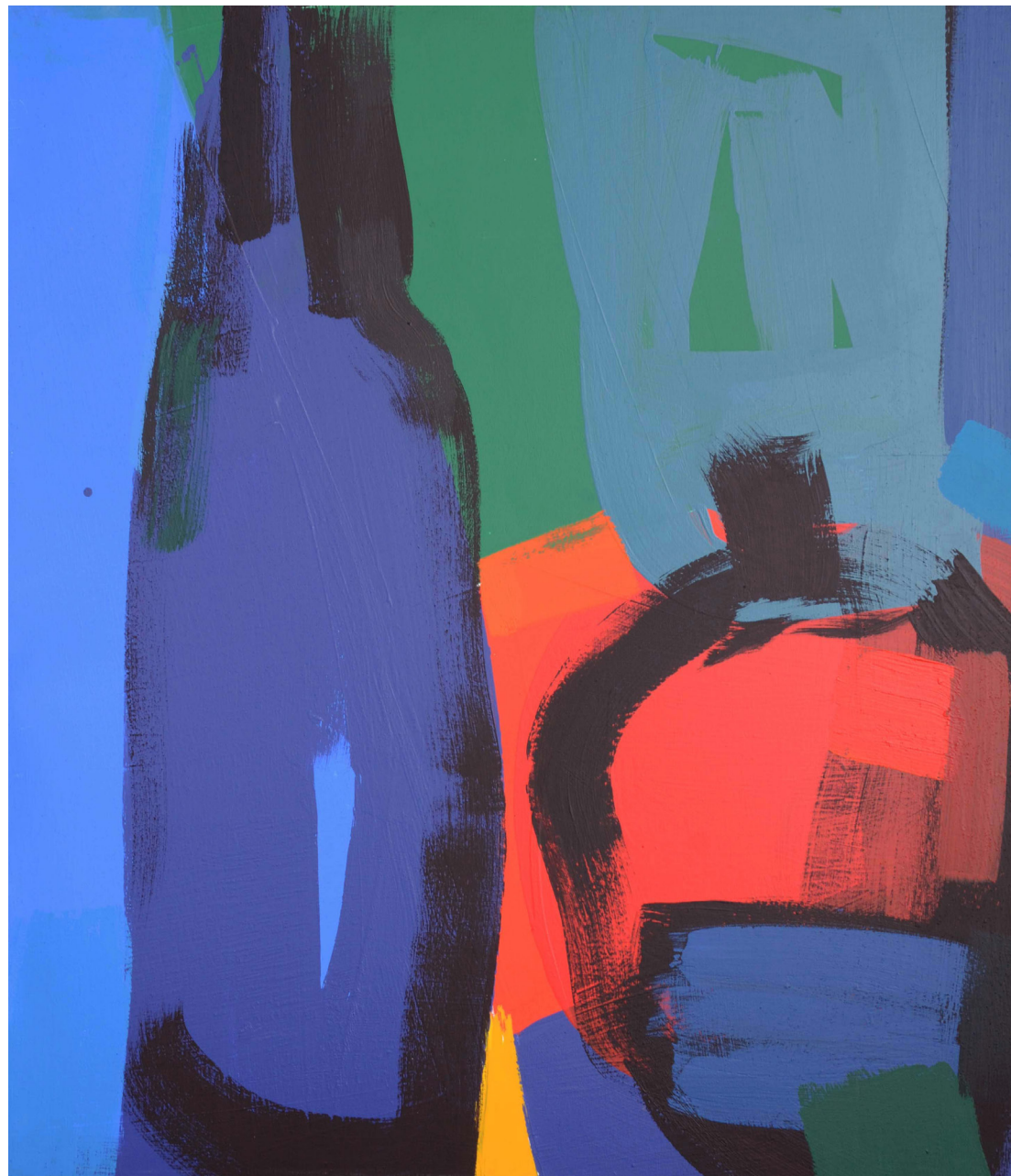




ALEXEI LANTSEV

Counterpoints



Pomegranate Wine, 2015
Acrylic on Canvas, 150x120

Cover: *Three Pomegranates*, 2016
Acrylic on Canvas 150x120

ALEXEI LANTSEV
Counterpoints

October to December 2016

An Exhibition of Paintings at Wolfson College Cambridge

Curated by Anna M Dempster
in association with Wolfson Fine Arts Committee



WOLFSON COLLEGE CAMBRIDGE



Quince and Grapes, 2015
Acrylic, 110x130

About the Exhibition

Counterpoints is a major exhibition of new work by Russian contemporary artist Alexei Lantsev at Wolfson College, University of Cambridge. It includes monumental still-lives, evocative landscapes and a series of works on canvas at different stages of abstraction. From the comfortingly familiar *Quince with Grapes* (2016) to unnervingly illusive *Depth of Understanding I and II*, in bringing this artist and his remarkable art to Cambridge, I hope there will be something here for many to enjoy and reflect on for the months to come.

The exhibition title refers to Lantsev's ongoing interest in finding the balance between the sensory and the structured; the emotional and the logical and in this case, the figurative and the abstract. The notion of *Counterpoints* parallels the musical term; however, here presenting a dilemma in which aesthetic elements, that are structurally dependent on each other, must also work in visual harmony across independent expressions of colour, rhythm and form.

Lantsev's masterful paintings play with both our sense of scale and our perception. He offers us oversized, richly coloured pomegranates and port (as in *Pomegranate Wine*, 2016) or a nearly blinding view from a window (as in *Asparagus on the Window*, 2016). In his always unexpected interpretation of the world around us, each brush stroke becomes both an abstract component and part of a recognizable whole – at once literal and symbolic. Paintings from his most recent 2016 series *Depth of Understanding* explore the ways in which a 'resolution' (including that of international conflict but also aesthetic) is illusive and fleeting. He provides a subtle yet deep reflection of the socio-political as well as cultural context in which the artist invariably exists but also an accessible visual experience. The world around us is interpreted as an aesthetic challenge. His efforts result in a series of remarkable paintings – both dynamic and tense, yet harmonious and complete. They seem to reassure us on the one hand and continue to challenge and question us on the other. A perspective, which has a natural home in Cambridge.

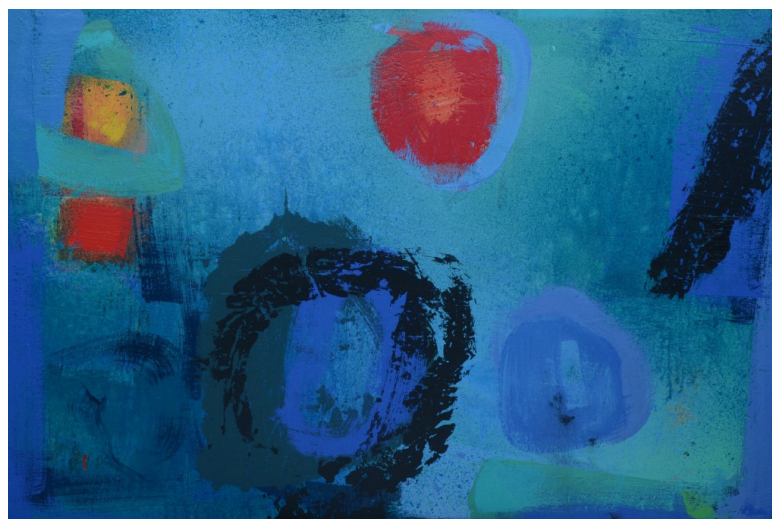
Anna M Dempster, Cambridge, 2016



Illusion of Victory, 2016
Mixed Media, 155x120



Depth of Understanding, 2016
Acrylic, 150x120



Depth of Understanding II, 2016
Mixed Media, 100x150

The Depth of Understanding

This series of paintings from 2016, entitled *Depth of Understanding*, includes approximately 20 large-scale canvases in acrylic and mixed media. It is conceived as a discourse between the sensory and the logical. It is an evolution of a series of works entitled *Transparent Relations*, which was shown internationally in 2012-13 and included the exhibition *Fluid Dynamics* in Cambridge at 5-6 Portugal Place. The earlier series explored the mathematical beauty of the proportions of primary colours, in which surfaces intersect within transparent layers and give rise to additional forms and colours that further build the composition of the painting, and this challenge continues.

The current series is concerned with the search and the possibility of reaching an interesting and meaningful (aesthetic) resolution through a balance of logic and spontaneity within the creative process. Each canvas is conceived and begins life as an improvisation – similar to jazz music and the art of the 20th century. For me, the initial sensory perception is at the start of all understanding and therefore of knowledge in general.

My challenge and task is to instantly capture the emotion of the viewer. I created each work over several sessions in the studio and at every stage it is completely transformed. Some works are light (physically and aesthetically) and reach a resolution quickly. Others are thick and heavy with layers of paint after many sessions and transformations. For me, the resolution of a painting is the result of an exchange between the anarchy of emotions interacting with the structure of logic. In each work I strictly analyse the composition, rejecting any excess, and make an effort to preserve a balance between emotional and rational elements. Although an internal process, the events which take place in the world around me are reflected in the canvases and pages of my many sketchbooks. Sometimes they are visible in the paintings themselves or alluded to in their titles, but often they reside in the emotional response of the viewer and the colour and resolution of the painting.

Alexei Lantsev, September 2016



Born in the southern Russian city of Krasnodar, Alexei Lantsev graduated from the Surikov Art Institute in Moscow (the Russian Academy of Art) in 1996 where he also occasionally teaches. He is known as a leading Russian colourist continuing in a long tradition of the Russian avant-garde, moving fluidly from the figurative to the abstract, constantly experimenting with light and colour, mixing methods and searching for new techniques and approaches.

Alexei has participated in a large number of solo and group exhibitions in Russia and internationally. His work appears in private and public collections in France, Hong Kong, Great Britain, USA, Germany, Israel, Switzerland and Russia, including those of Deutsche Bank, Standard & Poor, Raiffeisen Bank, National Bank of Iceland, Clifford Chance, Novosibirsk Art Museum and Abramtsevo Museum, Moscow.