

As a performance artist, writer and dramaturg, Matthew Goulsh lives and works inside the spoken or silent word, inside transcribed, performing thought. This past December, Matthew visited my studio to take a studied look at multiple canvases, still in-progress, and then to offer an open-form "guide" to work destined for this exhibition. We shared conversation and questions. Four days before the New Year, Matthew forwarded this account—the concluding section from an expansive set of episodic views on my work, Practical Expression / Infinite House. JF

Auroras of Ordinary
Matthew Goulsh

Call this elongated form extreme and say this painting has made itself. See it as a choir of bricks, their silent harmony defined in the arrival of its own repetition. Call it a novel entity, disjunctively among the many entities it synthesizes. Through it the many become one, and are increased by one. Say that its shapes divide then divide again, that its colors cause its shapes. It engenders semblances of life out of self-replicating structure, a thing which is its own cause. Why speak of cause, of the cause of color, when shape becomes a material presence? We might say that color and shape register the same external causality in different dimensions. They overlay upon one another: the angular morning light cast from window athwart a threshold surface. Out of illumination, color and shape express their certain essence, each constituting a whole prior to its parts. They become countersubjects to one another. Stacked modules both reflect and repel their nearest neighbor. Can we find the painter in this architecture? How must she have unscrolled it and guided us here, must have fostered these conversions of looking, in this oddly familiar compression and extension of place arranged gently atop place. Say this extremeness accosts us.

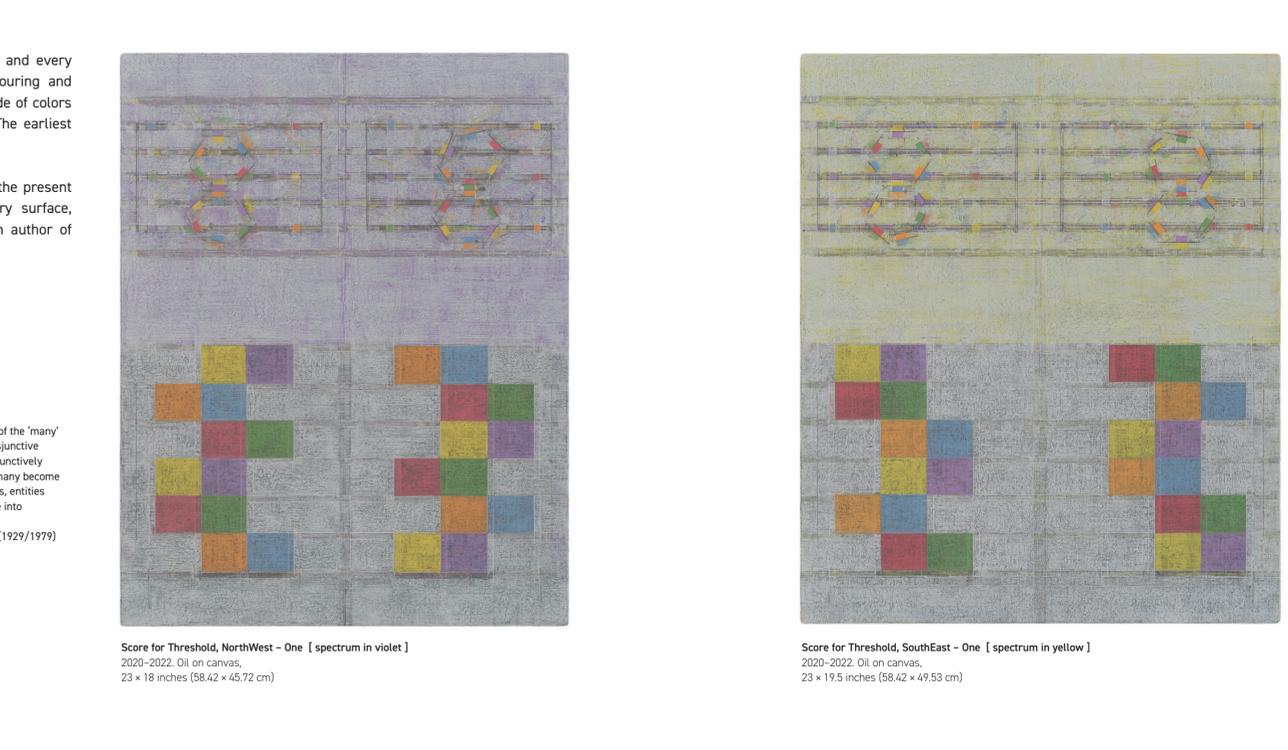
Studio Threshold with Hermitage Threshold Plans [east to west]
2018, 2020, 2021–2022. Oil on canvas.
12 × 120 inches (30.48 × 304.8 cm)

Score for Threshold, NorthWest – One [spectrum in violet]
2020–2022. Oil on canvas.
23 × 18 inches (58.42 × 45.72 cm)

Design
Jeff Wonderland
Photography
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Score for Threshold, NorthWest – One [spectrum in violet]
2020–2022. Oil on canvas.
23 × 18 inches (58.42 × 45.72 cm)

Score for Threshold, SouthEast – One [spectrum in yellow]
2020–2022. Oil on canvas.
23 × 19.5 inches (58.42 × 49.53 cm)



time's river left to right, or the sun's apparent arc across the sky, moving east to west describing the ecliptic. Light and shadow follow. We might sense this painting as we know the forest from the path. We apprehend it as both the score and the music—it has issued from the *as if* that architecture composes. I am of a doubly unsettled mind that finds itself here, settling before this stretched presence. It has revealed to me my need for the stillness that it offers. If we choose as we may to walk into it, we find, sheltered in the overflow of tangibility, in the plan and overlay of information, that every idea becomes the shadow of an idea. Even clouded, effaced as by rain and frost to granular grays, "dwindled and twinkling," the event of color, the self-evident event, remains forever in transit.

Imagine it's late October and we can arrest the burnished cellular latticework inside a leaf of Sugar Maple. We copy precisely each intricate groove and cross-hatched striation—the flat surface, exploded and unfolded, through a delicate process that echoes science but placidly, patiently, and at a larger scale than usual. Diagram grows to the size of its subject. We may read it with ease: the event midway between yellow and green.

In music the chromatic scale relates to notes outside of the diatonic, or the key of a musical passage's composition. Chroma, chromatics, color, thus exceeds the skeletal armature of melodic line. A cluster of musical notes catches on a staff, like a body on softly roughened wires. The grid supports the figure, and the figure, thus supported, performs. How the hand rests uneasy on the keyboard: five over twelve. That is to say, the keyboard repeats after every

twelve tones, and the hand consists in five. But five does not exactly describe the hand, whose nest of relations more accurately actualizes four plus one. The hand bypasses equal pentagon for stable quincunx ∴ with thumb opposing at the center, five elements but four sides. In the quincunx, the "five twelfths," a durable relation to the keyboard arises: square to hexagon. In a memory, the piano teacher lifts her hand. One tone sounds with gentleness equivalent to the touch, then another at the half step up, and synesthetic colors follow—the modulation of complementarity.

The less legible meanings of sounds, the little reds
Not often realized, the lighter words
In the heavy drum of speech

These are the edgings and inchings of final form,
The swarming activities of the formulae
Of statement

Like an evening evoking the spectrum of violet,
A philosopher practicing scales at his piano,
A woman writing a note

It is not the premise that reality
Is a solid. It may be a shade that traverses
A dust

"This is one of the many qualities that makes the fugue unique among musical forms: its statement is defined and framed by the arrival of its own repetition." Daniel Barenboim, *Music Quicquid Time* (2009) pp. 24–25
Gregory Bateson described the physics of the hand as "a nest of relation." Thanks to Judith Leemann for this reference.
"Devotion is never abstract; it always has duration, and it must leave its mark, whether outwardly or inwardly, on the devotee." Clare Carlisle, *Spinoza's Religion* (2021) p. 24
Carlisle adopts Michel Foucault's phrase "conversions of looking" to describe the spiritual element of Spinoza's practice of philosophy. Foucault, *Hermeneutics of the Subject* (1981–82/2005) p. 15
"...they cogitate, / they meditate their food, they muse it through their many-chambered / selves..." Diane Seuss, *frank: sonnets* (2021), p. 44
Wallace Stevens, *The Auroras of Autumn* (1950)
"...then I was really there, or at an equal remoteness from the life which I had left behind, dwindled and twinkling with as fine a ray to my nearest neighbor, and to be seen only in moonless nights by him." Henry David Thoreau, *Walden, Where I Lived, and What I Lived For* (1854)

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"The novel entity is at once the togetherness of the 'many' which it finds, and also it is one among the disjunctive 'many' which it leaves; it is a novel entity, disjunctively among the many entities it synthesizes. The many become one, and are increased by one. In their natures, entities are disjunctively 'many' in process of passage into conjunctive unity." Alfred North Whitehead, *Process and Reality* (1929/1979) p. 21

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