

Alexa Guariglia

Open Sesame

September 12 - October 24, 2026

Moskowitz Bayse is pleased to present *Open Sesame*, an exhibition of paintings by Alexa Guariglia. This exhibition is the artist's ninth with the gallery, and will be on view September 12 - October 24, 2026.

At the center of *Open Sesame* is a circuit between public experience and private transformation. Painting is often a hermetic activity with long periods spent alone, yet these works could not exist without sustained immersion in the world and close attention to its gestures, architectures, appetites, and rhythms. The crowded scenes carry the density of that world into the studio, where it is slowly digested and reconstructed, while the vacant landscapes give form to the solitude through which this transformation occurs. Withdrawal becomes a method of engagement as the artist moves inward to process experience and then sends it back into public life, where the image enters the consciousness of another person.

This feedback loop determines the spatial logic of the paintings. A bank is seen from an impossible vantage that reveals its lobby and subterranean vault simultaneously. This omniscient view turns discrete actions into a ballet reminiscent of an anthill. The prehistoric cave reverses that perspective, placing us within the darkness as we look toward a distant smoldering volcano. The cave's single aperture serves as both light source and line of sight, illuminating ancient pictographs as the rocky enclosure assumes the form of an eye socket; are we the homunculus peering out? These viewpoints correspond to two positions the artist must occupy, immersed closely enough to absorb the world's particularities and removed far enough to discover the structures joining them. In earlier works, a figure often anchored a composition serving as the hinge around which a place cohered. Here, perspective itself assumes that role.

In folklore, "open sesame" is a password that, once spoken, reveals a portal into another world. It turns a wall into a passage and secrecy into access. Throughout the exhibition, cave mouths, cinema screens, market stalls, and bank vault doors guide us in and out of space and time. Together they trace the places humanity has made to shelter itself, gather, exchange, watch, and safeguard what it prizes. Each is also an analogue for painting itself, a bounded surface that permits another place or time to become present.

This history does not present civilization as a clean progression. The natural cave gives way to the manufactured vault, while the abundance of the open-air fish market transforms ancestral foraging into commerce and spectacle. In the movie theater, an audience gathers in darkness before a luminous screen that projects the outside world back into an enclosed space. The screen becomes another kind of aperture, illuminating the interior with an image of what lies beyond it. Across these settings, humanity leaves a trail of slightly shifting sameness. We protect, exchange, and look, even as the constructs built around these elemental acts grow ever more elaborate.

Open Sesame locates the sacred, fleeting absurdity of everyday life within this circulation. Across millennia, humanity continues to build elaborate stages for elemental needs: to survive, store, gather, watch, and be watched. Each action is minor, but in succession they become civilization. The exhibition follows a similar conceptual path: the artist observes the world, transforms it in solitude, and returns it to us, allowing us to see it anew.

Alexa Guariglia (b. 1990, Brooklyn, NY) has presented solo exhibitions at Yossi Milo Gallery, New York, NY; Moskowitz Bayse, Los Angeles, CA; Gallery 263, Cambridge, MA; and World's Fair Gallery, Providence, RI. Guariglia has presented work in group exhibitions at Oakland University Art Gallery, Rochester, MI; Galeria Mayoral, Paris, France; Moskowitz Bayse, Los Angeles, CA; Fourth Wall, Boston, MA; Kevin Porter, Boston, MA, among many others. Her work is featured in the collection of the Rose Art Museum, Waltham, MA. The artist holds a BFA from The School of the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, MA. Guariglia lives and works in Providence, RI.

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Earthtones, 2026
Gouache, watercolor, and ink on paper
43 1/2 x 65 3/8 x 2 inches (framed)
110.5 x 166.1 x 5.1 cm (framed)
ALGU-0548

East Gallery:



Soft Edges, 2026
Gouache, watercolor, and ink on paper
65 5/8 x 94 3/8 x 2 inches (framed)
166.7 x 239.7 x 5.1 cm (framed)
ALGU-0549



Open Sesame, 2026
Gouache, watercolor, and ink on paper
65 5/8 x 94 3/8 x 2 inches (framed)
166.7 x 239.7 x 5.1 cm (framed)
ALGU-0546



Surround Sound, 2026
Gouache, watercolor, and ink on paper
65 5/8 x 94 3/8 x 2 inches (framed)
166.7 x 239.7 x 5.1 cm (framed)
ALGU-0557



Silver Screen, 2026
Gouache, watercolor, and ink on paper
65 3/8 x 69 3/8 x 2 inches (framed)
166.1 x 176.2 x 5.1 cm (framed)
ALGU-0553

West Gallery:



Den of Antiquity, 2026
Gouache, watercolor, and ink on paper
65 3/8 x 69 3/8 x 2 inches (framed)
166.1 x 176.2 x 5.1 cm (framed)
ALGU-0552



Downstairs, 2025
Gouache, watercolor, and ink on paper
9 x 8 x 11/2 inches (framed)
22.9 x 20.3 x 3.8 cm (framed)
ALGU-0558



Upstairs, 2025
Gouache, watercolor, and ink on paper
9 x 8 x 11/2 inches (framed)
22.9 x 20.3 x 3.8 cm (framed)
ALGU-0570



Subterranea, 2025
Gouache, watercolor, and ink on paper
9 x 8 x 11/2 inches (framed)
22.9 x 20.3 x 3.8 cm (framed)
ALGU-0571



Now What, 2026
Gouache, watercolor, and ink on paper
65 3/8 x 69 3/8 x 2 inches (framed)
166.1 x 176.2 x 5.1 cm (framed)
ALGU-0547



Water Signs, 2026
Gouache, watercolor, and ink on paper
65 5/8 x 94 3/8 x 2 inches (framed)
166.7 x 239.7 x 5.1 cm (framed)
ALGU-0555



Entrance, 2025
Gouache, watercolor, and ink on paper
9 x 8 x 11/2 inches (framed)
22.9 x 20.3 x 3.8 cm (framed)
ALGU-0562