



Melissa McCracken
Kansas City, MO

(American, b. 1990)

Synesthesia is a genetic neurological condition that affects sensory perception in a small percentage of the population. For artist Melissa McCracken, this unusual condition impacts her comprehension of music and color. In her latest body of work, McCracken is exploring new territories within the color and music matrix, paintings that depict celestial landscapes and floral galaxies.

I believe that we too often view the world through a singular and narrow lens, only allowing our habitual and empirical experiences to inform our perspective. Through my work, I hope to widen that lens, even if it at the smallest degree.

By incorporating elements of synesthesia, I create a visualization of music. My hope is to transcend traditional interpretations of experience and to reimagine the familiar. Intended to feel elusive, I invite the viewer to envision the potential of each piece in their own regard, thereby making the final product one of collective consciousness.

Blue Gallery

118 Southwest Blvd, Kansas City, MO 64108

816.527.0823 BlueGalleryOnline.com

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Bio

Melissa McCracken was born in Kansas City, Missouri in 1990. She graduated with a B.A. in Psychology from William Jewell College in 2013, but ultimately pursued a career in the arts post-graduation. In 2019, she relocated to Brooklyn, New York to expand her work in synesthesia, a unique neurological condition allowing her to see colors in the sounds she hears. Many of her paintings incorporate vibrant colors and lively textures to depict the movement of music.

Implementing the effects of both palette knives and brushwork, Melissa seeks to convey the swirl of colors embedded deep in her mind's eye. Layered blossoms of color and streaks of white create cosmic-like scenes, evoking new perceptions of melody and rhythm in her audience. Through her work, Melissa strives to unmask the elusive areas of the world we encounter, allowing a refreshing experience of the familiar.

I feel like the natural route was to take my art down a synesthetic path, McCracken recounts. Melissa's work has been featured in numerous publications including: MTV news, DIY magazine, NPR Fresh Air, VICE Broadly, CNN's Great Big Story, Oprah Magazine and Bored Panda. Melissa has also been a featured speaker at TEDxLafayette College in 2016, and TEDxUNC in 2018.

Melissa McCracken is a full-time artist who recently moved back to her hometown, Kansas City, MO after living several years in Brooklyn, NY. She is represented exclusively by Blue Gallery, Kansas City, MO since 2017.

Education

William Jewell College, Bachelor of Psychology, 2013

Solo Exhibitions

- 2024 HEART SONGS, Blue Gallery Kansas City, MO
- 2023 SOUND + VISION, Blue Gallery Kansas City, MO
- 2018 INCANDESCENCE, Blue Gallery, Kansas City, MO
- 2017 CONVERGENCE, Blue Gallery, Kansas City, MO
- 2016 Playlist No. 2, Hilliard Gallery, Kansas City, MO
- 2015 Visual Opus, Hilliard Gallery, Kansas City, MO

Printed Publications

- 2018 American Lifestyle Magazine
- 2018 The Kansas City Star
- 2016 Onyx
- 2015 Oprah Magazine
- 2014 Andy Warhol's Interview Magazine

Videos

- "Painting a Song" TEDxLafayetteCollege Make Your Mark <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EDzvPmAap8M>
- "Synesthesia and What It Has Taught Me" TEDxUNC Colorwheel <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kvPd3wH21z8>
- "The Artist Who Paints What She Hears" Great Big Story <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zbh7tAnwLCY&t=4s>
- "Melissa McCracken Kansas City, MO" American Lifestyle <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ryWPijXPf5o&t=8s>
- "Meet an artist who sees orange in Michael Jackson songs and blue in the letter A" The Kansas City Star <http://www.kansascity.com/entertainment/article208767614.html>

Press/Publications Online

- A Plus: Melissa McCracken Is An Artist With A Neurological Condition That Allows Her To See More Than Most People
- American Lifestyle Magazine: Shades of Sound: The Art of Melissa McCracken
- Andy Warhol's Interview Magazine (de): Ich Sehe Songs
- Art Inspiration: Melissa McCracken paints music she can see
- Art Sheep: Synesthete Artist Paints The Music She Hears And These Are The Results
- Artist Inspire Artists: Melissa McCracken paints music she can see
- Bored Panda: I See Music, So I Decided To Paint What I Hear



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Press/Publications Online continued

CNN's Great Big Story

Culture N Lifestyle: "I PAINT MUSIC" BY MELISSA S. MCCRACKEN

Daily Star: VIDEO: Can you guess the famous song behind this painting?

Dangerous Minds: 'SONG PORTRAITS': WHAT DOES MUSIC BY RADIOHEAD, STEVIE WONDER & DAVID BOWIE LOOK LIKE?

Demilked: Artist With Synesthesia Can See Music As Colorful Paintings

DIY Magazine: AN ARTIST WITH SYNESTHESIA HAS PUT RADIOHEAD, GLASS ANIMALS AND JOHN LENNON SONGS TO CANVAS

EDM: WATCH AN ARTIST DEMONSTRATE THE RARE ABILITY TO HEAR MUSIC IN COLOR

Elite Daily: Artist Paints What She Hears And Creates Abstract Masterpieces

Good Magazine: From a Rare Neurological Condition Comes Gloriously Vibrant Art

Heavy Metal: 10 Rock Songs Painted by a Woman Who Sees Music

i100, The Independent: Woman who sees music as colour shows you what your favourite songs look like

IBN Live: This Artist Can Literally See Music and She Paints Her Favourite Songs

IFL Science: Here's How an Artist with Synesthesia "Sees" Songs/

Inside: Artist Melissa McCracken, who has synesthesia, sees music as color.

Interrete: This Artist Paints Music

It Colossal: Artist Melissa McCracken Paint Music

Lockerdome: 14 Hit Songs Painted By An Artist Who Sees Music As Incredible Bursts Of Color!

MTV: This Artist Experiences Sound As Colors And Paints What Music Looks Like

My Art Inspiration: MELISSA MCCRACKEN - SYNESTHETIC ART

My Modern Met: Artist with Synesthesia Paints Music as Gorgeous Splashes of Color

NPR Fresh Air on Tumblr: Melissa McCracken

Oprah Magazine: How One Painter Sees Color in Music - And Turns it Into Incredible Works of Art

Oryx (Qatar Airways) "Making Sense of the World"

Panda Whale: Melissa S. McCracken on Etsy Painting Music

Perspective Daily: Do These Paintings Sound Right To You?

Popist: Want To Know What A Radiohead Song Looks Like? With These Paintings, Now You Can

Positiv: Reaching synesthesia, she can see the music. She decided to paint what she hears.

PSFK: Artist With Entangled Senses Paints Musical Explosions

So Bad So Good: ARTIST SUFFERS FROM SYNESTHESIA, AMAZINGLY PAINTS THE MUSIC SHE SEES

The Art Elephant: SEEING SOUNDS: ARTIST WITH SYNESTHESIA PAINTS WHAT SHE HEARS

The Kansas City Star: Meet an artist who sees orange in Michael Jackson songs and blue in the letter A

The Sound: Artist paints music the way she sees it

Uproxx: Want To Know What A Radiohead Song Looks Like? With These Paintings, Now You Can

Vanguardist: MELISSA MCCRACKEN IST SYNÄSTHETIKERIN UND MALT MUSIK

Viral Vinny: Artist With Synesthesia Creates Beautiful Paintings Of Music

WJC Inscape: Alumna Spotlight

XOXO The Mag: Melissa McCracken