

An abstract painting featuring broad, expressive brushstrokes. The composition is dominated by a large, dark green area on the right side, which transitions into a lighter green and then a deep blue. A prominent, light blue and white stroke curves from the bottom left towards the center. The background is a mix of light green and white, with some darker green and blue accents. The overall effect is one of dynamic movement and layered colors.

wall window table light

Elise Ansel

C A D O G A N





Tell me the story of a complicated color—

hermetic hour
unadorned
unabashed

rapture strewn

– Robin Tremblay-McGaw



wall window table light

by Elise Ansel & Alfred Mac Adam

“My soul radially whorls out to the edges of my body, according to the same laws by which stars shine, communicating with my body by emanation.

When you see her, you feel the impact of what visual can mean.

Invisibility comes through of deep pink or a color I see clairvoyantly.

This felt sense at seeing the rose extends, because light in the DNA of my cells receives light frequencies of the flower as a hologram. ...

The rose communicates instantly with the woman by sight, collapsing its boundaries, and the woman widens her boundaries. ...”

Mei-Mei Berssenbrugge, *Hello, the Roses*

In ‘Hello, the Roses’, Mei Mei Berssenbrugge contemplates the ability of light, nature and color to widen boundaries and expand awareness. Related ideas are explored and amplified in Elise Ansel’s ninth solo exhibition with Cadogan Gallery, featuring new paintings that add fresh chapters to her sustained engagement with the work of Johannes Vermeer. Those unfamiliar with Ansel’s modus operandi may find the following statement useful:

I create by translating Old Master paintings into a contemporary pictorial language, mining art historical imagery for color and formal structure. The Old Masters are my points of departure. I move them into abstraction by deconstructing their representational content, which is transformed and ultimately eclipsed by my focus on color and the materiality of paint. I disrupt linear, rational readings so that paint and gesture become the real subject. Thus, my work reworks both pictorial language and authorial agency to liberate meanings buried beneath layers of exclusionary thought.

In ‘wall window table light’, Elise Ansel extends her signature practice of translating Old Master painting into contemporary visual language by focusing on Vermeer’s images of women near windows immersed in light. The exhibition title refers both to the visible subject matter of Vermeer’s paintings and to the tension between the contemporary concept of painting as physical reality, a tangible object, self-contained in its own wall-like flat materiality, and the early modern idea of painting as a window or portal into illusory space.

Ansel goes beyond the physical because while deconstructing Vermeer she is also examining the shifting representations of the spiritual in art. Vermeer’s images of women seem secular, devoid of metaphysical content. Their celebration of light, however, brings them into dialogue with the religious and mythological paintings of previous centuries. Light in Vermeer’s paintings is transformative; it is a focus and simultaneously a structural, metaphorical and intellectual element. Because his paintings were made with the use of a camera obscura, it is also inextricably intertwined with the method of their making.

Ansel extends Vermeer’s implementation of the camera obscura into the present moment by deploying digital tools in her preparatory sketches. She crops, tips, and elongates images in Photoshop, before turning to a haptic practice, working with her hands, stretching and pulling filmic layers of transparent paint on a physical substrate.

Ansel’s paintings fuse painting and lens-based technology. She applies the tools of both analog and digital photographic praxis to the craft of painting: blurring, cropping, burning, dodging, enlarging, layering multiple exposures and creating new iterations or variants of each image. The re-scaling devices of the Fifteenth Century, based on the use of a grid, and the camera obscura of the Seventeenth Century, reliant on a lens, find their contemporary equivalent in the digital files Ansel creates in Photoshop as preparatory “sketches” and in museums while standing before Vermeer’s paintings. The pixelated images they provide are in essence grids.

The iterative series in the exhibition engage the seriality of not only photography but also Minimalism. Working with a limited palette (predominantly transparent red, green, blue, analogous to photo’s RGB) and a consistent compositional structure, they explore the multiplicity of plastic permutations possible within a constrained set of variables: limits and renewals. Donald Judd’s ‘100 untitled works in mill aluminum’ which is on permanent exhibition at the Chinati Foundation in Marfa, Texas is a referent. Most “serial” minimalists were men and also sculptors. The ‘Woman Reading’ series springs from a painting—Vermeer’s ‘Woman Reading a Letter’, c. 1663—and so pays homage to minimalist women painters: Marilyn Lenkowsky, Agnes Martin, Jo Baer, among others.

Johannes Vermeer
“The Lacemaker”, 1669-71
oil on canvas
24cm x 21cm (9" x 8")
© Musée du Louvre, Paris



Johannes Vermeer
“Woman Reading a Letter”, c. 1663
oil on canvas
47cm x 50cm (18" x 15")
© Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam



Johannes Vermeer
“Woman Writing a Letter, With Her Maid”,
1670-71
oil on canvas
72cm x 60cm (28" x 24")
© National Gallery of Ireland, Dublin

Johannes Vermeer (1632-1675)
“Mistress and Maid”, ca. 1664-67
oil on canvas
90cm x 78cm (35" x 31")
© The Frick Collection, New York

The fact that Vermeer’s painting is spare and geometrically composed makes it ideal source material for the series. Moments of luminosity occur when colors close in value but opposite in hue or temperature are juxtaposed. In ‘Woman Reading III, IV, V’ and ‘Woman Reading Sideways I’ and ‘II’, muddy green turns emerald when placed beside violet grey; the brown underpainting behind it, revealed by scraping into the green, glows golden yellow. These visual moments reference Josef Albers’s seminal ‘Interaction of Color’, 1963. Right angles and implied squares reference both Albers and his ‘Homage to the Square’; and the materials and means of Minimalism. The series braids together historical and modernist sources to produce a hybrid of expressionist gesture and minimalist reduction/distillation. Qualities specific to the medium of oil paint, constituent elements of the craft—transparency and opacity, darkness and light, flatness and depth, hard and soft edges, addition and subtraction—are interlaced. The synergistic energy created by circumjacent polarities is echoed in the compositional structure of the paintings, which in turn resonates with the conceptual underpinning of the project: the idea that the interaction and cooperation of opposites produces a combined effect greater than the sum of their separate parts.

Minimalist distillation is pushed to the limit in ‘Woman Reading I’ and ‘II’. By contrast, ‘Bridge’, which builds on visual ideas developed in ‘Woman Reading Sideways I’ and ‘II’, moves in a more maximal direction.

The ‘Sideways’ paintings were created by cropping earlier iterations in the series, tipping them sideways and elongating them in photoshop. In ‘Bridge’, an additional image is superimposed onto the elongated image, creating the painterly equivalent of a double exposure.

Ansel is an alchemist. Her painting is simultaneously invention and interpretation. The improvisational, aleatory nature of her practice carves space for chance. As she puts it, “It is in the slippage between intention and execution, the incidental accidents that occur during the painting process, the failure to translate correctly, the curvature of time, that new territory is gained and a deeper connection with the Old Master source is forged.” By transforming Vermeer’s compositions into vibrant, non-figurative fields, Ansel changes their meaning, proposing a capacious visual space where historical precedent and contemporary practice converge to generate freedom.

From the left Johannes Vermeer
“A Lady Writing a Letter”, 1665-6
oil on linen
45cm x 40cm (18" x 16")
© National Gallery,
Washington DC



Johannes Vermeer
“Woman Holding a Balance”, 1662-3
oil on canvas
43cm x 38cm (17" x 15")
© National Gallery,
Washington DC

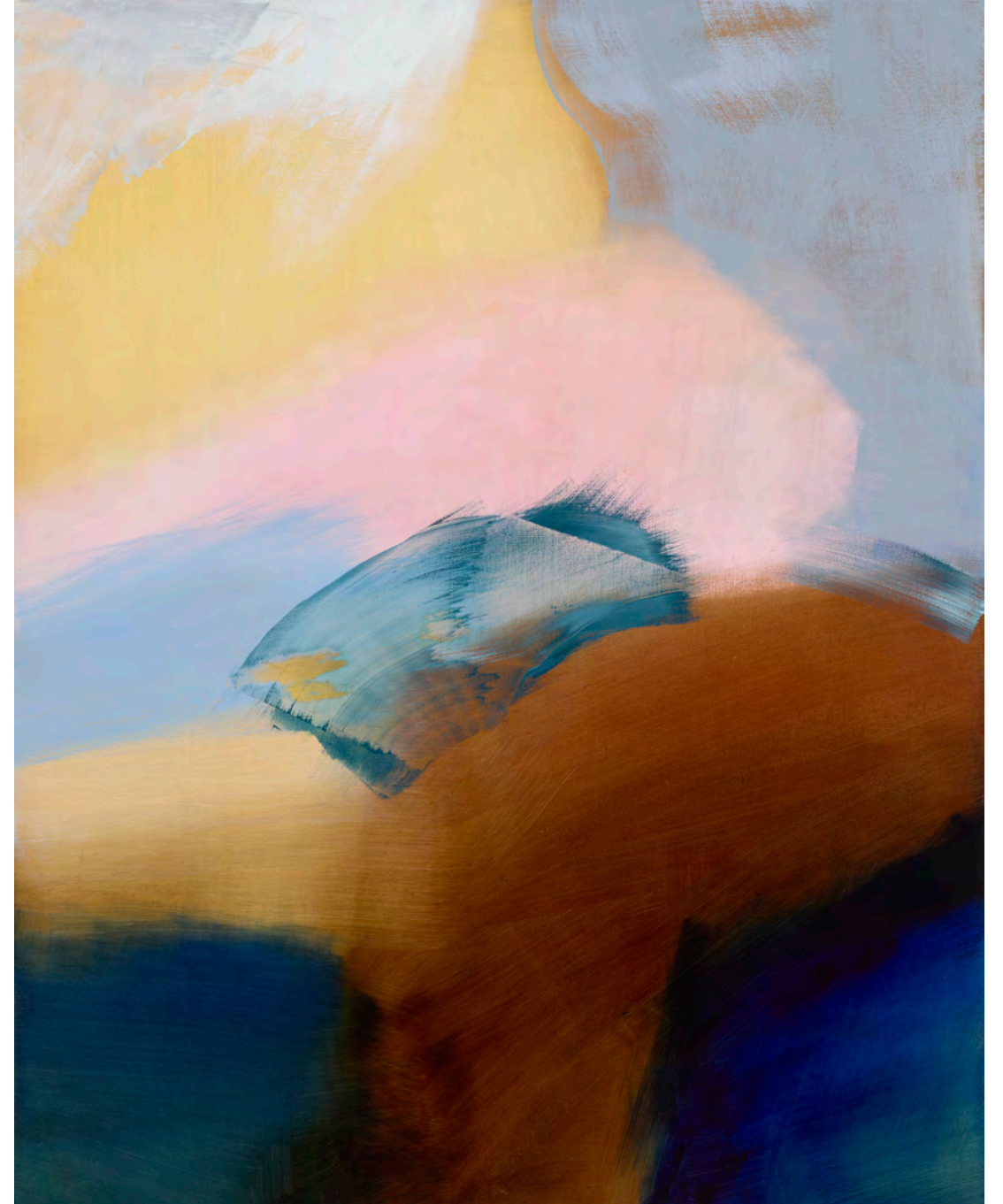


Alfred Mac Adam is both an art critic and Professor of Latin American Literature at Barnard College-Columbia University. He is a frequent contributor to ‘The Brooklyn Rail’ and a translator, most recently of Juan Villoro’s ‘Horizontal Vertigo’ (2021) about Mexico City.

Elise Ansel
wall window table light

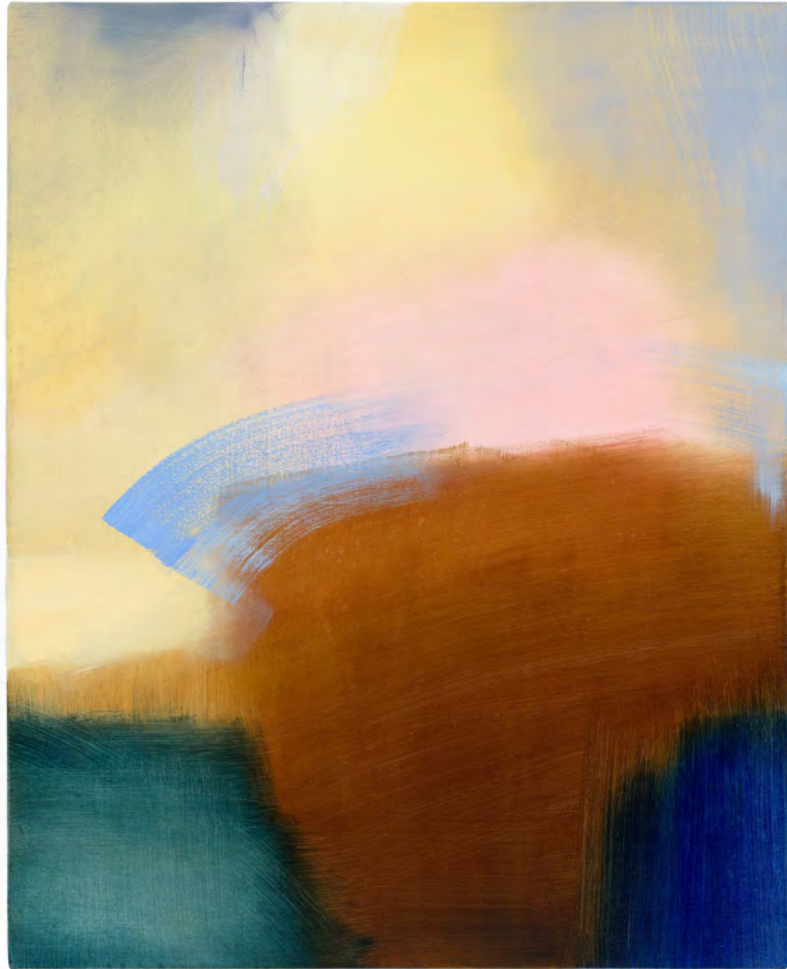
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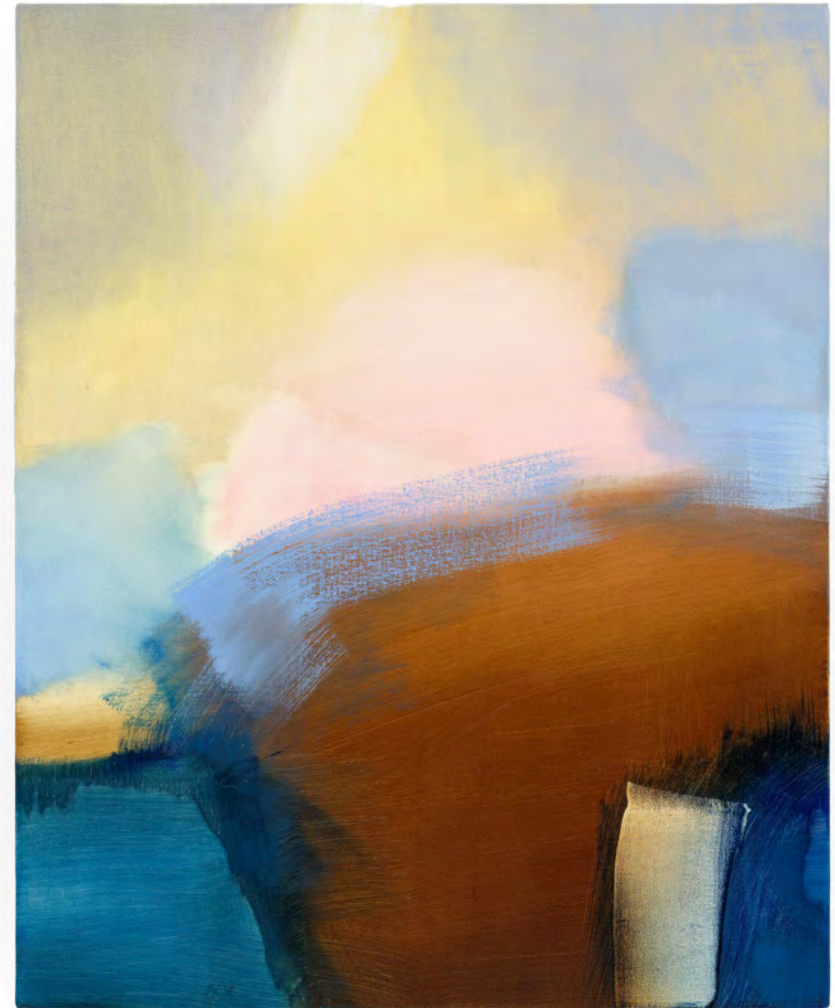


"Lacemaker III", 2026
oil on linen
152cm x 122cm (60" x 48")





"Lacemaker II", 2026
oil on linen
76cm x 61cm (30" x 24")



"Lacemaker I", 2026
oil on linen
76cm x 61cm (30" x 24")



"Woman Reading V", 2026
oil on canvas
152cm x 137cm (60" x 54")



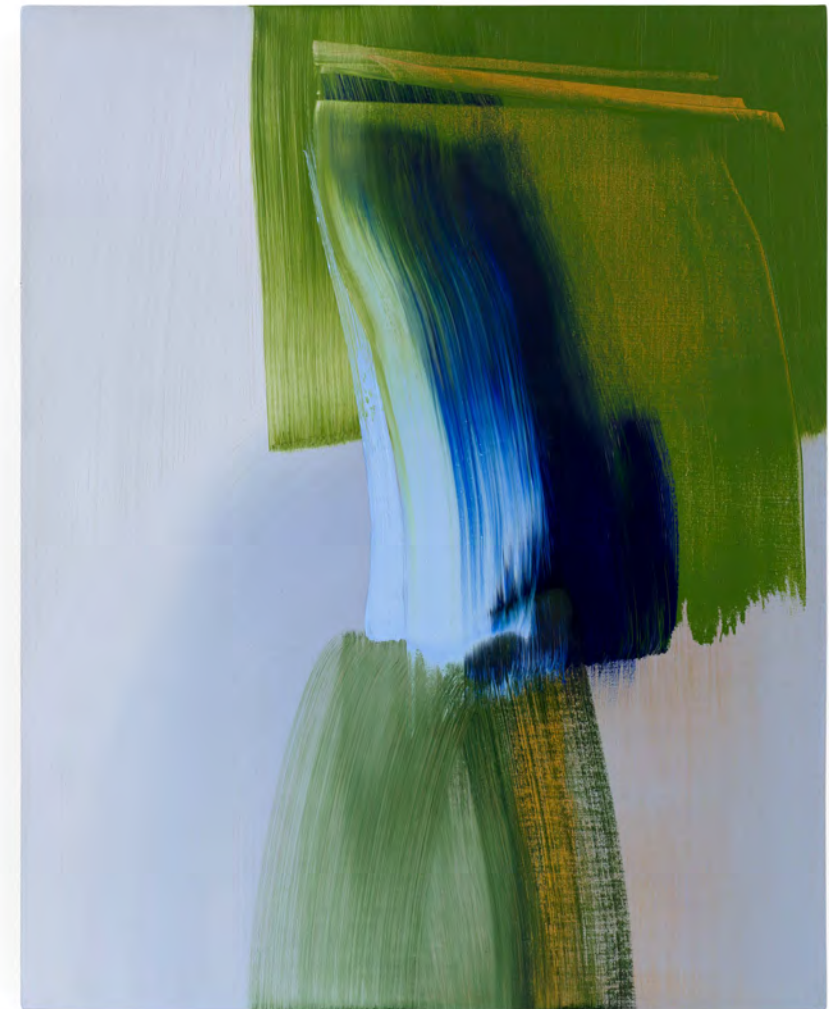
"Woman Reading Sideways", 2026
oil on linen
102cm x 152cm (40" x 60")



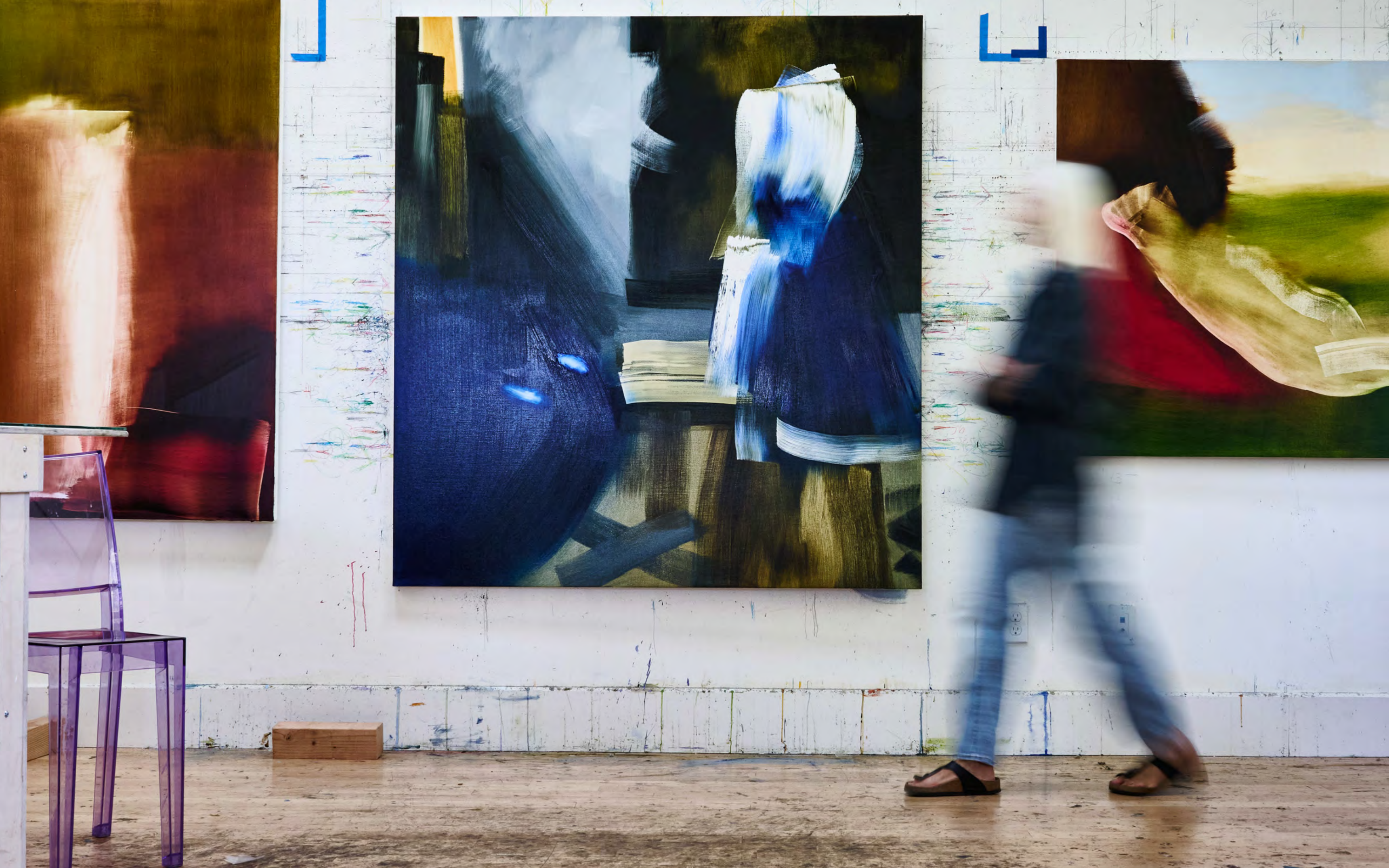
"Woman Reading Sideways II", 2026
oil on linen
102cm x 152cm (40" x 60")

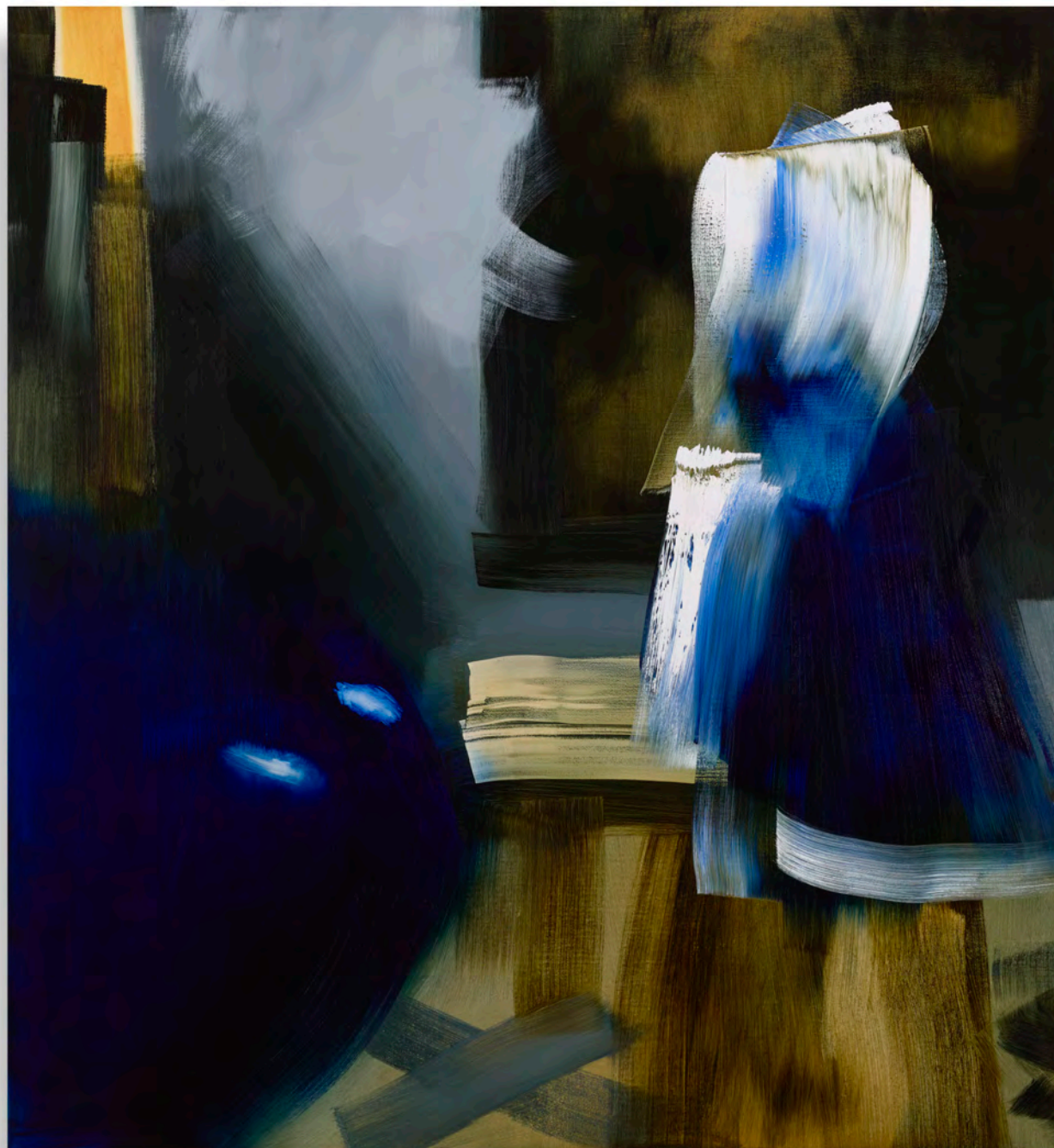


"Bridge", 2026
oil on linen
112cm x 152cm (44" x 60")



“Woman Reading IV”, 2026
oil on linen
76cm x 61cm (30" x 24")





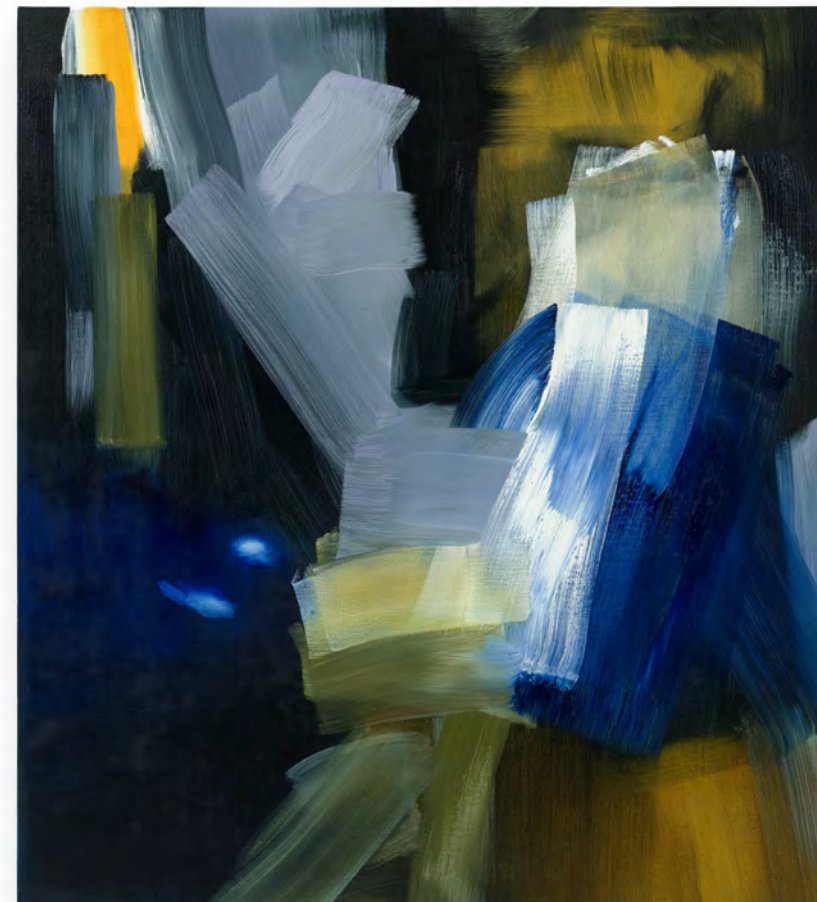
"Woman with a Balance V", 2026
oil on linen
165cm x 152cm (65" x 60")



"Woman with a Balance", 2026
oil on linen
127cm x 112cm (50" x 44")



"Woman with a Balance IV", 2026
oil on linen
96cm x 86cm (38" x 34")

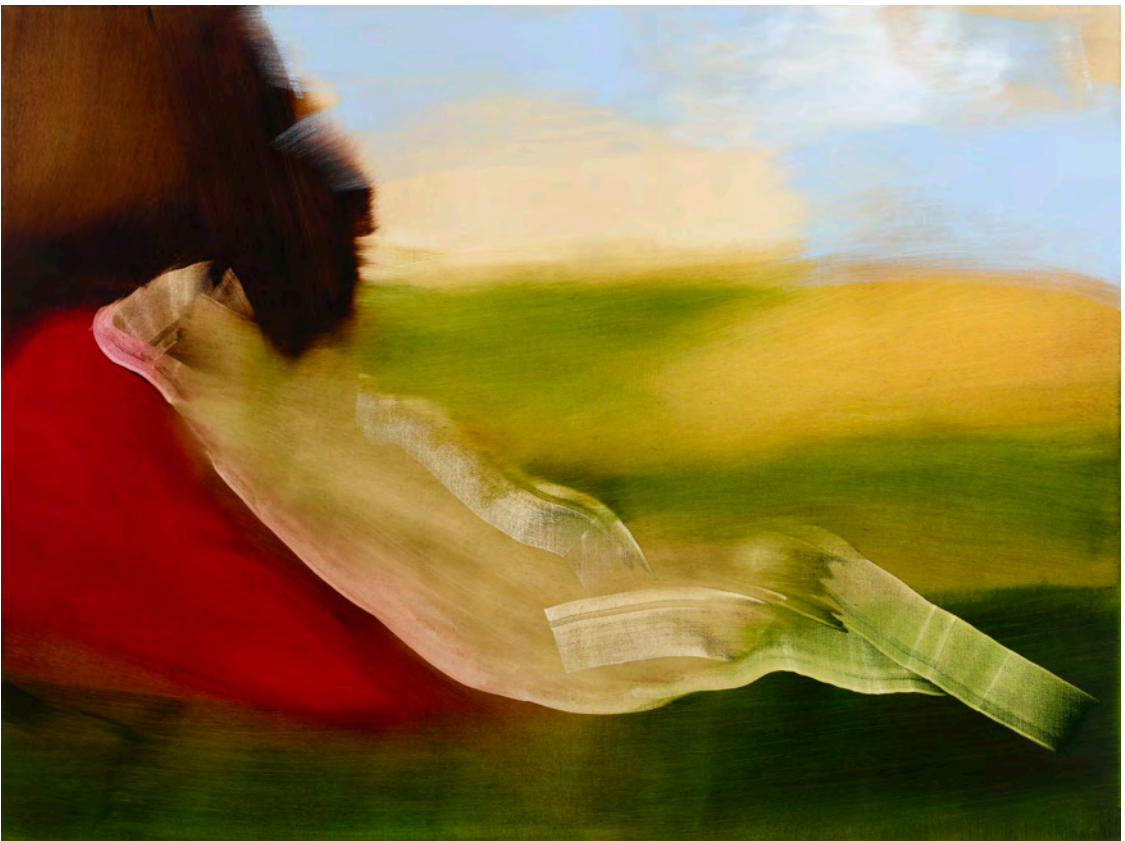


"Woman with a Balance III", 2026
oil on linen
97cm x 86cm (38" x 34")



"Woman in Green", 2026
oil on linen
102cm x 152cm (40" x 60")





“Band of Gold II”, 2026
oil on linen
114cm x 152cm (45" x 60")



"Wine Glass", 2026
oil on linen
76cm x 61cm (30" x 24")

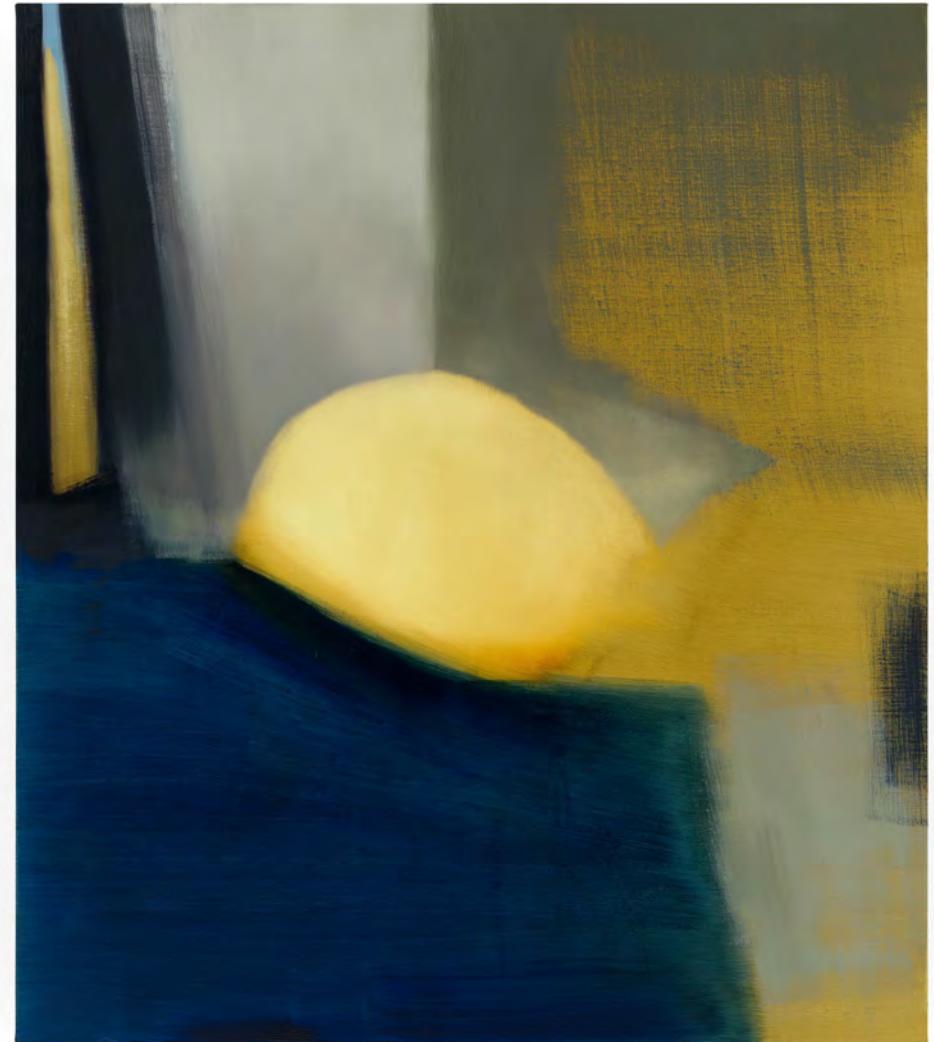


“Generosity Sideways II”, 2026
oil on canvas
81cm x 152cm (32” x 60”)



"Woman Reading I", 2026
oil on linen
76cm x 61cm (30" x 24")



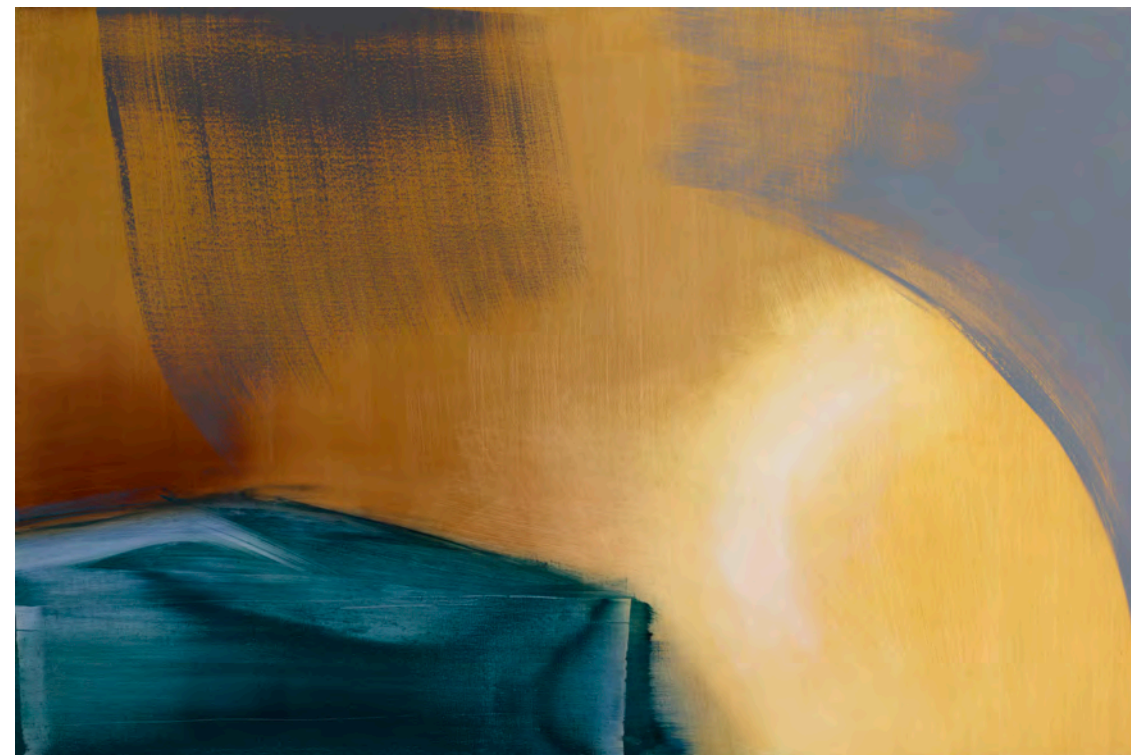


"Lemon", 2026
oil on linen
127cm x 112cm (50" x 44")



"A Lady Writing", 2026
oil on linen
127cm x 112cm (50" x 44")

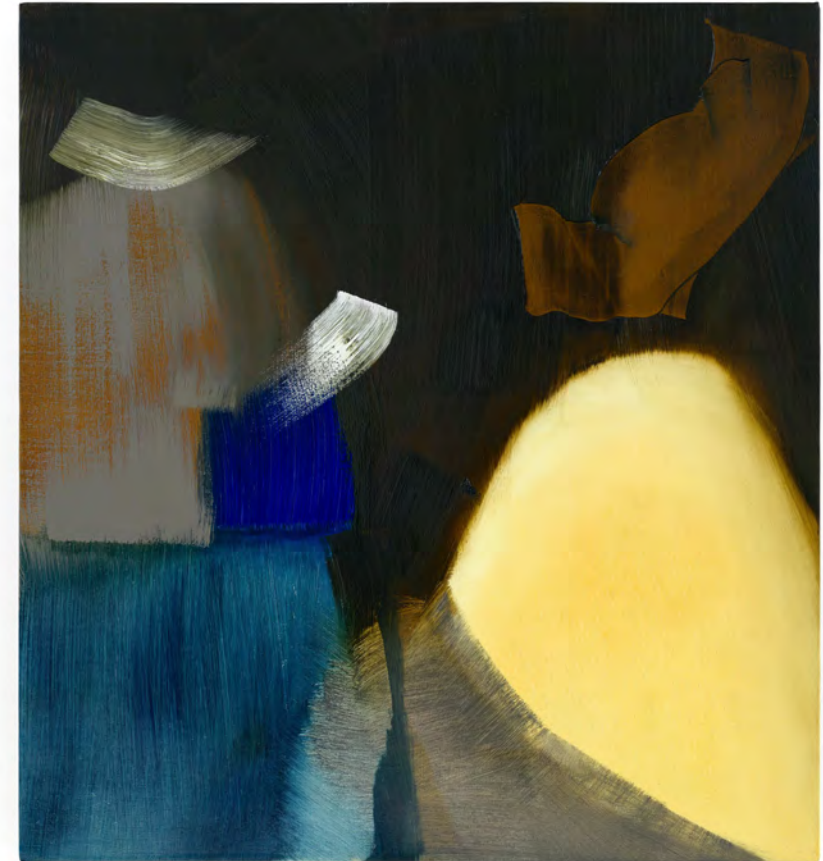




“A Lady Writing II”, 2026
oil on linen
102cm x 152cm (40” x 60”)



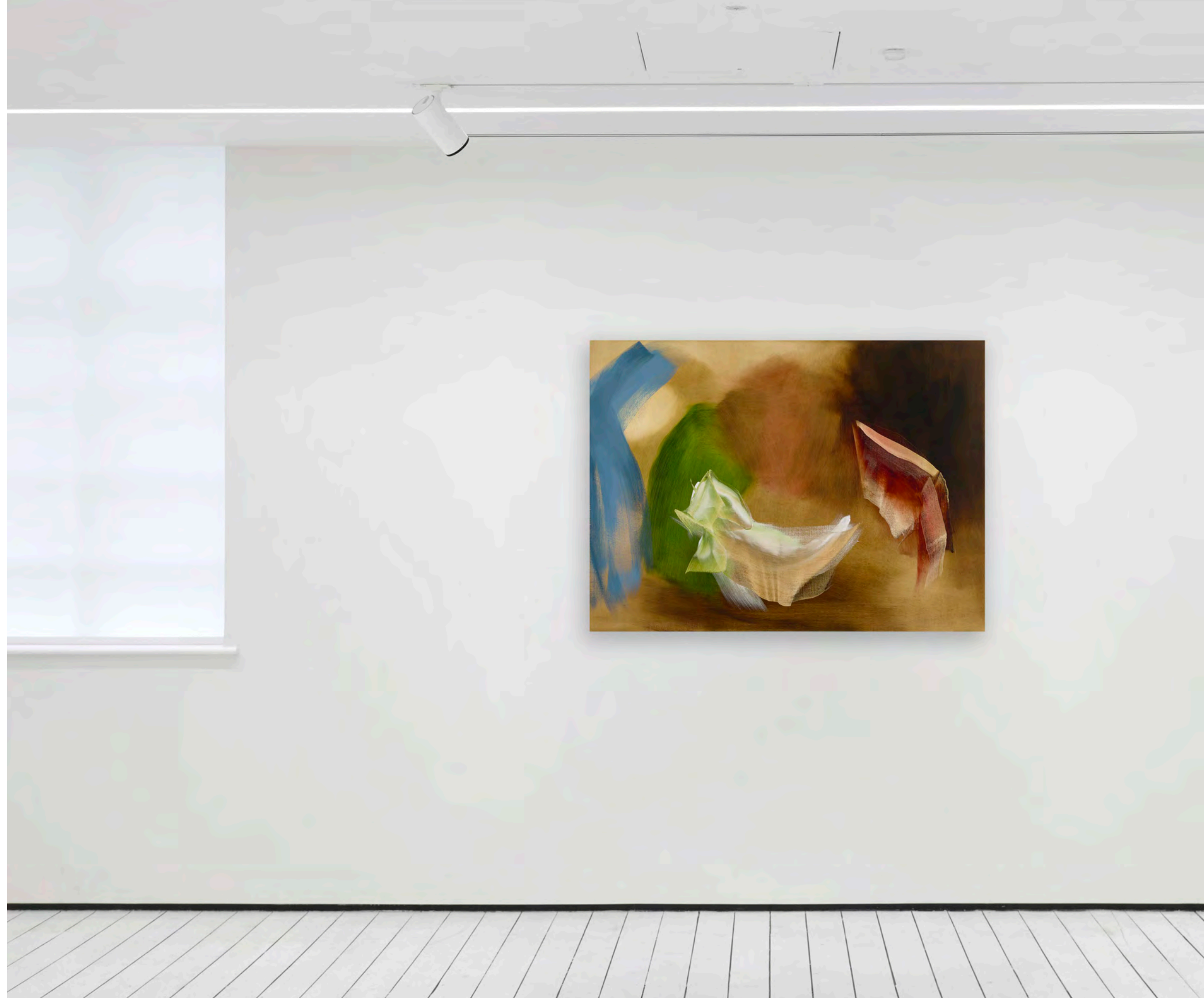




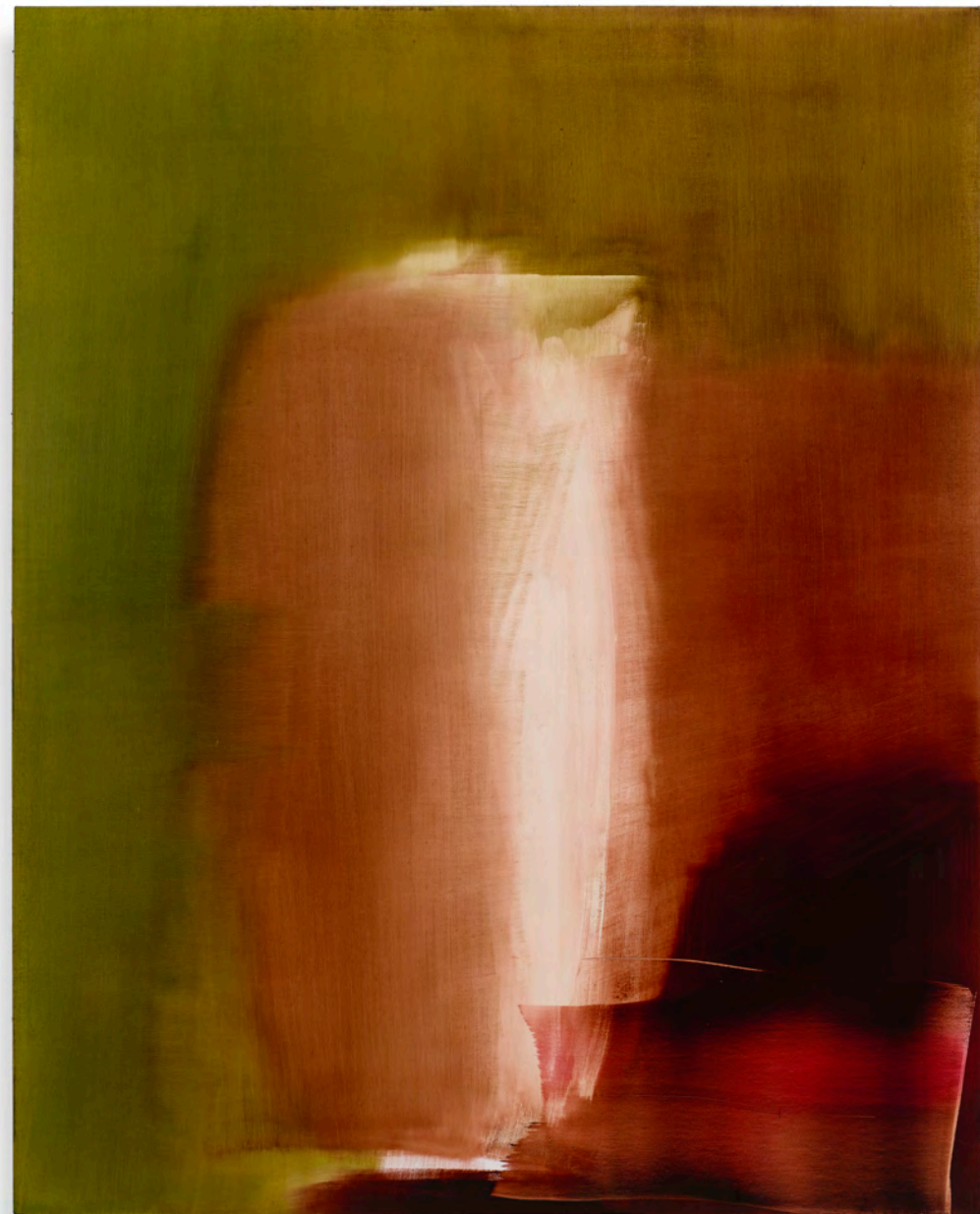
"Letter I", 2026
oil on linen
76cm x 69cm (30" x 27")



"Darkest Hour", 2026
oil on linen
112cm x 152cm (44" x 60")



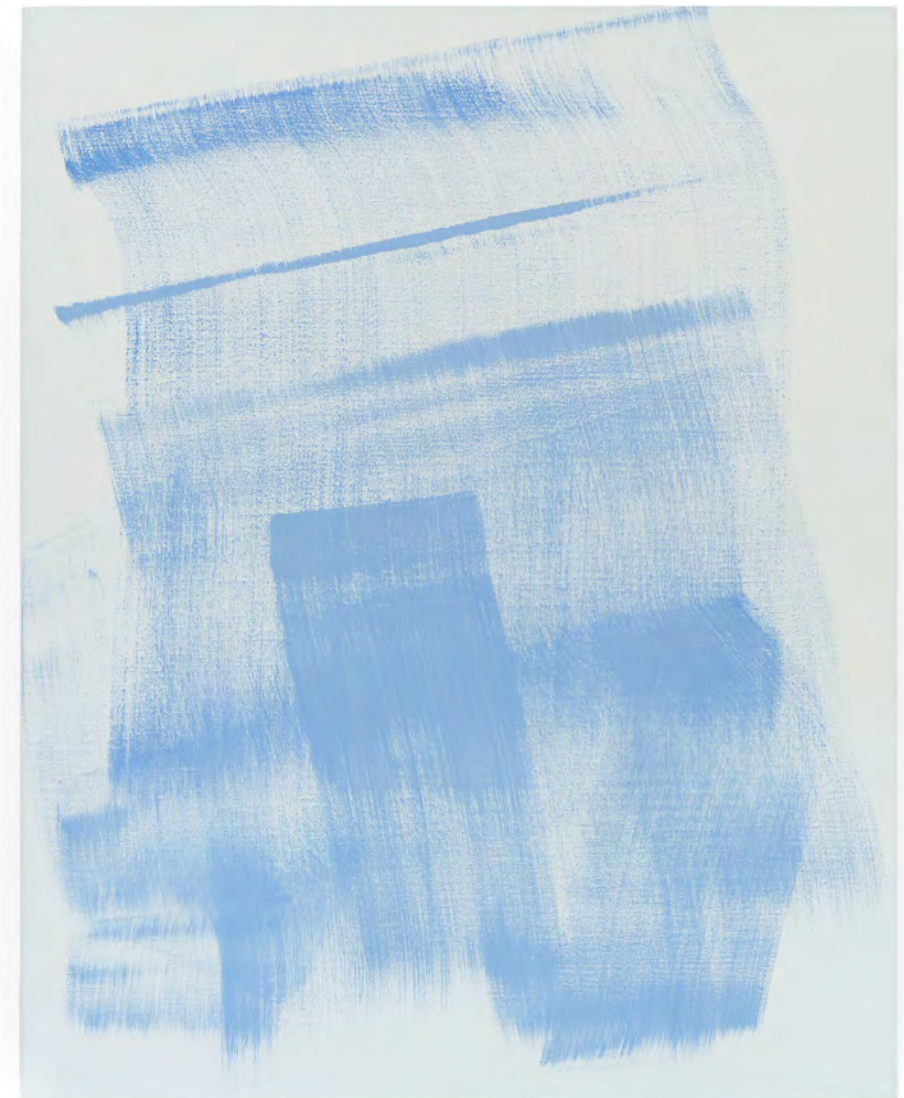
Cadogan Gallery, London
Installation view of
"wall window table light"



"Woman in Green IV", 2026
oil on linen
152cm x 122cm (60" x 48")

"Woman in Green II", 2026
oil on linen
102cm x 81cm (40" x 32")





"Woman Reading II", 2026
oil on linen
101cm x 81cm (40" x 32")



ELISE ANSEL

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

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2026 Cadogan Gallery, "wall window table light," London, UK
Miles McEnery Gallery, "Duetti," New York, NY
- 2025 Folger Shakespeare Library, "Contemporary Art at the Folger: Elise Ansel," Washington, DC
Schoolhouse Gallery, "Paper and Linen," Provincetown, MA
Galerie Martina Kaiser, "Two Rivers," Koln, Germany
- 2024 Cadogan Gallery, "Luminous Flux," Milan, Italy
Carol Corey Fine Art, "Works on Paper," Kent, CT
Schoolhouse Gallery, "Double Dutch," Provincetown, MA
- 2023 Cadogan Gallery, "some of its parts," London, UK
Miles McEnery Gallery, "Sea Change," New York, NY
Cove Street Arts, "Elective Affinities," Portland, ME
- 2022 Auxier/Kline, "Time and Materials," New York, NY
Carol Corey Fine Art, Hamptons Fine Art Fair, Southampton, NY
Michael S. Currier Center at the Putney School, "Space Between Angels," Putney, VT
- 2021 Cadogan Contemporary, "Polarity," London, UK
Carol Corey Fine Art, "The Women," Kent, CT
The Schoolhouse Gallery, "Ocean," Provincetown, MA
- 2020 Carol Corey Fine Art, "Flower of the Mountain," Kent, CT
David Klein Gallery, "Palimpsest," Detroit, MI
- 2019 Cadogan Contemporary, "yes I said Yes," London, UK
- 2018 Danese/Corey, "Time Present," New York, NY
David Winton Bell Gallery at Brown University, "Pushing Painting: Elise Ansel, Nicole Duennebier, Duane Slick, Three Concurrent Solo Exhibitions at List Art Center," Providence, RI
- 2017 Cadogan Contemporary, "Amber and Ebony," London, UK
Danese/Corey, "Dialogue," New York, NY
- 2016 Cadogan Contemporary, "B Camera," London, UK
Bowdoin College Museum of Art, "Distant Mirrors," Brunswick, ME,
- 2015 Cadogan Contemporary, "Fusion of Horizons," London, UK
Phoenix Gallery, "Palimpsest," New York, NY

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2025 Schoolhouse Gallery, "Director's Choice," Provincetown, MA
Cadogan Gallery, "Group Exhibition," London, UK
Schoolhouse Gallery, "Petit Fours," Provincetown, MA

2024-2025 Miles McEnery Gallery, "All Bangers, All The Time," New York, NY

2024-2025 Cadogan Gallery, "Group Exhibition," London, UK

2024 Carol Corey Fine Art, "Stop and Breathe," Kent, CT
Schoolhouse Gallery, "Oranges and Sardines," Provincetown, MA
Cove Street Arts, "Touch of Grey," Portland, ME
Carol Corey Fine Art, "A Light Exists in Spring," Kent, CT
Schoolhouse Gallery, "The Blush," Provincetown, MA

2023 Lehman College Art Gallery, "Framing the Female Gaze: Women Artists and the New Historicism," The City University of New York, Bronx, NY
David Klein Gallery, "Together & Apart, A Legacy of Abstraction: new work by Elise Ansel, Caroline del Giudice, Alisa Henriquez, Rosalind Tallmadge," Detroit, MI
Schoolhouse Gallery, "For Now," Provincetown, MA
Carol Corey Fine Art, "ABLOOM," Kent, CT
Ashawagh Hall, "Works on Paper," East Hampton, NY
Cadogan Gallery, "Through the Walls," London, UK
Space Gallery, "She-Wolves," Portland, ME
Carol Corey Fine Art, "Think Twice II," Kent, CT

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

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

2020 Cynthia Corbett Gallery, "Winter Curation," London, UK
David Klein Gallery, "Art Miami," Miami, FL
Heaven Gallery, "Fete Galante," Chicago, IL

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Alfred Mac Adam, "Painting As Translation: Elise Ansel, James Hyde, and Alex Ralaivao," The Brooklyn Rail, October 2025
Noah Davis, "Elise Ansel Reimagines Old Masters and Explores Transformation through Abstract Painting," WOWwArt, January 2025
Alfred Mac Adam, "Elise Ansel: Sea Change," Brooklyn Rail, July/August 2023
Paul Laster, "From New York to Los Angeles, 6 Not-to-Be-Missed Solo Gallery Shows in August," Galerie Magazine, August 2023
Jorge Arango, "Old Masters, Maine landscapes among influences on display at Cove Street," Portland Press Herald, July 2023
Marni Katz, "Artist Elise Ansel Rewrites the Stories Behind Original Paintings," Boston Magazine, November 2022
Steve Pill, "How I Paint," Artists & Illustrators, March 2021
Carson Wos, "Showings in Four Dimensions," Art Spiel, July 2022
Paul Laster, "6 American Galleries Highlighting Abstraction," Art & Object, June 2020
Frances Hedges, "How to make the most of London's art season," Harper's Bazaar UK, October 2019

SELECTED PRIVATE AND PUBLIC COLLECTIONS

NYU Langone, New York, NY
Farnsworth Art Msueum, Rockland, ME
Museum of Contemporary Art Krakow, MOC AK, Krakow, Poland
Bowdoin College Museum of Art, Brunswick, ME
Brown University, Providence, RI
Eli Lilly Foundation, Indianapolis, IN
Evansville Museum of Arts and Sciences, Evansville, IN
Art Masters Solutions, London, UK
Ice, Miller, Denadio, and Ryan, Indianapolis, IN
Sopwell House, St. Albans, UK
Spring Island Trust, Spring Island, SC

EDUCATION

1984 Brown University, B.A. in Comparative Literature
1993 Southern Methodist University, M.F.A. in Visual Art

Elise Ansel | “wall window table light”

Cadogan Gallery, London
14.10 - 14.11.2026

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Studio images: Winky Lewis
Catalogue design: Valerio Angiolillo
Poems: Robin Tremblay-McGaw
Essay: Elise Ansel & Alfred Mac Adam

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