

An abstract painting featuring a complex interplay of colors and textures. The dominant colors are various shades of red, from deep, dark crimson to bright, fiery orange and yellow. These are set against a background of white and light pink, which appears to be layered and partially obscured by the more vibrant colors. The brushwork is visible and expressive, with thick, impasto-like applications of paint in some areas and more delicate, wispy strokes in others. The overall effect is one of intense energy and emotional depth, reminiscent of the dramatic and often turbulent nature of Messiaen's music.

MESSIAEN
AIDA TOMESCU

FOX JENSEN / SYDNEY



I give bird songs to those who dwell in cities and have never heard them, make rhythms for those who know only military marches or jazz, and paint colours for those who see none.

Olivier Messiaen

Olivier Messiaen was Professor of Harmony at the Paris Conservatoire. This sounds as much a diplomatic post rather than one devoted solely to music. Perhaps it is indeed the case, that musical composition depends on relationships and on the negotiation of space and time. That some form of rapprochement between factions is needed to co-exist is also a demand made of painting. Unfortunately, one sees entirely too much easing of tensions – but not in Tomescu.

The new paintings of Aida Tomescu take many of their titles from the composer Messiaen and whilst she is appropriately reluctant to see her works as anything other than the resolution of their own demands and desires, the ecumenical approach that Messiaen took to music, from cultures outside of the western canon – Hindu rhythms and Japanese music for example, demonstrate something that is fundamental to Tomescu's mature painting.

More than ever before Tomescu's paintings reject the monotheism and orthodoxies of the western canon – less so the art history that has always been the foundation of her passion and shapes an essential understanding of painting, but her increasing use of colour as a profound structural element, something Messiaen would've assented to, and critically the relationships that exist between time and music, between time and painting and between colour and sound.

The chromesthesia that Messiaen embraced – seeing colour as chords and vice versa is something that one might easily ascribe or rather adopt in looking at Tomescu's increasingly symphonic works. For these are paintings where pitch and crescendo, silence and transition work, as Messiaen would've wanted, in harmony.

The installation of *Messiaen* in the new gallery allows for the presentation of Tomescu's work with appropriate scale and generosity. Each panel that Tomescu paints is made at full reach. This calibration to body feels crucial to the works capacity to invite attention through sensation as much as through cognition.

The presentation of each panel as an open field where the body of the pigment, in concert with the of constructive strokes, promotes colour itself as a structuring element – one that opens the space, granting access to both a concrete and a metaphorical architecture where one experiences their rhythms, transitions and intricacies.

As diptychs and triptychs, the physical extent of the paintings becomes truly panoramic and the invitation they extend to move along their full breadth gives these paintings an amplitude and volume that is heightened even further.

New colours – yellow and violet, orange and luminous whites invest the paintings with an incandescence and celebration that mark her most compelling works.

Aida Tomescu's work is a profound counterpoint to the preponderance of risk averse painting that exists. For Tomescu risk is not about uncertainty, rather it is about the real opportunity that being prepared to sacrifice what you have in the pursuit of something greater, something unforeseen.

Andrew Jensen



Messiaen II, 2025
oil on Belgian linen
200 x 460 cm



The life and tension arises between material, transforming the material and all the incidents and drips that are part of it and the fullness and grace of form..I follow through the thoughts of the materials to find this form...

Aida Tomescu

Messiaen VI, 2025
oil on Belgian linen
206 x 160 cm



Messiaen III, 2025
oil on Belgian linen
200 x 306 cm





Messiaen V, 2025
oil on Belgian linen
206 x 320 cm





Messiaen IV, 2025
oil on Belgian linen
206 x 160 cm

This notion of coalition between elements, recalls something of Cezanne's famous dictum that "when the colour achieves richness, the form attains its fullness also"



Violetta, 2024
Oil on Belgian linen
190 x 460cm





Double Violetta, 2024
Oil on Belgian linen
200 x 306cm



Sources and themes are swallowed up by the vortex of painting looking for living structures. looking for an inner life.. What is important about the original source is that it can spin off completely new ideas, new material that is incorporated and has to be constructed.

Aida Tomescu

Adele I, 2024
Oil on Belgian linen
206 x 160 cm



Messiaen 1-4, 2025
oil on Belgian linen
60 x 40 cm



Messiaen I, 2025
oil on Belgian linen
60 x 40 cm



Messiaen 3, 2025
oil on Belgian linen
60 x 40 cm





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