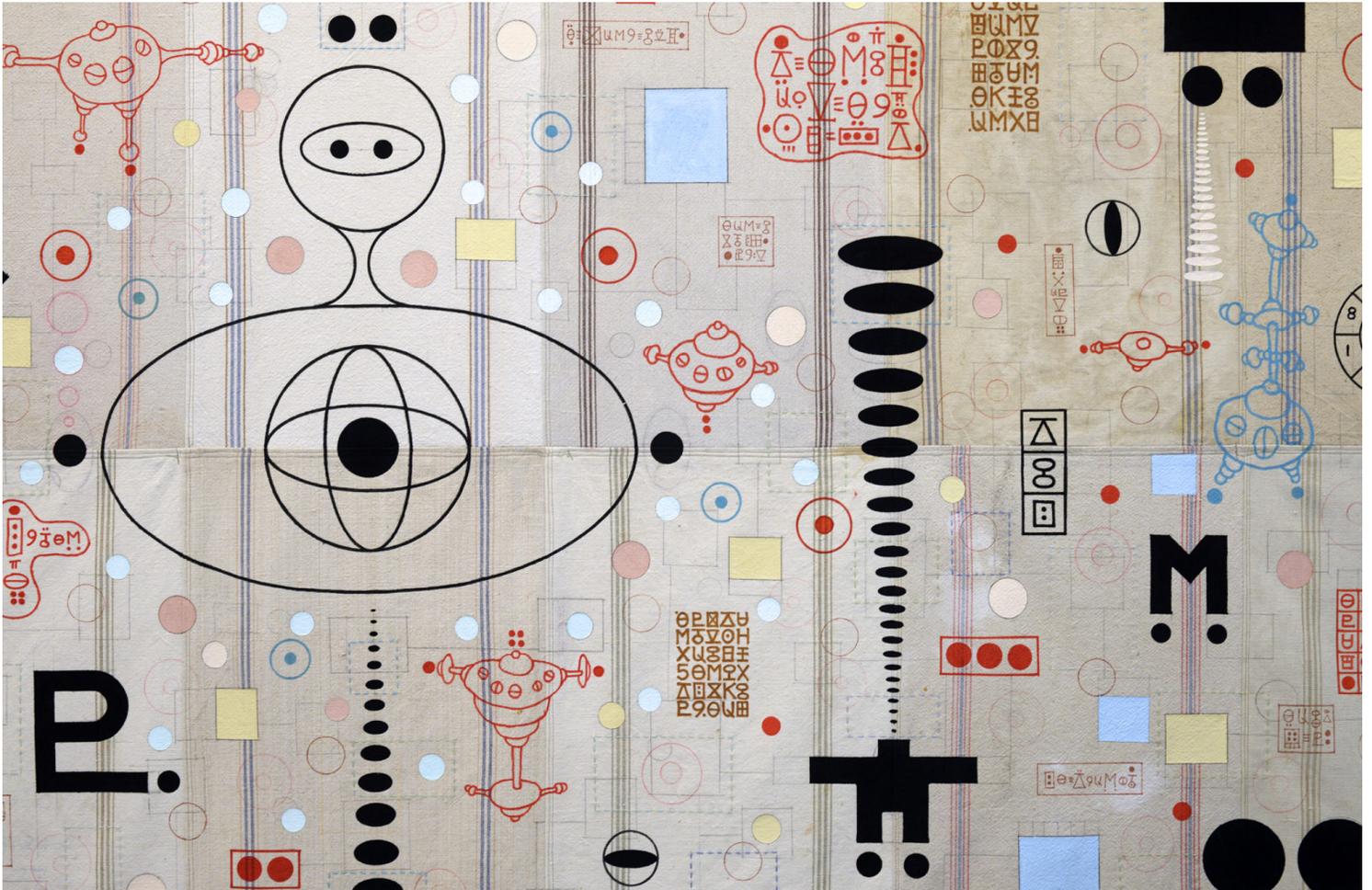


## The Aldrich



NEWS | BLOG

### Artist Interview: Karla Knight

Karla Knight has spent the last forty years creating an impressive body of work that spans painting, drawing, and photography. *Navigator*, her first institutional solo show, will take the form of a focused survey, charting the development of her far-seeing language over a four-decade-long career. Knight's imagery is steeped in science, the occult, early twentieth century abstraction, Surrealism, and Native American art. Her visual language is purposefully impenetrable— she offers no clues or methods to its decoding. For her, its true meaning must remain unnamed, as it is ultimately inspired by “the mysteries and absurdities

**of life.” Her dense paintings and works on paper swirl with graphic shapes, diagrams, and ciphers that appear both archaic and spaced-aged.**

The exhibition will track the vast range and evolution of Knight’s pictographic lexicon—the spaceships, floating orbs, and eyeballs, as well as the hieroglyphic-like lists, charts, codes, alphabets, and other invented symbols— that embody these all-over compositions. Similar to the trailblazing abstract artist Hilma af Klint (1862–1944) and the far-sighted symbolist Agnes Pelton (1881–1961), Knight’s enigmatic image databank channels a passionate engagement with spiritual or nonphysical realms. The exhibition will also debut an entirely new series, featuring what Knight refers to as “tapestries.” Using reclaimed cotton cut from circa 1940s–50s seed and grain bags purchased on eBay, Knight sews pieces together to form a patchwork composition. Unstretched, she draws and paints directly on the surface with flashe, colored pencil, and graphite, while hand embroidering select sections. This exhibition, organized by Senior Curator Amy Smith-Stewart, will open on October 17, 2021 and will be on view through May 1, 2022.

Karla answered a few questions about her upcoming exhibition at The Aldrich.

**Q** As a Connecticut-based artist, what does it mean to you to have an exhibition at The Aldrich?

**A** As a Connecticut-based artist, I am thrilled to have a solo exhibition at The Aldrich. Any artist living in this state would be! The Aldrich’s rich history of giving extraordinary artists their first museum shows is wonderful to be a part of. I live in Redding

and have driven past the Museum countless times in the last 20 years. Dream come true.

**Q** You'll be debuting a new body of work you refer to as "tapestries" in your exhibition. What do you hope visitors will take away from this new work?

**A** My new "tapestry" series is coming to fruition just in time for my Aldrich show. I have been leading up to it for years. The tapestries are made of vintage seamless grain sacks sown together, then painted and drawn with my usual imagery, as well as some embroidery. They are influenced by Native American art, specifically Lakota winter counts, which were used as calendars of indigenous life and cosmology. In my case, I hope they act as windows into otherworldly imagery and language, whose underlying system is not known.

**Q** How do you stay inspired in the studio and at home?

**A** I am inspired by the universe at all times, especially in the studio. My head is constantly full of cosmic information. It just flows out, regardless of location and circumstance.

Top image: Karla Knight, Tapestry (detail), 2020, Flashe, acrylic marker, pencil, and embroidery on cotton, 72 x 121 inches, Courtesy of the artist

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