

An abstract painting featuring a dense composition of vibrant colors including red, blue, yellow, green, and pink. The brushstrokes are expressive and varied in direction, creating a sense of movement and depth. The overall effect is a rich, textured visual experience.

Dream for Light Years
Ali Smith & Michael Alec Rose

Dream for Light Years

for Ali Smith

Michael Alec Rose (2019)

Fast, disquieting
♩ = c.132

Flute: *p, sostenuto*, *ft.*, *f*, *p*
Violin: *p, sostenuto*, *f*, *p*
Tenor Trombone: *p, sostenuto*, *f*, *p*
Violoncello: *p, sostenuto*, *f*, *p* (pizz)

Detailed description: This block shows the first five measures of the musical score. It is in 3/4 time with a tempo of approximately 132 beats per minute. The score is for four instruments: Flute, Violin, Tenor Trombone, and Violoncello. The Flute part starts with a piano (*p*) dynamic and a *sostenuto* marking, followed by a fortissimo (*f*) dynamic and a *ft.* marking. The Violin part also starts with *p, sostenuto*, followed by *f* and *p*. The Tenor Trombone part has *p, sostenuto*, *f*, and *p*. The Violoncello part has *p, sostenuto*, *f*, and *p* with a *pizz* marking.

6

Flute: *mf*, *mp*
Violin: *trem.*, *port.*, *mf*, *mp*
Tenor Trombone: *mf*, *mp*
Violoncello: *poco >*, *mp*, *mf*, *mp*

Detailed description: This block shows measures 6 through 10 of the musical score. The Flute part has dynamics of *mf* and *mp*. The Violin part includes *trem.* and *port.* markings, with dynamics of *mf* and *mp*. The Tenor Trombone part has dynamics of *mf* and *mp*. The Violoncello part starts with a *poco >* marking, followed by dynamics of *mp*, *mf*, and *mp*.

An Introduction:
Dream for Light Years
Ali Smith & Michael Alec Rose

March 19 – June 7, 2020

Emily Weiner, Interim Curator,
Fine Arts Gallery
Vanderbilt University

In April 2018, composer Michael Alec Rose emailed the California-based painter Ali Smith to ask if he could have permission to create “a suite of pieces responding to a few [her] paintings.” Rose, a professor of composition at Vanderbilt’s Blair School of Music and based in Nashville, had never met Smith—or even seen her canvases in person—but had been a fan since first encountering the artist’s vibrant and multilayered artworks in a 2007 issue of *New American Paintings*.

Smith replied with enthusiasm, which set off an ongoing correspondence between artist and musician. In following months, Rose sent examples of music while Smith shared images of new works. One painting-in-progress that Smith revealed was titled *Dream for Light Years*. “The painting is so rich and strange,” Rose responded in July, “it’s already effecting a sea change in my looking and hearing.”¹ Over the next two years, this painting—and a namesake composition by Michael Alec Rose—would evolve. Along with these evolving works came the idea for a shared exhibition that might shed light on how one art form might inspire another, even across remarkably different mediums and creative methods.

This spring, two years after the initial e-meeting of Rose and Smith, the Vanderbilt University Fine Arts Gallery is pleased to present an exhibition that is the culmination of their exchange of ideas. On opening night, guests will gather inside the Fine Arts Gallery to view fourteen oil paintings by Smith, along with the debut performance of Rose’s composition. A quartet of distinguished faculty of the Blair School of Music will perform Rose’s score amidst Smith’s paintings: Molly Barth on flute, Stephen Miahky on violin, Jeremy Wilson on trombone and Felix Wang on cello. So that gallery visitors can experience this debut for the run of the exhibition, John Warren, film artist and lecturer in the Department of Art at Vanderbilt, will produce a video of the *in situ* performance.

Dream for Light Years began as a generative dialogue which—as the number of collaborators and facilitators mentioned within these pages can attest—has steadily increased in momentum over time. We expect this to be just the beginning of a rich (and polyphonic!) conversation on the power of cross-disciplinary collaboration.

¹ Excerpts of the e-mail exchange between Ali Smith and Michael Alec Rose, from 2018–2020, can be found in following pages.

Note from the artist

Ali Smith

When Michael first contacted me in 2018 about the prospect of working together, I was delighted at the thought of my paintings connecting somehow with his compositions, yet admittedly a bit apprehensive: how would the collaboration work? How would I let another person into my studio practice where I am happily isolated? How might I shift my way of working, and how might this all happen, sight unseen? Thankfully Michael persisted and it turns out that I have needed this collaboration and communication these past few years, more than I might have anticipated. Working with music has made so much sense, perhaps it's been the foundation of a lot of my work all along, and the idea of choreography, of the rehearsed act of painting and honing in on a certain practiced intuition of mark-making, is a key element to how my work takes shape.

What a reassurance it's been to discover this renewed hope in art, music and humanity, which we all need now more than ever. Thank you for reaching out, Michael, it's been a privilege.

Note from the composer

Michael Alec Rose

One of the paintings by Ali Smith I encountered early on was titled *Dream for Light Years*. I loved it immediately. I knew that I had found a new home. The title was part of the charm, a fusion of fantasy and physics, true to the already-hybrid nature of light years as a unit of measure, distance expressed in terms of time.

In every way, Ali's work embodies *continuum*.

I'm so grateful to Ali for repurposing that older title *Dream for Light Years* for one of the glorious new paintings in this exhibition. She knew that I loved the earlier picture, and that I suggested its title to our curator Emily Weiner as an apt name for this collaboration.

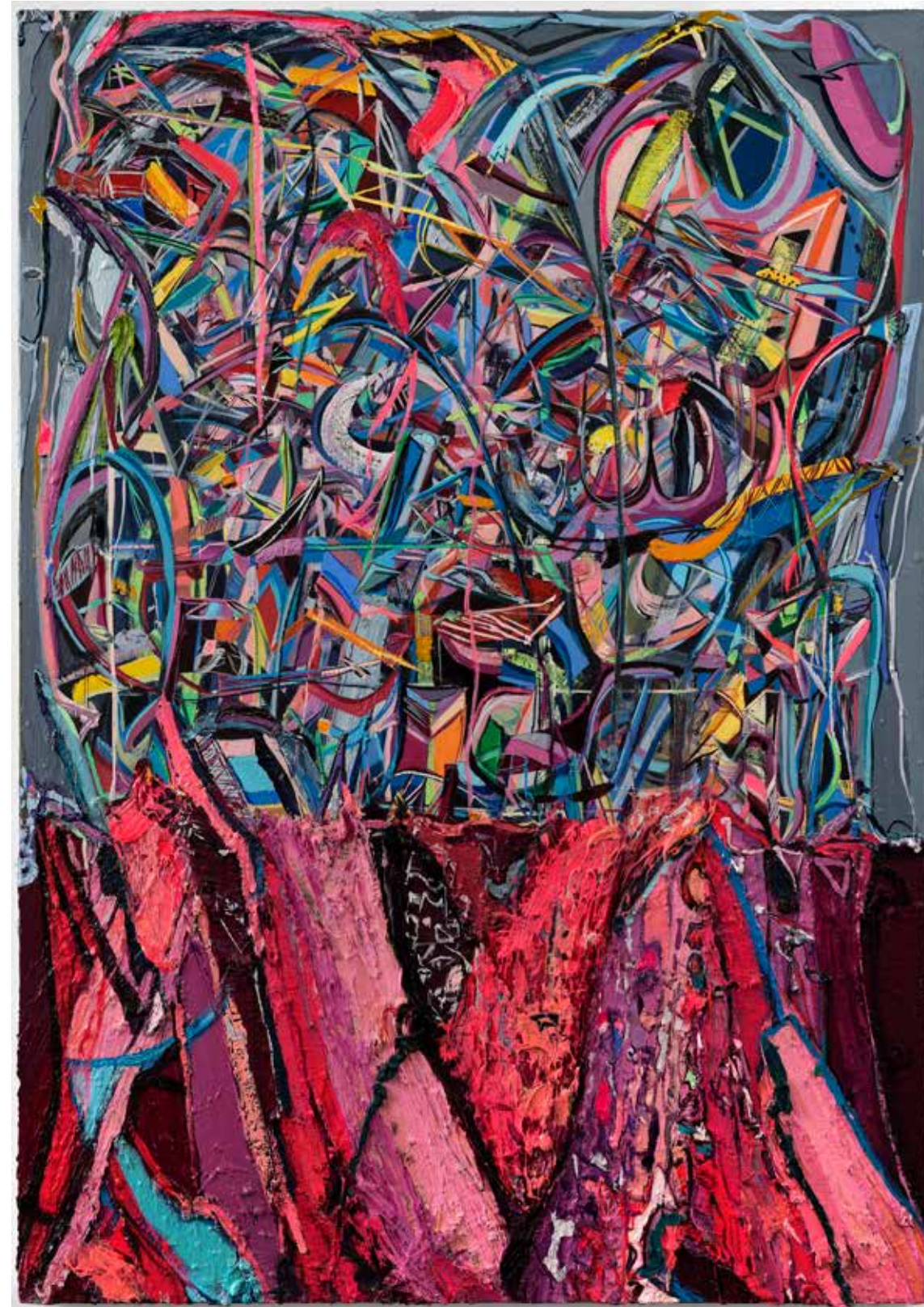
At some point in these two close-knit years of exchanging emails and text messages, Ali suggested that my piece *Dream for Light Years* is a love letter to her paintings. She gets everything right.

Note from the filmmaker

John Warren

It is always exciting and humbling to collaborate with artists from different mediums. Painting, music and video each has its own language, economy, history and aesthetic. I enjoy collaborating because I like finding the places where we intersect, and can move deeper into uncharted territory. It is here where we discover the enhancement of expression, the fresh perspective and the unexpected spark that makes the experience in the gallery a little less predictable.

I think of my role in this project as a bridge that helps connect the color and texture of Ali Smith's paintings with the rhythm and movement of Michael Alec Rose's score, while also offering a new way to experience the conversation between music and painting. Special thanks to Fine Arts Gallery curator Emily Weiner for organizing this progressive exhibition.



Border, 2020. Oil on canvas, 60 x 42 inches

Photo by Gene Ogami, Courtesy of the artist.

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4/6/2018

Dear Ms. Smith,

Your paintings are very beautiful. I'm a composer of concert music, and I've been having lots of fun the past few years collaborating with fellow musicians, museum curators and gallery owners in the UK, Italy and the US, composing music inspired by artworks. I just want to ask you if I could have your permission to make a suite of pieces responding to a few of your paintings.

Yours,

Michael Alec Rose

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In the Dark, 2018. Oil on canvas, 72 x 36 inches.

Photo by Gene Ogami, Courtesy of the artist.

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4/9/2018

Dear Michael,

Thank you so much for your kind email, what a fabulous compliment for me, and I'm really fascinated by what you might compose. It'd be great to hear more of your collaborations, just hearing a few of your pieces online was such a great treat, and please let me know if you're ever in Southern California, my husband and I have an art studio near Long Beach and it would be terrific to speak more in person. I'm excited by this conversation and please do keep me posted on your progress.

Very best,

Ali

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Slender, 2018. Oil on canvas, 72 x 36 inches.

Photo by Gene Ogami, Courtesy of the artist.



...
7/26/2018

Dear Ali,

I'm having so much fun seeing your seven recent works, all of which are firing my imagination.

I'm especially smitten with Dream for Light Years. The painting is so rich and strange, it's already effecting a sea change in my looking and hearing.

*Yours in growing wonder and thanks,
Michael*

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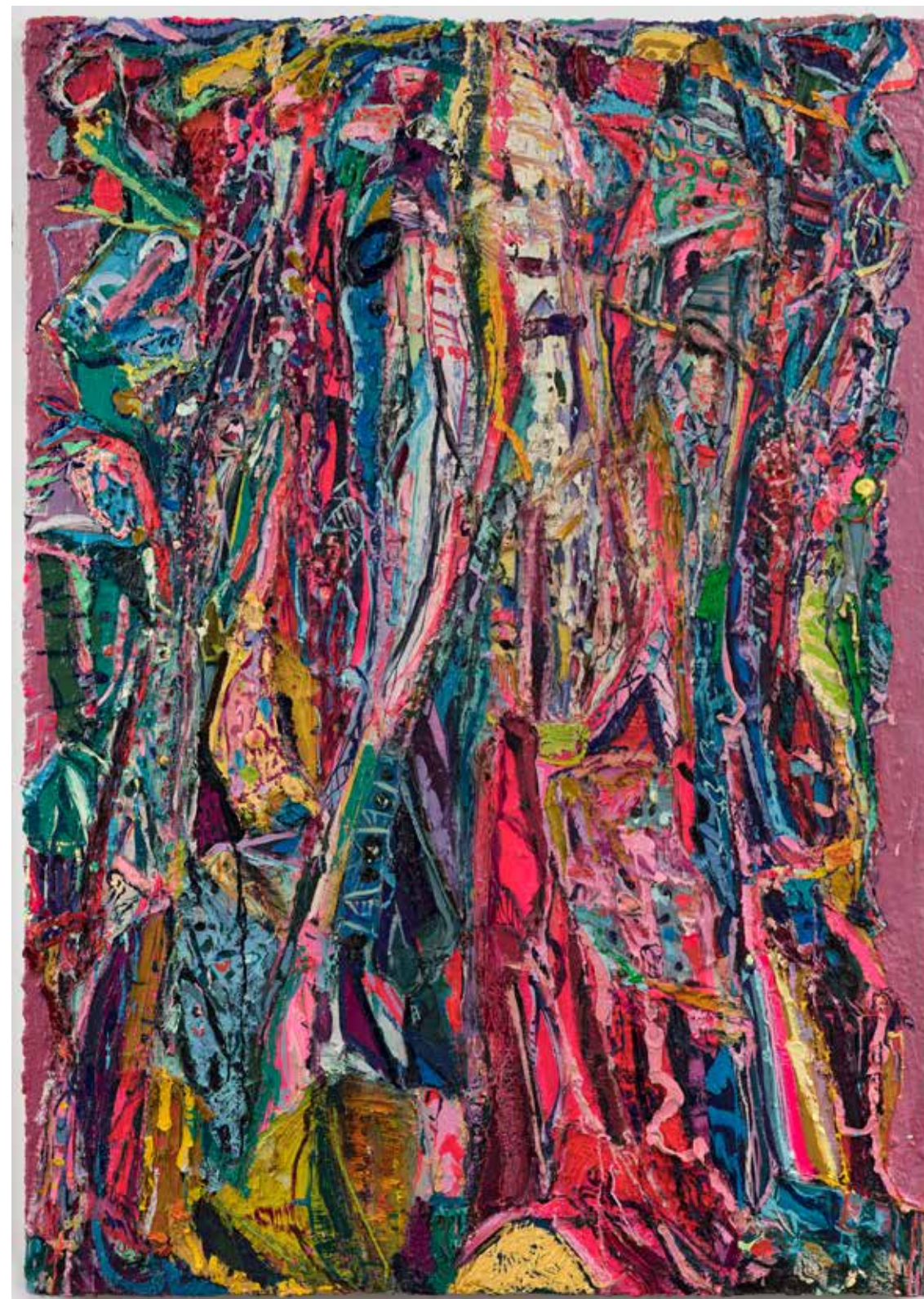
*Dream for Light Years, 2020.
Oil on canvas, 80 x 100 inches.
Photo by Gene Ogami,
Courtesy of the artist.*

Painting Parallels, Sounding Connections

Lee Hallman

My first impression of Ali Smith's paintings is that they are exuberant and teeming and mischievous. There's no easing into her compositions: as soon as I look at one, I am *in* it, fallen into its ocean. Each canvas is a painted topography of unfathomable variety, featuring vein-like lines and thick globs, flat smears and intricate doodles built up layer upon layer, extending edge to edge. The saturation of information is almost too much. Once I start noticing the individual incidents, it's difficult to stop. A fluorescent yellow triangle cuts into a crimson slab with a thin purple outline that overlays a hot pink wedge with blue dots adjacent to a craggy black scar. Every collision of shape and color creates a spark such that the whole canvas flickers like an electric field. In some of the images, I can't help but see vestiges of figuration. From some angles, the central triangle spanning the height of *Violette* morphs into a portrait bust, the lightest yellow passage becoming a face with crudely drawn black eyes, nose, and mouth. At a glance, *Elixir* reads as a candy-colored landscape with a watery expanse and high horizon line. This may just be my mind playing a game of recognition, like seeing shapes in the clouds. But the paintings always get the better of me, refusing to resolve but also refusing to let me forget what I saw. How do they walk this tightrope between chaos and cohesion, familiarity and enigma, and never fall? How does Smith manage to turn a mire of brushstrokes into an image as vital and changing as life itself?

I can see why Michael Alec Rose would like these paintings. I have confessed to him before that the experience of listening to his music can feel like falling, Alice-like, into a rabbit hole. There's no gentle introduction or invitation into some of his pieces. From the instant they begin, I am *in* them, plunged into their well to tumble through their waves of sound. But after the initial shock, the submersion lasts long enough that I start to adjust to the music's own light and gravity, and to consider where I am. As Alice begins to notice the bookshelves lining the rabbit hole and the cupboards filled with marmalade, I begin to notice the music's repeated rhythms, or the melodic cell being passed around among instruments. The musical incidents keep coming: a gut-wrenching plummet in the bass or a breathtaking lyrical rise, a rain of *pizzicato* or a flowing *legato*, a tangle of dissonance followed by a tune of almost dumbfoundingly simple



Violette, 2020. Oil on canvas, 60 x 42 inches.

Photo by Gene Ogami, Courtesy of the artist.

beauty, rooted in the same melodic cell I've heard before. As these patterns emerge, I start to feel a little bit at home in this wild and unfamiliar soundscape. But there's no telling what waits around the corner. How does Rose's music uphold this duality of harmony and discord? How does he manage to weave such divergent threads of sounds into a musical fabric as dazzling and multiform as life itself?

The exhibition *Dream for Light Years* is not only an occasion to encounter the dynamic works of a painter and a composer, but an opportunity to witness the intimate collaboration between them. When it comes to the relationship between art and music, much has been written about the neurological phenomenon of synesthesia, wherein one sensory experience systematically triggers another—the famous synesthesia Wassily Kandinsky, for example, specifically related the sound of a cello to the color blue. But what interests me—what I am trying to draw out in the paragraphs above—is something else, something harder to talk about, a much more open-ended inquiry. What interests me are the formal analogies, technical resonances, conceptual parallels and spiritual alliances between art and music waiting to be unearthed and riskily proposed. What motivates me is the possibility and the pleasure, through close looking and listening, of discovering connections that have never been considered before.

With Smith and Rose, we could draw a line between the immersive sensory qualities of their work, their readiness at once to overwhelm us and keep us aloft. We could consider how Smith's paintings, like music, reveal themselves to the viewer in layers and over time. In a world of instantaneous information and immense

external pressure—social, political and technological—the inner space of her art and Rose's music entreat a different tempo of attention. We could ponder the pair's mutual delight in their raw materials and venture analogies between their techniques of stitching diverse units of paint or sound into a complex whole. We could reflect on how they don't filter out what is difficult or awkward, but find a place for it in the fabric. We could contemplate their parallel self-awareness as a painter engaging the language of abstraction and a composer engaging the language of musical tonality, both championing the relevance of their respective traditions while expanding their conventions into unprecedented territories. We could reach toward a description of the ethics of their work: something that in both cases ultimately defies words, but that might be characterized as a faith that darkness and light are both in our nature and that truth and complexity walk hand-in-hand.

The dialogue between Smith and Rose has resulted not only in a suite of new work, but in a friendship and ongoing dialogue. Perhaps this is ultimately what their painting and music have in common: an openness to connection, a passion for the creative process and a readiness to dream for light years.

Lee Hallman (Vanderbilt BA, 2002) is an associate curator at the Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth. In 2016, she organized the premiere of Michael Alec Rose's *Mornington Caprice*, a duo for violin and viola, in the galleries of the Frank Auerbach retrospective at Tate Britain.



Elixir, 2020. Oil on canvas, 60 x 42 inches.

Photo by Gene Ogami, Courtesy of the artist.

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6/26/19

Hi Michael,

So happy to hear that the images from my studio have helped, I will indeed send as many as I can! I just hope my process of painting over and erasing things doesn't hamper anything for you, or even disappoint you if I end up ruining something, which I suppose is the risk in how I work. It is so exciting for me to see the sketches of your piece. Just starting to paint so I'll send some images soon!

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Pink Lady, 2020. Oil on canvas, 72 x 36 inches.

Photo by Gene Ogami, Courtesy of the artist.



Electric Blue, 2020. Oil on canvas, 60 x 42 inches.

Photo by Gene Ogami, Courtesy of the artist.

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6/26/19

I am never disappointed to see how a particular work changes in your hands! That transformation is a process that has so much uncanny resonance with my own modus operandi. I am sending a few rough snippets of some of the music soon, just me playing passages on the piano, so you can hear some of the motifs.

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Tangerine, 2020. Oil on canvas, 60 x 42 inches.

Photo by Gene Ogami, Courtesy of the artist.

*Ali Smith's Paintings and the
Plurality of Affinity, Agency and
Possibility: Notes with Headings
Inspired by Gilbert and Sullivan¹*

Christopher Miles

Phenomenological, Formal, Compositional

Ali Smith's paintings separate, distinctly consider, layer and intertwine efforts and results in three categories of inquiry and action often conflated in the discussion of painting: phenomenological, formal and compositional. There are multiple instances of density and complexity in these paintings—those of imagery, or color, of line and mark, of space—but not to be overlooked is that of the phenomena of oil paint physically manipulated on a substrate, left to harden via oxidation, and then observed by the moving, embodied eye of the viewer. In the case of Smith's paintings, the canvas carries multiple manipulations of material, each becoming the substrate of the next, and “viewing” Smith's barnacled paintings is less snapping a mental picture than commencing a mental 3D scan, using our bodies to bob and weave, and our necks to crane, to get our eyes around the paint as if beholding a relief sculpture. To the extent that Smith's paintings are invested in exploring the phenomenological, they are equally engaged with the related but different terrain of the formal. Her paintings attest that she is committed to working with and through paint, to investigate and maybe even eviscerate the art form of painting and what makes it what it is in order to find what it can be—in the artist's words, to “bring a sense of invention to current painting.” Composition, as act and outcome, is utterly central to Smith's practice, and inextricably tied to phenomenological dimensions and formal investigations, as the accretion that so characterizes Smith's canvases is the result of the turnover of composition and revision.

Representational, Spatial, Figural

For works so declaratively concerned with surface, with paint, with composition within format, and so akin to the works of artists who over the last century attempted to push beyond abstraction into a fully non-objective or non-representational mode, Smith, just as is the case with some of these predecessors, retains and exercises what we might think of as a kind of representational prerogative within her practice. Even amidst her crusts of paint, so insistent on their literal and physical presence, one finds moments where the strokes and lines and shapes and colors and transparencies collude and collide, perhaps by act or accident of the artist and viewer, to deliver one or more of the hallmark approaches to illusionistic represen-

¹ Gilbert and Sullivan refers to the Victorian-era partnership of dramatist W. S. Gilbert and composer Arthur Sullivan. Collaboratively, they wrote fourteen comic operas between 1871 and 1896, including *H.M.S. Pinafore*, *The Mikado* and *The Pirates of Penzance*. They were renown for their use of “patter song” structures.

tation in painting: foreground-background and figure-ground relationships, overlapping elements, diminishing scale, softening focus, color shifts and fades, and occasionally even hints of linear perspective. Sometimes these illusionistic spaces emerge as vignettes or pockets within the paintings, and often they are stacked within the canvas format, or layered within the picture plane such that the internal pictorial logic of one seems to contradict that of another, or such that one can only be seen through another. The coalescence of these emerging images thus becomes variously reminiscent of cinematic and photographic montage, of CGI effects and of the kinds of spatial organization one might find in pre-Renaissance European painting and in Tibetan cosmology paintings. Figures inevitably emerge within all these spaces, sometimes in the simple way that marks read against ground, or shapes seem to sit in relation to an implied plane, and it is uncertain in many instances whether the figures observed are more akin to the faces and animals that emerge to our eyes from clouds or star constellations, or materialize the way that figures are noted by artists with the concise but certain marks of a gesture drawings. Whether seemingly spectral or concrete, these figures, via the ways and scales and intensities by which they inhabit and share pictorial space, begin to push one's sense of Smith's paintings in the directions of varied and disparate categories of figurative painting: portraits, figure groups, genre scenes, bucolic images.

Animal, Vegetable, Mineral, Mechanical, Architectural, Pastoral

Such a broadly encompassing, irreverently encyclopedic, and yet wholly inexhaustive categorical list as appears above represents the range of illusions and allusions that emerge within the representational, spatial, figural moments of Smith's paintings. Such breadth is indicative of what Smith has called her attempt to "sort through the visual and cultural clutter," and is an assertion of a freedom Smith exercises as an artist and extends to viewers of her work. There is something unabashedly attitudinal about this assertion, analogous to what the artist and critic Joanna Frueh proposed as taking on the risk of the charge of intellectual promiscuity in the exercise and service of "mental freedom."²

² Frueh, Joanna. "Towards a Feminist Theory of Art Criticism," *Feminist Art Criticism, An Anthology*, Ed. by Arlene Raven, Cassandra L. Langer, and Joanna Frueh (Ann Arbor/London: U.M.I Research Press, Studies in the Fine Arts: Criticism, 1988), 27, 164.

³ McEvelley, Thomas. *Art and Discontent* (Kingston, New York: McPherson, 1991), 71.



Prism, 2020. Oil on canvas, 60 x 72 inches.

Photo by Gene Ogami, Courtesy of the artist.

Color-FULL

It is in her employment, or perhaps better said, deployment, of color that Smith most clearly declares that she is an artist who seeks no permission and makes her own rules, that she keeps her options open and that palette and color choices might move beyond matters of design and taste to achieve agency in their assertion of freedom.

Willful, Mercurial, Playful, Verbal, Careful

Smith's attitudinal position is willful, mercurial and playful, as evident in her attachment to her paintings, what the poet and art critic Thomas McEvelley called "verbal supplements" in the form of titles.³ Among the names of paintings included

in this exhibition are *Prism*, *Elixir*, *Electric Blue*, *Fille Unique*, *Ruine*, *Border*, *Violette*, *Stay the Course*, *In the Dark*, *Slender*, *Pink Lady*, *Tangerine* and the exhibition's namesake *Dream for Light Years*. Various suggestive of objects, substances, experiences, places and locations, social standings, feelings, qualities and attributes, types, characters, ways of being and states of mind—and in many instances doubling potential readings among them—these varied applications of language come only at the end of the creation of a painting, and reinforce the care with which Smith allows each painting to evolve towards its own conclusion, often working on canvases over spans of years with none starting from a shared premise, operating on the same schedule or moving toward a predetermined end.

***Personal, Vulnerable, Aspirational,
Indomitable***

Within Smith's paintings and practice, there is something profoundly personal and vulnerable, by which I don't mean to suggest that the works are particularly confessional or necessarily autobiographical. Rather, I mean that over time, these canvases become the sites, receptacles, records and secret-keepers within their layers of all of Smith's experiments and efforts in making meaning, and in reiteratively posing and pondering what she calls "the question of what it means to be a female painter employing the language of abstraction." I am reminded of a 1976 statement by the artist Joyce Kozloff that Smith enthusiastically shared with me.⁴ Intended as a response to Ad Reinhardt's writing "On Negation," Kozloff's statement begins with a list of compound words coupling anti- with a cache of words, many of them taken from Reinhardt. The list stands as a repudiation of those who would seek to hem art in, to determine its options, or to submit it to hierarchy or patriarchy. Kozloff follows with another list, under the banner "On Affirmation," of words related to enjoyment, openness, curiosity and freedom—words of a spirit that resonates with Smith and her paintings—aspirational and indomitable.

Musical?

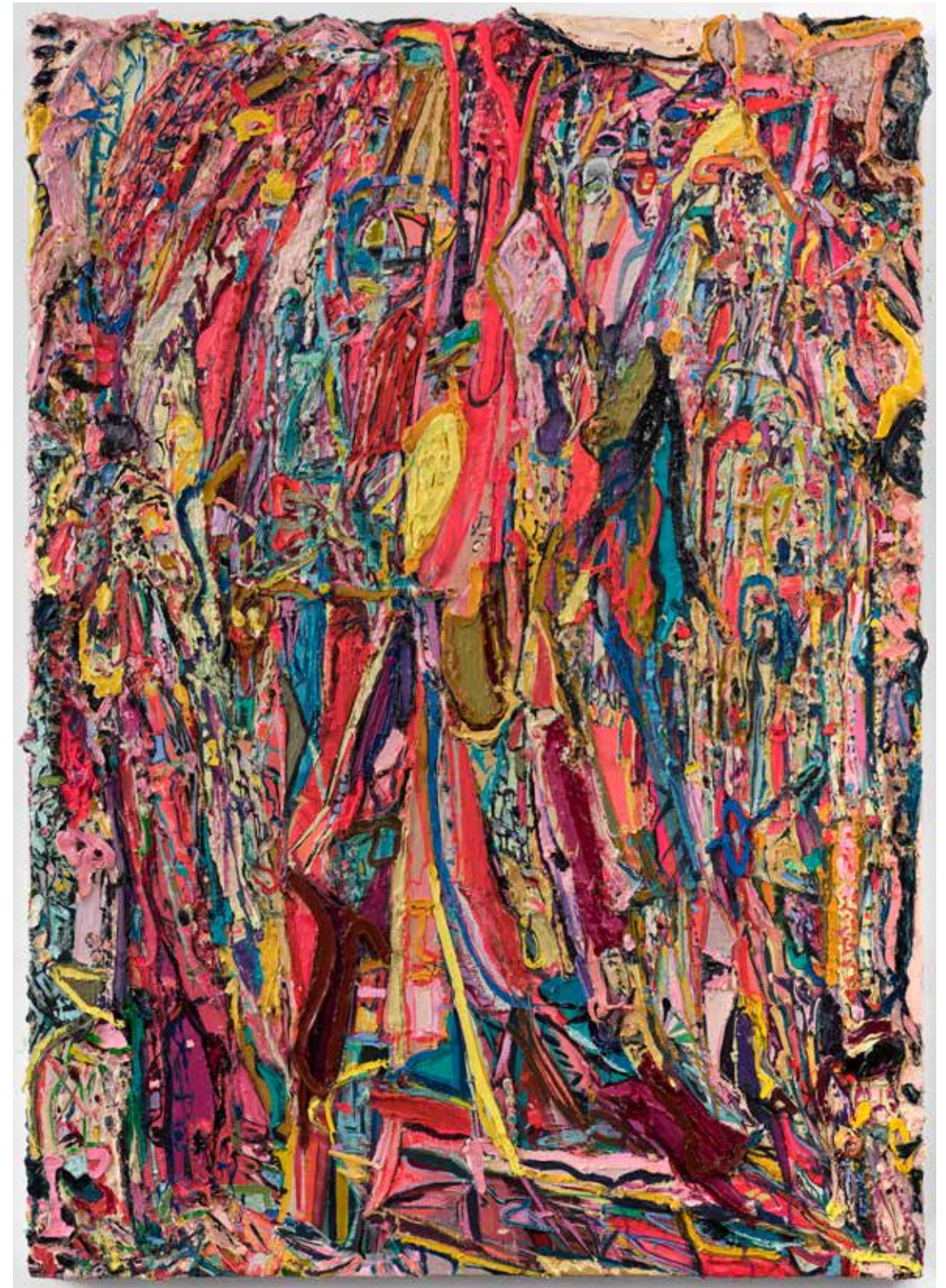
I am but a tourist in the field of music and thus leave its discussion to better suited parties, and I am disinclined to revisit propositions about art, music, musicality, synesthesia, etc. I am, however, struck by something about music, generally speaking, that resonates when I think about painting, and specifically about Ali Smith's paintings. Music is an art: (a) which is directly tied to the specificity of sensory experience; (b) that can function in non-representational or non-referential ways yet also can be quite referential and even explicit; and (c) whose practitioners enjoy the opportunity to reiterate and

revisit and revise and shift modes and moods all within a single composition as it unfolds in time to the ears, bodies and minds of an audience. Painting has much of all this in common with music except that paintings are fully there in front of our eyes, all at once. To me, Smith's paintings resonate with how I understand music in their aspiration to unfold like music, and I can't help but think that such resonance moved back and forth in a kind of feedback loop as Michael Alec Rose developed his composition *Dream for Light Years* while looking at images of Smith's paintings in development, and as Smith finalized the paintings in this exhibition while listening to sketches of Rose's composition in development. It comes as no surprise that Rose, who has a fondness for the arts broadly defined, and has both written about and created from the intersection of music and the experience of other arts, has composed a score that shares both the title and space of this exhibition, and that this score contains performance directions for the musicians to look at the paintings while playing, as well as notations like "fast, disquieting," and "schlep," and "hold back" and "push ahead," and "assured, at home" and "molto accelerando."

With *Dream for Light Years*, Smith and Rose, her paintings and his music, keep company and pace with one another in all their aspiration and freedom.

⁴Kozloff, Joyce. "An Answer to Ad Reinhardt's 'On Negation' Negating the Negative," artist's handout at *10 Approaches to the Decorative* exhibition (New York: Tony Alessandra Gallery, September 1976).

Christopher Miles is a Los Angeles based artist, writer, and educator, and a professor in the School of Art at California State University Long Beach. He has known Ali Smith and her paintings for twenty years.



Fille Unique, 2020. Oil on canvas, 60 x 42 inches.

Photo by Gene Ogami, Courtesy of the artist.

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7/4/19

So great to hear these, wow, thank you!! The second piece was especially powerful to me. And just as I was starting to listen to the third piece, I felt a bit dizzy and then we all noticed that a lot of lamps in the house were shaking—it turned out that there was a 6.4 magnitude earthquake, luckily in a fairly remote area near Death Valley. Welcome to California!

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Stay the Course (new normal #2), 2020.

Oil on canvas, 72 x 36 inches.

Photo by Gene Ogami, Courtesy of the artist.



Ruine, 2020. Oil on canvas, 60 x 42 inches.

Photo by Gene Ogami, Courtesy of the artist.

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7/5/19

Gosh, my music has never started an earthquake before—and from such a remote distance! No, for real, I'm very glad you are all ok!

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Everything, 2020. Oil on canvas. 60 x 42 inches.

Photo by Gene Ogami, Courtesy of the artist.

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1/22/20

Hi Michael,

I've been thinking about you and hoping you had a terrific weekend and that your son's bar mitzvah was a success! I wish I could've recorded snippets of the Beethoven concert last night and how my kids reacted. My ten-year-old demanded "What sort of name is Emanuel Ax?" She absolutely loved his piano playing and the music, though our six-year-old kept mouthing "I hate this!!" Thank goodness we didn't get kicked out of the concert hall last night! But wow, I wonder how you feel about Beethoven's Piano Sonata, Opus 2, No. 3—I was blown away by it, so many abstract moments.

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1/22/20

Hi Ali!

The bar mitzvah was a wonderful weekend. My son did a great job. I love hearing you say that this early C Major sonata has many abstract moments! If by abstract you mean visceral, massively energetic and endlessly surprising, then I'm with you all the way on that great piece—one of the first I ever played. I'm glad at least one of your kids loved it! What I said about Beethoven is also how I see your own version of abstract too!

I'm excited about our exhibition in March—but in a deeper sense I feel like what we set out to do is already a reality. I mean, if somehow this crazy project of ours just might have helped us to have a focus for working and for sticking to the work in the past couple of years—then that's already good enough for me.

...

10
91

push ahead ----- accel. -----

mf f

mf f

senza sord.
p mf f

mf f

96

♩ = c. 152

All players — except the cello — suddenly stand up and look around the gallery space, as if summoned by the artworks on the walls. (The cellist also gives the same new kind of attention from a seated position.)

It is soon clear that each of the three standing players is now being drawn by a different painting.

They resume playing as they begin to walk towards their chosen artworks.

ff

ff

ff

ff

Artist

Ali Smith has an MFA from California State University, Long Beach in Drawing and Painting and earned her undergraduate degree from Skidmore College in Saratoga Springs, NY. She has had numerous solo exhibitions in the US, including recent ones at Mindy Solomon Gallery in Miami, Mark Moore Gallery in Los Angeles and Freight and Volume Gallery in New York City. Smith has work in collections including the Frederick R. Weisman collection, the Progressive Insurance collection and the private collection of Richard Prince, as well as many private collections in the US and abroad. She has been in group shows at the Laguna Art Museum, the Frederick R. Weisman Museum of Art, Wilding Cran Gallery and Carl Berg Gallery. Smith was included in the *Los Angeles Times* article “45 Painters under 45” by Christopher Knight.

Composer

Michael Alec Rose is associate professor of composition at Vanderbilt’s Blair School of Music, and a composer of symphonic, chamber, piano, vocal, wind ensemble, ballet and theater music. From 2005 to 2016, he co-directed an international exchange program between Vanderbilt University and the Royal Academy of Music, London. Rose has composed eight works for string quartet, all premiered by distinguished ensembles at venues including the Library of Congress, Tate St. Ives (Cornwall, England), the Blanton Museum of Art (Austin, Texas) and the Seal Bay Music Festival (Maine). In April 2019, Rose’s opera *Lolly Willowes* was premiered at the Midtown Arts and Theatre Center, Houston. His book *Audible Signs: Essays from a Musical Ground* is published by Bloomsbury Press.

Filmmaker

John Warren is a film and video artist, a lecturer in the Department of Art at Vanderbilt University, and the artistic director of the psychedelic-themed Far Out Film Fest in Nashville. He earned a BFA from Emerson College in Boston and an MFA from the California Institute of the Arts. Warren makes films and installations that explore the lyrical and subjective frontiers of experimental, documentary and narrative. His cinematic work has exhibited internationally in a wide range of museums, festivals, micro-cinemas, gallery exhibitions and non-traditional venues.

Flute

Molly Barth is a flutist specializing in the musician biographies for catalog music of today. In demand as a soloist, clinician and adjudicator, Barth has visited esteemed venues throughout the world. She recently released her first solo album on the Albany label, titled *Vento Appassionato*. Contemporary chamber music is Barth's primary musical interest, and she is currently involved with two ensembles, Duo Damiana and the Zohn Collective. As a founding member of the new music sextet Eighth Blackbird, Barth won the 2007 "Best Chamber Music Performance" Grammy Award, recorded with Cedille Records, and was granted the 2000 Naumburg Chamber Music Award and first prize at the 1998 Concert Artists Guild Competition. As co-founder of the Beta Collide New Music Project, Molly collaborated with individuals from a broad spectrum of disciplines and recorded with Innova Records. Barth is assistant professor of flute at the Blair School of Music, Vanderbilt University.

Violin

Stephen Miahky is a violinist and the Joseph Joachim Professor of Violin and first violin of the Blair String Quartet at Vanderbilt University. Miahky has garnered acclaim for his performances as a recitalist and a chamber musician throughout North America, Europe and Asia in concert halls and music festivals. His most recent engagements include performances at New York City's Symphony Space, Merkin Hall and Bargemusic, Atlanta's ProMozart Society, the Princeton Chamber Music Society, the American Academies in Rome and Berlin, NPR's "Performance Today" and a performance for the Dalai Lama. Miahky is currently a member of Brave New Works, and a rotating concertmaster with the IRIS Orchestra in Memphis. In addition to the standard repertoire, Miahky is a noted performer and interpreter of contemporary music. His performances have been rebroadcast across the country on national and regional public radio affiliates.

Trombone

Jeremy Wilson is associate professor of trombone at Vanderbilt University's Blair School of Music. Prior to his appointment at Blair, he was a member of the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra and its sister organization, the orchestra of the Vienna State Opera. He joined those orchestras at the age of 25 after winning what was his first-ever orchestral audition, and in 2010 became one of just a handful of Americans to have ever been made a full member of the Vienna Philharmonic Society. Wilson was privileged to travel extensively while with the Philharmonic, performing in 28 countries throughout Europe, East Asia, the Middle East, Australia and North America, often with renowned soloists such as Lang Lang, Yefim Bronfman and Yo-Yo Ma. He performed as guest principal trombonist with the Nashville Symphony Orchestra during its 2013–14 classical series, and also performs regularly with the Saito Kinen Orchestra and the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. Wilson is an active soloist and clinician. As a chamber musician, he is a member of the Blair Brass Quintet, a group composed of Vanderbilt faculty.

Cello

Felix Wang is the cellist of the Blair String Quartet, as well as a founding member of the Blakemore Trio and co-principal cellist of the IRIS Orchestra under the direction of Michael Stern. His diverse career has brought him throughout the world as a chamber musician, soloist and in recital, receiving critical acclaim for his performances. Frequently invited to perform at festivals, recent engagements include the Portillo International Music Festival, the Tucson Winter Chamber Music Festival, Strings in the Mountains Festival and the Walla Walla Chamber Music Festival. He has been heard live on NPR stations across the country and has recorded for the Albany, Blue Griffin, Centaur, Innova and Naxos labels. Wang is professor of cello at Vanderbilt University in Nashville. During the summer, he is on the faculties of the Chautauqua Music Festival and Madeline Island Chamber Music and is co-artistic director of the Hilton Head Chamber Music Institute.

Acknowledgments

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Jeremy Wilson, Associate Professor of Trombone

Vanderbilt University

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John Sloop, Associate Provost for Education Development and Technologies, Vanderbilt University
Michelle Wyatt, Associate Director, Susan Gray School

Catalog Essays

Lee Hallman, Associate Curator, Collection Research, The Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth
Christopher Miles, Artist, Writer and Educator, School of Art at California State University Long Beach

Gene Ogami, Photography
John Warren, Videography
Sam Boyette, Videography
John Pitcher, Host, "Fearful Symmetries," WXNA Nashville

Special Thanks to Ali Smith's Family and Gallery

Clea and Laurel Smith-Thomas
Noah Thomas
Ann and Fritz Smith
Mindy Solomon, Mindy Solomon Gallery

Fast! Tempo I, $\text{♩} = \text{c. } 132$

...più e più incalzando al fine ----- $(\text{♩} = \text{c. } 152)$

All players—except the cello—suddenly stand up, look around, and resolutely walk back to their respective paintings (from measure 98ff), where they wind up right as the music comes to an end.

34 ----- $\text{♩} = \text{c. } 172$ ----- !



Dream for Light Years

Ali Smith & Michael Alec Rose

March 19 – June 7, 2020

Opening reception and quartet performance
Thursday, March 19, 5–7pm

Vanderbilt University Fine Arts Gallery

The Vanderbilt University Fine Arts Gallery promotes engagement with the visual arts among students, faculty and the greater Nashville community through its exceptional art collection and a wide-ranging program of exhibitions and events. The Gallery collection totals more than 7,000 works spanning the history of world art. This historical collection is the only one of its kind in the area, serving the Nashville community as a vital, interdisciplinary resource.

The Vanderbilt University Fine Arts Gallery is located on the Peabody Campus, in Cohen Memorial Hall, at 1220 21st Avenue South in Nashville, Tennessee.

The gallery is open daily during the academic year:

Monday–Friday 11am–4pm
and Saturday and Sunday noon–5pm.

Summer hours begin May 1:
Tuesday–Friday noon–4pm and Saturday 1–5pm.



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