Nottingham Contemporary

Glenn Ligon Encounters and Collisions
3 April – 14 June
Exhibition Notes
From letter to Beauford Delaney
I am writing because I am curating a show titled Encounters and Collisions, and it juxtaposes my work with the work of many other artists. I have been in touch with a gallery here in New York that has a sublime portrait of Baldwin you made in the '50s as well as a yellow abstraction that would work perfectly in the exhibition. I am including these pieces in the show not only because of the crucial place Baldwin occupies in our lives— I’ve seen numerous portraits you painted of him, and his essay Stranger in the Village is the basis of a major cycle of paintings.

I have created— but also because your figurative and abstract work finds deep inspiration in jazz and the blues, an inspiration Baldwin and I also share. In your paintings, the line between figuration and abstraction is always porous. That has inspired a similar fluidity in my paintings, which often turn text (a kind of figuration, I suppose) towards abstraction. To tease out that connection is one of the things Encounters and Collisions aims to do.