

An abstract painting featuring bold, expressive brushstrokes in vibrant red, deep blue, and white. The composition is layered and textured, with some areas appearing more saturated than others. In the lower-left quadrant, there is a faint, horizontal line of light blue and white, which could be interpreted as a horizon or a distant landscape element. The overall effect is one of dynamic energy and emotional intensity.

**ELISE ANSEL**

# ELISE ANSEL

## SEA CHANGE

MILES

McENERY

GALLERY

525 West 22nd Street  
New York NY 10011

515 West 22nd Street  
New York NY 10011

511 West 22nd Street  
New York NY 10011

520 West 21st Street  
New York NY 10011



## SOMETHING RICH AND STRANGE

By Patricia Akhimie

*Of his bones are coral made:  
Those are pearls that were his eyes,  
Nothing of him that doth fade,  
But doth suffer a sea-change  
Into something rich and strange.*

-William Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, (1611)

It was *Kings I* (2013) that first caught my eye some years ago. It seemed to glow from within; I was arrested by the tension between abstraction and representation and the exploration of deep color—green! gold! a weight of royal blue and ethereal pink suspended in the air. Stark light is rendered tactile in the brushstrokes of Elise Ansel’s oil paintings, many of which engage directly with European paintings from the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries.

Incredibly enticing—playful, dangerous—Ansel’s gestures defamiliarize the original images but recall the significance (religious, cultural, iconic) of the colors, shapes and attitudes of the Old Master paintings they reference. For a scholar of early modern culture like me, this reverent irreverence is a delight because it scrapes away at the familiarly masculinist, exclusionary, and dogmatic strain that runs through so much of the artistic outpouring of the “Renaissance” and reveals something volatile, appealingly rich and strange.

In “Sea Change,” Ansel introduces a new iteration of *Kings*, which in turn springs from Jan Gossaert’s *The Adoration of the Kings* (1510-1515), alongside works in conversation with Tiepolo, Titian, Bellini, Veronese, De Caro, and Mignard. In each, the details to which we are accustomed in Renaissance paintings—the tangle of limbs, upturned faces, outstretched wings of angels, heavy folds of layered cloth, expanses of sky, flesh pale to ruddy and, more rarely, brown, framed by marble steps and arches, sparse grass and brush, and shading branches—become velvet swathes of color, stripped of baroque intricacies, and somehow made more glorious.



Left: Jan Gossaert, *The Adoration of the Kings*, 1510-1515  
 Right: Lorenzo de Caro, *Esther Before Ahasuerus*, 1758



Left: Giovanni Bellini, *Madonna and Child Enthroned with Saints and Donor*, 1505  
 Right: Giovanni Battista Tiepolo, *The Virgin Appearing to St. Phillip Neri*, 1740

Ansel's vision brings us closer and invites us to touch the intensity that runs beneath the ordered surface of an allegorical vignette like Tiepolo's *Generosity Bestowing her Gifts* (1734), an intensity which Ansel brings viscerally to the fore in a vivid sweep of orange (*Generosity*). In this way, Ansel's practice goes beyond citation. It ruptures and remakes, opens up a space beyond the constraints of the literal. It replaces sentiment with sensation, narrative with lyrical flourish, and offers us a more immediate kind of knowledge, one that follows intuition rather than understanding. But how is this accomplished?

Ansel begins with small studies of each historical painting, knowing that the historical works are "rich enough to spawn a multitude of responses," creating many drafts or versions—"iterations"—which in turn serve as "a point of departure or catalyst, a starter sauce for future works." Working by daylight, across a range of media (oil, photography, collage, drawing, watercolor), Ansel "allow[s] the constant discovery of one state to give rise to another." Moving from studies to concurrent small-and large-scale works, Ansel invites "incidental accidents that open doors."

These "incidental accidents" are emancipatory, neutralizing the oppressive power—dogmatic, colonialist, misogynist, racist—inherent in much of the aggrandized religious, historical, and mythic imagery to which her work responds.

"This is my way of dealing with/gaining freedom from/overtuning difficult/toxic narratives... This is done with respect for the Old Master paintings. The more I work from and with them, the more I learn and the more I see. They are my powerful allies. I am not attacking them. I am using them to shine a light on disparities I see and experience in the present day; finding the roots of those disparities."

—Elise Ansel, personal correspondence, 2 April 2023

In the rush of color that moves in streaks as *Esther* becomes *Ester*, Ansel reveals as fantasy the patronizing idealism of the story depicted in De Caro's *Esther Before Ahasuerus* (1758) in which the sight of a woman wilting, pale and inert, halts an act of state violence by triggering a chivalrous response. Ansel gives us not a limp body, but a sky-colored conduit rent with rust and blues, pulling us always upward and away, beyond or beneath the solemn scene.

Some sense of the ubiquitous formations may linger—the Madonna and Child, centered, weighty, as in Bellini's *Madonna and Child Enthroned*, also known as the Cornbury Park



Top Left: Titian, *Christ and the Adulteress*, 1510

Top Right: Pierre Mignard, *Louise de Kéroualle, Duchess of Portsmouth with an unknown female attendant*, 1682

Bottom Left: Bellini and Titian, *The Feast of the Gods*, 1514

Bottom Right: Paulo Veronese, *The Allegory of Virtue and Vice*, 1565

altarpiece (1505), or framed by the forms of worshippers and floating heavenly bodies as in Tiepolo's *The Virgin Appearing to St Philip Neri* (1740). In Ansel's reworking, however, static pageantries and the monolithic ideologies they illustrate have dropped away, leaving something altogether more "elemental" and more open to our imaginative work as viewers. Ansel utilizes abstraction, as in *Cornbury* and *Cornbury II*, as well as strategic cropping or reframing, as in *Cloud*, and an emphasis on color and movement to achieve this release.

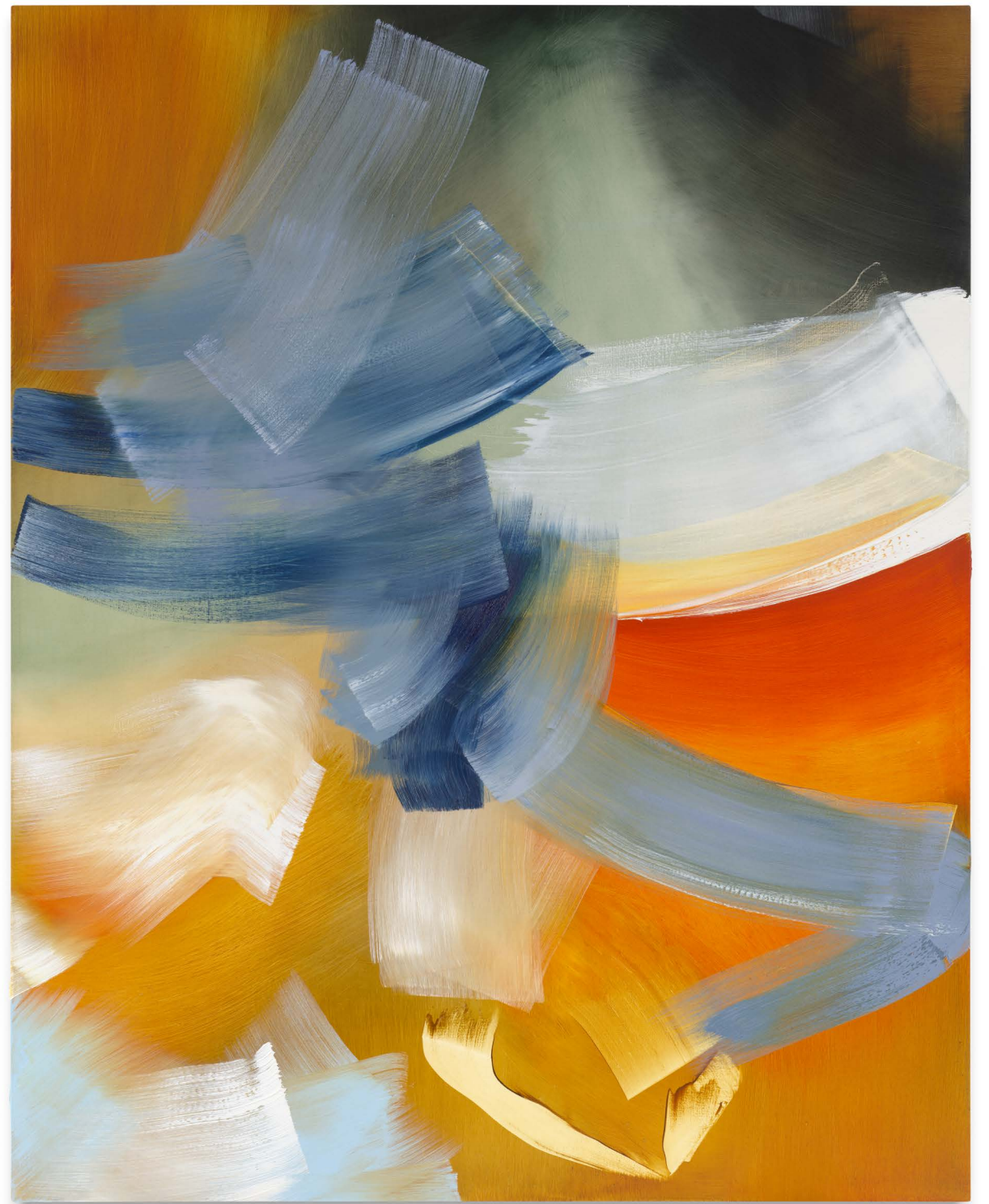
This strategy is starkly evident in Ansel's reworking of Pierre Mignard's *Louise de Kéroualle, Duchess of Portsmouth with an unknown female attendant* (1682). The original utilizes a dehumanizing practice common in images from the era, placing a dark-skinned servant or slave adjacent to the sitter. This move obscures the identity and history of one figure in order to elevate that of the other, to emphasize the whiteness of the sitter's complexion, the scope of their wealth, and some sense of their cosmopolitanism or connoisseurship in possessing the exotic.

In Mignard's portrait a young African girl is conflated with other luxury goods—pearls, silks, a branch of red coral. In *Crop* (2023), however, the young African girl becomes a focal point of the image, the canvas an exploration of brown, green, and gold; the spectacle of luxury, exploitation, and white supremacy is muted, surpassed by the overwhelming presence of the human, rendered as texture and glow. This capacity for healing is the gift of Ansel's acts of feminist and intersectional re-creation. ■

**Patricia Akhimie** is Director of the Folger Institute, at the Folger Shakespeare Library, Associate Professor of English at Rutgers University-Newark, and Director of the RaceB4Race Mentorship Network. She is author of *Shakespeare and the Cultivation of Difference: Race and Conduct in the Early Modern World* (2018), and editor of *Othello* for the Arden Shakespeare 4th series and *The Oxford Handbook of Shakespeare and Race*, both forthcoming.



*Cloud*, 2023  
Oil on linen  
60 x 48 inches  
152.4 x 121.9 cm

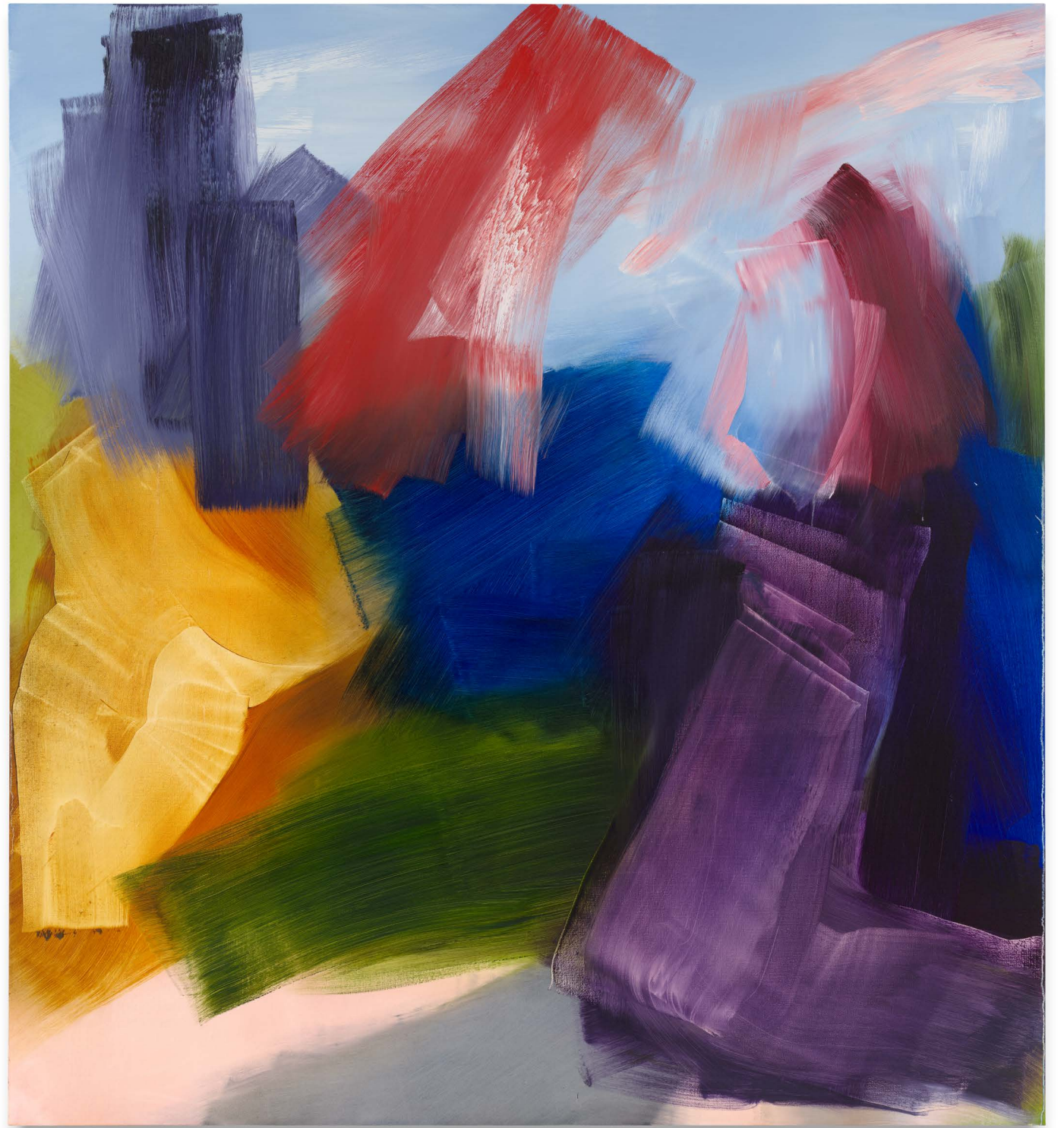


*Cornbury*, 2023  
Oil on linen  
60 x 60 inches  
152.4 x 152.4 cm

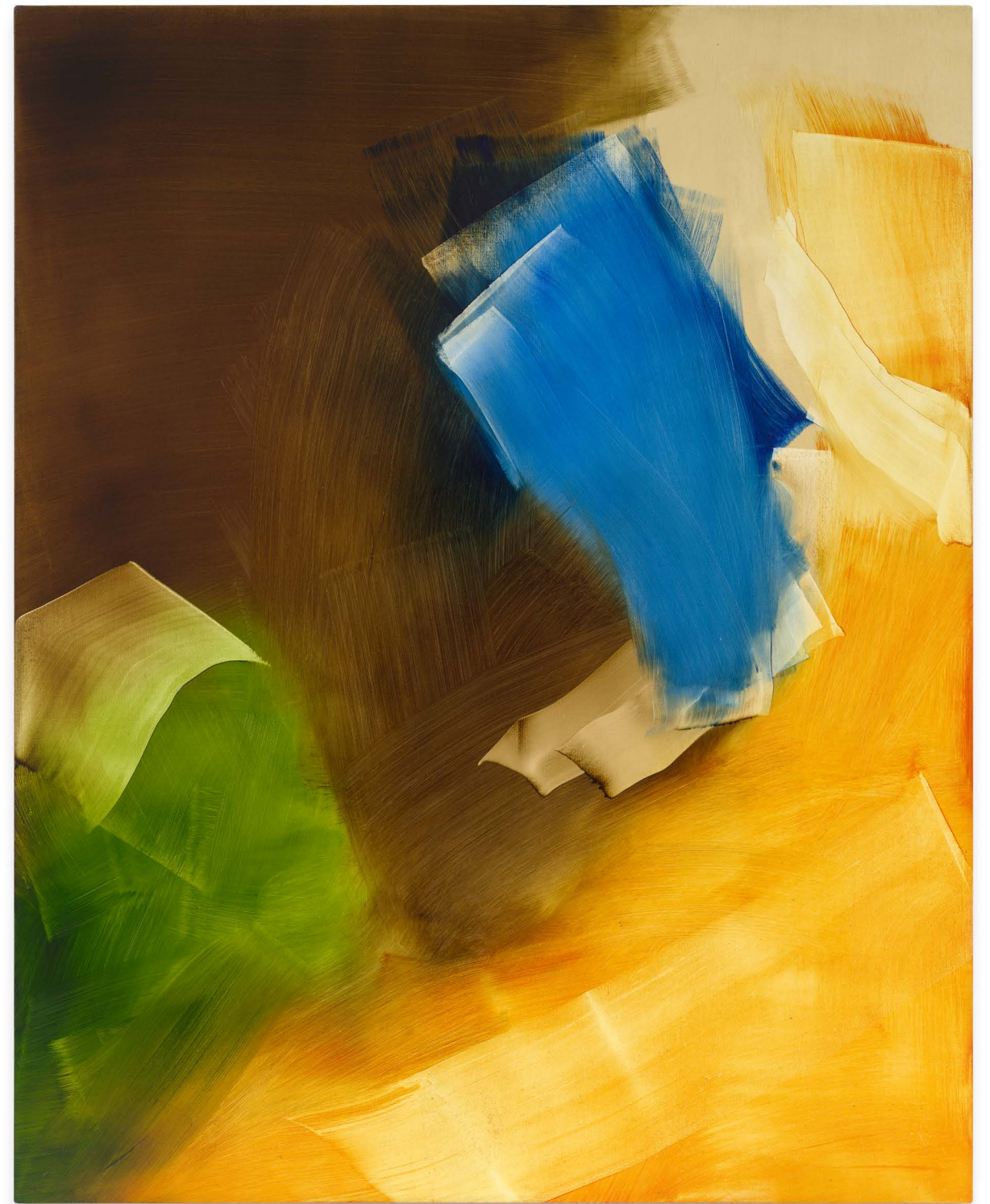




*Cornbury II*, 2023  
Oil on linen  
65 x 60 inches  
165.1 x 152.4 cm



*Crop*, 2023  
Oil on linen  
60 x 48 inches  
152.4 x 121.9 cm



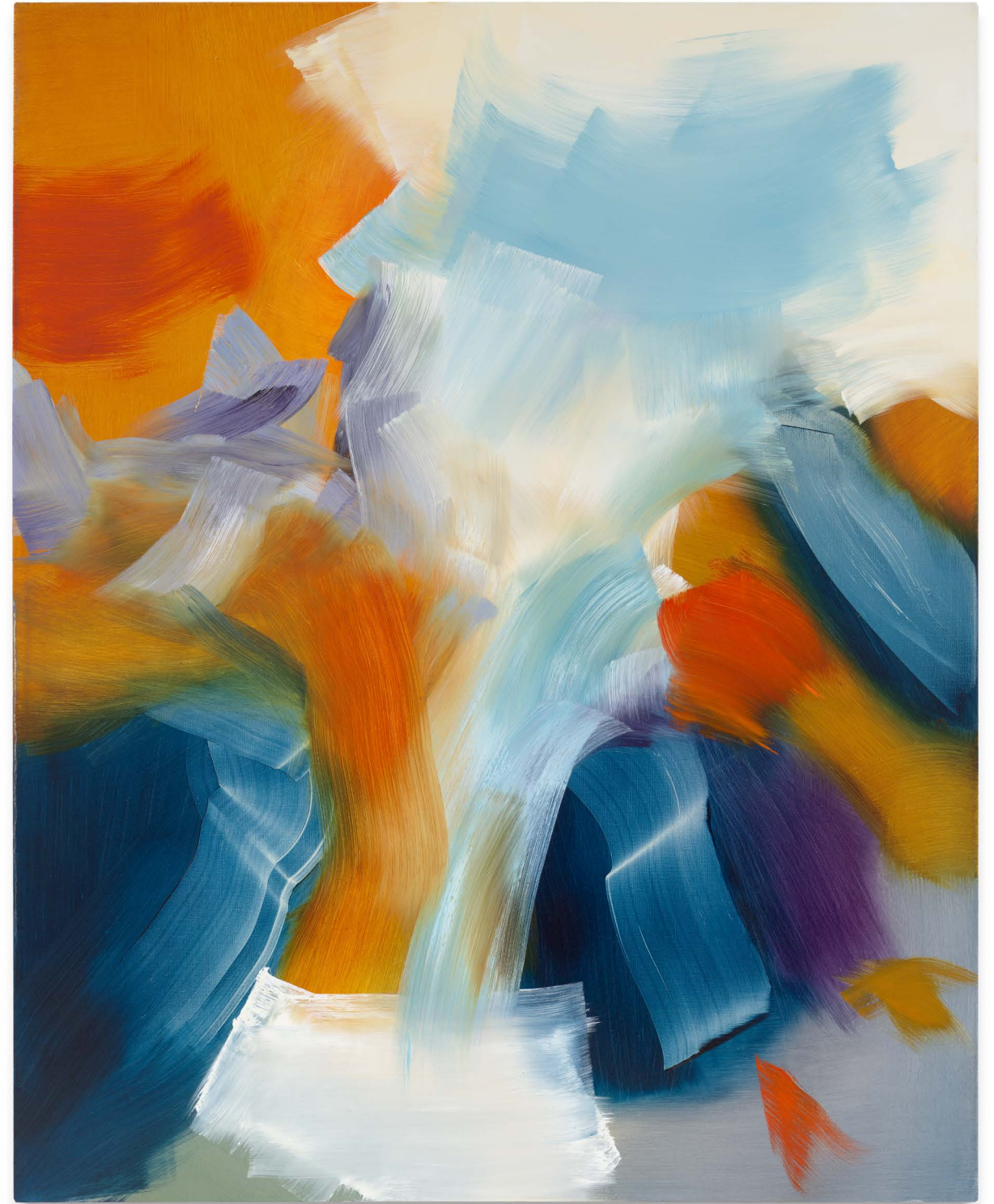
*Eyes Are Pearls, 2023*  
Oil on linen  
60 x 48 inches  
152.4 x 121.9 cm



*Sapphire*, 2023  
Oil on linen  
40 x 32 inches  
101.6 x 81.3 cm



*Ester*, 2023  
Oil on linen  
60 x 48 inches  
152.4 x 121.9 cm





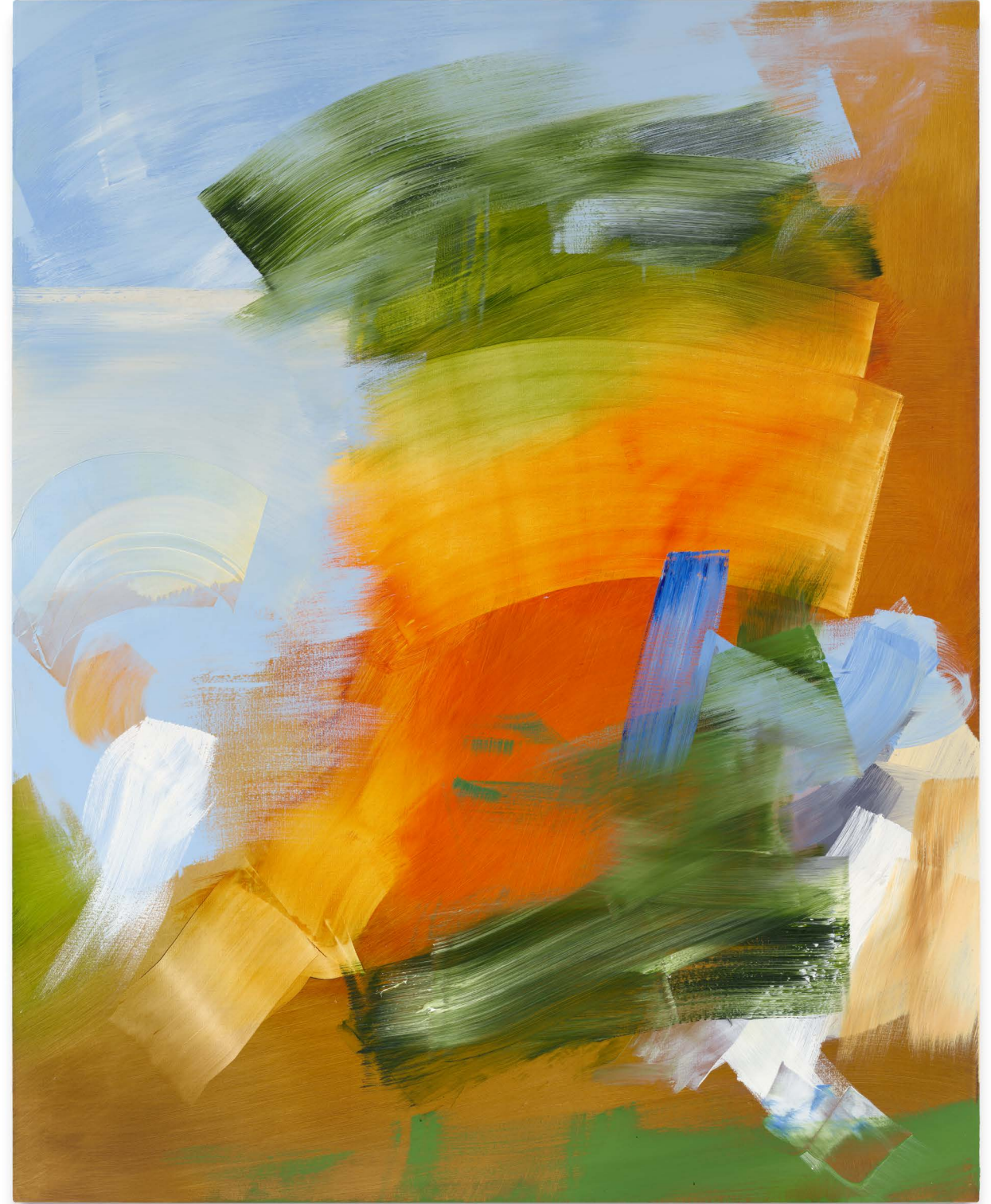
*Fire Fanged Feathers, 2023*  
Oil on linen  
60 x 72 inches  
152.4 x 182.9 cm



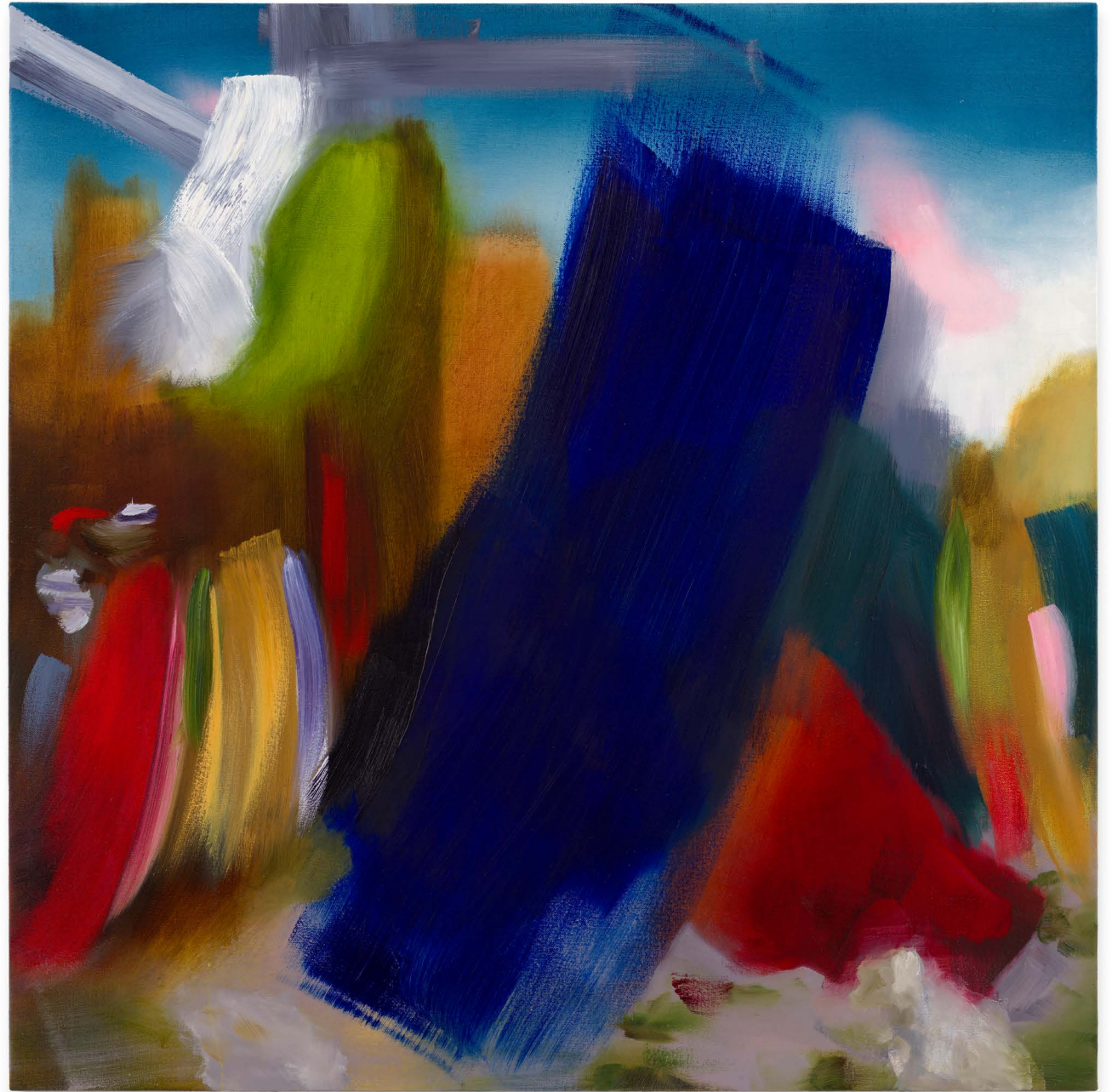




**Generosity, 2023**  
Oil on linen  
60 x 48 inches  
152.4 x 121.9 cm







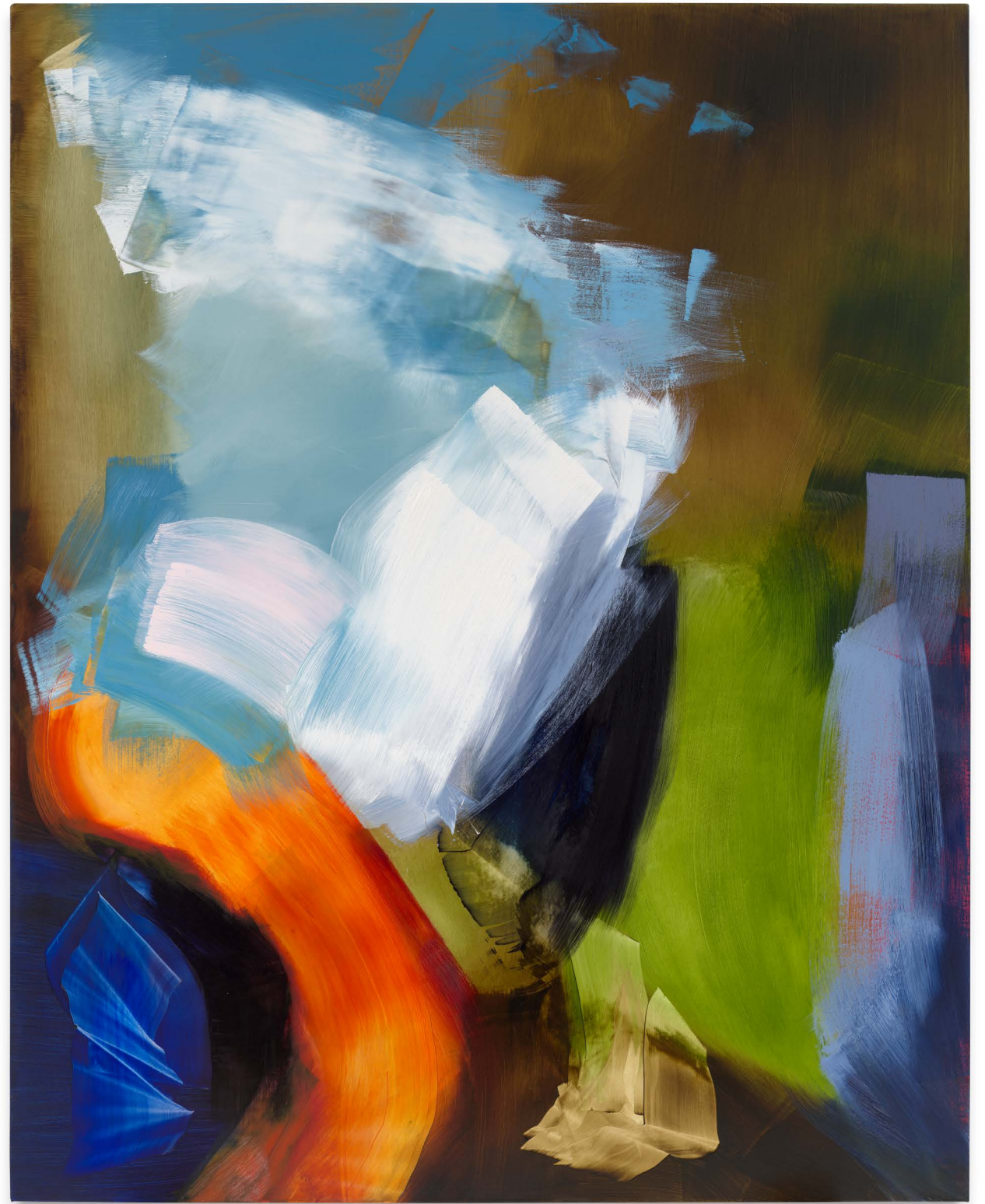
*Kings, 2023*  
Oil on linen  
36 x 36 inches  
91.4 x 91.4 cm



*Midsummer's Night, 2023*  
Oil on linen  
60 x 144 inches  
152.4 x 365.8 cm



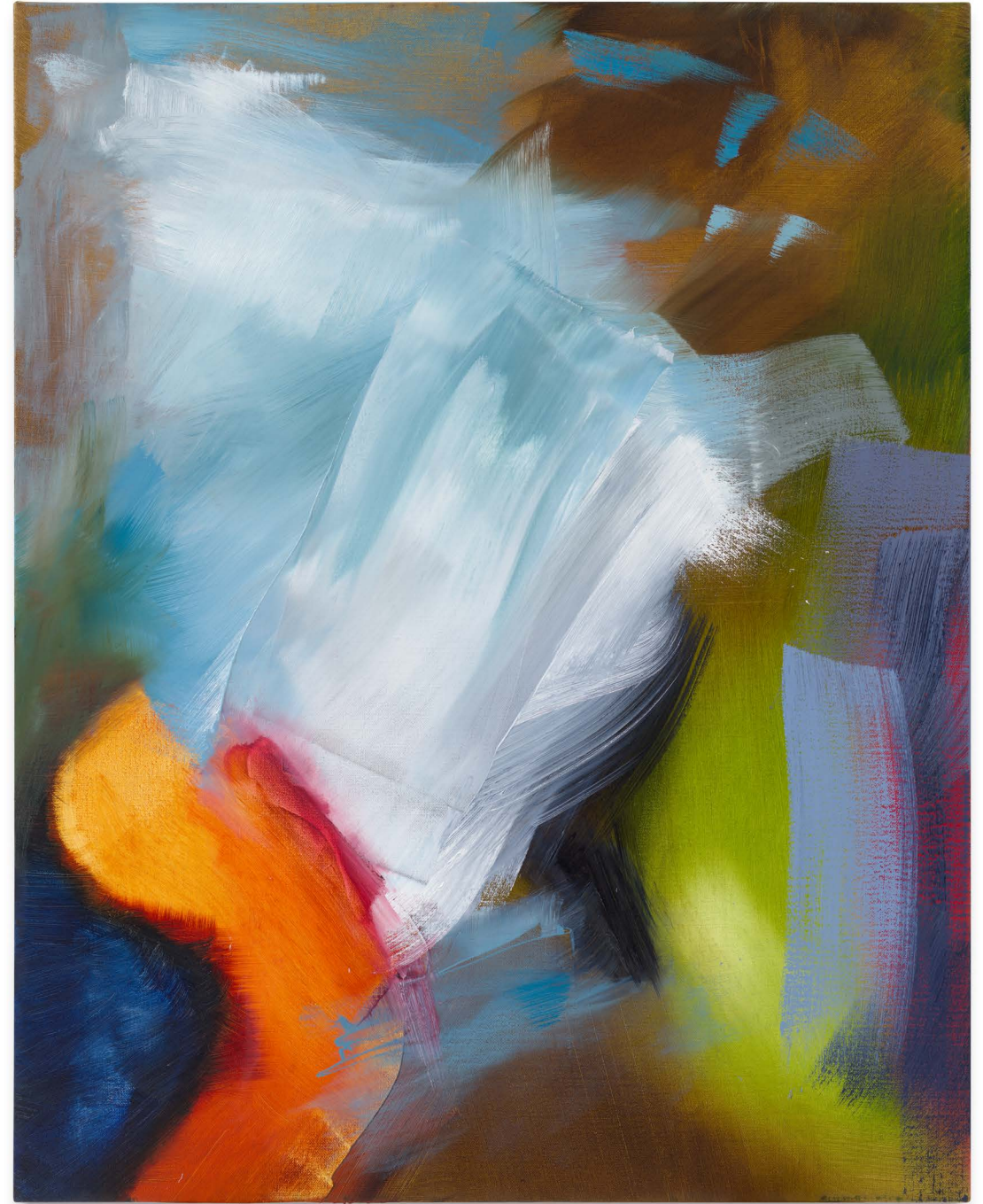
*Virtue & Vice*, 2023  
Oil on linen  
60 x 48 inches  
152.4 x 121.9 cm



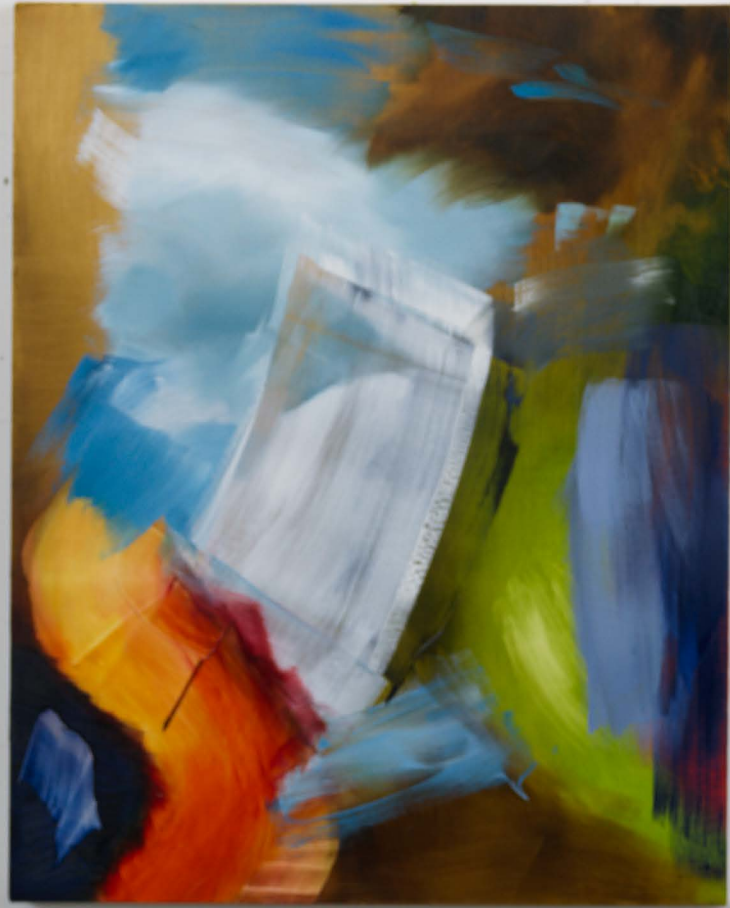
*Virtue & Vice II*, 2023  
Oil on linen  
40 x 32 inches  
101.6 x 81.3 cm



*Virtue & Vice III*, 2023  
Oil on linen  
30 x 24 inches  
76.2 x 61 cm







**ELISE ANSEL**

Born in New York, NY in 1961  
Lives and works between New York and Maine

**EDUCATION**

1984  
BA, Brown University, Providence, RI

1993  
MFA, Southern Methodist University, Dallas, TX

**SOLO EXHIBITIONS**

2024  
David Klein Gallery, Detroit, MI  
Cadogan Contemporary, Milan, Italy

2023  
Cadogan Contemporary, London, United Kingdom  
“Sea Change,” Miles McEnery Gallery, New York, NY  
“Elective Affinities,” Cove Street Arts, Portland, ME

2022  
“Time and Materials,” Auxier Kline, New York, NY  
“Space Between Angels,” Michael S. Currier Center at the Putney School, Putney, VT

2021  
“Polarity,” Cadogan Contemporary, London, United Kingdom  
“The Women,” Carol Corey Fine Art, Kent, CT  
“Ocean,” The Schoolhouse Gallery, Provincetown, MA

2020  
“Flower of the Mountain,” Carol Corey Fine Art, Kent, CT  
“Palimpsest,” David Klein Gallery, Detroit, MI

2019  
“yes I said Yes,” Cadogan Contemporary, London, United Kingdom

2018  
“Time Present,” Danese/Corey, New York, NY

2017  
“Amber and Ebony,” Cadogan Contemporary, London, United Kingdom  
“Dialogue,” Danese/Corey, New York, NY

2016  
“B Camera,” Cadogan Contemporary, London, United Kingdom  
“Distant Mirrors,” Bowdoin College Museum of Art, Brunswick, ME

2015  
“Fusion of Horizons,” Cadogan Contemporary, London, United Kingdom  
“Palimpsest,” Phoenix Gallery, New York, NY

2013  
“The Invisible Thread,” Ellsworth Gallery, Santa Fe, NM  
“Correspondence,” Phoenix Gallery, New York, NY  
“Drawn From History,” Cadogan Contemporary, London, United Kingdom

2012  
Phoenix Gallery, New York, NY

2011  
Lenore Gray Gallery, Providence, RI

2010  
List Art Center, Brown University, Providence, RI

2001  
UMF Gallery, Farmington, ME

2000  
Ruschman Gallery, Indianapolis, IN

1999  
The Art Gallery, Hopkinsville, KY

1998  
The Michael Dunn Memorial Gallery, Cornwell-Reed Fine Arts Center, Oakland City University, Oakland City, IN  
Krannert Gallery of Art, University of Evansville, Evansville, IN

1997  
Fine and Hatfield Gallery, Evansville, IN

1996  
The Riits Gallery, Savannah, GA

1995  
Hanes Art Center Glass Gallery, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Chapel Hill, NC

1993  
Undermain Theater (in conjunction with Kitchen Dog Theater’s performance of Samuel Beckett’s Footfalls and Krapp’s Last Tape), Dallas, TX

1991  
Undermain Theater (in conjunction with Kitchen Dog Theater’s performance of Henrik Ibsen’s Creditors), Dallas, TX

1989  
Dance Space, Inc., New York, NY

1987  
Dance Space, Inc., New York, NY

1984  
List Art Center, Brown University, Providence, RI

**GROUP EXHIBITIONS**

2023  
“Re-Framing the Female Gaze: Women Artists and the New Historicism,” Lehman College Art Gallery, New York, NY

“Together & Apart, A Legacy of Abstraction: Elise Ansel, Caroline Del Giudice, Alisa Henriquez, Rosalind Tallmadge,” David Klein Gallery, Detroit, MI

“Works on Paper,” Ashawagh Hall, East Hampton, NY  
“Through the Walls,” Cadogan Contemporary, London, United Kingdom  
“She-Wolves,” Space Gallery, Portland, ME  
“Think Twice II,” Carol Corey Fine Art, Kent, CT

2022  
“Multiple Choice,” ABNY Gallery, East Hampton, NY  
“Elise Ansel/Hang Feng/Adrian Fernandez/Jefferson Hayman/Jeannie Motherwell,” The Schoolhouse Gallery, Provincetown, MA  
“Showings in Four Dimensions,” ABNY Gallery, East Hampton, NY  
“Crown Shy,” The Schoolhouse Gallery, Provincetown, MA

2021  
“Look Twice,” Carol Corey Fine Art, Kent, CT  
“All Possible Worlds,” The Schoolhouse Gallery, Provincetown, MA  
“Reunion,” Hollis Taggart, Southport, CT  
“Efflorescence,” Zero Station, Portland, ME  
“Garden Party,” Carol Corey Fine Art, Kent, CT

2020  
“Winter Curation,” Cynthia Corbett Gallery, London, United Kingdom  
“Fête Galante,” Heaven Gallery, Chicago, IL  
“July Exhibition,” Cadogan Contemporary, London, United Kingdom  
“Reaction in Seclusion” (online exhibition curated by Beatrice Hassell-McCosh), United Kingdom  
“Virtual Spring” (online exhibition), Danese/Corey, New York, NY  
“Abstraction: Hot and Cool,” Danese/Corey, New York, NY

2019  
“Art Purposes: Object Lessons for the Visual Arts,” Bowdoin College Museum of Art, Brunswick, ME  
“Salon, Works on Paper,” David Klein Gallery, Detroit, MI  
“Summer Exhibition 2019,” Royal Academy of Arts, London, United Kingdom  
“rePRESENTed PAST,” Sotheby’s Institute of Art, New York, NY

“Summer Show,” Cynthia Corbett Gallery, London, United Kingdom  
 “In the Ruins of the Anthropocene,” Ellsworth Gallery, Santa Fe, NM

2018  
 “Pushing Painting: Elise Ansel, Nicole Duennebie, Duane Slick,” David Winton Bell Gallery, Brown University, Providence, RI  
 “scape,” Danese/Corey, New York, NY  
 “Biennial 2018,” Portland Museum of Art, Portland, ME

2017  
 “Art in Art,” Museum of Contemporary Art Kraków, Kraków, Poland  
 “Referenced,” Danese/Corey, New York, NY

2016  
 “Drawing Conclusions,” Danese/Corey, New York, NY  
 “Artists’ Choice,” Ellsworth Gallery, Santa Fe, NM  
 “3 Artists,” Phoenix Gallery, New York, NY

2015  
 “Young Masters/Focus on New Work,” Site/109, New York, NY  
 “Far Reaches,” Ellsworth Gallery, Santa Fe, NM  
 “Young Masters/Dialogues,” Sphinx Fine Art, London, United Kingdom  
 “Summer Exhibition 2015,” Royal Academy of Arts, London, United Kingdom  
 “Cynthia Corbett Gallery Summer Exhibition 2015: Focus on Painting,” Conigsby Gallery, London, United Kingdom  
 “New Year,” Cadogan Contemporary, London, United Kingdom  
 “On the Brink,” Ellsworth Gallery, Santa Fe, NM

2014  
 “Young Masters 2014,” Sphinx Fine Art, London, United Kingdom  
 “Young Masters 2014,” Lloyds Club, London, United Kingdom  
 “Spring 2014,” Cadogan Contemporary, London, United Kingdom  
 “ONE,” Ellsworth Gallery, Santa Fe, NM  
 “syn.the.sis,” Phoenix Gallery, New York, NY

2013  
 “Artists Choose Artists,” Parrish Art Museum, Water Mill, NY  
 “Young Masters at Sphinx Fine Art 2013,” Sphinx Fine Art, London, United Kingdom  
 “Summer Exhibition 2013,” Cadogan Contemporary, London, United Kingdom  
 “Summer Exhibition,” Springs Fireplace Project, East Hampton, NY  
 “Spring Exhibition Showcase Alongside a Selection of Young Masters,” Cynthia Corbett Gallery, London, United Kingdom  
 “Young Masters: The Figure in Art,” Gallery 27, Mayfair, United Kingdom  
 “Young Masters: The Figure in Art,” Henley Festival, Henley-on-Thames, Oxfordshire, United Kingdom

2012  
 “Gallery Artists,” Phoenix Gallery, New York, NY  
 “Summer Exhibition 2012,” Cadogan Contemporary, London, United Kingdom  
 “Works on Paper,” Cadogan Contemporary, London, United Kingdom  
 “30th Anniversary Exhibition,” Cadogan Contemporary, London, United Kingdom

2011  
 “Gallery Artists,” Phoenix Gallery, New York, NY  
 POP Gallery, Portland, ME  
 “Summer Exhibition,” Cadogan Contemporary, London, United Kingdom  
 “Summer Exhibition,” Thomas Moser Gallery, Freeport, ME  
 “Faculty Triennial,” Bell Gallery, Brown University, Providence, RI

2010  
 Phoenix Gallery, New York, NY  
 Guild Hall, East Hampton, NY

2009  
 Springs Fireplace Project, East Hampton, NY  
 Clic Gallery, East Hampton, NY

2008  
 Springs Fireplace Project, East Hampton, NY

2007  
 Alpers Fine Art, Andover, MA  
 Guild Hall, East Hampton, NY

2006  
 Center for Maine Contemporary Art, Rockport, ME

2005  
 Ruschman Gallery, Indianapolis, IN

2004  
 Alpers Fine Art, Andover, MA  
 Lenore Gray Gallery, Providence, RI  
 Greenhut Galleries, Portland, ME  
 “Works on Paper,” Ruschman Gallery, Indianapolis, IN

2003  
 Nohra Haime Gallery, New York, NY  
 “Recent Work,” Ruschman Gallery, Indianapolis, IN

2002  
 “Gallery Artists,” Ruschman Gallery, Indianapolis, IN

2001  
 “The Drawing Show,” Boston Center for the Arts, Boston, MA  
 “Gallery Artists,” Ruschman Gallery, Indianapolis, IN  
 ICON Contemporary Art, Brunswick, ME  
 “Re-Emerging,” Elaine Benson Gallery, Bridgehampton, NY  
 “New Work by Gallery Artists,” Ruschman Gallery, Indianapolis, IN

2000  
 “Biennial Juried Exhibition 2000,” Maine Coast Artists, Rockport, ME

1999  
 “Gallery Artists,” Ruschman Gallery, Indianapolis, IN

1998  
 “49th Mid-States Art Exhibition,” Evansville Museum of Arts, History & Science, Evansville, IN  
 “New Work by Gallery Artists,” Ruschman Gallery, Indianapolis, IN  
 “Eastside/Westside,” Evansville Museum of Arts, History & Science, Evansville, IN

1997  
 “New Gallery Artists,” Ruschman Gallery, Indianapolis, IN  
 “Southern Exposure,” Owens-Thomas Regional Arts Gallery, Savannah, GA  
 “Annual Juried Exhibition,” Arts Council of Southwestern Indiana Gallery, Evansville, IN  
 “National Invitational Art Exhibition,” Brenau Visual Arts Gallery, Brenau University, Gainesville, GA  
 “Faculty Exhibition,” Krannert Gallery of Art, University of Evansville, Evansville, IN  
 “18th Annual Juried Fine Arts Competition,” West Bank Gallery, Savannah, GA  
 “The Low Country and Beyond,” Pinnacle Art Gallery, Savannah, GA

1996  
 York Street Open Studios, Savannah, GA  
 Exhibit A Gallery, Savannah College of Art and Design, Savannah, GA  
 “Faculty Exhibition,” Bergen Gallery, Savannah College of Art and Design, Savannah, GA

1995  
 “Summer Exhibition,” Haystack Mountain School, Deer Isle, ME  
 Center for Creative Leadership, Greensboro, NC  
 Fine Arts Center Gallery, Ravenscroft School, Raleigh, NC

1993  
 Ashawagh Hall, East Hampton, NY  
 “Twenty-Three Years of Printmaking at SMU: A Traveling Retrospective of Prints from the Meadows School of the Arts,” Meadows Museum, Southern Methodist University, Dallas, TX

## AWARDS & RESIDENCIES

2023

Artistic Research Fellowship, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington, D.C.

1998

Merit Award, 49th Mid-States Art Exhibition, Evansville Museum of Arts, History & Science, Evansville, IN  
Spring Island Artist in Residence, Spring Island, Okatie, SC  
Excel Grant, Award in Teaching Innovation, Eli Lilly Foundation, regranted through the University of Evansville, Evansville, IN

1997

Gulfstream Aerospace Award in Painting, 18th Annual Juried Fine Arts Competition, West Bank Gallery, Savannah, GA

1995

Faculty Enrichment Grant, Ravenscroft School, Raleigh, NC

1991-92

Meadows Artistic Scholarship Award, Full Tuition, Southern Methodist University, Dallas, TX  
Zelle Award, Southern Methodist University, Dallas, TX  
Jones Fund Award, Southern Methodist University, Dallas, TX

1990-91

Meadows Artistic Scholarship Award, Full Tuition, Southern Methodist University, Dallas, TX  
Zelle Award, Southern Methodist University, Dallas, TX  
Jones Fund Award, Southern Methodist University, Dallas, TX

1984

Albin Polasek Award, Brown University, Providence, RI  
Minnie Helen Hicks Award, Brown University, Providence, RI

## TEACHING

2019

Visiting Critic, Bowdoin College, Brunswick, ME

2018

Visiting Artist and Critic, Brown University, Providence, RI

2017

Tutor, New School of Art, London, United Kingdom

2016

Visiting Artist, Bowdoin College Museum of Art, Brunswick, ME

2016

Visiting Critic, Bowdoin College, Brunswick, ME

2014

Adjunct Lecturer, Brown University, Providence, RI

2011

Drawing Instructor, Pont Aven School of Contemporary Art, Pont Aven, France

2010 - 2007

Adjunct Lecturer, Brown University, Providence, RI

2006 - 2004

Visiting Artist, Bowdoin College, Brunswick, ME

2001

Visiting Artist, University of Maine, Farmington, ME

1999

Assistant Professor of Art, University of Southern Indiana, Evansville, IN

1998

Lecturer, University of Evansville, Evansville, IN

1997

Adjunct Professor of Art, Armstrong Atlantic State University, Savannah, GA

1996

Professor of Foundation, Savannah College of Art and Design, Savannah, GA

## SELECT COLLECTIONS

Art Masters Solutions, London, United Kingdom

Bowdoin College Museum of Art, Brunswick, ME

Brown University, Providence, RI

Eli Lilly Foundation, Indianapolis, IN

Evansville Museum of Arts, History & Science, Evansville, IN

Ice, Miller, Denadio, and Ryan, Indianapolis, IN

Museum of Contemporary Art Kraków, Kraków, Poland

Sopwell House, St Albans, United Kingdom

Spring Island Trust, Spring Island, SC

Published on the occasion of the exhibition

**ELISE ANSEL**  
**SEA CHANGE**

27 July - 31 August 2023

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GALLERY



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