



Elise Ansel

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Amber and Ebony

17th October - 4th November 2017

Private View

Tuesday, 17th October 2017

6 - 8pm

Gallery Hours

Monday - Friday 10am - 6pm

Saturday 11am - 6pm

CADOGAN
CONTEMPORARY

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Ithaka

C. P. Cavafy, 1863 - 1933

As you set out for Ithaka
hope the voyage is a long one
full of adventure, full of discovery.
Laistrygonians and Cyclops,
angry Poseidon—don't be afraid of them:
you'll never find things like that on your way
as long as you keep your thoughts raised high,
as long as a rare excitement
stirs your spirit and your body.
Laistrygonians and Cyclops,
wild Poseidon—you won't encounter them
unless you bring them along inside your soul,
unless your soul sets them up in front of you.

Hope the voyage is a long one.
May there be many a summer morning when,
with what pleasure, what joy,
you come into harbors seen for the first time;
may you stop at Phoenician trading stations
to buy fine things,
mother of pearl and coral, amber and ebony,
sensual perfume of every kind—
as many sensual perfumes as you can;
and may you visit many Egyptian cities
to gather stores of knowledge from their scholars.
Keep Ithaka always in your mind.
Arriving there is what you are destined for.
But do not hurry the journey at all.
Better if it lasts for years,
so you are old by the time you reach the island,
wealthy with all you have gained on the way,
not expecting Ithaka to make you rich.

Ithaka gave you the marvelous journey.
Without her you would not have set out.
She has nothing left to give you now.

And if you find her poor, Ithaka won't have fooled you.
Wise as you will have become, so full of experience,
you will have understood by then what these Ithakas mean.

From C. P. Cavafy: Collected Poems

Dissecting the Familiar

by Stephanie Buhmann

When looking at Elise Ansel's gestural abstractions, their overt sense of dynamic movement and sophisticated use of dramatic light are instantly striking. Manifesting as a cohesive group, they are characterized by a tapestry of broad, lush brushstrokes, which seem to have been applied by a quick, and yet, assured hand. Though her process is comprehensive and involves multiple steps, Ansel appears to approach space as a flexible sphere rather than a crisply delineated concept. It is within these vibrant parameters that her language unfolds and interlocks with her expressive vocabulary, establishing a web of dense information.

For the past decade, Ansel has employed the same distinct source: Old Master paintings. Though inspired by such art historical milestones as Titian's "Bacchus and Ariadne" (1522-1523), Veronese's "Venus and Adonis" (1580), and Caravaggio's "Conversion on the Road to Damascus" (1601), among others, Ansel is not eager to simply dissect the familiar. Instead, it is through the means of abstraction that she searches for and aims to highlight the unexpected. Her paintings translate the gathered observations into a form that intends to be as abstract as possible while also remaining true to the original subjects.

It would be misleading to think of Ansel as creating abstract portraits of classic figurations. It is true that in the beginning, she had been primarily focused on finding a contemporary pictorial language for the powerful vocabulary set forth by the Old Masters. However, in time she discovered that her process aided in revealing some of the complex spiritual and mythological layers embedded in these works. She selects her subjects according to originality and structure, viewing them either in situ in Italian churches, in major museums in New York or London, or as mass-reproduced images on the Internet, for example. In fact, part of Ansel's idea of interpreting the Old Masters through the prism of contemporary practice involves trying to bring back intangible virtual moments into concrete reality. In other words, she intentionally revisits the Old Masters in the light

of the cultural and technological conditions that prevail right now.

Meanwhile, all of Ansel's paintings reflect a keen interest in color relationships that enhance and contrast each other, as well as in a sense of dynamism that is evoked through asymmetry. To her, the act of painting represents an alternative way of seeing, allowing her to engage in an intimate dialogue with her source and to comprehend it on a more profound level. By translating her discoveries of spiritual intentions, psychological, and emotional impact into abstraction, Ansel's paintings succeed in capturing glimpses of the original content. As a result, her works not only serve as a point of departure from the Old Master context, but also as a celebration of the values, knowledge and techniques it entails.

To the viewer, Ansel's respectful and enthusiastic engagement can be traced in her vigorous brushwork, her skillful layering of information and the ability to distill essentials. In her works, we are occasionally able to detect the nature of her source material and perhaps, even able to point at a specific example outright. This is due to the fact that Ansel allows a sense of the familiar to remain. Nevertheless, it is also easy to engage with her work without any knowledge of the associated subject. It is one of Ansel's significant achievements that despite her eclectic references, she has been able to develop a unique signature language of abstraction that is immediately accessible.

Ansel remains an experimental painter at heart, whose keen interest in photography and its ongoing dialogue with the medium of painting has encouraged her to explore her subjects over time and from different perspectives, while playing with various concepts of scale. In general, she begins her explorations through a series of quick studies in oil and watercolor, enabling her to record her observations with a sense of spontaneity and improvisational freedom. Employing Renaissance methods and a grid, Ansel translates the smaller oil studies into large-scale paintings, which embrace the choreography of the former but present her forms with an increased focus on color and gestural expression. As a result, color takes on the role of a protagonist, while creating a profound link between Ansel's paintings and the art historical works from which they spring. Her palette, which favors deep, saturated hues, not only establishes a sense of mood, but also succeeds in weaving together disparate compositional elements. Although her large-scale paintings might look as spontaneous as her smaller ones, they are often the result of meticulous planning. Here, intellect is using the fruits of intuition. This illusion of a spur-of-the-moment expression is enhanced by Ansel's method of working "wet on wet", which allows for all components to be assembled in one long session.

Floating into each other on even ground, Ansel's brushstrokes seem to stem from one stream of consciousness. Despite working within a certain rhythmic structure, she will not shy away from making drastic changes to a composition when needed, willing to sacrifice a safety net to assure the work's ultimate success. It is this kind of unwavering commitment that has allowed her to develop and work with stylistic cohesion, no matter how diverse the images and artworks are that make up her sources of inspiration. As a result, Ansel's paintings correspond with each other, forming a unified body of work that continues to build upon itself.

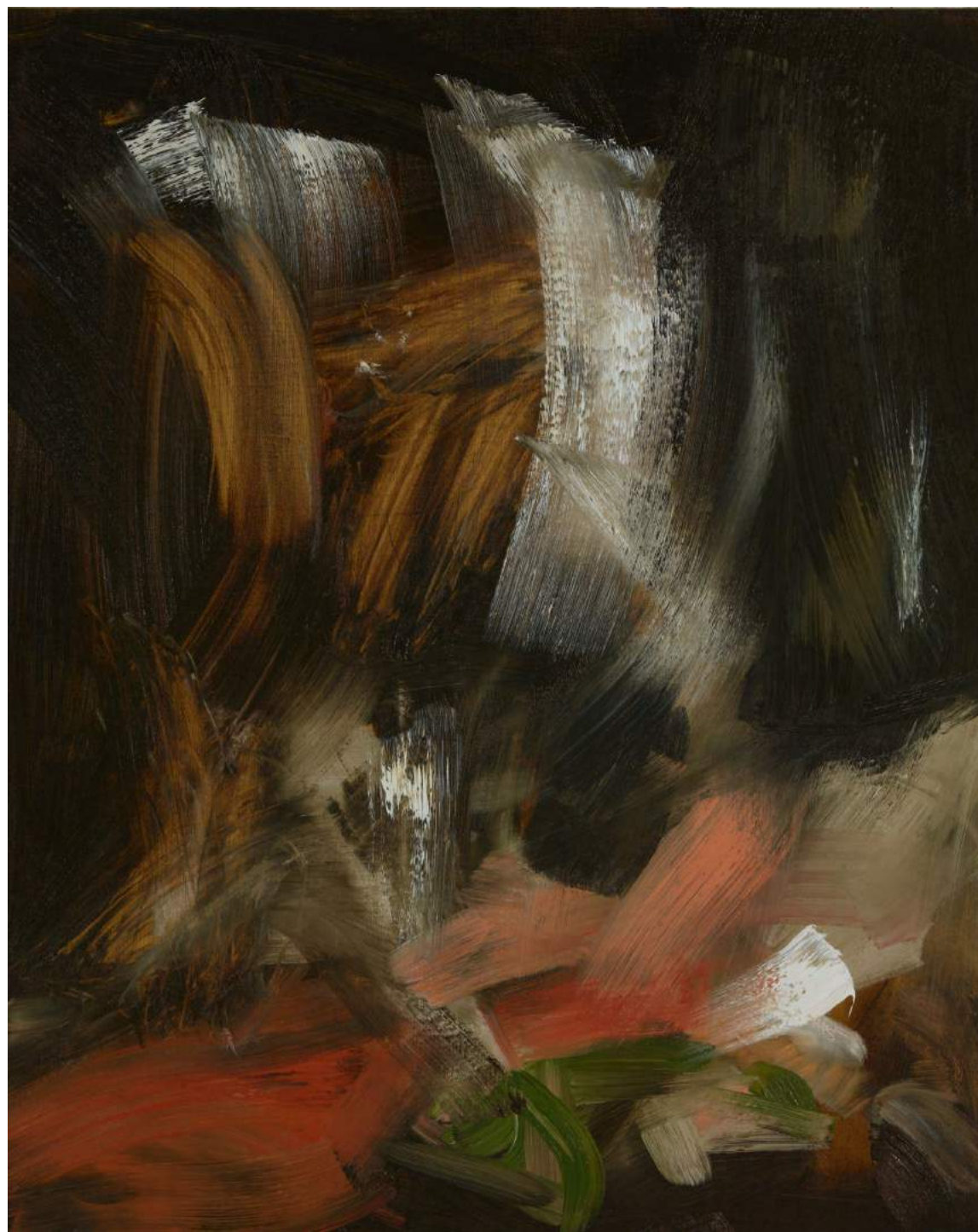
While Ansel might draw from some of the Old Masters that have helped define the traditional canon of Western art history, her work is also conscious of the field's inherent undercurrent of sexism. Offering a personalized take on the matter, Ansel uses gestural abstraction to interrupt a one-sided and sometimes disturbing linear narrative. Focused on the fact that both art history and much of contemporary visual communication are presented from a male point of view that understands itself as uniquely objective and as the only one acceptable, Ansel calls for an active participation and engagement with visual culture. Rather than simply critiquing the sexism inherent in art history, she uses the latter to shine a light on the disparities that continue to persist today. In this quest, the Old Masters have become her powerful allies. Celebrating all that she finds inspiring while re-envisioning art history as something fluid, open and forever changing, Ansel introduces a refreshing perspective. She offers the opportunity to re-imagine Old Master paintings in the context of contemporary life and culture, experienced through her intensive interaction with them.



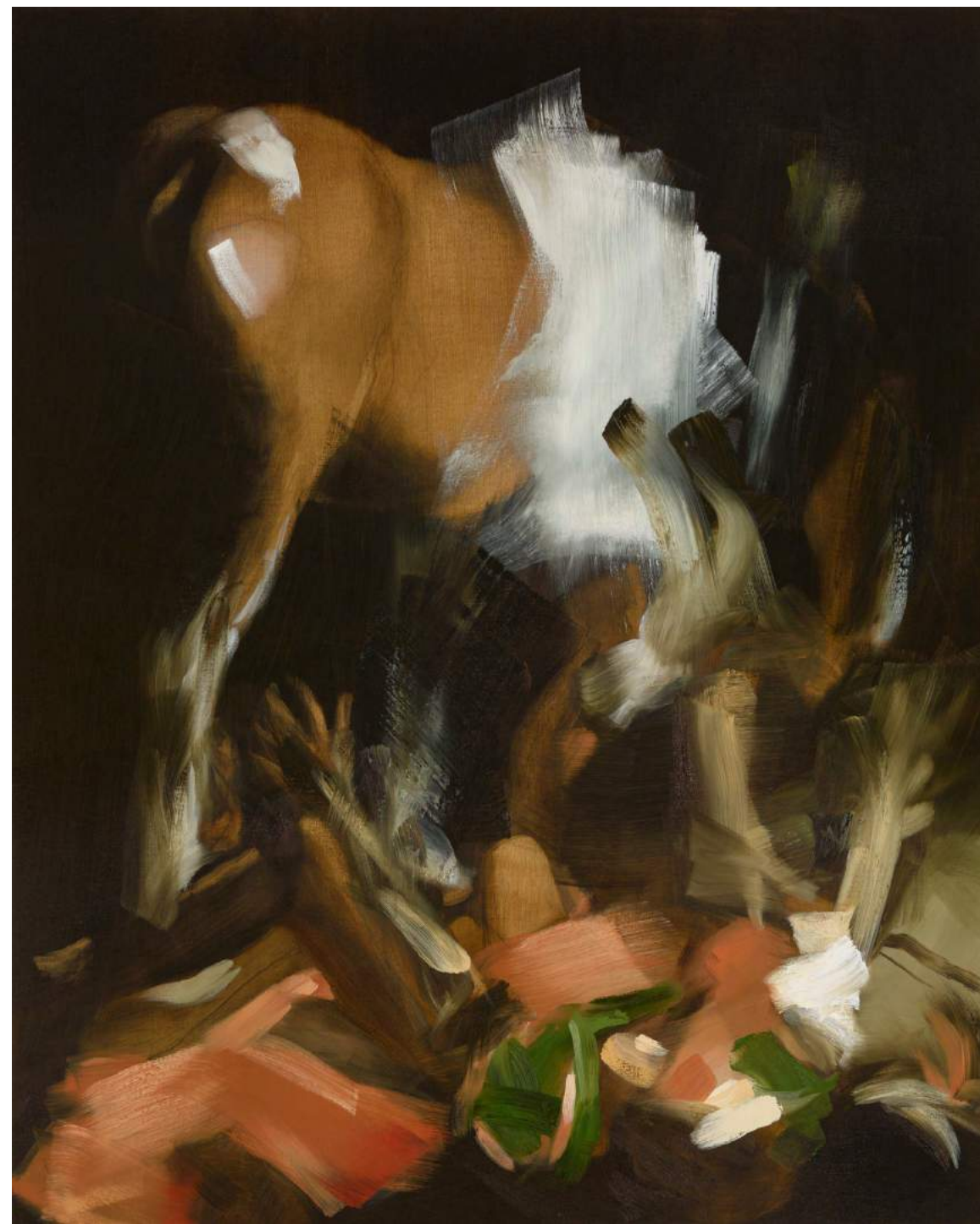
Small study I for Emerald Light, oil on linen, 14" x 11" (35.5 x 28cm)



Medium study I for Emerald Light, oil on linen, 30" x 24" (76 x 61cm)



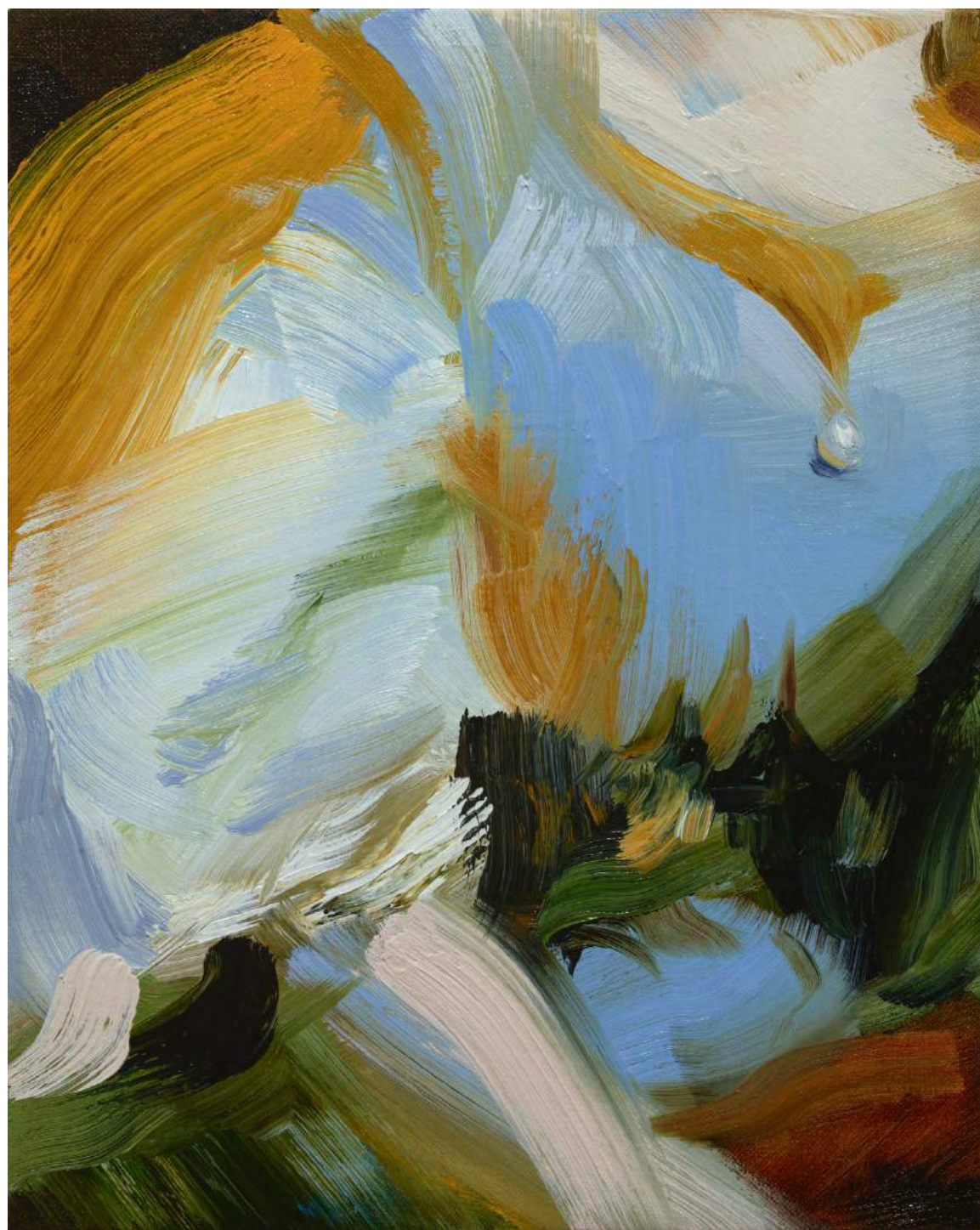
Medium study I for Damascus, oil on linen, 30" x 24" (76 x 61cm)



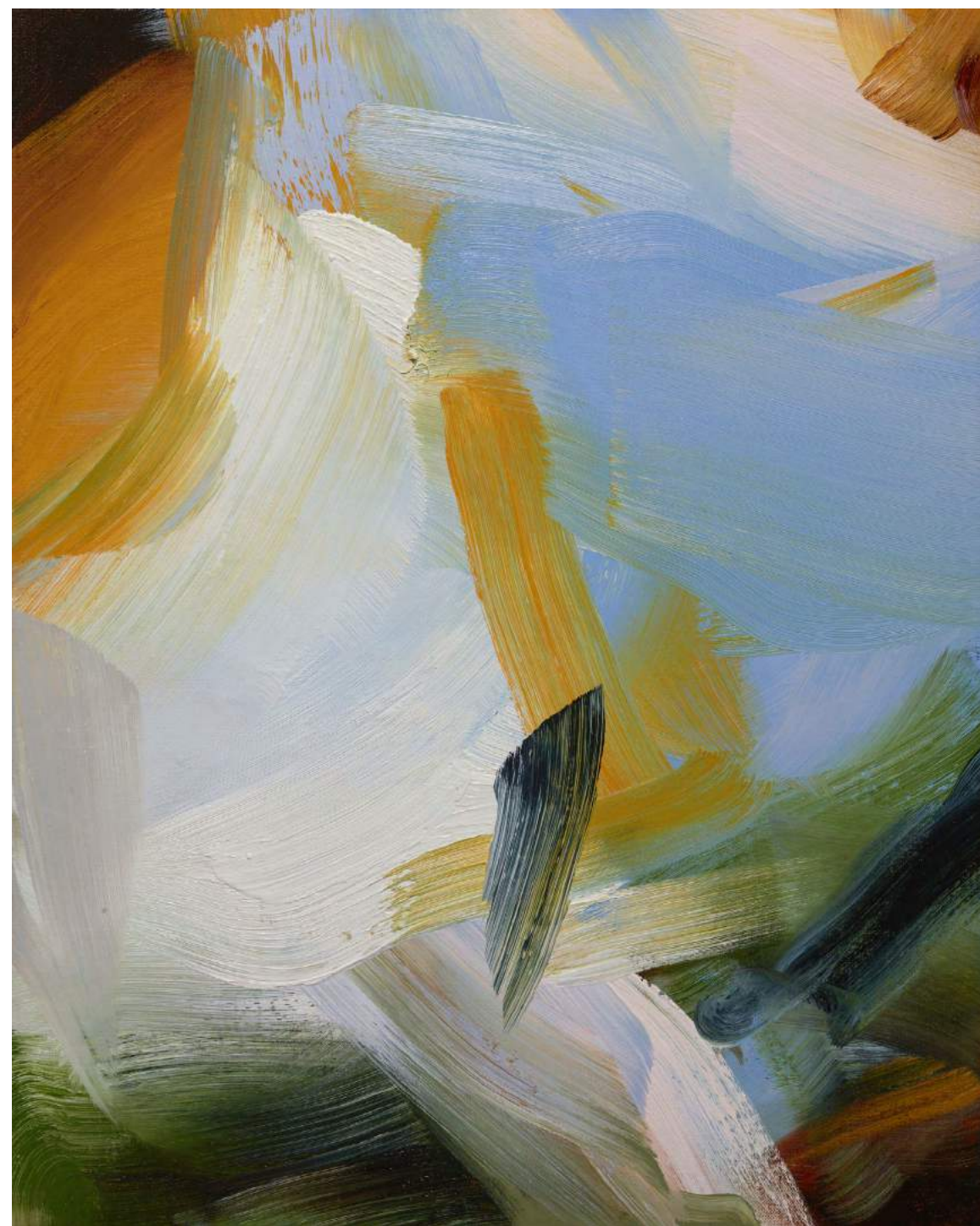
Large study I for Damascus, oil on linen, 60" x 48" (152 x 122cm)



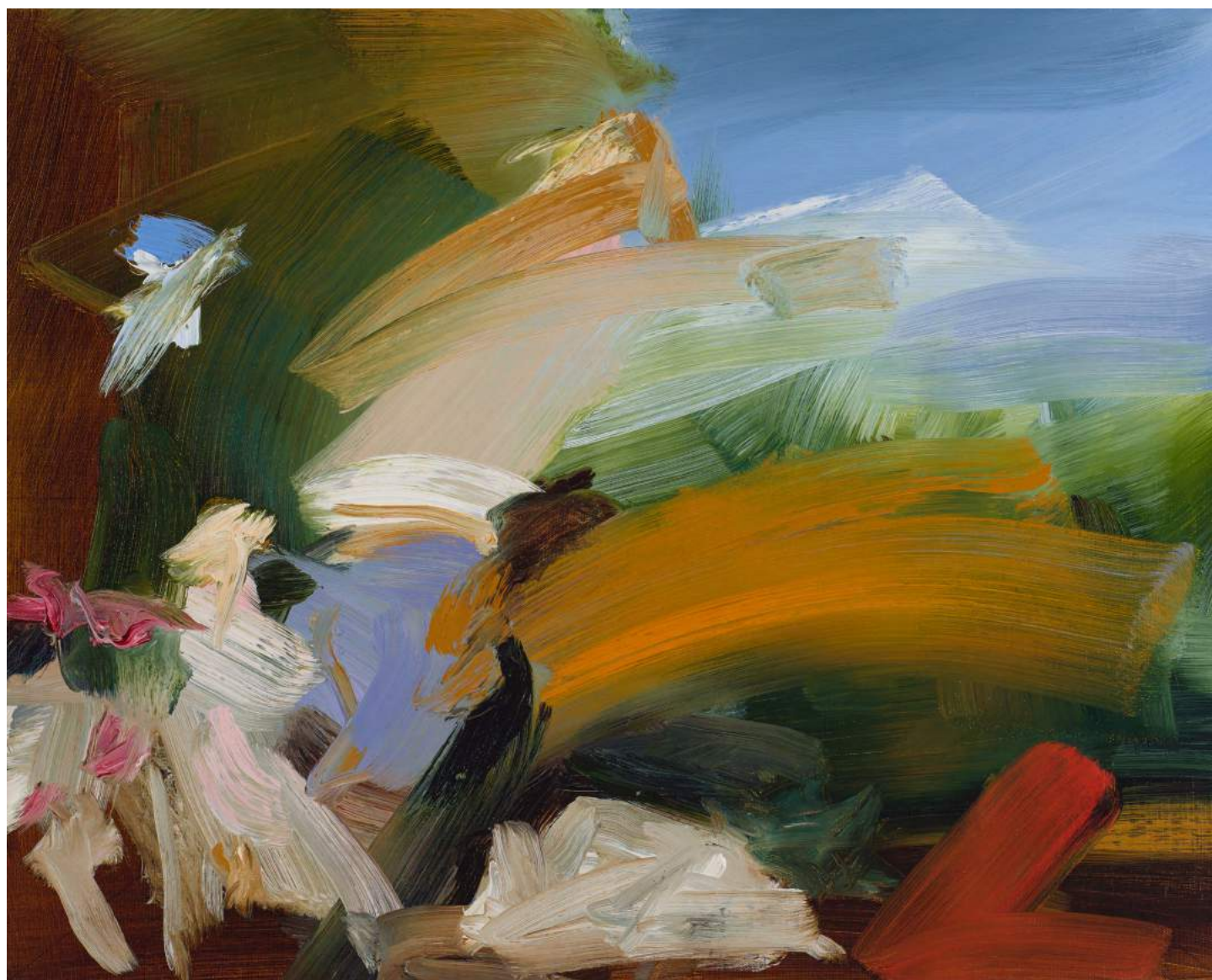
Large study I for Daphne and Apollo, oil on linen, 48" x 60" (122 x 152cm)



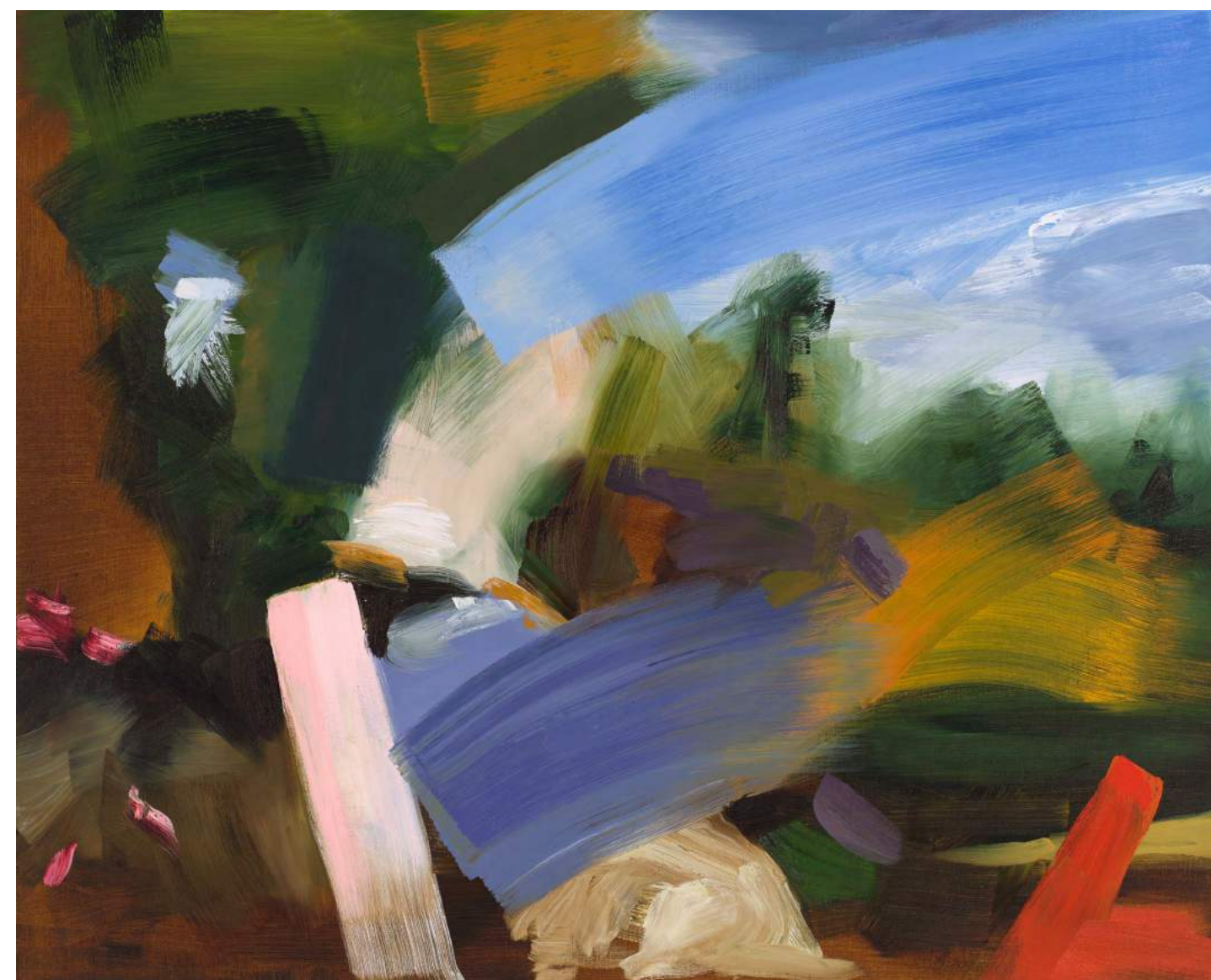
Small study I for Cecilia, oil on linen, 15" x 12" (38 x 30.5cm)



Medium study I for Cecilia, oil on linen, 25" x 20" (63.5 x 51cm)



Medium study II for Venus and Adonis, oil on linen, 20" x 25" (51 x 63.5cm)



Large study I for Venus and Adonis, oil on linen, 48" x 60" (122 x 152cm)



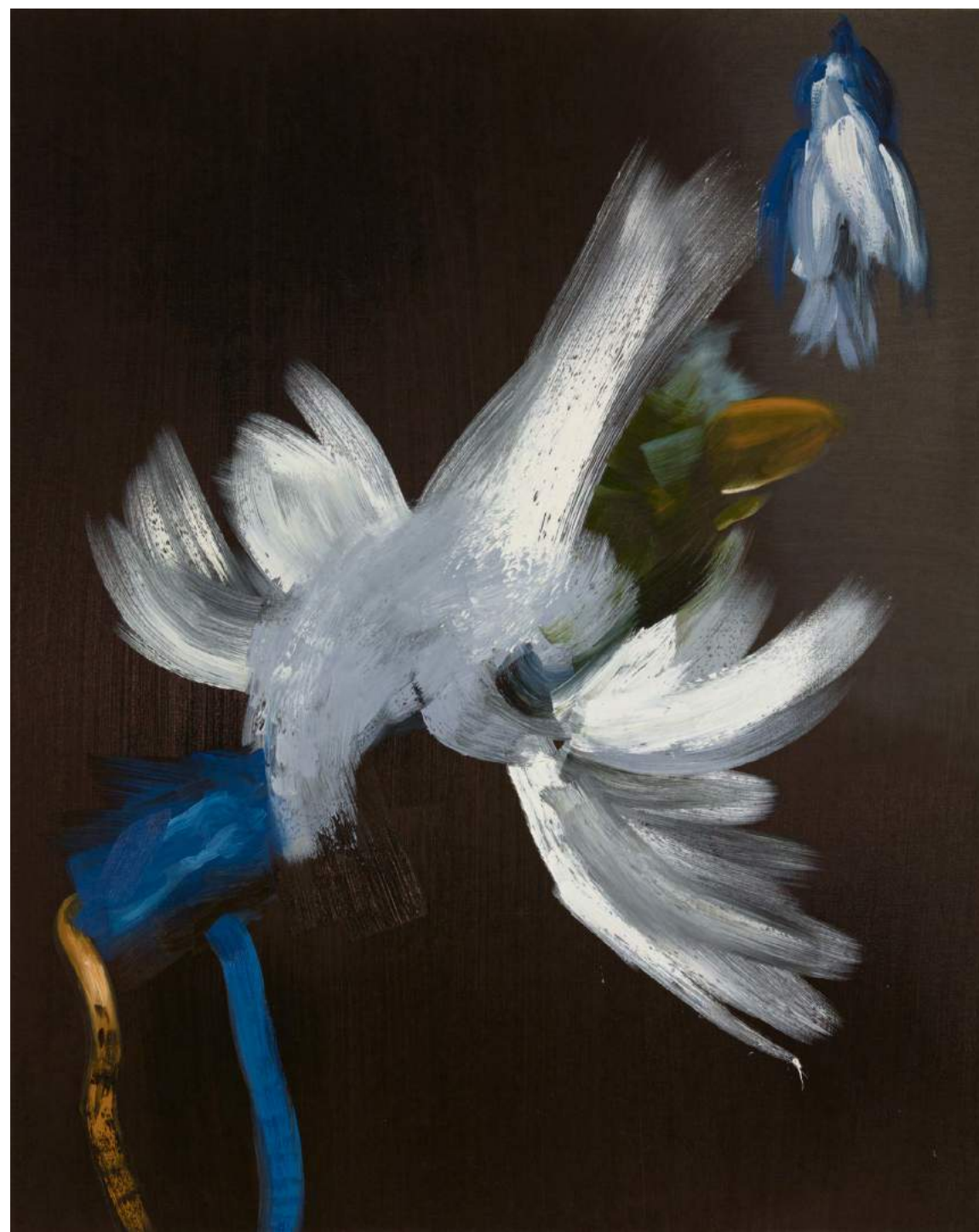
Large study I for Tiger, Lion and Leopard Hunt, oil on linen, 48" x 60" (122 x 152cm)



Two Angels, oil on linen, 48" x 60" (122 x 152cm)



Small study I for Light in August, oil on canvas, 15" x 12" (38 x 30.5cm)



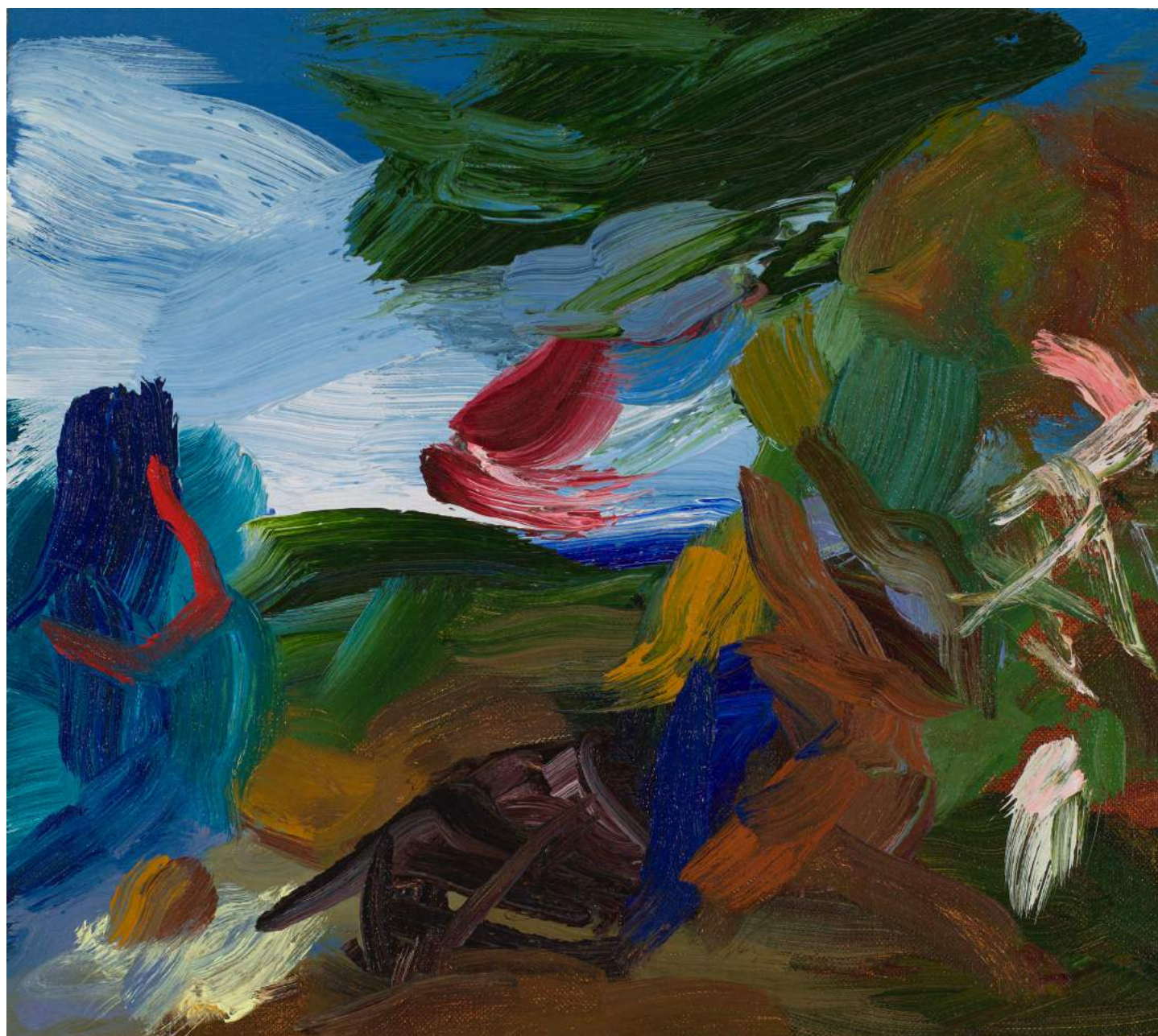
Light in August, oil on linen, 60" x 48" (152.5 x 122cm)



Naxos (Monochrome), oil on linen, 54" x 60" (137 x 152.5cm)



Medium study I for Naxos, oil on linen, 27" x 30" (68.5 x 76cm)



Small study IV for Bacchus and Ariadne, oil on linen, 12.5" x 14" (32 x 35.5cm)



Small study I for Andrians (Unpopulated), oil on linen, 10.5" x 12" (27 x 30.5cm)



Holy Family with Shepherd, oil on linen, 29" x 40" (73.5 x 122cm)



Holy Family with Shepherd (Unpopulated), oil on linen, 20" x 30" (51 x 76cm)



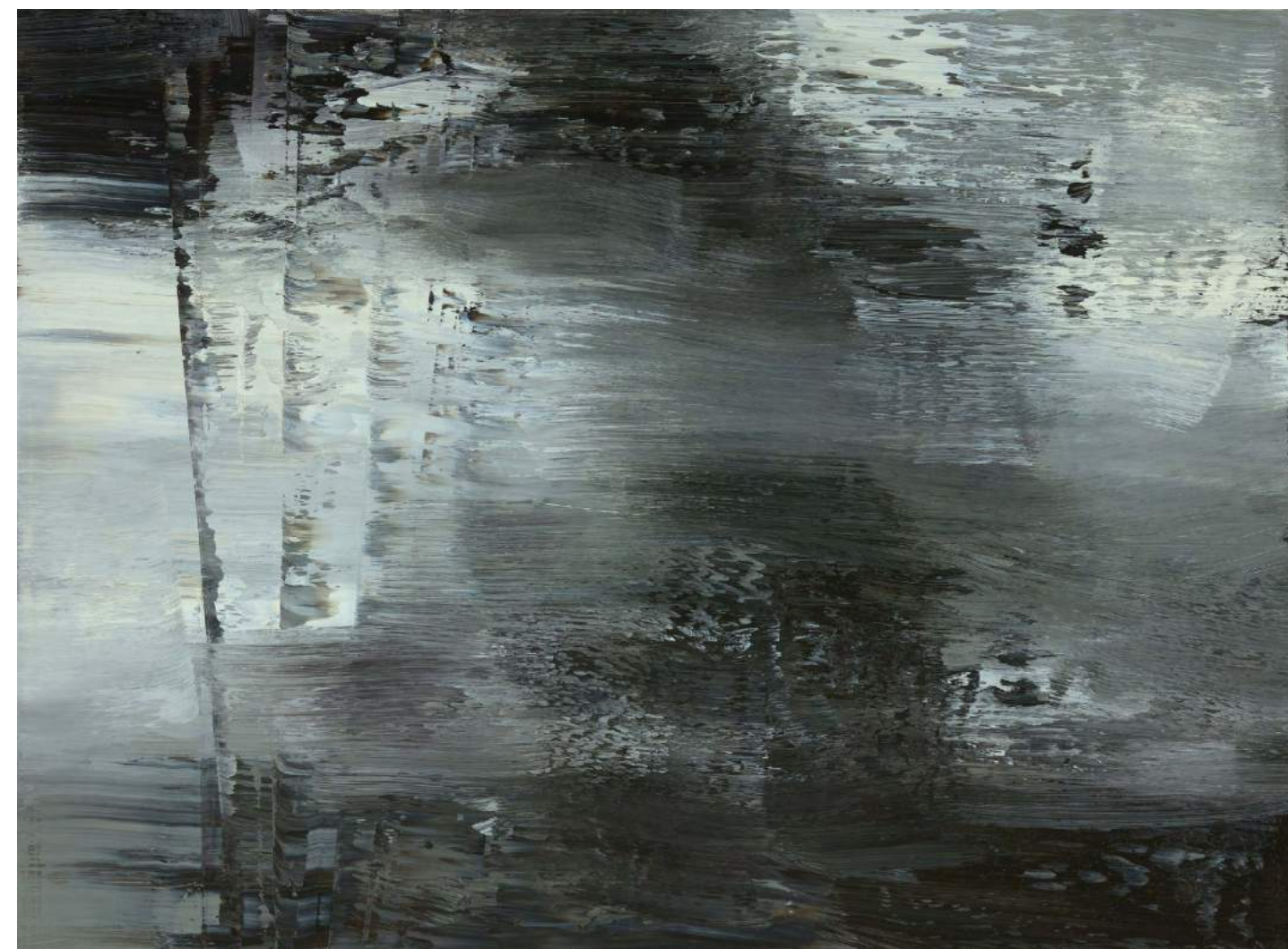
Reflections on the Boulevard, oil on linen, 20" x 30" (51 x 76cm)



Venice, oil on linen, 20" x 30" (51 x 76cm)



Terminal, oil on linen, 23" x 30" (58 x 76cm)



Watery Reflections, oil on linen, 20" x 30" (56 x 76cm)



Medium study IV for Seascape, oil on linen, 30" x 24" (76 x 61cm)



ELISE ANSEL

Born New York, NY

Brown University, B.A.

Southern Methodist University, M.F.A.

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2017 Danese/Corey, "Dialogue", New York, NY

2017 David Klein Gallery, "Summer Selection", Detroit, Michigan

2016 Bowdoin College Museum of Art, "Distant Mirrors" Brunswick, ME,

2015 Cadogan Contemporary, "Fusion of Horizons," London, UK

Ellsworth Gallery, "Far Reaches," Santa Fe, New Mexico

Phoenix Gallery, "Palimpsest," NY, NY

2013 Ellsworth Gallery, "The Invisible Thread," Santa Fe, NM

Phoenix Gallery, "Correspondence," New York, New York

Cadogan Contemporary, "Drawn From History," London, UK

2012 Phoenix Gallery, New York, New York

2011 Lenore Gray Gallery, Providence, Rhode Island

2010 List Art Center, Brown University, Providence, Rhode Island

2001 UMF Gallery, Farmington, Maine

2000 Ruschman Gallery, Indianapolis, IN

1999 The Art Gallery, Hopkinsville, Kentucky

1998 The Michael Dunn Memorial Gallery, Cornwell-Reed Fine Arts Center, Oakland

City University, Oakland City, Indiana

Krannert Gallery of Art, University of Evansville, Evansville, Indiana

1997 Fine and Hatfield Gallery, Evansville, Indiana

1996 The Riits Gallery, Savannah, Georgia

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

Chapel Hill, North Carolina

1993 Undermain Theater, in conjunction with Kitchen Dog Theater's performance of

Samuel Beckett's Footfalls, Play, and Krapp's Last Tape, Dallas, Texas

1991 Undermain Theater, in conjunction with Kitchen Dog Theater's performance of

Henrik Ibsen's Creditors, Dallas, Texas

1989 Dance Space, Inc., New York, New York

1987 Dance Space, Inc., New York, New York

1984 List Art Center, Brown University, Providence, Rhode Island

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS:

2018 Portland Museum of Art, 2018 Portland Museum of Art Biennial, Portland, MA

(forthcoming)

2017 Museum of Contemporary Art Krakow, "Art in Art", Krakow, Poland

Institute of Contemporary Art at Main College of Art, "18th, 19, 21st:

Confabulations of Millenia", Porland, ME

Danese/Corey, "ReFerEnced", New York, NY

David Klein Gallery, "Summer Selections", Detroit, MI

LA Art Show, Ellsworth Gallery, Los Angeles, CA

London Art Fair, Cynthia Corbett Gallery, London, UK

2016 Danese/Corey, "Drawing Conclusions", New York, NY

AAF London, Cynthia Corbett Gallery, London, UK

Art New York, Cynthia Corbett Gallery, London, UK

Ellsworth Gallery, "Artists' Choice", Santa Fe, NM

Phoenix Gallerym "3 Artists", New York, NY

2015 Art Miami, "Art Miami with the Cyntha Corbett Gallery," Miami, Florida

Site/109, "Young Masters/ Focus on New Work," New York, New York

Sphinx Fine Art, "Young Masters/ Dialogues," London, UK

Royal Academy of Arts, "Summer Exhibition 2015," London, UK

Conigsby Gallery, "Cynthia Corbett Gallery Summer Exhibition 2015, Focus on

Painting," London, UK

Cadogan Contemporary, "New Year," London, UK

Ellsworth Gallery, "On the Brink," Santa Fe, New Mexico

2014 Young Masters 2014, Sphinx Fine Art, London, UK

Young Masters 2014, Lloyds Club, London, UK

Cadogan Contemporary, "Spring 2014," London, UK

Ellsworth Gallery, "ONE," Santa Fe, New Mexico

Phoenix Gallery, "syn.the.sis," New York, New York

2013 Parrish Art Museum, "Artists Choose Artists," Water Mill, NY

"Young Masters at Sphinx Fine Art 2013," Sphinx Fine Art, London

Cadogan Contemporary, "Summer Exhibition 2013," London, UK

Springs Fireplace Project, "Summer Exhibition," East Hampton, NY

Cynhtia Corbett Gallery, "Spring Exhibition Showcase Alongside a

Selection of Young Masters," London, UK

Affordable Art Fair, "Excerpt of Young Masters Art Prize," Hampstead, UK

Gallery 27, "Young Masters: The Figure in Art," Mayfair, UK

Henley Festival, "Young Masters: The Figure in Art," Henley-on-Thames,

UK, Oxfordshire, England

2012 Phoenix Gallery, "Gallery Artists," New York, New York

Cadogan Contemporary, "Summer Exhibition 2012," London, UK

Cadogan Contemporary, "Works on Paper," London, UK

Cadogan Contemporary, "30th Anniversary Exhibition," London, UK

2011 Phoenix Gallery, "Gallery Artists," New York, New York

POP Gallery, Portland, Maine

Cadogan Contemporary, "Summer Exhibition," London, UK

Thomas Moser Gallery, "Summer Exhibition," Freeport, Maine

Bell Gallery, "Faculty Triennial," Brown University, Rhode Island

2010 Phoenix Gallery, New York, NY

Juror: Robert Storr

2010 Guild Hall, East Hampton, NY

2009 Springs Fireplace Project, East Hampton, NY

2008 Clic Gallery, East Hampton, NY
Springs Fireplace Project, East Hampton, NY

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

2006 Maine Center for Contemporary Art, Rockport, ME

2005 Ruschman Gallery, Indianapolis, IN

2004 Alpers Fine Art, Andover, MA
Lenore Gray Gallery, Providence, Rhode Island
Greenhut Galleries, Portland, Maine
Ruschman Gallery, "Works on Paper," Indianapolis, Indiana

2003 Nohra Haime Gallery, New York, NY
Ruschman Gallery, "Recent Work," Indianapolis, Indiana

2002 Ruschman Gallery, " Gallery Artists," Indianapolis, Indiana

2001 Boston Center for Contemporary Art, "The Drawing Show," Boston, Massachusetts
Juror: Bill Arning, Curator, List Visual Arts Center, M.I.T.
Ruschman Gallery, " Gallery Artists," Indianapolis, Indiana
ICON Contemporary Art , Brunswick, Maine
Elaine Benson Gallery, "Re-Emerging," Bridge Hampton, New York
Ruschman Gallery, "New Work by Gallery Artists," Indianapolis, Indiana

2000 Maine Coast Artists, "Biennial Juried Exhibition 2000," Rockport, Maine
Jurors: Mark Bessire, Linda Earle, Katy Kline

1999 Ruschman Gallery, "Gallery Artists", Indianapolis, Indiana

1998 Evansville Museum of Arts and Sciences, "49th Mid-States Art Exhibition,"
Evansville, Indiana
Juror: James D. Burke, Executive Director and Chief Executive Officer of the St.
Louis Art Museum
Ruschman Gallery, "New Work by Gallery Artists," Indianapolis, Indiana
Evansville Museum of Arts and Sciences, "Eastside/ Westside," Evansville, Indiana

1997 Ruschman Gallery, "New Gallery Artists," Indianapolis, IN
Owens-Thomas Regional Arts Gallery, "Southern Exposure," Savannah, Georgia
Arts Council of Southwestern Indiana Gallery, "Annual Juried Exhibition,"
Evansville, Indiana
Brenau Visual Arts Gallery, "National Invitational Art Exhibition," Brenau
University, Gainesville, Georgia
Krannert Gallery of Art, "Faculty Exhibition," University of Evansville,
Evansville, Indiana
West Bank Gallery, "18th Annual Juried Fine Arts Competition," Savannah, GA
Juror: Lisa Phillips, Curator of the 1997 Whitney Biennial
Pinnacle Art Gallery, "The Low Country and Beyond", Savannah, Georgia

1996 York Street Open Studios, Savannah, Georgia
Exhibit A Gallery, Savannah College of Art and Design, Savannah, Georgia
Bergen Gallery, "Faculty Exhibition," Savannah College of Art and Design, Savannah,
Georgia

1995 Haystack Mountain School, "Summer Exhibition," Deer Isle, Maine
Center for Creative Leadership, Greensboro, NC

Fine Arts Center Gallery, Ravenscroft School, Raleigh, NC

1993 Ashwaag Hall, East Hampton, New York
"Twenty-Three Years of Printmaking at SMU," A Travelling Retrospective of Prints
from the Meadows School of the Arts
Meadows Museum, SMU, Dallas, Texas

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY:
Alfred MacAdam, "Take it from the Masters", ARTnews, March 2017.
David Dorsey, "All art is contemporary now," The Dorsey Post, February 2017.
Patrica Ramos, "Elise Ansel: Playing with Abstraction," METAL, November 2016
Carl Little, "Elise Ansel's Ab-Ex Annunciation," Hyperallergic, April 2016.
John O'Hern, "Distant Mirrors," American Art Collector Magazine, April 2016.
Jacob Fall & Virginia Rose, "Elise Ansel's Painterly Revelations," The Chart, March 2016.
Kat Herriman, "Reclamation Project," Cultured Magazine, Feb/March 2016.
Skye Priestley, "Elise Ansel: A Repainting of Things Past," Big Red & Shiny, March 2016.
Daniel Kany, "Elise Ansel Gloriously Revisits Calvaert's 'Annunciation' at Bowdoin,"
Portland Press Herald, February 2016.
Hanétha Vété-Congolo and Joachim Homann, Distant Mirrors (catalogue) Brunswick, ME: Bow-
doin College Musuem of Art, 2016.
John O'Hern, "Preview for Far Reaches," American Art Collector Magazine, July 2015.
Lara Santoro, Elise Ansel: Fusion of Horizons (catalogue), Cadogan Contemporary, 2015.
Christina Arza, Steadfast Arte, December 2015.
Gabrielle Selz, "Artists Choose Artists: A Visual Dialogue of the East End - Part I,"
Hamptons Art Hub, December 2013.
Michael Abatemarco, "A Renaissance Renaissance: Elise Ansel Reinterprets the Masters," In
Pasatiempo, The Santa Fe New Mexican, August 2013.
Deborah Weisgall, Maine Magazine., January/February 2011.
Bill Van Siclen, Providence Journal, January 2011.

SELECTED PUBLIC AND PRIVATE COLLECTIONS:
Art Masters Solutions, London, UK
Bowdoin College Museum of Art, Brunswick, Maine
Brown University, Providence, Rhode Island
Eli Lilly Foundation, Indianapolis, Indiana
Evansville Museum of Arts and Sciences, Evansville, Indiana
Mr and Mrs Goh, Singapore
Ice, Miller, Denadio, and Ryan, Indianapolis, IN
Mr and Mrs Edward and Jane Russell-Walling, London, UK
Mr and Mrs Seabright, London, UK
Mr Mark Smith, London, UK
Sopwell House, St. Albans, UK
Spring Island Trust, Spring Island, South Carolina

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE:

2017 Tutor, New School of Art, London, UK

2016-17 Visiting Artist, Bowdoin College Museum of Art, Brunswick, Maine

2014 Adjunct Lecturer, Brown University, Providence, Rhode Island

2011 Drawing Instructor, Pont Aven School of Contemporary Art (PASCA), Pont Aven, France

2007- 2011 Adjunct Lecturer, Brown University, Providence, Rhode Island

2006 Visiting Artist, Bowdoin College, Brunswick, Maine

2001-04 Visiting Artist, Bowdoin College, Brunswick, Maine

2001 Visiting Artist, University of Maine, Farmington, Maine

1999 Associate Professor of Art, University of Southern Indiana, Evansville, Indiana

1997-99 Lecturer, University of Evansville, Evansville, Indiana

1997 Adjunct Professor of Art, Armstrong Atlantic State University, Savannah, Georgia

1996 Professor of Foundation, Savannah College of Art and Design, Savannah, Georgia



An abstract painting with thick, expressive brushstrokes in various colors including green, orange, brown, and white. The composition is layered and textured, with some areas appearing more saturated than others.

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