

An abstract painting featuring a central dark brown shape, possibly a face or a mask, surrounded by vibrant colors like orange, red, green, and blue. The background is a mix of light blue and white with visible brushstrokes and textures.

SURROUNDED BY WATER
EDRA SOTO | EMANUEL TORRES

LATCHKEY GALLERY
NOVEMBER + DECEMBER 2022

SURROUNDED BY WATER

EDRA SOTO | EMANUEL TORRES

November 04 - December 18, 2022

LatchKey Gallery
New York, NY



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Catalogue © 2023 LatchKey Gallery

Artworks © 2021 - 2022 Edra Soto + Emanuel Torres

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Installation view, *Surrounded by Water*, larger version on pages 6-7

EDRA SOTO



Edra Soto is a Puerto-Rican born artist, curator, educator, and co-director of the outdoor project space, The Franklin. Soto has exhibited at venues including El Museo del Barrio, NY; Albright-Knox Northland, NY; Museum of Contemporary Art of Chicago, IL; Smart Museum, IL and the Abrons Arts Center, NY. Recently, Soto completed a large-scale public art commission titled “Screenhouse”, currently on view at Millennium Park in Chicago. The artist has attended residency programs at Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture, Beta-Local, the Robert Rauschenberg Foundation Residency, Headlands Center for the Arts, Project Row Houses and Art Omi, among others.

Soto has been awarded the Efroymsen Contemporary Arts Fellowship, the Illinois Arts Council Agency Fellowship, the Foundwork Artist Prize and the Joan Mitchell Foundation Painters & Sculptors Grant, among others. Between 2019-2020, Soto exhibited and traveled to Brazil, Puerto Rico, and Cuba as part of the MacArthur Foundation’s International Connections Fund. Soto holds an MFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and a bachelor’s degree from Escuela de Artes Plásticas y Diseño de Puerto Rico. The artist lives and works in Chicago.

EMANUEL TORRES



Emanuel Torres-Pérez (Aguas Buenas, Puerto Rico, 1988) creates abstract paintings of fragmented bodies liberating from the restraints of cultural imperialism.

Rich in color and shape, his rhythmic compositions find influence in Olga Albizu (1924-2005), Rosado del Valle (1922-2008), Carmelo Fontáñez (1945) and Julio Suárez (1947), among others. Torres pulls from Puerto Rican masters, to push through colonial systems resulting in stylistic revolutions that move from fervent marks, to graceful arcs.

Torres graduated from the University of Puerto Rico, Río Piedras with a BA in theatre and philosophy and continued his studies in video art, installation and performance at the University of Puerto Rico, Cayey. He is the recipient of the 2018 Pollock-Krasner Foundation Grant and has participated in group and individual exhibitions across Puerto Rico, Europe, Japan, and the United States.





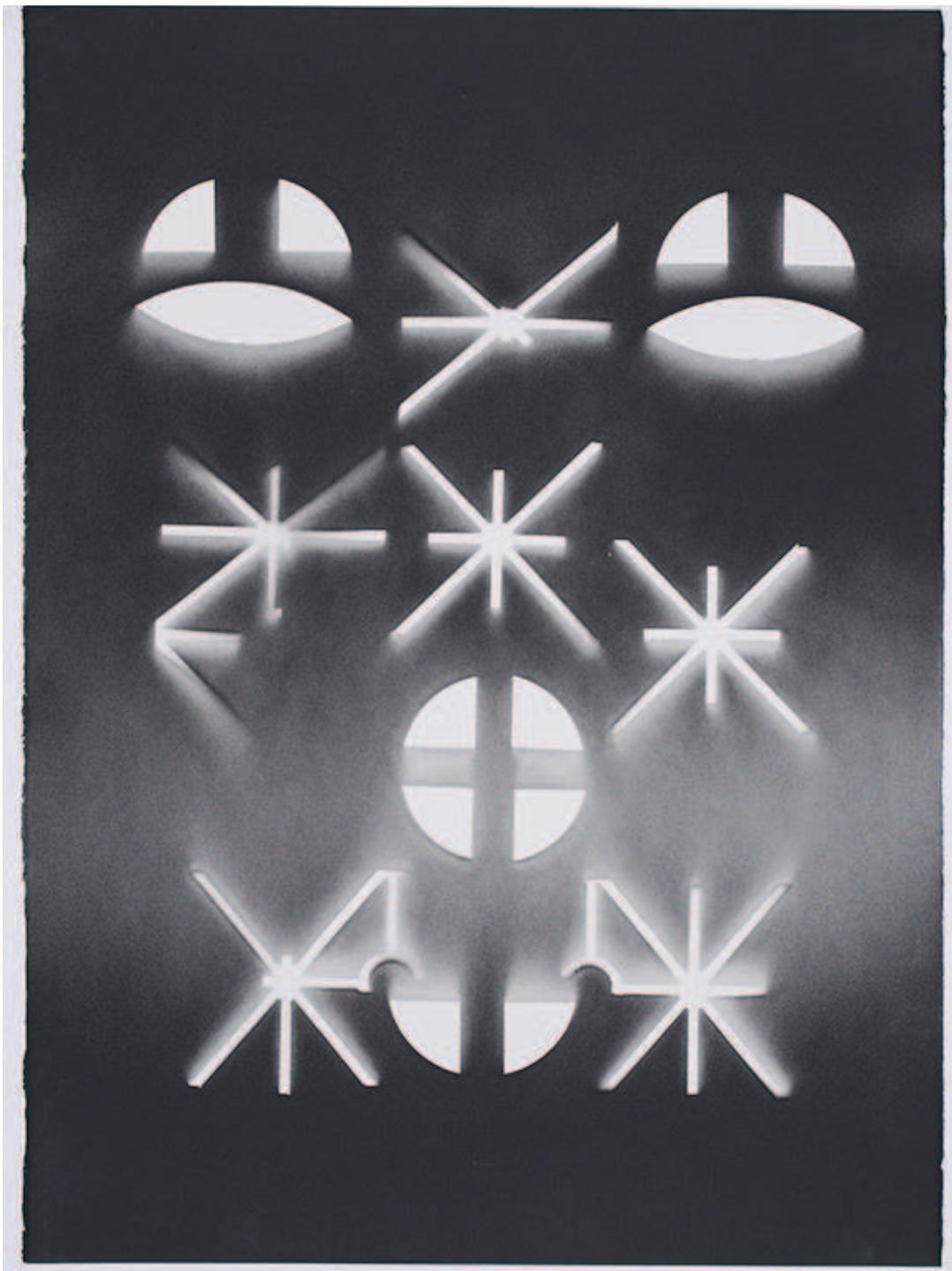
LatchKey Gallery is proud to present, *SURROUNDED BY WATER*, a two-person exhibition featuring new works by Edra Soto and Emanuel Torres. Drawing on historical, political and personal narratives, Soto and Torres create abstract, visual essays documenting the consequences of the colonial relationship between the United States and Puerto Rico.

As part of Edra Soto's ongoing series, *GRAFT, Dos Cuerpos (Two Bodies)*, is a collection of works on paper of fragmented compositions sourced from her decade long investigation into the origins of *Rejas*; ornamental iron screens ubiquitous in the architecture of post-war Puerto Rico due to the security they provided and their ability to allow for cross ventilation. Today, these iron *rejas* are not only viewed as a protection device as much as a language that pertains to the island's visual culture. The ghostly imprints found in *Dos Cuerpos* suggest a sense of fragility, an absence which act as metaphors to her personal experience as she cares for her elderly mother who suffers from dementia, the numerous catastrophic hurricanes and recent laws that have accelerated settled colonialism on the island. This sense of absence, loss and removal converge on to the paper as cryptic remnants or archeological findings from the past.

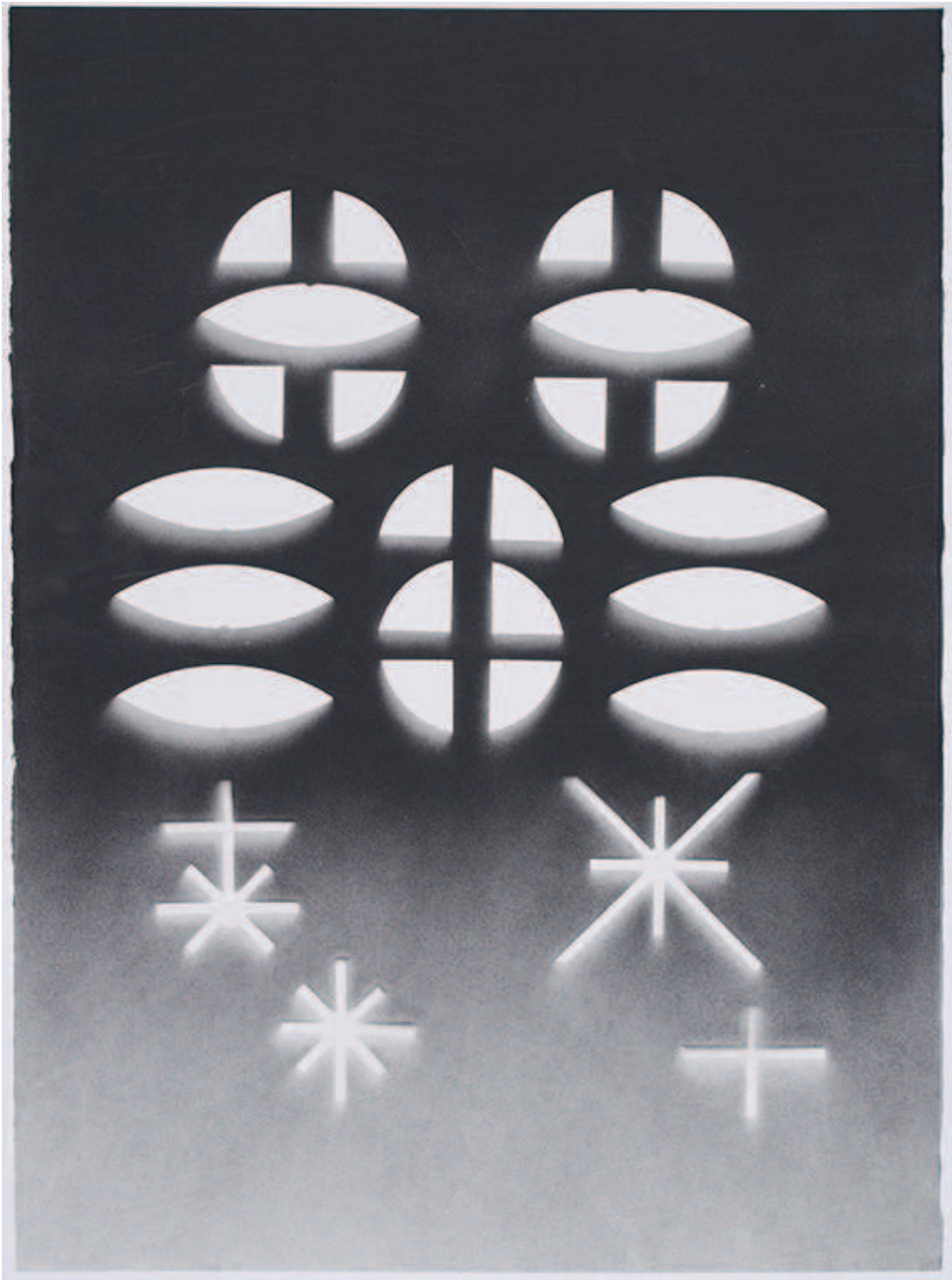
Where Soto's geometrical abstractions are derived from the architecture of Puerto Rico, the gestural abstractions by Emanuel Torres are examinations of the human form. Working from the body, Torres deconstructs the form, fragmenting them into a reduction of shapes and colors that energetically consume the canvas. As Torres explains, "the colonial relationship creates a psychological way of being, some sort of deformation. Trying to understand what is around and creating something out of it. In this case, painting is a way of freedom, ... that build themselves in the painting as a poem of forms that in some way articulates what is happening around me." These gestural works result in a symbolic liberation of the colonized body, freeing these forms to create a new body; a rebirth.

SURROUNDED BY WATER serves as a visual essay into the inequities imposed on an island and its people. Words resulting from the 45th President who, when asked what he knew about Puerto Rico after the catastrophic hurricane María, replied, "It is an island, surrounded by water..." serves as the symbolic indifference the US Government has towards its colonized-citizens.

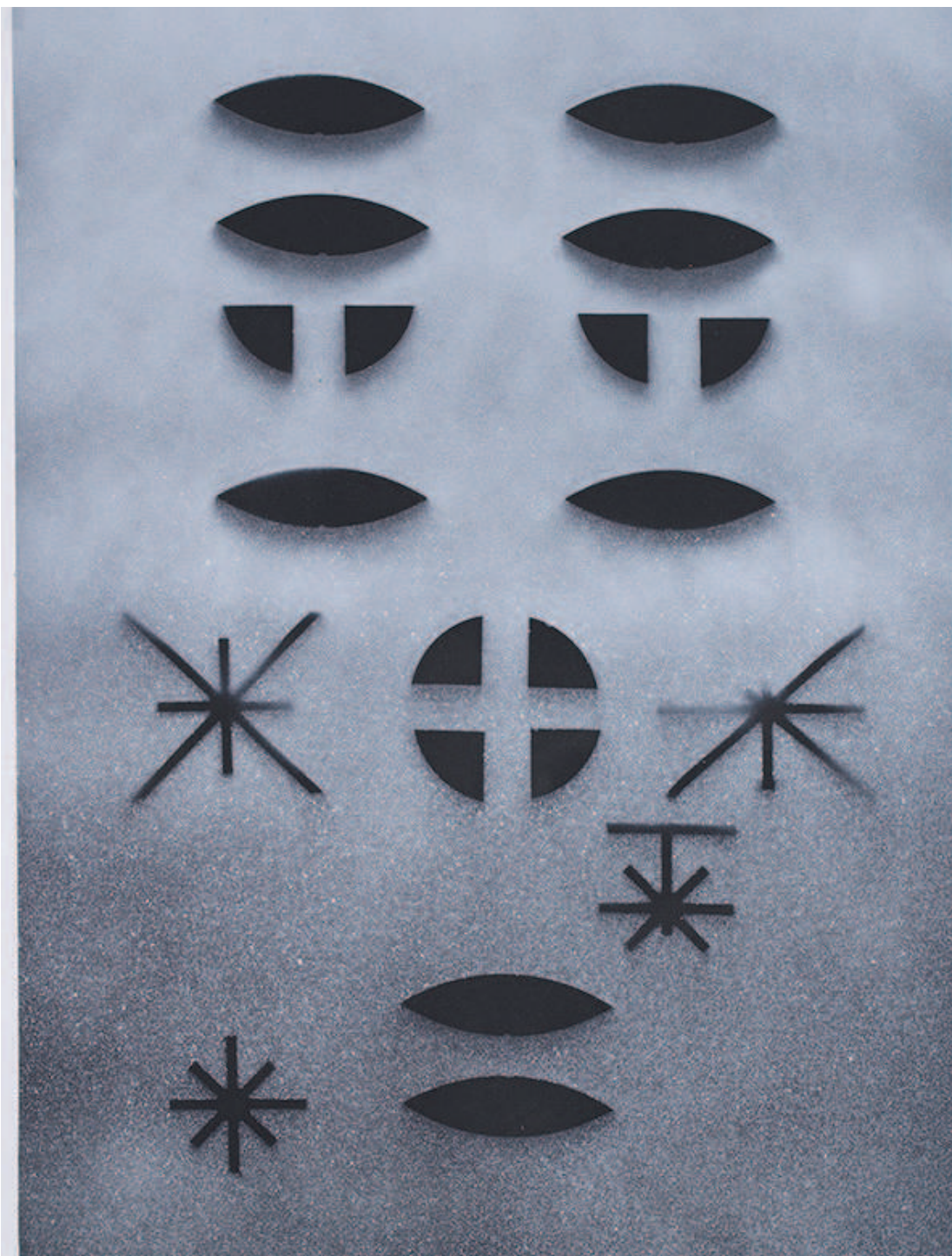
LatchKey Gallery is proud to partner with The Clemente for this exhibition. Upcoming programs at The Clemente include: Emanuel Torres as an artist-in-residence through November 20th, an artist talk with Edra Soto on November 5th and ongoing studio tours.



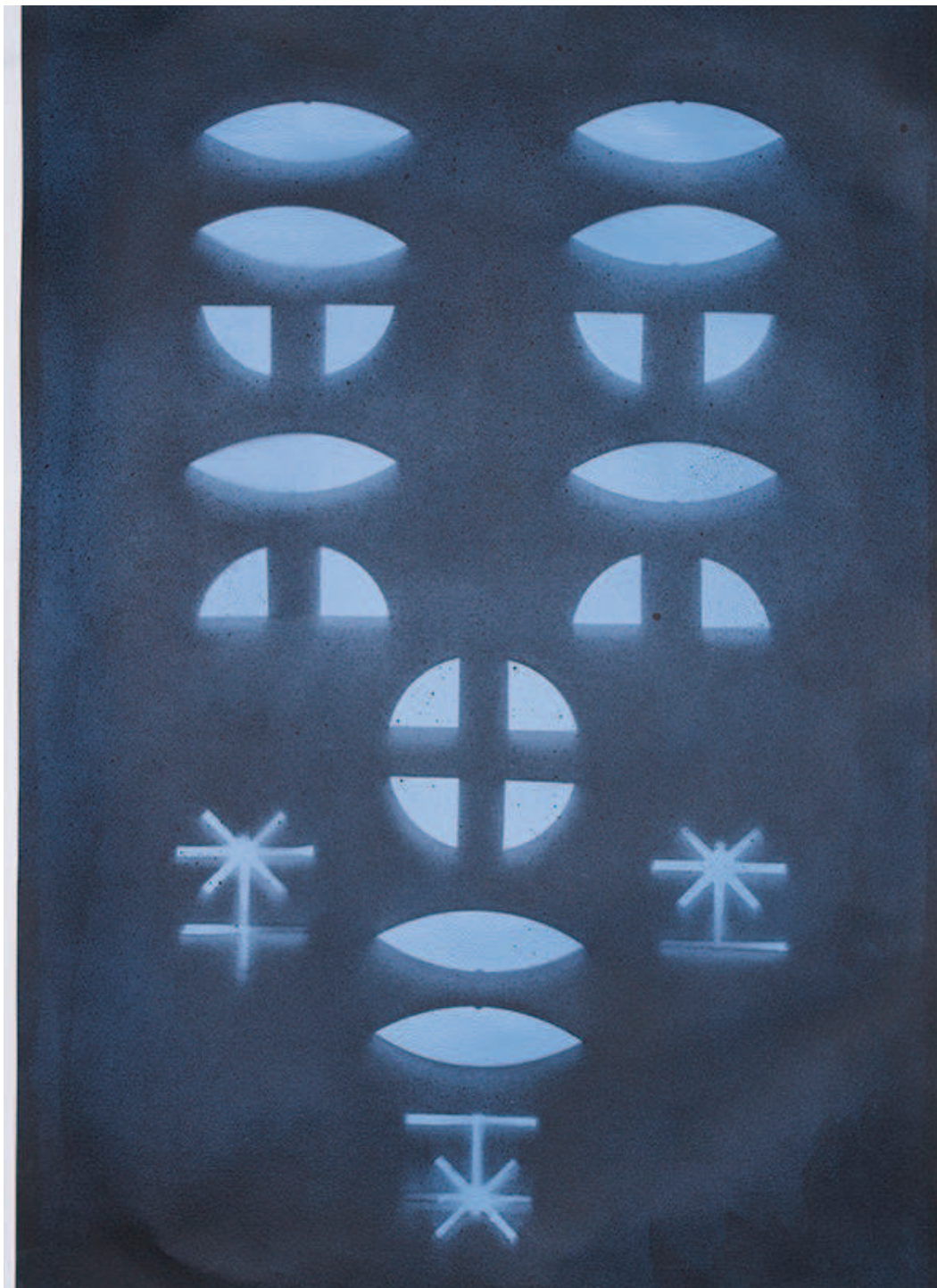
Dos Cuerpos 4, 2022
Edra Soto
Latex paint and mixed media
on paper.
35 x 23 in



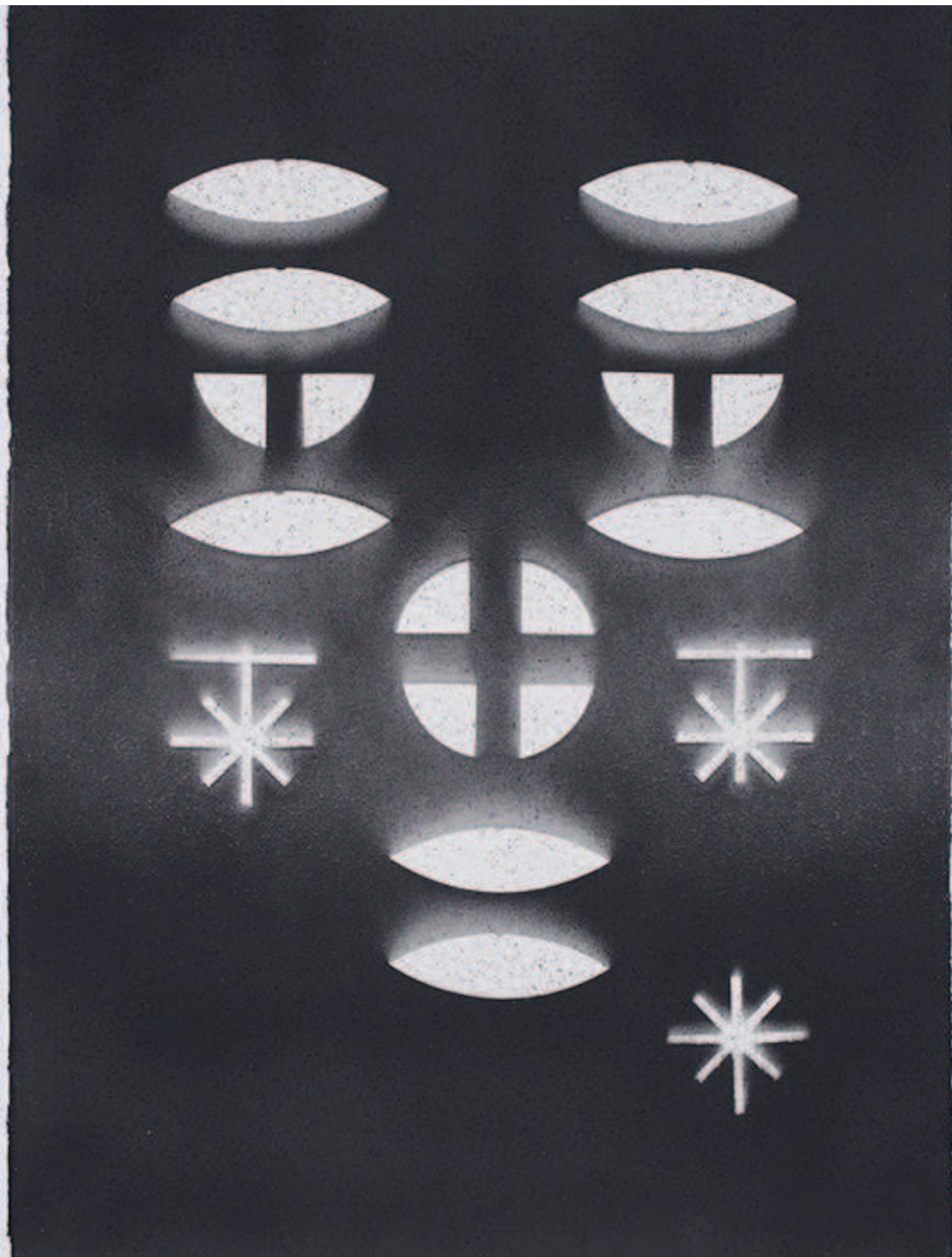
Dos Cuerpos 5, 2022
Edra Soto
Latex paint and mixed media
on paper
30 x 22 in



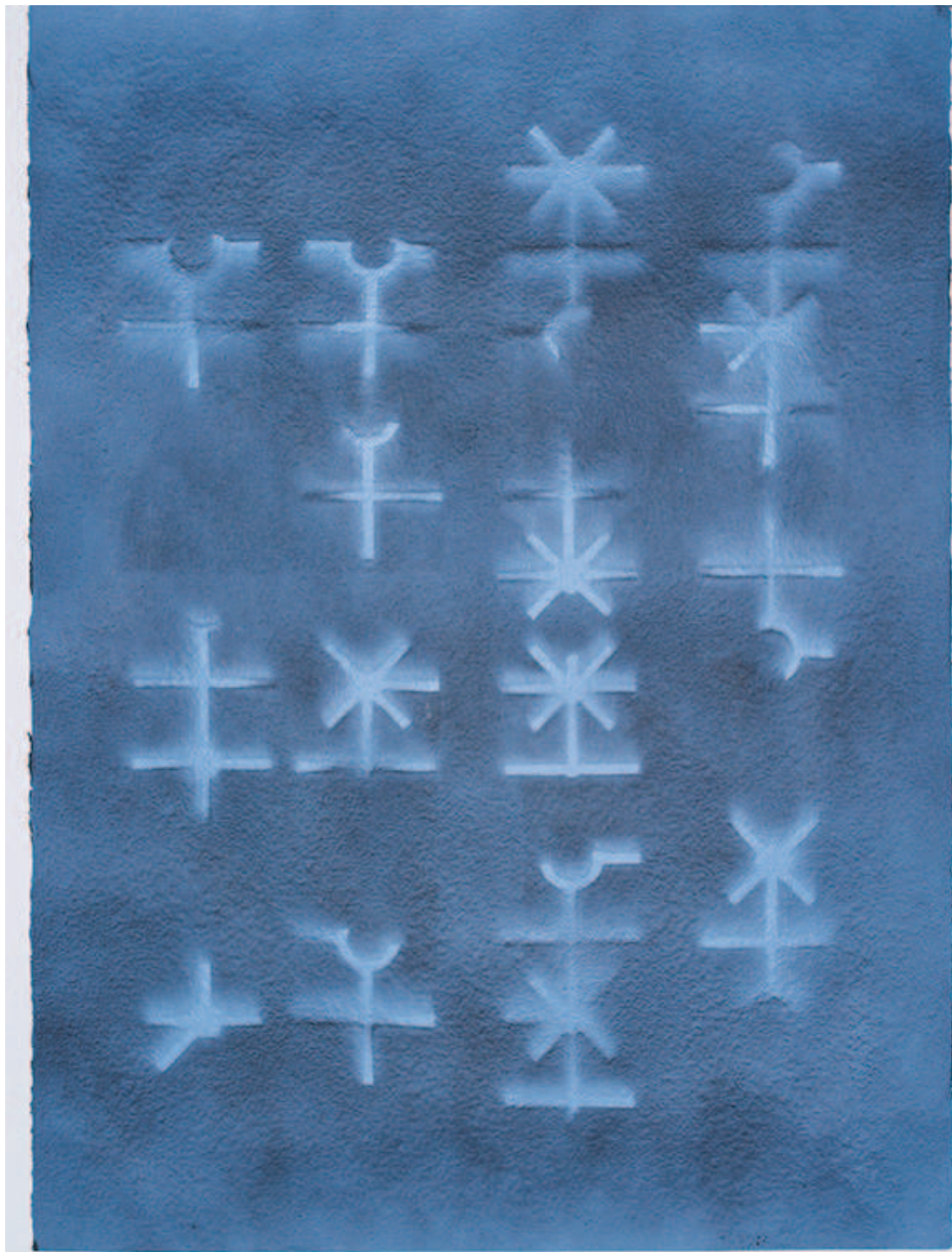
Dos Cuerpos 9, 2022
Latex paint and mixed
media on paper
35 x 23 in



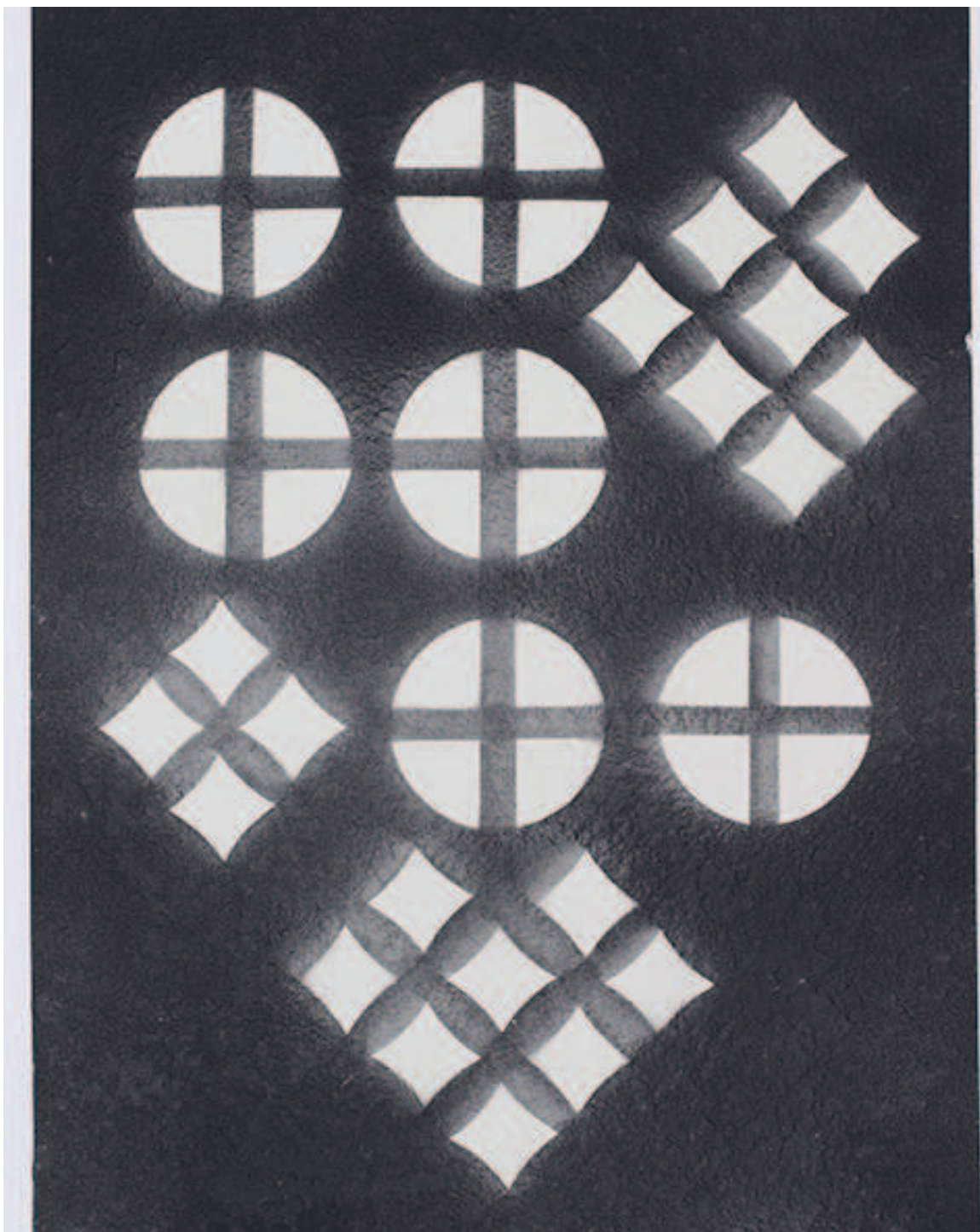
Dos Cuerpos 8, 2022
Latex paint and mixed
media on paper
35 x 23 in



Dos Cuerpos 5, 2022
Edra Soto
Latex paint and mixed
media on paper
30 x 22 in



Dos Cuerpos 6, 2022
Edra Soto
Latex paint and mixed
media on paper
30 x 22 in



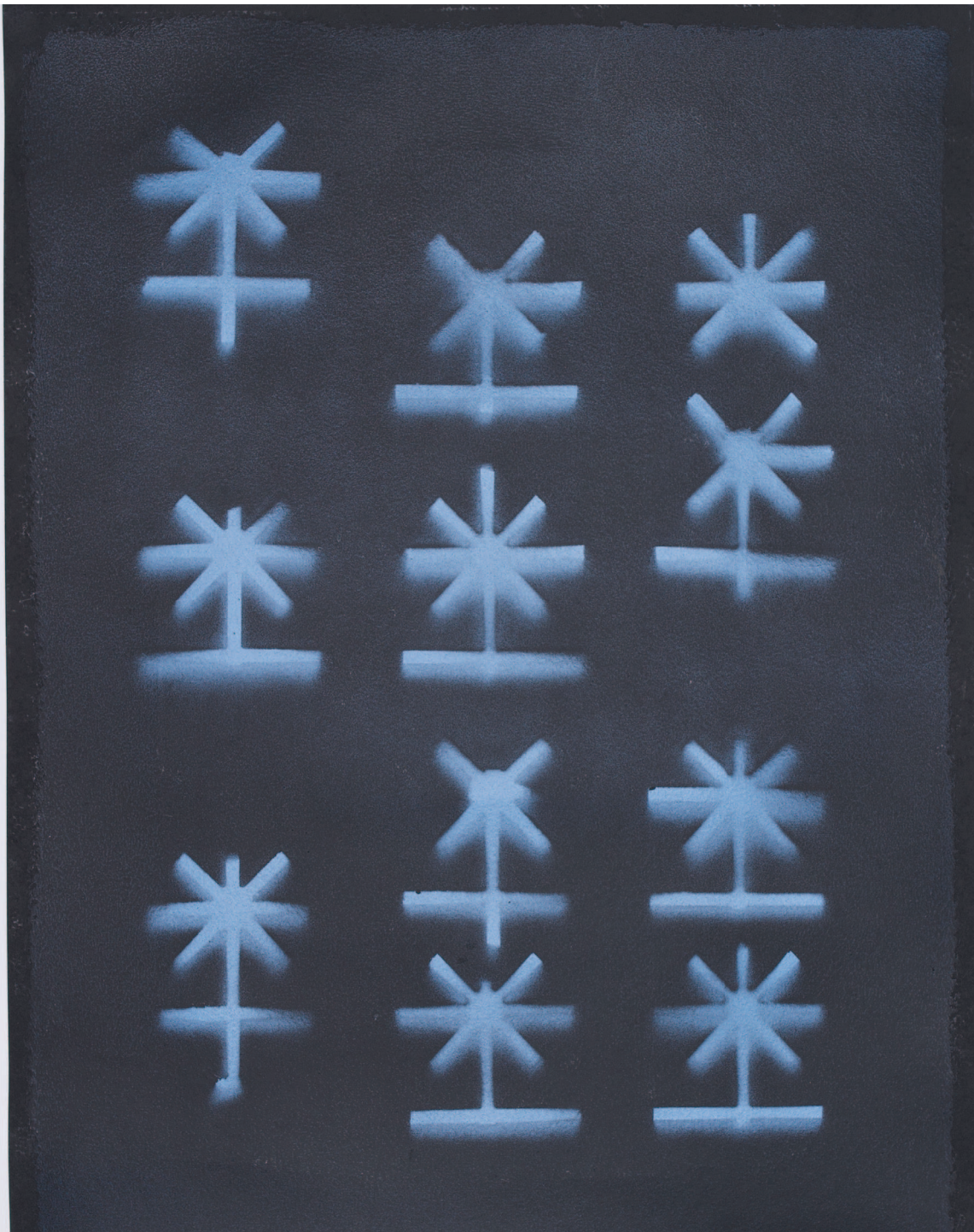
Dos Cuerpos 1, 2022
Edra Soto
Latex paint and mixed
media on paper
24 x 18 in



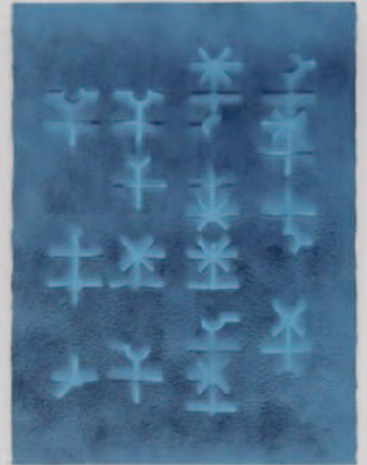
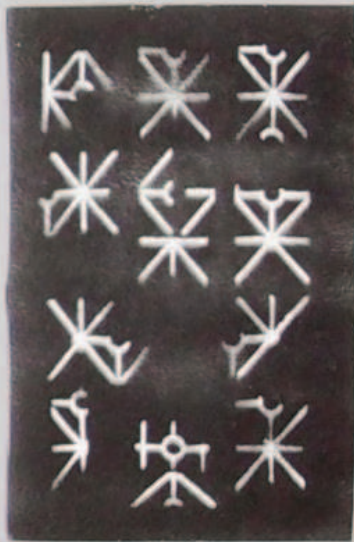
Dos Cuerpos 7, 2022
Edra Soto
Latex paint and mixed
media on paper
35 x 23 in

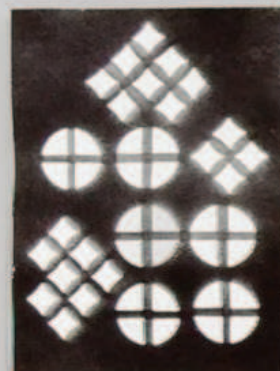
Dos Cuerpos 2, 2022
Edra Soto
Latex paint and mixed
media on paper
24 x 18 in

Right: Installation
view of Soto's work















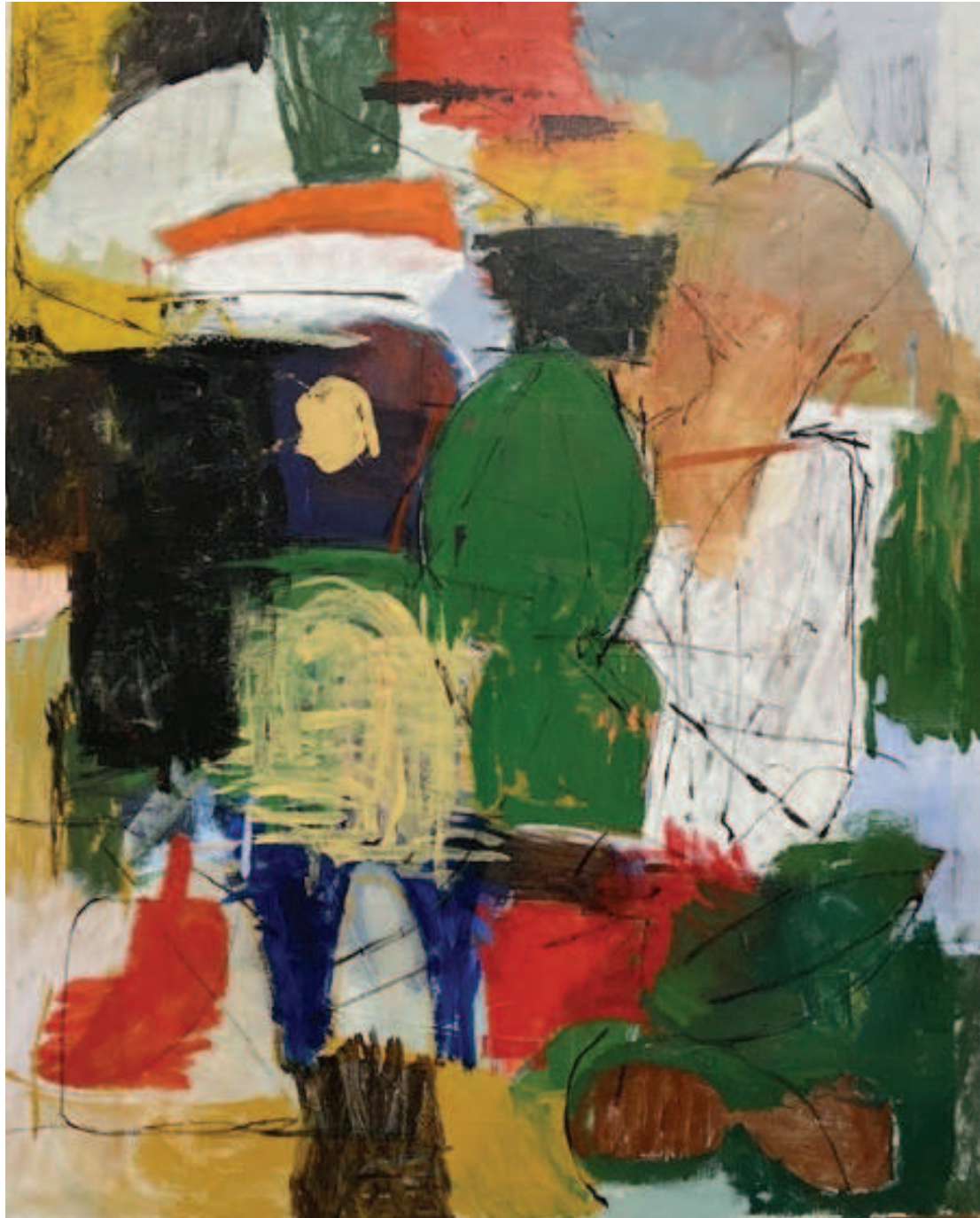
Surrounded by Water, Untitled 1, 2022
Emanuel Torres
Oil, acrylic, and charcoal on canvas
66 x 96 in
(Pages 22-24)



Surrounded by Water,
Untitled 5, 2022
Emanuel Torres
Oil, acrylic, and
charcoal on canvas
60 x 48 in



Surrounded by Water,
Untitled 8, 2022
Emanuel Torres
Oil, acrylic, and
charcoal on canvas
60 x 48in



Surrounded by Water,
Untitled 2, 2022
Emanuel Torres
Oil, acrylic, and
charcoal on canvas
60 x 48in



Surrounded by Water,
Untitled 4, 2022
Emanuel Torres
Oil, acrylic, and
charcoal on canvas
60 x 48in



Surrounded by Water,
Untitled 7, 2022
Emanuel Torres
Oil, acrylic, and
charcoal on canvas
60 x 48in



*Surrounded by Water,
Untitled 3, 2022*
Emanuel Torres
Oil, acrylic, and charcoal
on canvas
60 x 48in

Right: Installation view
featuring *Surrounded by
Water, Untitled 11 + 12*
Oil, acrylic, and charcoal
on canvas
24 x 18 in



