

WYNWOOD WALLS

version for guitar and string quartet (2023)
originally for guitar, strings, and percussion (2022)

Stephen Goss

Duration: 23 minutes

Miami is a city with a strong association with the visual arts. My quintet is set up like an art show. *Wynwood Walls* is based on 9 artworks which give their titles to the 9 short sections of the piece. The listener is led from one artwork to another. In performance the artworks can be projected on a screen behind the ensemble. The 9 sections run without a break.

1	Bathers at Asnières	Georges Seurat
2	I want my time with you	Tracey Emin
3	Sunflower Seeds	Ai Weiwei
4	Nighthawks	Edward Hopper
5	No Woman, No Cry	Chris Ofili
6	#Lamentation	Grayson Perry
7	Selfie with Sunflowers	Vincent Van Gogh
8	Infinity Room	Yayoi Kusama
9	Seurat's Bathers	Howard Hodgkin

The sections are organised in related pairs circling out from the still centre of the piece 'No Woman, No Cry'. The idea and title for this central section came from Chris Ofili's 1998 painting, a moving portrait of Doreen Lawrence, mother of Stephen Lawrence, a teenager murdered in an unprovoked racist attack in 1993. As well as this specific reference, the artist intended the painting to be read as a universal portrayal of melancholy, solace, and grief. The two sections flanking 'No Woman, No Cry', complete the central slow trytich. Edward Hopper's 'Nighthawks' explores loneliness and isolation, while Grayson Perry's '#Lamentation' is a meditation on remembrance and the transience of life. The music in these two sections is dark and introspective. 'I want my time with you' is a giant neon sign designed by Tracey Emin and on show at St. Pancras Station, London. 'Selfie with Sunflowers' is an article written by Julian Barnes about the popularisation and commodification of art. Here, the music borders on Schmalz and Kitsch. 'Sunflower Seeds' and 'Infinity Room' are a pair of moto perpetuo scherzos based on the minimalist installations of Ai Wei Wei and Yayoi Kusama respectively. The opening section 'Bathers at Asnières' suggests Seurat's iconic painting, while the finale, 'Seurat's Bathers', is based on Howard Hodgkin's reworking of the Seurat.

'Wynwood Walls' was commissioned for Mesut Özgen by the Miami International GuitART Festival through a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts. The first performance of the original version took place at the WPAC Concert Hall, Miami, on 23rd February 2023 with Mesut Özgen (guitar), the FIU Festival Orchestra, conducted by Javier Jose Mendoza.