

James Barron Art

Alison Hall

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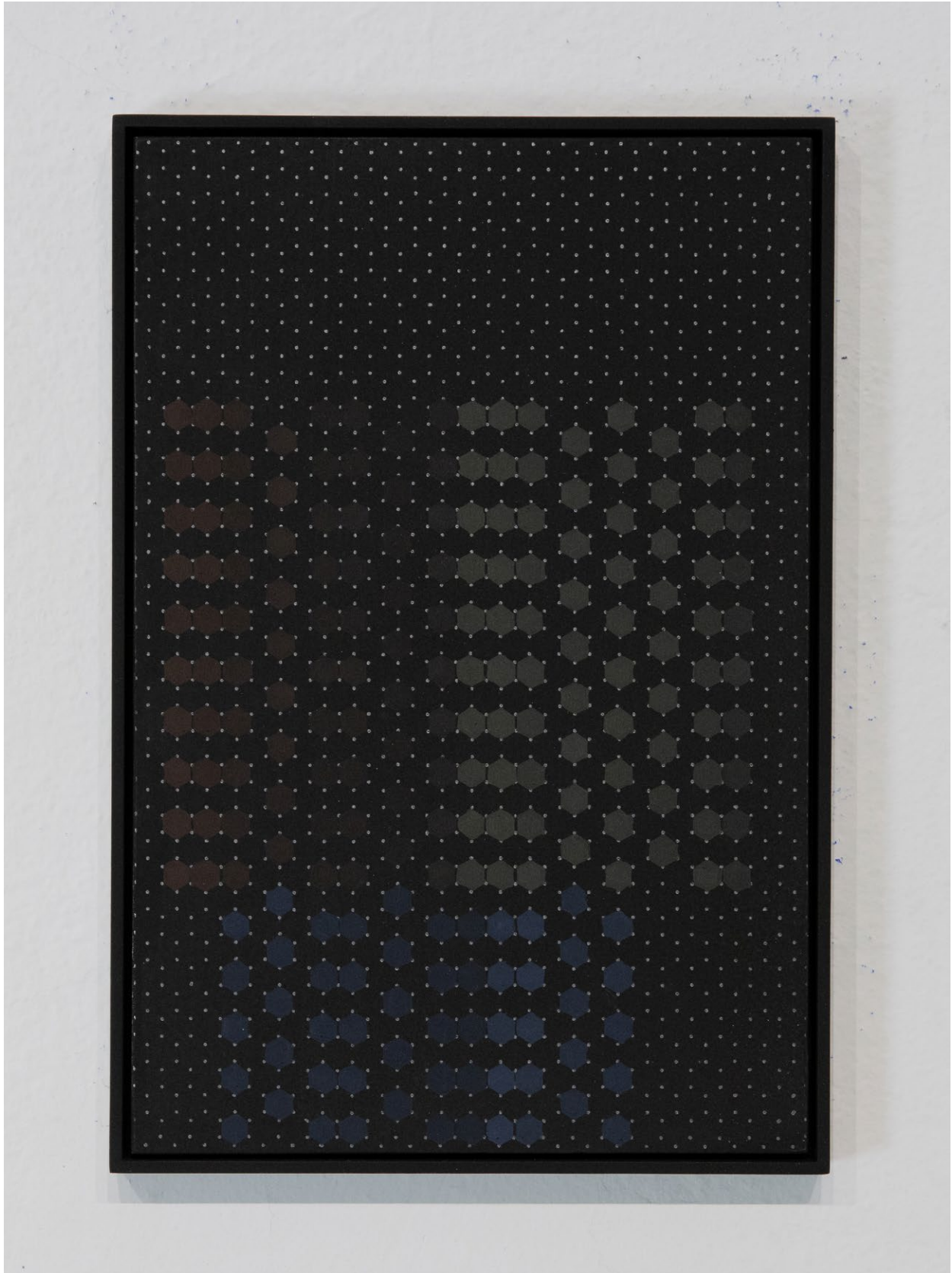
ALISON HALL

A Hymn (for the pity), 2022
oil, graphite, and plaster on panel,
artist frame, Virginia maple, plaster, and oil
12 1/5 x 8 1/4 inches (31 x 21 cm)



ALISON HALL

A Hymn (for the wonder), 2022
oil, graphite, and plaster on panel,
artist frame, Virginia maple, plaster, and oil
12 1/5 x 8 1/4 inches (31 x 21 cm)



ALISON HALL

A Ballad (for the damsons), 2022
oil, graphite, and plaster on panel,
artist frame, Virginia maple, plaster, and oil
12 1/5 x 8 1/4 inches (31 x 21 cm)

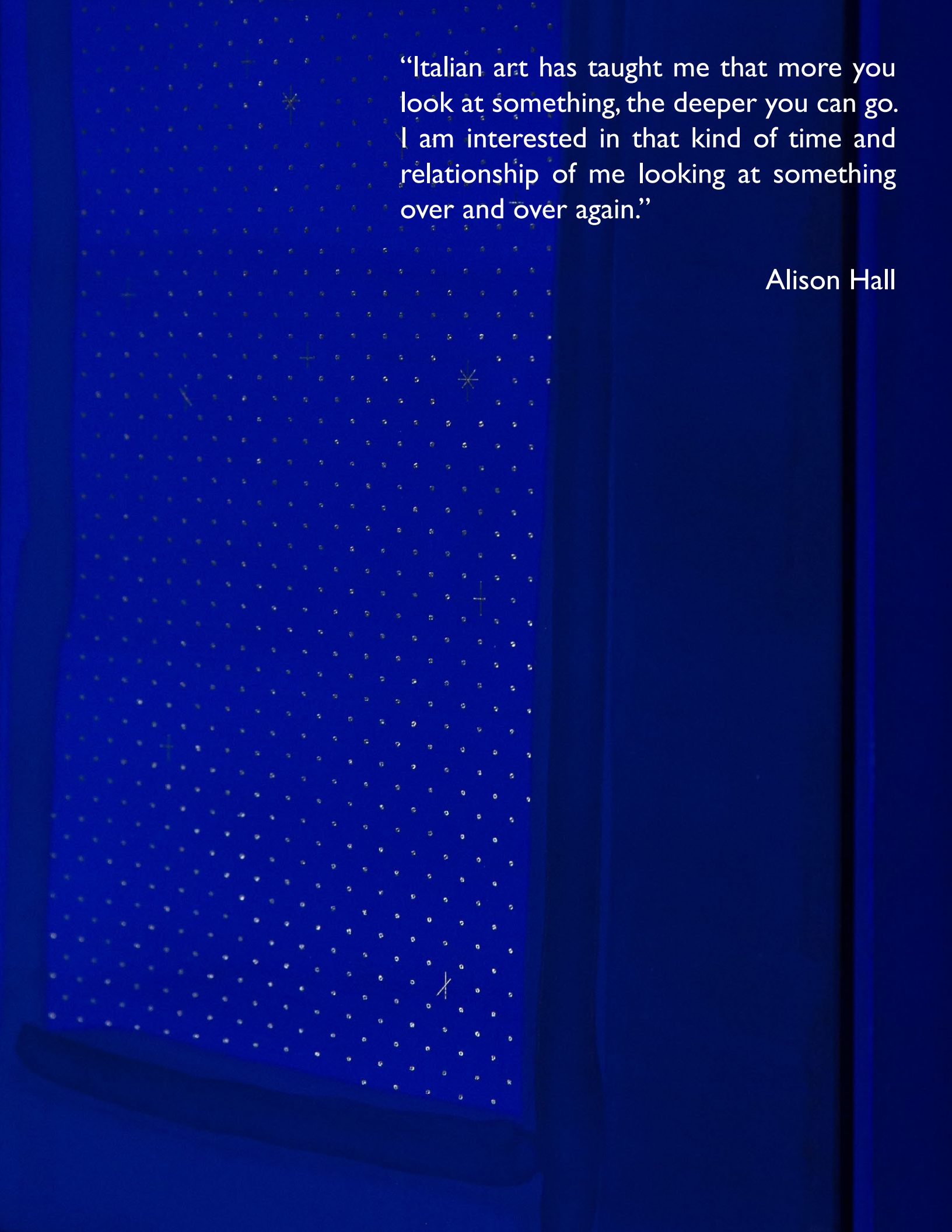




ALISON HALL

A Ballad (for a calloused heart), 2022
oil, graphite, and plaster on panel,
artist frame, Virginia maple, plaster, and oil
12 1/5 x 8 1/4 inches (31 x 21 cm)





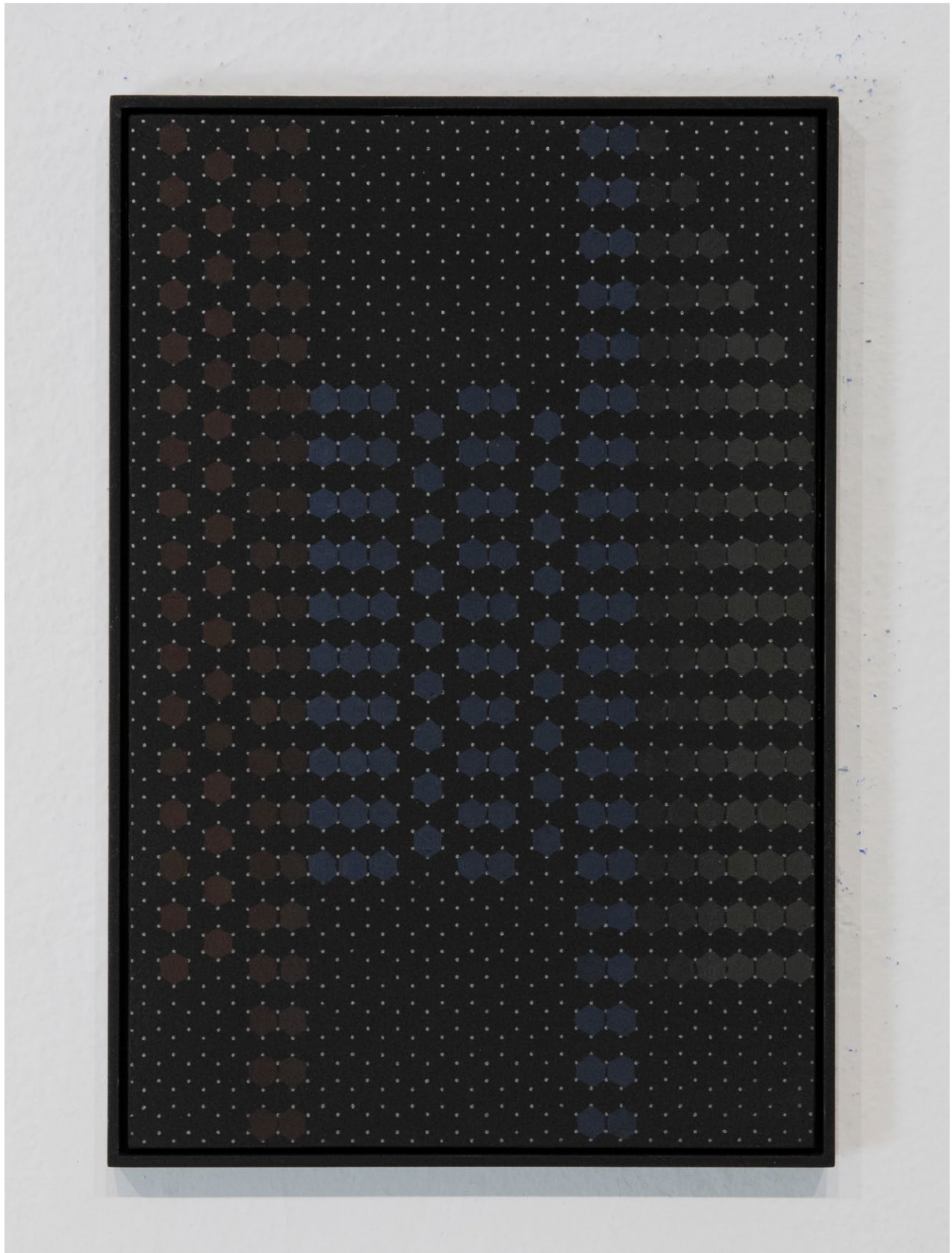
“Italian art has taught me that more you look at something, the deeper you can go. I am interested in that kind of time and relationship of me looking at something over and over again.”

Alison Hall



ALISON HALL

A Hymn (for the sacred grove), 2022
oil, graphite, and plaster on panel,
artist frame, Virginia maple, plaster, and oil
12 1/5 x 8 1/4 inches (31 x 21 cm)



“The artists who many critics cite when writing about Alison Hall’s paintings are Agnes Martin, Sol LeWitt, and Ad Reinhardt. Hall is one of the few contemporary abstract painters that I know of whose highly formal paintings do not diminish in the company of such rigorous ascetics. This is because her slow, mesmerizing, monochromatic works provoke a state of exalted seeing that is unlike anyone else’s, including the aforementioned artists.”

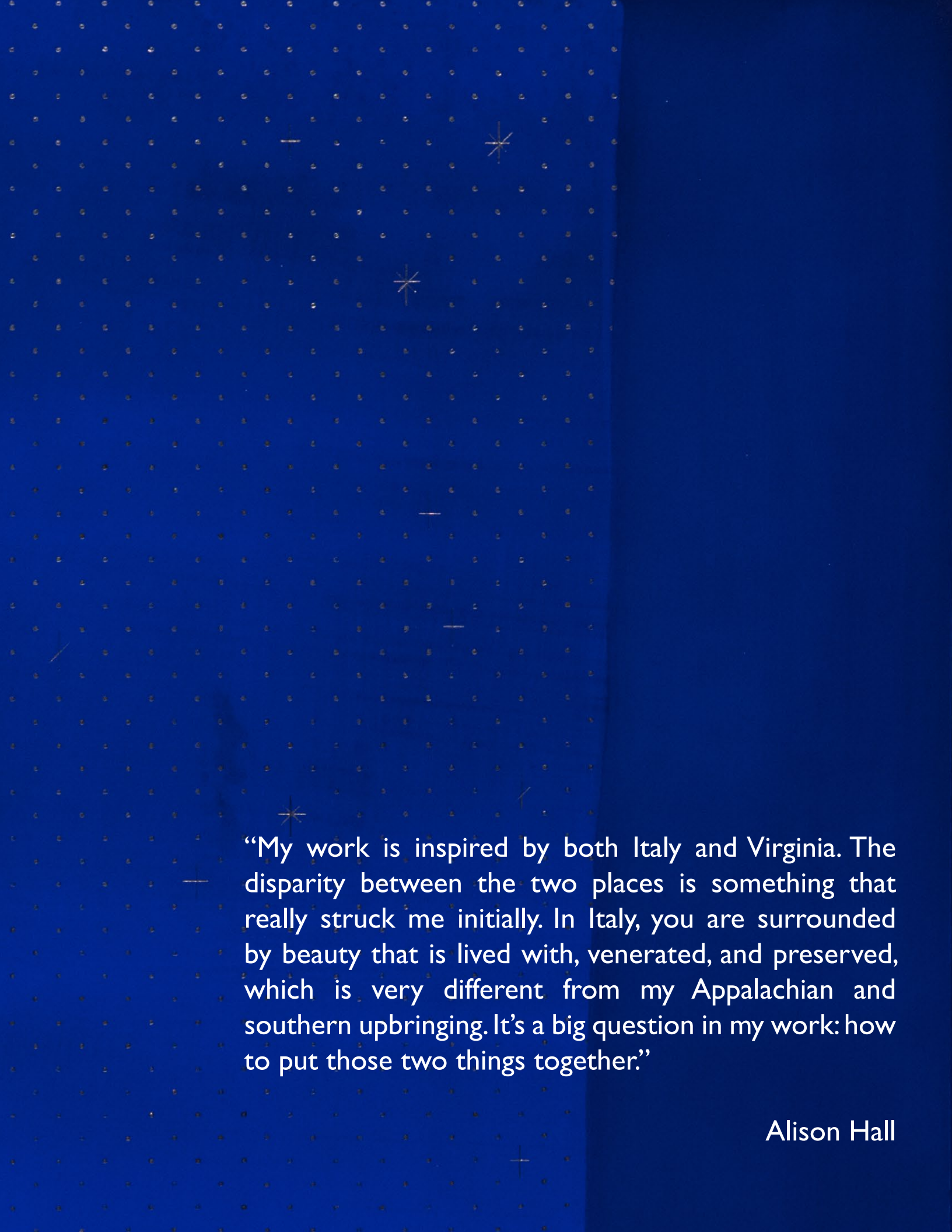
John Yau, *Hyperallergic*



ALISON HALL

A Ballad (for the heart of pine), 2022
oil, graphite, and plaster on panel,
artist frame, Virginia maple, plaster, and oil
12 1/5 x 8 1/4 inches (31 x 21 cm)





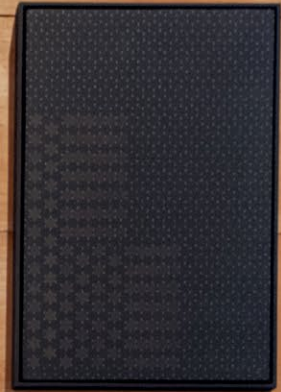
“My work is inspired by both Italy and Virginia. The disparity between the two places is something that really struck me initially. In Italy, you are surrounded by beauty that is lived with, venerated, and preserved, which is very different from my Appalachian and southern upbringing. It’s a big question in my work: how to put those two things together.”

Alison Hall

ALISON HALL

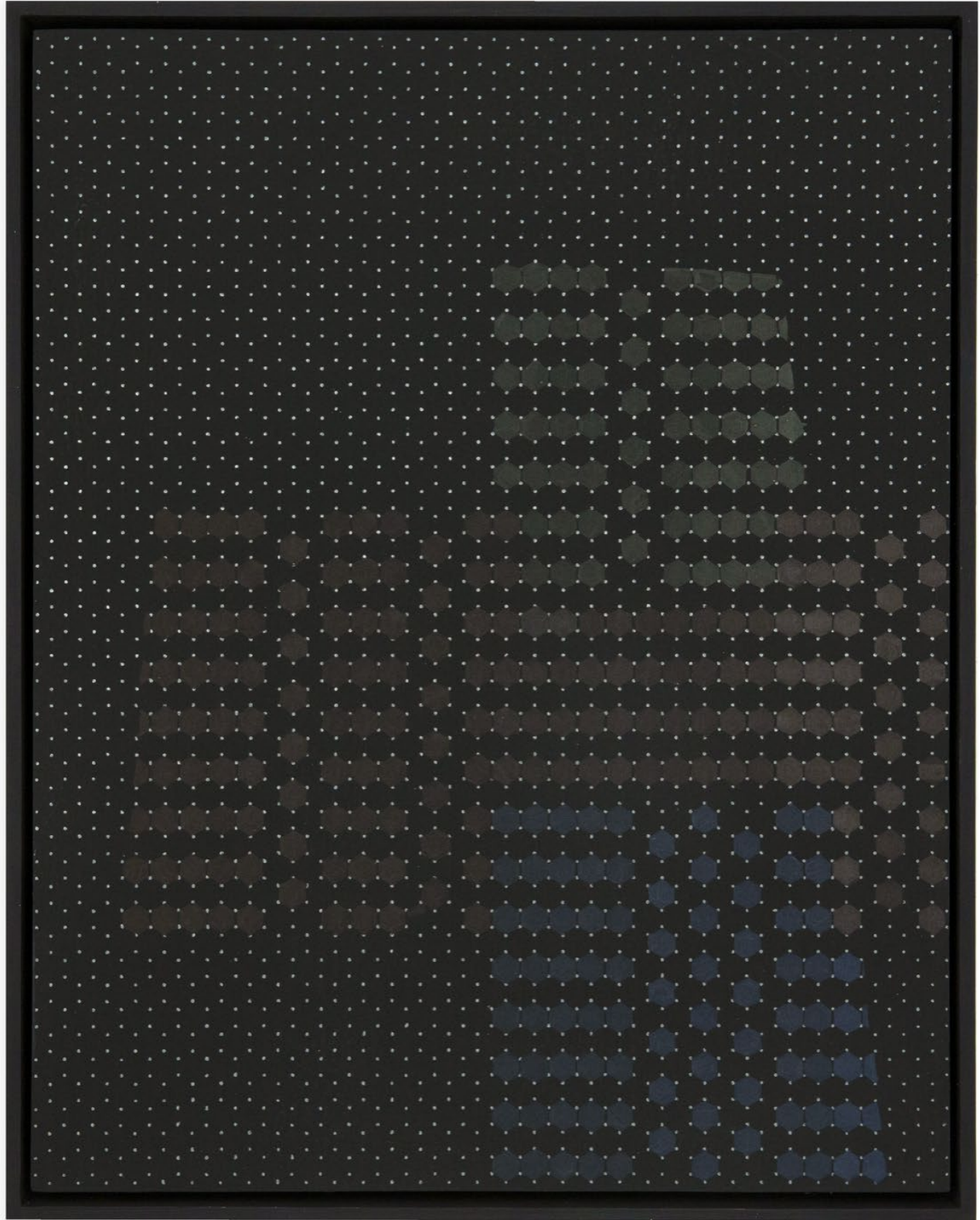
*A Hymn (for the mountain that you see from
the north and that I see from the south), 2022*
oil, graphite, and plaster on panel,
artist frame, Virginia maple, plaster, and oil
12 1/5 x 8 1/4 inches (31 x 21 cm)





ALISON HALL

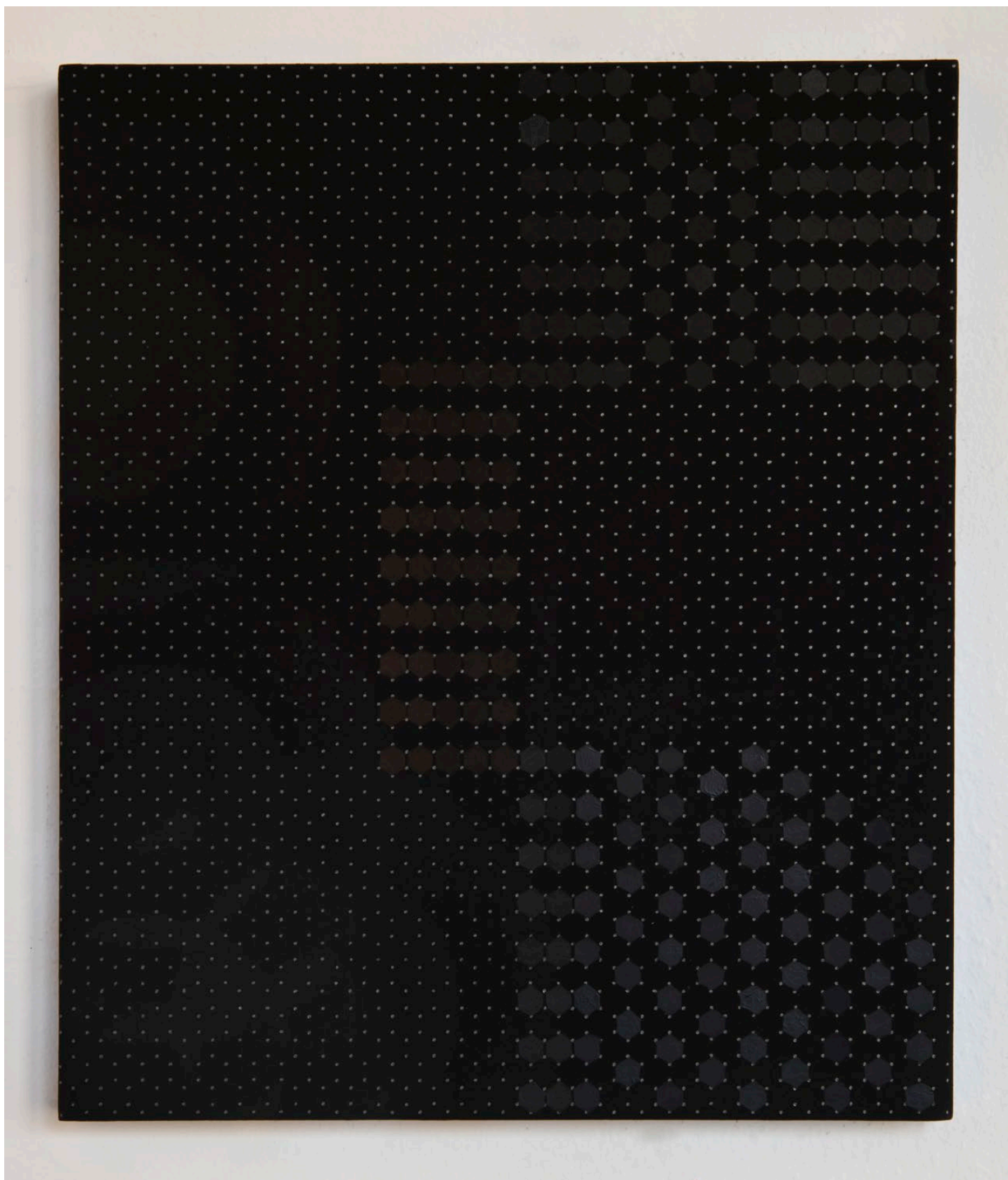
Thunderbird, 2022
oil, graphite, and plaster on panel,
artist frame, Virginia maple
13 x 11 in (33 x 27.9 cm)





ALISON HALL

Pitched Roof, 2022
oil, graphite, and plaster on panel,
artist frame, Virginia maple
13 x 11 in (33 x 27.9 cm)





ALISON HALL

A Hymn (for the longing), 2022
oil, graphite, and plaster on panel,
artist frame, Virginia maple, plaster, and oil
12 1/5 x 8 1/4 inches (31 x 21 cm)



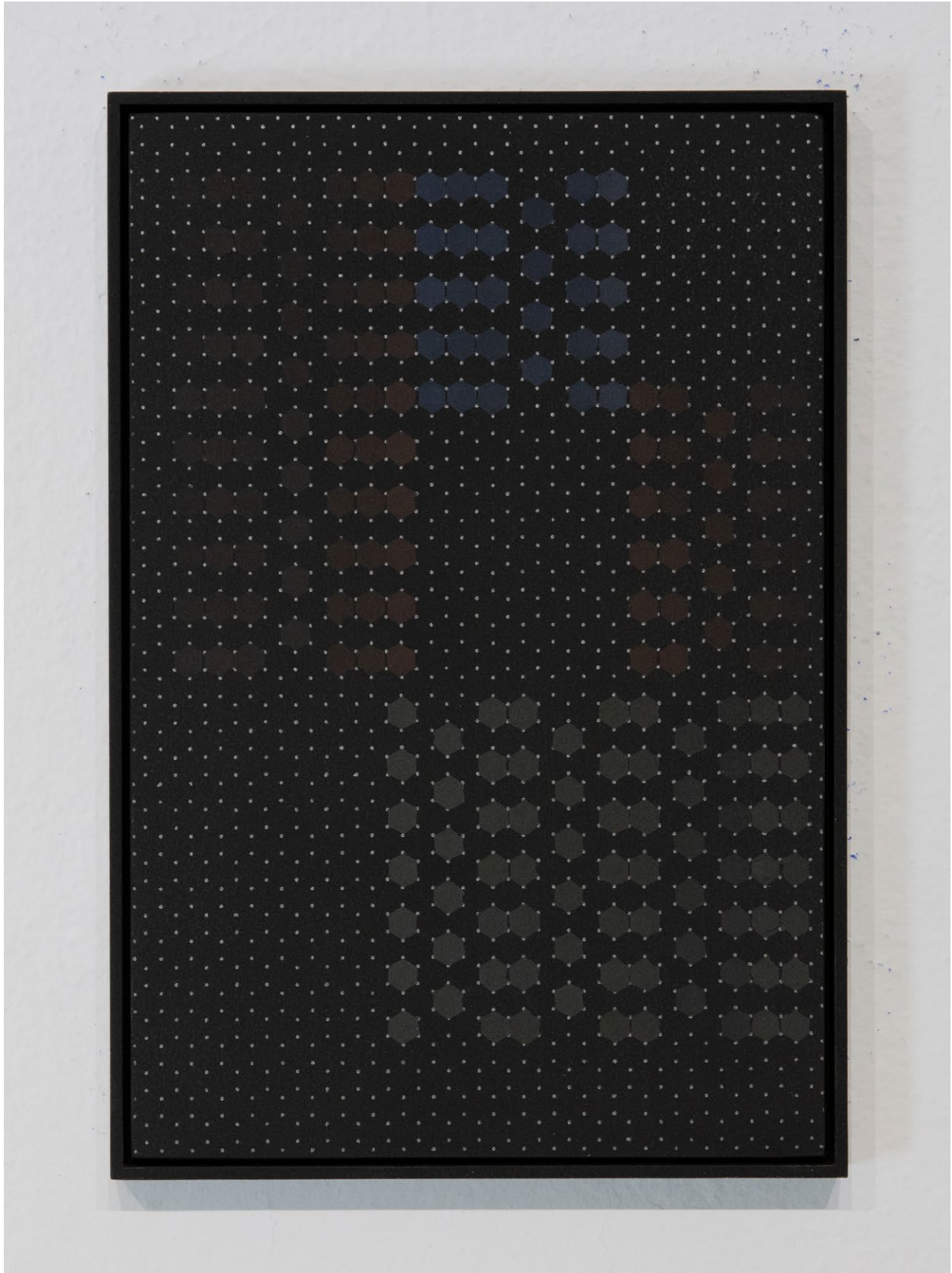
ALISON HALL

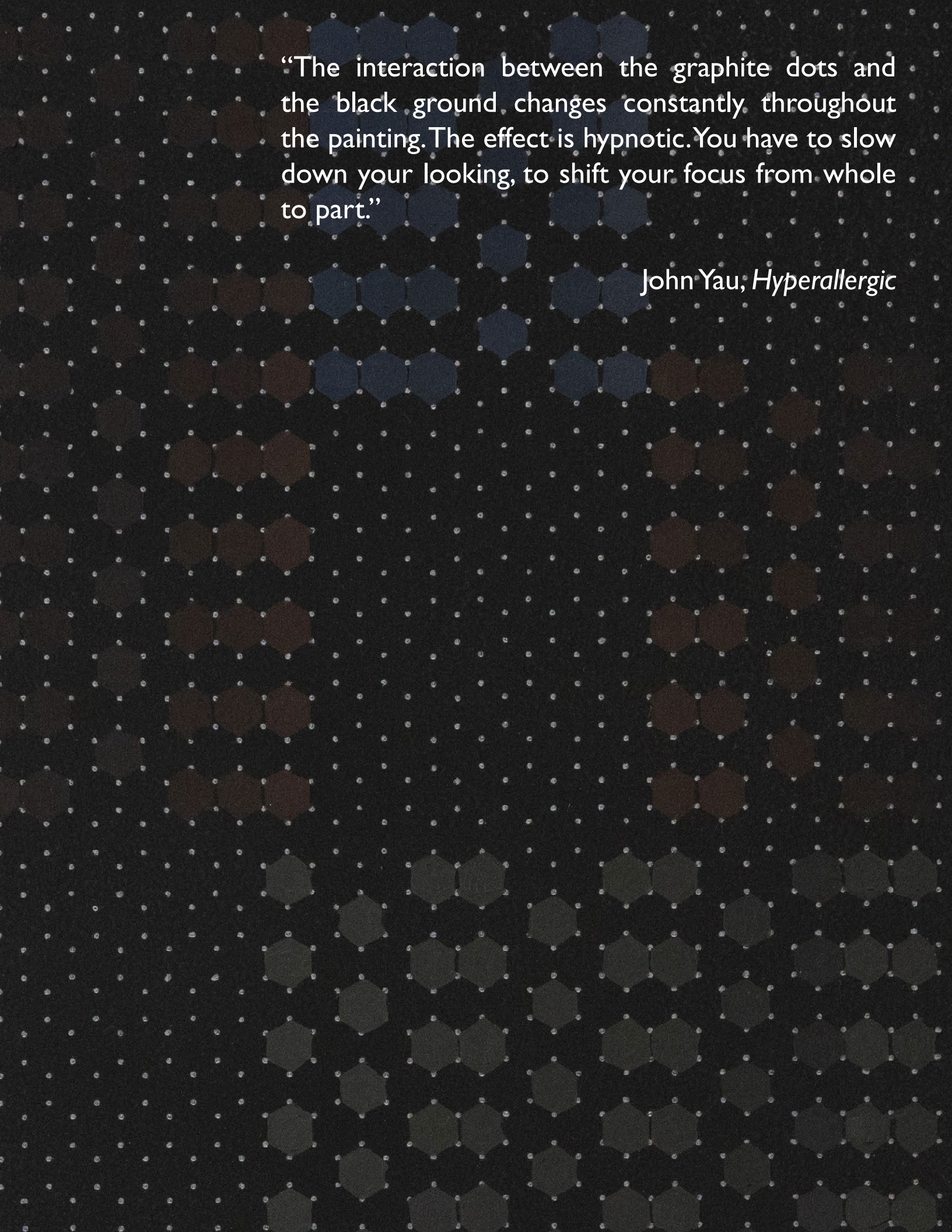
A Hymn (for the vesper hour), 2022
oil, graphite, and plaster on panel,
artist frame, Virginia maple, plaster, and oil
12 1/5 x 8 1/4 inches (31 x 21 cm)



ALISON HALL

A Hymn (for the shadow thats cast by your home in late evening light), 2022
oil, graphite, and plaster on panel,
artist frame, Virginia maple, plaster, and oil
12 1/5 x 8 1/4 inches (31 x 21 cm)



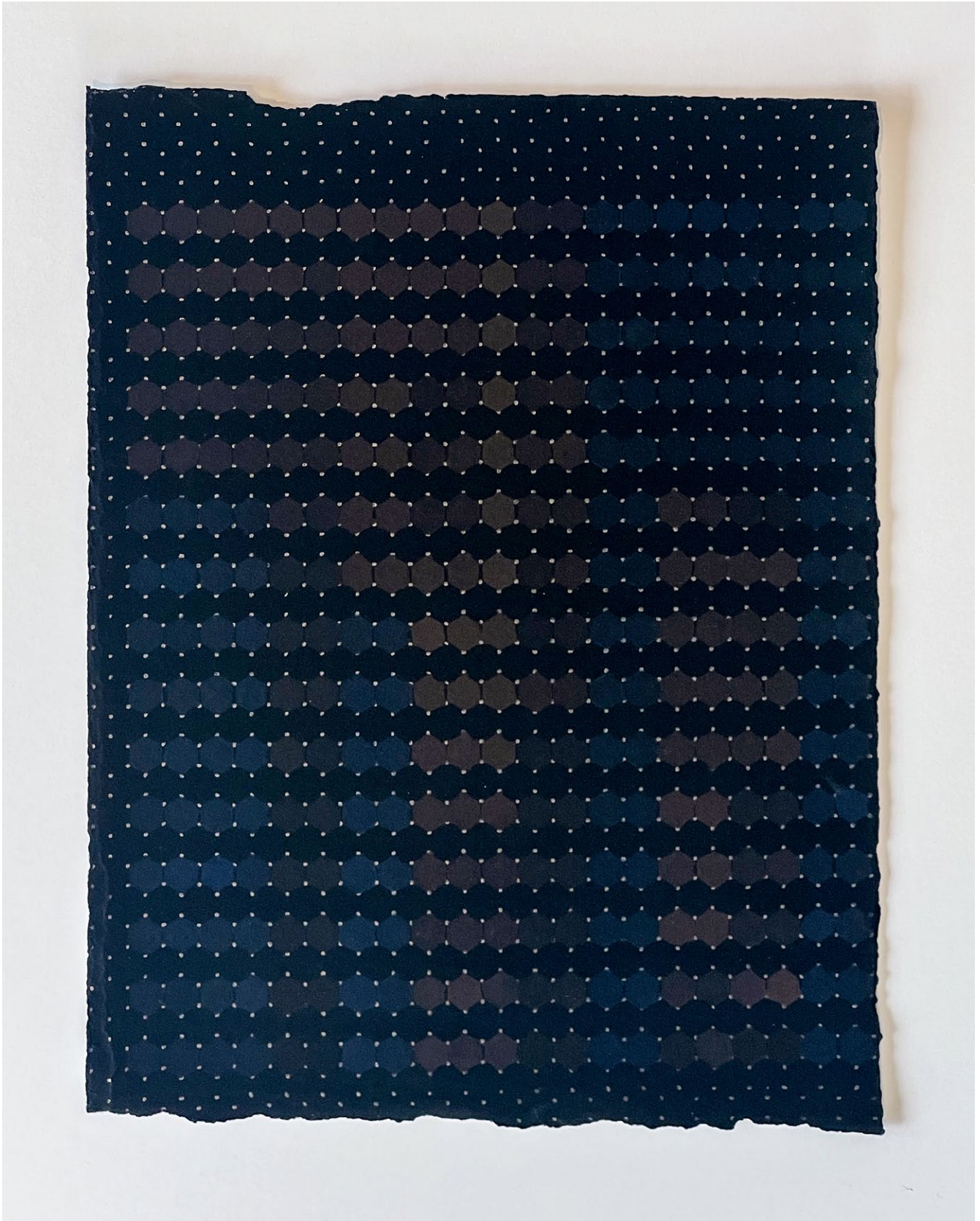


“The interaction between the graphite dots and the black ground changes constantly throughout the painting. The effect is hypnotic. You have to slow down your looking, to shift your focus from whole to part.”

John Yau, *Hyperallergic*

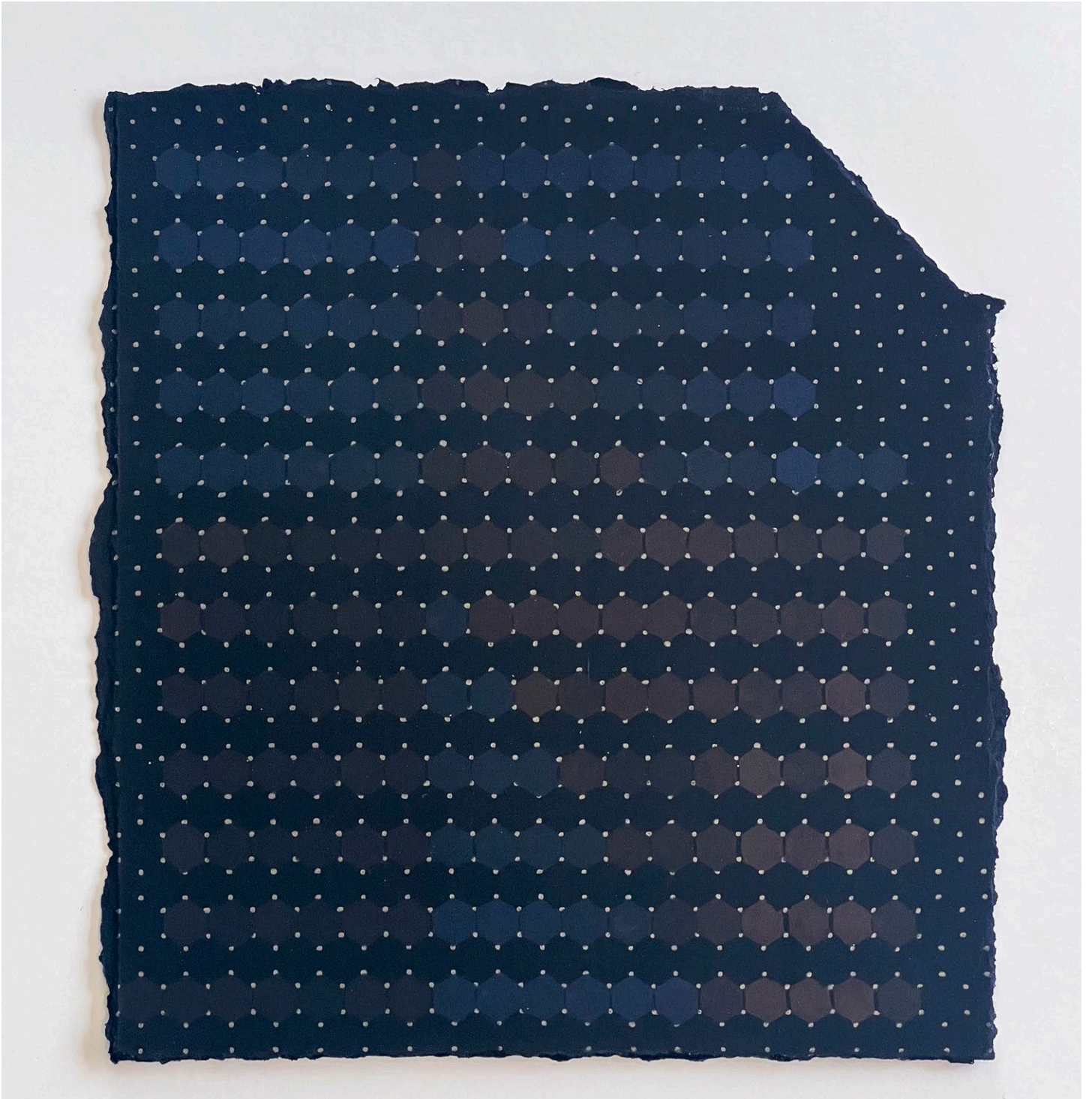
ALISON HALL

A Hymn (for the wild birds that warble), 2023
gouache and graphite on paper
unframed
10 1/4 x 7 1/2 inches (26 x 19.1 cm)



ALISON HALL

A Hymn (for the high up and low down), 2023
gouache and graphite on paper
unframed
7 3/4 x 7 1/2 inches (19.7 x 19.1 cm)



Essay / Alison Hall

One and one is one
41 Ballads, 57 Hymns and 2 Odes

*Listen, she says,
There's one more thing.
Regarding the fires, there are two.
Left and right, they grow wiser in the same house.
Up and down, the higher incases the lower, and the lower clings to the higher.
Inner and outer, these two illuminations are a thousand illuminations.*

*But I'm thinking,
My hands know things my eyes can't see.
My eyes see things my hands can't hold.
—an excerpt from the poem 'The Undressing', by Li-Young Lee*

This poem, written by Li-Young Lee, has remained a permanent fixture in my studio this year, for many years really. The title of the exhibition, *One and one is one*, comes from this poem, as do many other thoughts about this body of work. The poem is a conversation between two people who are inextricably connected.

The lines of the poem become a way of describing the rooms that these paintings were made for, or the star-studded ceiling and the diamond-patterned floor of the Arena Chapel (the opposing planes that contain the pattern and the color of my work). I like to think about the two voices in the poem, how the two bodies of paintings (the blue and the black) could represent the two illuminations: *Left and right, they grow wiser in the same house. Up and down, the higher incases the lower and the lower clings to the higher. Inner and outer, these two illuminations are a thousand illuminations.*

An artist friend visited recently and after seeing the mass of paintings populating the studio he reminded me that when I began painting abstractions it was a project of making 108 paintings, all the same size, exhibited in a linear configuration that hung across three walls of a long narrow room. There is also a history, a great canon of minimal works that include large numbers, accumulations—I recall Marcia Hafif's 'An Extended Grey Scale' (106 paintings), or Donald Judd's '100 untitled works in mill aluminum'. There are conversations that develop between works as they are being made in such numbers. Variation becomes an overriding theme between works, slight but constant changes of

form, of gesture, of tone. A language develops in the making and remaking and if one is lucky, a narrative unfolds. I find these themes of variation and accumulation to cross time and space—into another world, into generations (of my ancestors) in manual labor, in factories and farms. Where can the human mind go, or not go in such repetition, such circumstances? *Never let the fires go out.*

These paintings are very much about time, place, people and my relationship with them. They hold everything, from the memories of people I love to the smell of Southside Virginia. I am interested in how these things can be bound and imbued into the pictures I make. They hold lineages of painters who came before me, other continents, ancient wisdom passed down in the grand oral tradition of this craft. The people I come from reside in them (missing teeth, calloused hands, jaw-set gazes). My grandmothers sometime look back at me as I make them. *My hands know things my eyes can't see. My eyes see things my hands can't hold.*

I have very distinct feelings for the black paintings. They are intellectual, rigorous. These paintings are titled Hymns. They are stronger paintings that require a participation that is much more engaged. The pattern from the floor of the Arena Chapel is repeated in graphite dots that form hexagons and those are sometimes painted in tonal gradations of primary colors veering toward black. Occasionally, in the creating of these Hymns, I felt that I was making really good paintings and sometimes I could barely look at the paintings that felt less than perfect. I have come to feel that the paintings that I initially wanted to retouch or redo are my favorite paintings. Maybe it's the rural southern poor in me—my home was full of 'seconds', textiles made in the factories the women in my family worked in that had mistakes, something that held them back from being perfect.

I find the blue paintings to be terribly difficult to make but at the same time I have difficulty taking them seriously. They're a different thing to create. They are impulsive, prone to failure—sometimes I even consider them to be plain. These paintings I have titled Ballads. I am finding greater joy in the frivolity of these pictures. Somehow, I think they are more myself than anything else.

These bodies of work are inherently different from one another. The blue paintings are sourced from the ceiling of the Arena Chapel, the space of the heavens. The black paintings are of the mortal—the space where we stand. It's the exalted and the quotidian, all in one space. For the first time the black and blue works will be exhibited in two separate spaces—rooms that are mirrored

but the same. Here it's maybe helpful to note that each painting is the same size, held by the same frame—wood sourced from my small Virginia hometown and made to the specific proportion of the architecture in which they hang.

There are two paintings in the exhibition that could be perceived as anomalies—two red paintings, one installed in each room. The color red has no didactic reference to the Arena Chapel but perhaps explores the space between the two planes of my motifs. I've made red paintings for quite some time, always in private and never for anyone to see. They feel out of my range and vulnerable. I've titled these two paintings *Odes* and I see them as romantic pictures.

I am often astonished by how much the paintings know, how mysterious and knowing they are. Through the language of abstraction intimacy can be held, whole histories that only the painter and the painting knows. *Listen, she says.*

