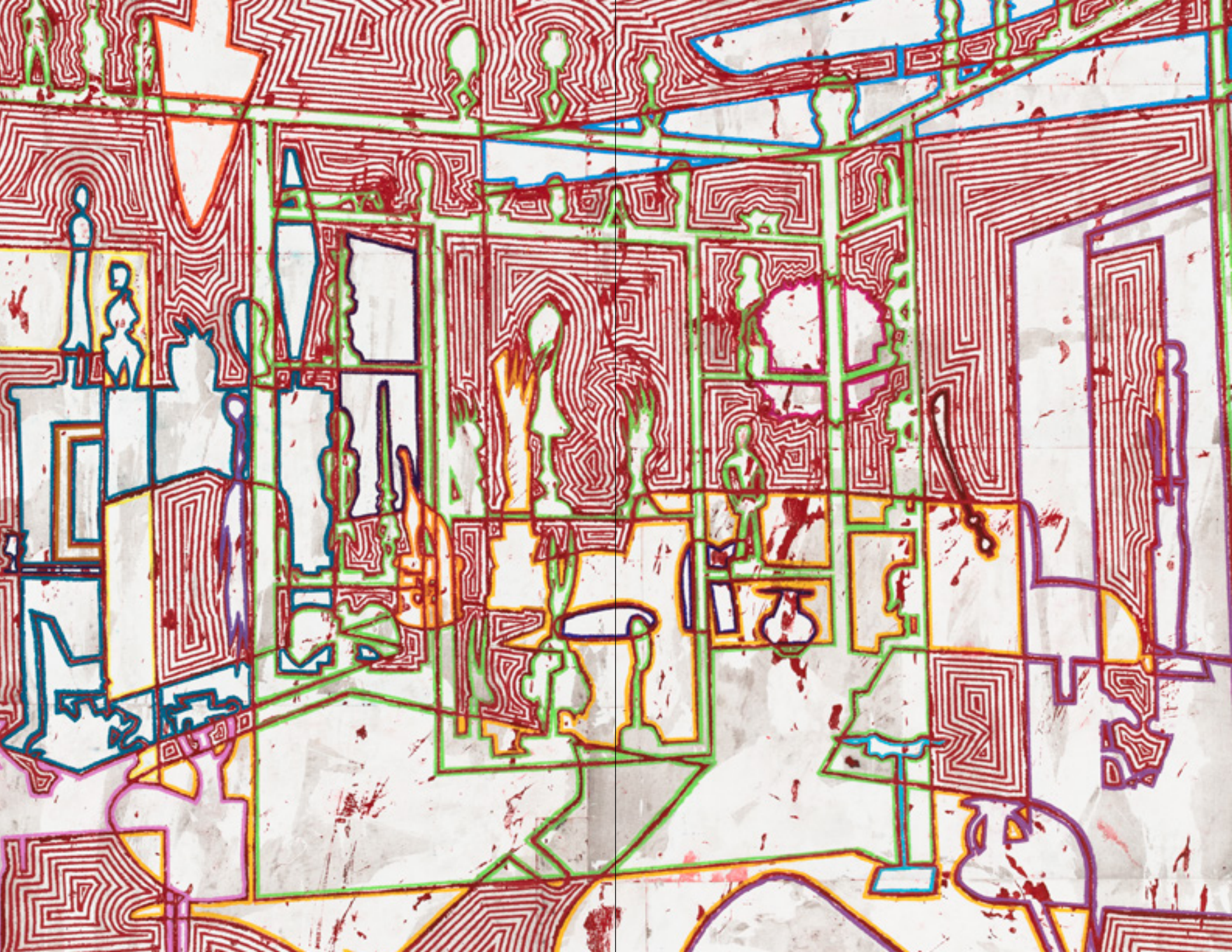
Bo Joseph was born in 1969 in Berkeley, CA, moving with artistically inclined parents between Oakland, Los Angeles, Paris, and San Francisco, where exposure to cultural and ideological diversity laid the groundwork for life as a visual thinker. Since graduating from the Rhode Island School of Design in 1992 with a BFA in Painting, Joseph has received awards and honors such as the Basil H. Alkazzi Award, and fellowships in painting from the Fine Arts Work Center, Provincetown, and the Rhode Island State Council on the Arts. He has been a visiting artist and lecturer at the University of Massachusetts, Dartmouth; Parsons and Pace University, New York; Ewha Woman's University, Seoul; and the Rhode Island School of Design, where he also taught drawing.

His work can be found in museum collections including the RISD Museum, Providence, RI; Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, TX; Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art, Kansas City, MO; Zillman Art Museum University of Maine, Bangor; The Springfield Museum of Art, OH; and the Guilin Art Museum, China. Joseph has exhibited in institutions, art fairs, and galleries across the U.S. and abroad, including the RISD Museum, Brooklyn Museum, Tang Museum, McClain Gallery, Lee Eugene Gallery, and Sears-Peyton Gallery. His work has been featured in *The New York Times*, *Art in America*, and *Architectural Digest*, and on NYCTV and National Public Radio. Bo Joseph lives and works in New York.





Holding Spaces: Self-Appointed Custodians, 2022
oil pastel, acrylic and tempera on joined paper
55 1/2 x 53 in. / 141 x 134.6 cm





Untitled, 2025
acrylic and tempera on paper mounted on canvas
22 1/4 x 29 1/2 in. / 56.5 x 74.9 cm



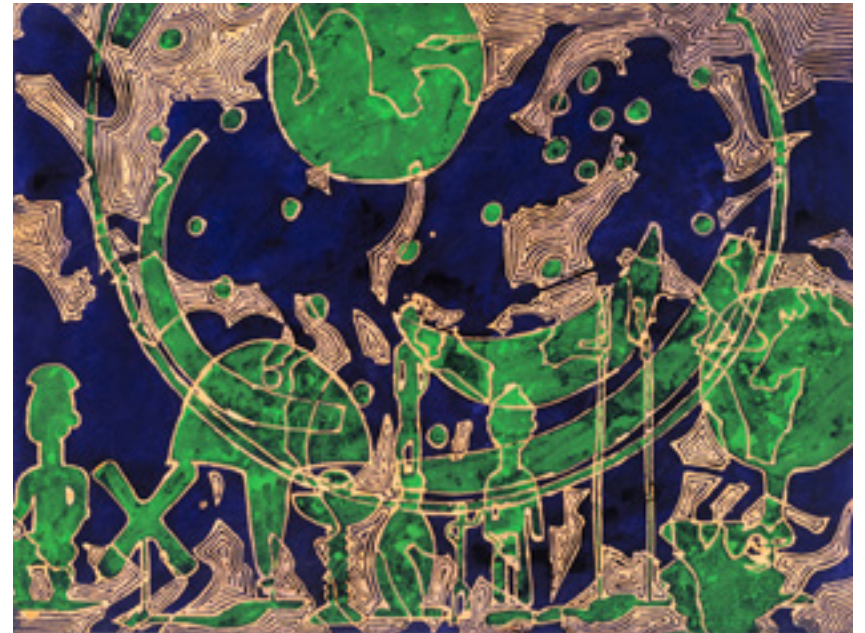
Untitled, 2025
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22 1/4 x 29 1/2 in. / 56.5 x 74.9 cm



Untitled, 2025
acrylic and tempera on paper mounted on canvas
22 1/4 x 29 1/2 in. / 56.5 x 74.9 cm



Untitled, 2025
acrylic and tempera on cloth
36 x 24 in. / 91.4 x 61 cm



Untitled, 2025
acrylic and tempera on paper mounted on canvas
22 3/8 x 29 1/2 in. / 56.8 x 75.1 cm



Untitled, 2025
acrylic and tempera on paper mounted on canvas
29 7/8 x 22 1/8 in. / 75.9 x 56.2 cm



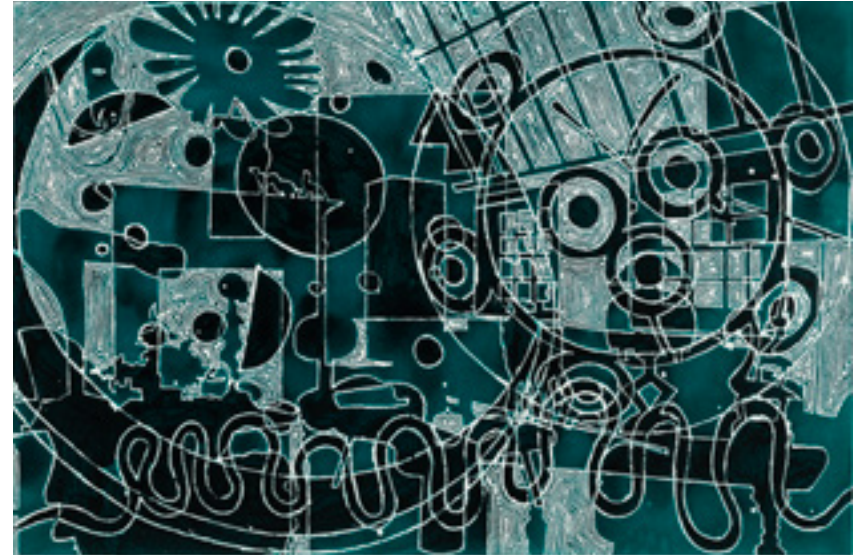
Untitled, 2025
acrylic and tempera on paper mounted on canvas
29 5/8 x 22 1/8 in. / 75.2 x 56.2 cm



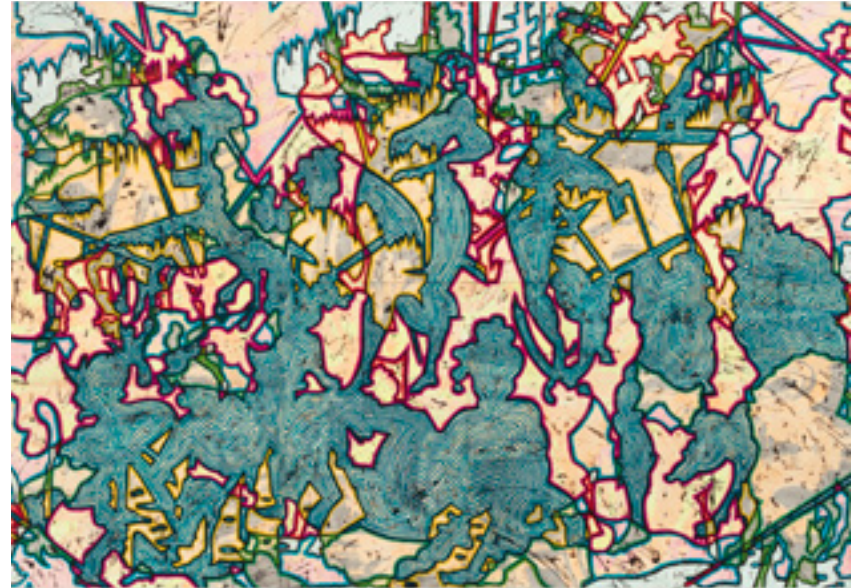
Untitled, 2025
acrylic and tempera on paper mounted on canvas
29 5/8 x 22 1/8 in. / 75.2 x 56.2 cm



Untitled, 2024
acrylic and tempera on paper mounted on canvas
31 7/8 x 47 7/8 in. / 81 x 121.6 cm

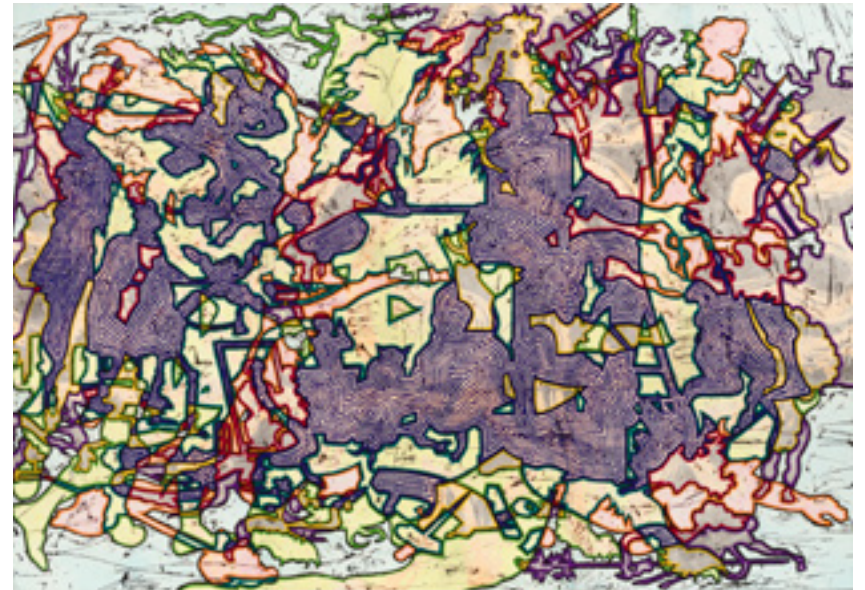


Untitled, 2024
acrylic and tempera on paper mounted on canvas
31 3/4 x 47 7/8 in. / 80.6 x 121.6 cm

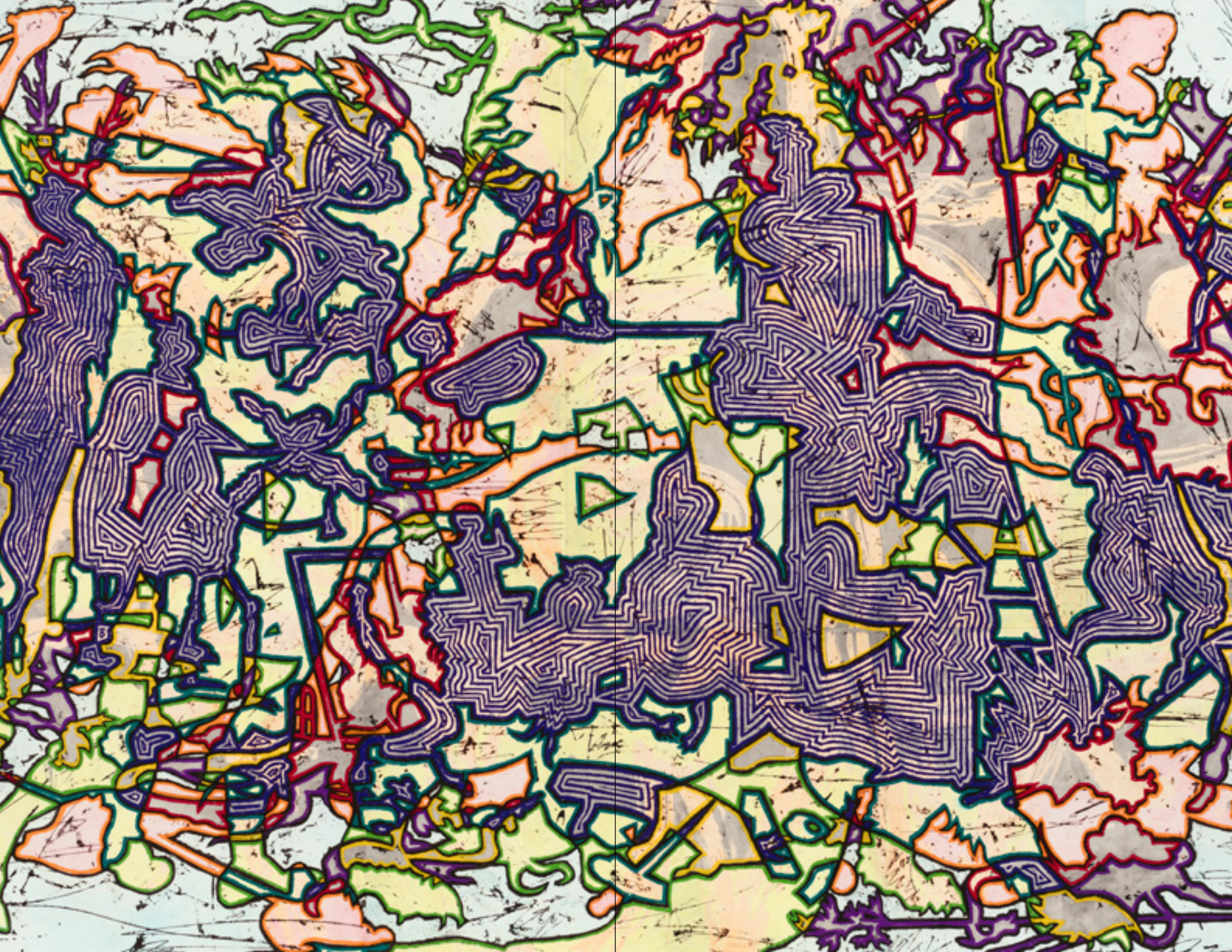


The Roots' Slow Victory, 2026
oil pastel, acrylic, tempera and oil on joined cloth patchwork
49 x 70 in. / 124.5 x 177.8 cm





Empire is Only a Stage, 2026
oil pastel, acrylic, tempera and oil on joined cloth patchwork
49 x 70 in. / 124.5 x 177.8 cm





Catching Ghosts: Chimeric, 2020
iron oxide and acrylic on resin, fiberglass and foam
48 x 31 3/4 x 1 1/2 in. / 121.9 x 80.6 x 3.8 cm

Catching Ghosts: Opposing Forces, 2020
iron oxide and acrylic on resin, fiberglass and foam
47 3/4 x 25 1/2 x 1 1/2 in. / 121.3 x 64.8 x 3.8 cm





Catching Ghosts: Conjoining, 2020
iron oxide and acrylic on resin, fiberglass and foam
47 7/8 x 27 x 1 1/2 in. / 121.6 x 68.6 x 3.8 cm

Catching Ghosts: Personae, 2020
casein and acrylic on resin, fiberglass and foam
60 1/4 x 35 3/4 x 1 1/2 in. / 153 x 90.8 x 3.8 cm





Installation View:
Chasing Ghosts, February 19 - March 28, 2026
SLAG&RX, New York

Published on the occasion of the exhibition

Bo Joseph
Chasing Ghosts

February 19 - March 28, 2026

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The image features a complex, abstract pattern. A dark blue background is overlaid with intricate, organic shapes in a vibrant green color. These green shapes are defined by thin, golden-yellow outlines that form a dense, interconnected web. The overall effect is reminiscent of a microscopic view of a material or a stylized, futuristic landscape. The text 'SLAG&RX' is centered in the middle of the image in a clean, white, sans-serif font.

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