

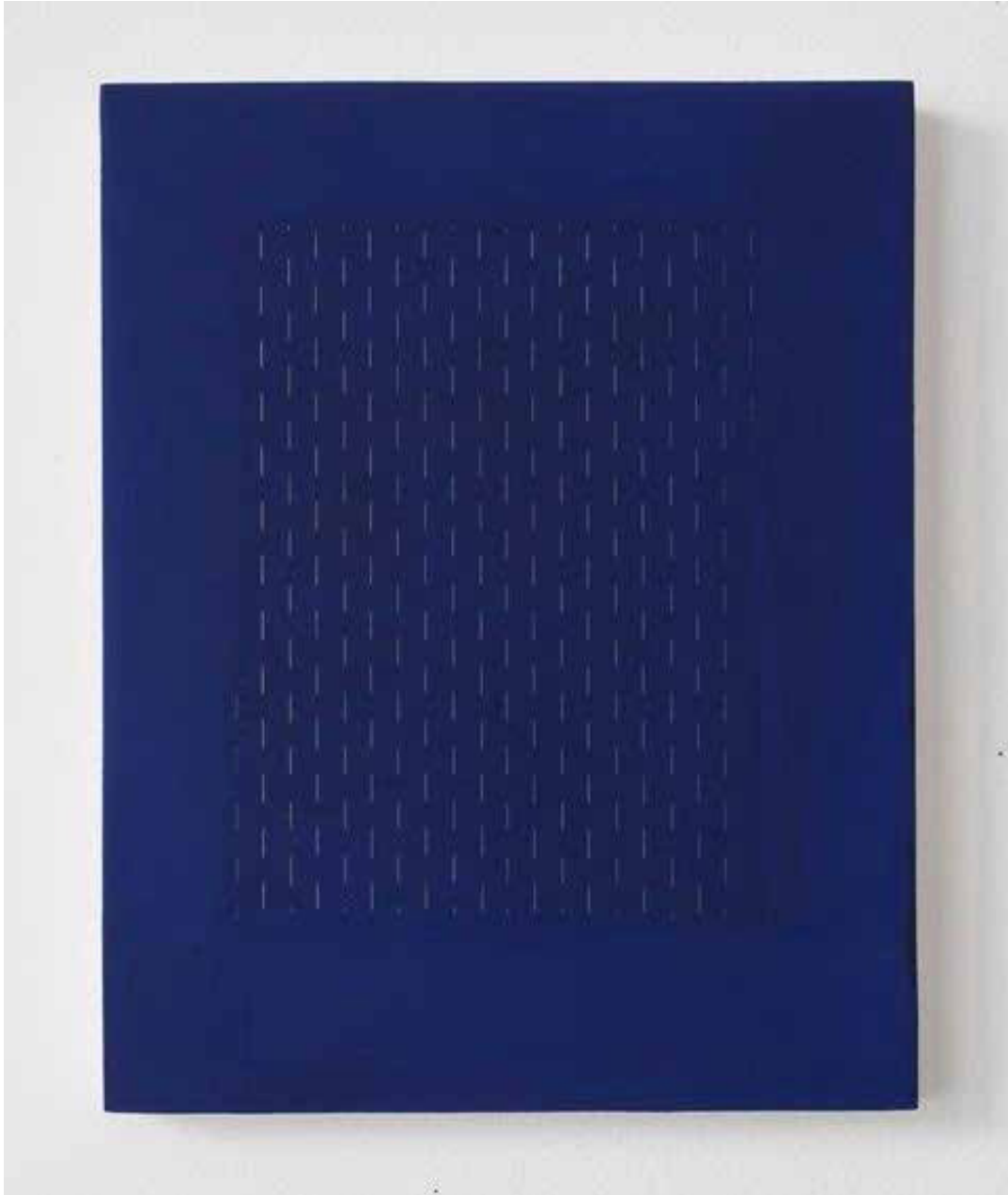
# STEVEN ALEXANDER JOURNAL

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***ALISON HALL at Steven Harvey***

**Steven Alexander**

**06/24/2015**



Alison Hall, *Brooklyn Nocturne XII, Ghazal*, 2015, 9 1/2 x 7 1/2 in., oil, graphite, and venetian plaster on panel

In her first solo show in New York, Alison Hall is presenting a group of exquisite small paintings at Steven Harvey Fine Art Projects (through July 31, 2015). The exhibition, aptly titled *East of Blue*, reveals Hall's deep connection to the history of painting -- the materials, processes, systems, and iconography, as well as the ritualized labor of traditional practice. While it might not be obvious to the viewer that each small panel is painstakingly built of many layers of sanded Venetian plaster, what is obvious is the utter sensuality of the resulting surface, and the delicacy and depth of the oil color ground. On top of, or into that ground, Hall uses graphite hash marks and lines to create intricate rhythmic patterns that are at once translucent, physical, and constantly shifting with the viewer's position. Within the obsessive system of each piece always occurs some beautifully unexpected irregularity that nudges the work to take a breath.

Visually, this work has obvious relations to 13th century Italian frescos, and of course equally, to contemporary geometric abstraction. But it is in the expansive realm of metaphor that the visuality is operating here. Hall is tapping into the ultimate potency of the poetic object. Much more ancient than Giotto, it is a primal impulse that creates visual embodiments of our most fundamental perceptions - inexplicably transforming the ordinariness of the world into magic.



Alison Hall, *Sally*, 2015, 13 3/4 x 11in., oil, graphite, and venetian plaster on panel



Alison Hall, *Relics*, 2015, 27 1/2 x 22 in., oil, graphite, and venetian plaster on panel



Alison Hall, *Brooklyn Nocturne XIV, My Three Eyes*, 2015, 9 1/2 x 7 1/2 in., oil, graphite, and venetian plaster on panel

All images courtesy of Steven Harvey Fine Art Projects