

# dépendance

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**RICHARD ALDRICH**  
STRANGE STRINGS: THE RHIZOME AS IT IS  
EMPLOYED IN THE MAPPING OF THE PSYCHE  
4 March – 8 April 2023

Press Release

The title of the show is an homage to an ongoing joke between Olivia Shao and I about titles and naming conventions. The mix of jokey pretentiousness and total seriousness—having both at once. In this case it echos the title for her show at Drawing Center in New York City called *Of Mythic Worlds: Works From the Distant Past through the Present*, in that *Of Mythic Worlds* is the name of a Sun Ra album, as is *Strange Strings*.

A few months ago, as I was thinking about the show, I was looking at paintings in my studio and found this painting from 2011 of a pair of pants attached to a canvas. A few times over the past ten years I remember thinking this was not a good painting and that I should just paint over it. But in the moment of deciding its fate something was always there that I still liked. Initially the interest was a pair of pants I had bought that ended up being too small and liking how they seemed somewhat anachronistic. Very contemporary in a way, but also looked like the pants a costume designer would make for a cheery movie set in the 1940s. Sort of overtly clean in the cut and bright color. Anyway, somehow this made sense as a painting to be in the show. The title written on the back was *Time and a Word*, which was the title for [another painting](#) I had made around the same time that was shown at dépendance. Curious that two paintings would have the same title of something so specific. As I went to look up *Time and a Word* on their website I noticed [a painting](#) I had also shown and remembered I had written “[pants](#)” with a wood burnisher into a piece of wood attached to a canvas. Such a weird convergence of coincidences, all very strange!

[This painting](#) of these tiger-esque legs sticking out of a metal box was one of the first canvases I made in a beginners painting class at university in the mid 90s. I think this was the first time that we were suppose to paint anything we liked. When I moved to New York in 1999 I painted a similar figure on paper in acrylic. A couple years ago I attached it with another drawing to make a [new painting](#). I remember thinking to myself at the time “I must use this orange alien figure when I am in a vastly new situation—my first painting class, having just moved to a new city.” But now I am using this form again. What is it that is new now?

In the end all of these lines connecting all these seemingly unconnected points began to organically coalesce and *Strange Strings* seemed like a very apt title.

Also, with the show, a room was built. I didn’t intend this to be “the psyche”—the title came only in the past couple weeks. At most it was an interior space as opposed to the exterior space of the gallery. In deciding how to set up the inside I didn’t want to come off as too expansive or overwrought. I was interested in more just a different environment in which you see the paintings, more a subtle surrealness than an installation with a capital “I”. The carpet/door was meant to signify you are entering a new dimension—the floor becomes a door.