

CODA PERIPHERAL:  
PERCEPTUAL CONNECTIONS BETWEEN  
SOUND EXPRESSION AND VISUAL ART

by

Melanie Dawn Moralez

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree

of

Master of Fine Arts

in

Art

MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY

Bozeman, Montana

May 2023

©COPYRIGHT

by

Melanie Dawn Moralez

2023

All Rights Reserved

DEDICATION

Dedicated to my mother, who never fails in her encouragement of me; to my father, who pushed me to always stretch myself; to my partner, family, and friends who have made me feel loved and supported; and to the countless artists, musicians, and teachers who inspire me.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I want to begin by acknowledging my mother, Donna Gayle Erickson, who has been there for me with unconditional love throughout my life—you have shown unyielding support for all my ambitions without judgement, and our most treasured friendship has allowed me to move through life without ever feeling alone. I would like to also express my gratitude to John Erickson, who has been a constant source of kind and loving support.

I want to also acknowledge my father, Donald Lee Marrow, who made me feel like I was capable of anything by encouraging me to always strive toward my ultimate best—you made me feel cherished and found ways to motivate me that no one else could have.

To my partner, Jeremy Brendan Shanok—words cannot express how much I love and appreciate you. I'm grateful you have come along for this ride.

To the art faculty of the University of Minnesota and the School of Art and Architecture at Montana State University; in particular, my committee members Sara Mast, Josh DeWeese, and Jeremy Hatch, and others I worked closely with: James Zimpel, Rollin Beamish, Gesine Janzen, Denise Riebe, and Melissa Ragain—I thank you for your words that influence, expand, and reverberate through the activated artworks of growing art students. I would also like to express gratitude for the Sidney E. Frank Foundation Scholarship and acknowledge that the land in which I have spent the last three years in Bozeman is the indigenous land of the Apsaalooké, Salish Kootenai, and the Cheyenne.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND .....	1
2. IDENTITY; CONNECTING VISUAL ART WITH MUSIC .....	3
3. DIAGNOSIS WITH VOCAL CORD DISABILITY, ASD .....	8
4. SYNESTHESIA.....	12
Fusing Senses.....	12
In Context.....	14
5. DISCOVERY OF MY CHROMESTHESIA.....	16
Perceptual Assumptions.....	16
Layers, Translucency, Overlap, Stack .....	17
Reflections on a Chromesthetic Theme .....	19
6. ART AND PERCEPTION.....	22
The Neuroscience of Perception .....	22
Fragmenting Realty.....	23
Paracusia .....	24
Role of the Subconscious.....	25
Does it Make a Sound? .....	26
Nature and Purpose of Expression.....	26
Beauty Aims Meets Process Art .....	28
7. VIEWER’S PERCEPTIONS AND INTERPRETATION .....	32
Audience .....	32
Inspiration .....	33
Happy Accidents.....	35
Serendipitous Magic of the Unexpected.....	36
8. RESPONDING TO THE PERCEIVER.....	38
Last Step of Making.....	38
Embedded .....	40
Beyond the See .....	43

## TABLE OF CONTENTS CONTINUED

9. ARTISTS AND MUSICIANS OF INFLUENCE .....	47
Meaning from Connecting .....	47
Synesthetes.....	49
Non-Synesthetes .....	51
10. THE ART-MUSIC RELATIONSHIP AS A MICROCOSM OF LIFE .....	54
11. A CONCLUDING NOTE ON MY PRACTICE .....	57
WORKS CITED .....	59
APPENDICES .....	63
APPENDIX A: Artist Statement.....	64
APPENDIX B: Exhibition Photos .....	66

## LIST OF IMAGES

Image	Page
1. Image 1. (detail) <i>Portrait of Mark with Violin</i> . Melanie Moralez. Graphite and charcoal. 2023 .....	2
2. Image 2. <i>Sketch of Albert Einstein playing the violin</i> . Leonid Osipovich. 1922.....	3
3. Image 3. <i>Something Got Lost in Translation</i> . Melanie Moralez. Encaustic mixed media assemblage (wood, guitar strings, pick, bridge). 2021 .....	4
4. Image 4. <i>Shellac Song III</i> . Melanie Moralez. Encaustic mixed media assemblage on wood panel. 2021.....	5
5. Image 5. <i>3 Phases of ADSD Vocal Chords: I. Dysfunctional Condition of Pulled Chords II. Post-Injection – Mute Phase III. Adequate Resolve</i> . Melanie Moralez. Ceramics, red thread, white yarn, red thread clippings, white stiff cord. 2022 .....	11
6. Image 6. <i>Franz Liszt at the Piano</i> . Unknown. Photograph. Circa 1880.....	13
7. Image 7. <i>Shellac Song VI</i> . Melanie Moralez. Encaustic mixed media. 2022.....	18
8. Image 8. <i>A-B-A, with 2-bar 2nd ending</i> . Melanie Moralez. Encaustic mixed media on 17 wood panels, installation. 2022.....	21
9. Image 9. <i>Tremelo</i> . Agnes Martin. 1962.....	27
10. Image 10. <i>Repetition Nineteen III</i> . Eva Hesse. 1968 .....	30
11. Image 11. <i>Untitled</i> . Melanie Moralez. 2023 .....	30
12. Image 12. <i>Raqqa II</i> . Frank Stella. Painting, Synthetic polymer, graphite on canvas. 1962.....	33
13. Image 13. ( <i>Photograph, portion</i> ) <i>Oblique Strategies</i> . Brian Eno and Peter Schmidt. Schmidt. 1974.....	34
14. Image 14. <i>Effinggy</i> . Stanley Donwood. First edition, giclee print. 1974.....	36

## LIST OF IMAGES CONTINUED

Image	Page
15. Image 15. <i>Embedded (I-V, installation)</i> . Melanie Moralez. Mixed media. 2021 .....	39
16. Image 16. <i>Embedded III</i> . Melanie Moralez. Mixed media. 2021 .....	41
17. Image 17. <i>The Savoy</i> . Romare Bearden. Mixed media collage. 1975 .....	47
18. Image 18. <i>Composition VII</i> , Wassily Kandinsky. Oil on canvas. State Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow. 1913 .....	49
19. Image 19. <i>Duke Ellington the Painter</i> . Unknown. Photograph. Circa 1945.....	50
20. Image 20. <i>Untitled</i> . Nam June Paik. Mixed media, Estate of Nam June Paik. Photo courtesy The Museum of Modern Art. 1993.....	51
21. Image 21. <i>Asemic Front</i> . Federico Federici. Ink on paper. 2017.....	52
22. Image 22. <i>Ghost</i> . Mark Charlton. Mixed media on canvas. 2022 .....	53
22. Image 23. <i>(detail) La Mer, Triptych I</i> . Melanie Moralez. Mixed media. 2022 .....	54

## ABSTRACT

Coda Peripheral explores the relationship between visual art and sound-expressions, in correlation with my graduate program artwork. It examines various approaches to differentiate perceptions of visual art from music and sound art. My aim is to reveal ways in which visual artists, including myself, have approached visual and sound art practices, while exploring the relevance of maintaining distinctions in our modern world. In this paper, I reflect upon images from artists who have engaged with sound and/or musical themes in their visual art, as well as images from my graduate art body of work that chronicle my explorations into this subject. The rare condition of chromesthesia hints at a more commonly held, perceptual experience to link concepts of visual art and music. Visual art has become such a broad and ill-defined concept that it has evolved to capture many things, including sound and music. In this thesis, I address several questions on perception and identifying meaning for ourselves: What are the attributes of music that are shared with visual art? How might we challenge perceptual values we place upon artworks? The creation and reception of art is a symbiotic cycle. Examining these concepts has led me to question how I might respond through my art.

## CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

From early childhood, I intensely gravitated toward both creating art and playing music. For most of my adult life, I have been an artist, teacher, and guitarist. In 2006, I graduated from the University of Minnesota with a degree in Fine Art and it was around that time that I started falling in love with jazz, as well. I spent over a decade in Seattle, making art, teaching guitar, learning jazz manouche, and playing out at gigs around the city.

I also came to teach both guitar and visual art classes at a private high school in the Seattle area. I discovered that teaching helps to solidify my own fundamentals and practice; motivating me to be consistent in expanding my own passionate pursuit of growth in both arenas of music and visual art. It's also opened my eyes to the intricacies of the human learning process and to the ways that the experience of learning can work differently for people. This pursuit of growth to become an effective and inspiring teacher expands aims at being a good communicator, and it's pulled me into inquiries surrounding the psychology, philosophy, and even physiology behind perception.

Throughout decades of focused time on music, my passion for visual art remained. Just prior to entering the three-year MFA art program at Montana State University, my primary area of visual art focus began to include abstract, encaustic mixed-media paintings that conceptually engage curiosities surrounding the perception and depiction of music and sound; at the same time, I started creating realistic portraits of musicians in graphite and/or charcoal.



Image 1. *(detail) Portrait of Mark with Violin.* Melanie Moralez.  
Graphite and charcoal. 2021.

## CHAPTER TWO

## IDENTITY; CONNECTING VISUAL ART WITH MUSIC

*“If I were not a physicist, I would probably be a musician. I often think in music. I live my daydreams in music. I see my life in terms of music.”*

—Theoretical physicist and violinist, Albert Einstein



Image 2. *Sketch of Albert Einstein playing the violin.* Leonid Osipovich Pasternak. (1922).

Currently, when asked what I ‘do,’ I vacillate between identifying as a guitarist or as an artist. I’ve found it fascinating how the two inform each other. As different as they may seem in terms of results, the two practices have a similarity and interplay in approach. Each discipline

enriches the other. I believe that my work as an artist has made me a better musician and vice versa. In my pursuit of becoming both an artist and a musician, I've learned a great deal about critique, community, and practice. If I had to name one overarching lesson that I've taken away from these pursuits, it's the idea that both music and visual art can and should aim to make the audience feel something. Not only can these expressions deliver a message or an idea, but they should evoke an emotional response. Therefore, I consider what it means for an artist to strive toward being clear on what they ideally want the viewer to feel. And secondly, I have come to cultivate my intention to do that. This is a value that has recently become elucidated in my art practice, and an approach that inherently carries over from musical performance to visual art making. In both cases, it's this aspect of the work by which the magic happens.



Image 3. *Something Got Lost in Translation*. Melanie Moralez. Encaustic mixed media assemblage (wood, guitar strings, pick, bridge). 2021.

I remember, vividly, the excitement I felt when I was first discovering old timey swing and jazz manouche music. This genre has a swing rhythm 'feel,' but the printed music has no

written dynamic, interpretive, or rhythm markings within the structured bar lines to indicate exactly how to drive the tune in a swing feel. The musician is provided only with a key, a tune, and a rhythmic frame to layer over a swing feel, with which to evoke a particular emotional response. I continue to find this mysterious and thrilling. It's aligned with the excitement I feel around abstract art, in which we have little more than color, texture, and shape to create 'meaning.'

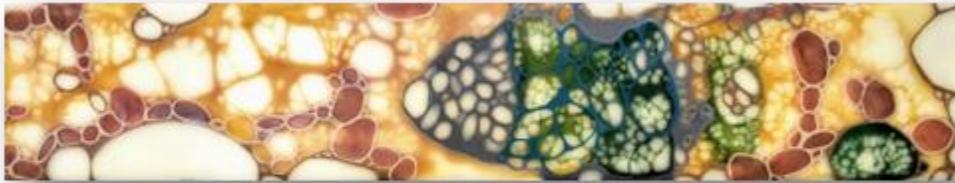


Image 4. *Shellac Song III*. Melanie Moralez. Encaustic mixed media assemblage on wood panel. 2021.

Music is always abstract. You can't hear a piece of music and assume you've decoded the literal message. I've found that many people seem to lodge themselves within an equivocal differentiation between music and most other forms of expression, such as visual art. Perhaps, hearing a few bars of music feels 'purer' than the reading and deciphering often required by other art forms. We don't experience music and think to ourselves, "Oh! I hear it! It's an apple on a table!" or "that sequence of notes is classical code for the Holy Trinity." Instead, the effect is its purpose and 'meaning.' This is one of the most direct links between music and non-representational art. Furthermore, whether it be musical tones stacked up and arranged in certain rhythms, or colors stacked up and arranged in certain shapes, in both cases we have mere elements of nature—that is, elements of physics. We can break these down to wavelengths of

light or wavelengths of sound. On the most fundamental level, the work is really the same; the only distinction is that music is oriented in time, whereas visual art is oriented in space (Kosovske).

Yet the similarities between music and art aren't all on this kind of metaphysical level. I encounter them constantly when creating art. For this reason, I relate my artmaking and creations to the Process Art Movement. My visual art pieces become, in part, mere aftereffects of exploring and noting the relationship and correspondence between the two. It's a major aspect of what fuels my practice. For instance, color theory is very similar to musical harmony. Colors take on feeling relative to each other in the context of the color wheel the same way musical tones take on meaning relative to each other in the context of the scale. These corresponding relativities inevitably lead to considerations on the concepts of consonance and dissonance in both art forms. There are macro analogies to be formed around every corner when I'm making a visual art piece. A micro version, for instance, might be that I found myself playing a lot of triplets in a jazz jam the night before I'm in my studio, where I find myself echoing that same rhythm, but visually.

With music, the same chord can be transposed to a higher or lower octave, similarly to how the same color relationship can be transposed to higher pitches by adding white or a lower octave by adding black. In both cases, the higher or lower frequencies bear strongly on the affect—the emotional content. With music, the volume can be reduced, similar to how pigment can be thinned by either water or oil medium; we can add sound volume by applying more pressure with our picks or bows, the way we increase pigment density by pressing harder with our graphite, charcoal, or pigment sticks. There is transparency versus opacity in both. Also, in

both art and music, there is compositional structure or form to consider, as well as areas of improvisation. There's the nuance of line (musical melody/lead line and visual outline or compositional directional flowline). Musicians make decisions about balance the way artists make decisions about what should be in the foreground and what should be pushed back. A guitar pick and a paint brush have in common that they can both be used with an infinite combination of speeds and tilts to create wide-ranging effects. This leads me to the overall physicality; both artists and musicians must keep the body (especially the spine, brain, arms, and hands) in good physical condition (Kosovske).

Beyond these theoretical, technical, and physical parallels, I've found both musicians and visual artists seek a considered balance between control and abandon; leaning into the defined structure and the predictable executions, while relishing the 'happy accidents' by way of embracing moments that feel serendipitously out of control. Such is the case for life, overall.

## CHAPTER THREE

## DIAGNOSIS WITH VOCAL CORD DISABILITY, ADSD

It's been about seven years since I was first diagnosed with the neurological disorder adductor spasmodic dysphonia (ADSD). It's a rare, chronic condition affecting the voice muscles in the larynx. Typically, when one speaks, air from the lungs is pushed between two elastic structures (called vocal folds) causing them to vibrate and produce vocal sound. With spasmodic dysphonia, the muscles inside the vocal folds spasm, interfering with or stopping vocal fold vibrations. This "causes voice breaks during speaking and can make the voice sound tight, strained" (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services). ADSD, is lifelong and has no cure. Although it's rare, it can affect anyone. My ADSD developed quite suddenly, which is common. When I try to speak, my vocal folds slam together and stiffen; I attempt to push through, which sounds like 'vocal fry' or makes me seem anxious or on the brink of tears. "The voice of someone with adductor spasmodic dysphonia may sound strained and strangled" (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services). Trying to push words through the feeling of being strangled makes verbal communication exhausting and often embarrassing.

My voice had gone out like a light switch, and I was completely unable to speak. I was grateful to finally receive any labeled explanation for where my voice had gone, but the diagnosis was crushing. I was told my voice would never function again without costly, life-disruptive treatments I've now been receiving every few months for several years. Singing had been a major part of my identity. It was where I found release and joy, and it was the vehicle of melody that accompanied my chord-strumming on guitar. But as much as the loss of singing crushed me, the loss of my ability to speak felt like losing a limb. Or even worse, as we have

only one voice, and mine will forever be lost to the cycles of spasming suspension, mute whispers, or weak gravel tones that I slip on when trying to speak.

I brushed the rust off my sign language, started a support group, and scoured the internet to learn more about ADSD, but this felt like futilely trying to escape from embracing a new reality. Receiving my first treatment for this unusual condition was terrifying, and the idea that I would need to endure both the procedure and its challenging side effects every few months for the rest of my life was disheartening. Still, I'm grateful beyond words for the procedures, as they return to me a semi-functioning voice.

Struggling to maintain oral communication and singing ability is relevant to my art practice, because it's a unique experience to share through my art and one that provides a fitting overlap on other themes related to sound expression. Also, it reflects on the gravity society puts on sound-based, oral communication, presented with highly specific tones of voice (Gross). In a *Fresh Air* interview called "From Upspeak to Vocal Fry: Are We 'Policing' Young Women's Voices?" Stanford linguistics professor Penny Eckert and journalist and show producer Terry Gross join speech pathologist Susan Sankin in conversation about upspeak, vocal fry labeling, and generally sexist attitudes around female voices and speech. They address how misogynistic perspectives can have serious implications on women's careers, for instance. Interviewee Jessica Grose describes her experience with professional repercussions due to judgements about her voice, "That was the first moment I felt my voice was hurting my career beyond just irritating a couple listeners." (Gross)

There are societal expectations to communicate via sound and spoken word, and there's also a harsh reality of financial burdens and stress pressed upon people who struggle to meet sound-based communication expectations. The ADSD treatments I receive three to four times a year, for instance, cost about \$10,000 to \$13,000 annually. It's a procedure deemed 'medically necessary,' and therefore is covered by most insurance plans, but "there is an upsurge of speech pathologists and vocal coaches in our country to meet the demand for improved vocal communication." (Hunter 131) From 2021 through 2031, the "Job outlook" for "Speech-Language Pathologists" is "expected to increase 21% (Much faster than average)" according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Articles like Forbes Magazine's "Why Your CEO Needs a Vocal Coach" abound (Goman). I've found a connection between this burden of straining (physically, medically, and financially) to meet perceptual expectations or preferences for vocalizing to sound a particular way and how artists often do the same in order to communicate what they wish to express with an audience.

Over the past three years, I've created ten artworks that reflect on and attempt to express my experience with this topic. Most of these pieces have been primarily assemblage-based (using materials like found wood, guitar strings and cast shadows, stones, photographs, encaustic, etc.). I felt the most successful of these was an assemblage-installation entitled "3 Phases of ADSD Vocal Chords: I, II, and III," which was ceramic-vessel tryptic, involving thread, yarn, and strings. It symbolized the 'phases' of ADSD vocal ability/tone of vocal sound over a roughly 3-month cycle and touched upon physical and emotional challenges in expressing myself in the expected, 'normal,' and desired way. I echo these explorations in my thesis art exhibition.



Image 5. *3 Phases of ASD Vocal Chords: I. Dysfunctional Condition of Pulled Chords II. Post-Injection -Mute Phase III. Adequate Resolve.* Melanie Moralez. Ceramics, red thread, white yarn, red thread clippings, white stiff cord. 2022.

## CHAPTER FOUR

## SYNESTHESIA

*“Color is the keyboard, the eyes are the hammers, the soul is the piano with its many chords. The artist is the hand that, by touching this or that key, sets the soul vibrating automatically.”*

—Wassily Kandinsky

Fusing Senses

It’s often remarked that a piece of music sounds ‘colorful’ or ‘dark.’ For most, these would be symbolic expressions of a song’s ability to incite poetry. But for a select few, comments of this sort are quite literal observations: sound makes them ‘see’ colors. The phenomenon of involuntarily fusing two senses, such as sound and sight, is known as synesthesia. It’s a word that emerges from two ancient Greek words: ‘syn,’ which means ‘together,’ and ‘aisthesis,’ which means ‘sensation.’ Combined, they form the meaning: to feel sensations together. It’s not limited to colored hearing; in fact, there are several different kinds. For instance, some synesthetes ‘taste’ a different flavor for each word spoken or read, while others may perceive a specific hue along with each number or day of the week. Most people who have the condition are unaware that most others don’t. Furthermore, synesthetes are often agitated by others’ alternative color choices for letters, numbers, and musical elements. For a synesthete who understands the letter A as gold, seeing it printed in green can feel dissonant (Cytowic, *The Man Who Tasted Shapes*).

Researchers have found that synesthetes are more likely than non-synesthetes to pursue formal training in visual art and music, and though they suspect that there’s no correlation between synesthesia and perfect pitch (a perceptual condition that enables a person to identify

and play a specific musical note in tune, without a reference point), many musicians feel certain that there must be a connection. One aspect of research around synesthesia is clear: there's ample evidence that sound-to-color synesthetes ('chromesthetes') are personally consistent with their associations of hues to musical elements, despite not yet uncovering why one person's middle-C is pale blue while another person's is red (Force). Regardless of what the unique associations are, it's clear that someone who speaks metaphorically of imagining blue skies when listening to violins is not describing a synesthetic experience (Cytowic, *Synesthesia: A Union of the Senses*).

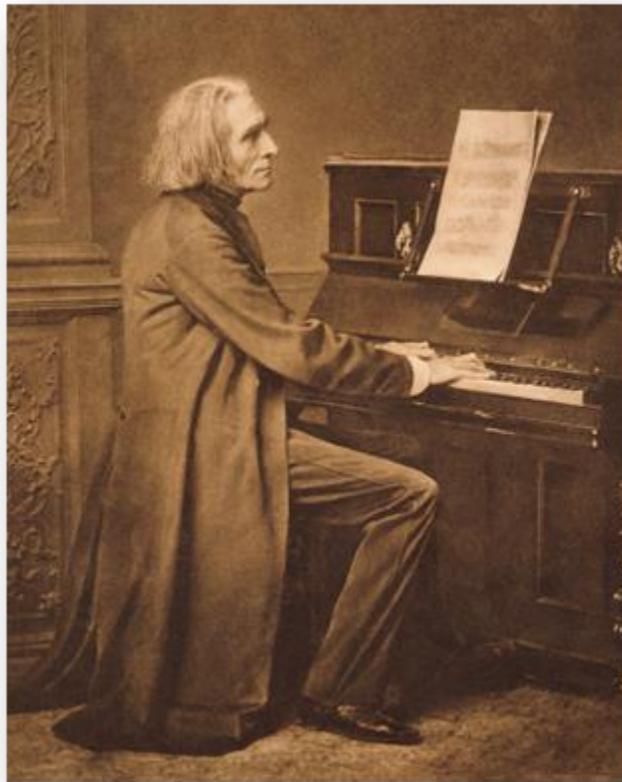


Image 6. *Franz Liszt at the Piano*. Unknown. Photograph. Circa 1880.

In Context

Music history abounds with subjective experiences of hearing in color. Countless artists and musicians have referenced synesthesia and incorporated their relationships with these unique perceptions into their works. When Hungarian composer Franz Liszt took over as maestro of a Weimar orchestra in 1842, he requested of the performers “Gentleman, a little bluer, if you please!” and “That is a deep violet, please-depend on it! Not so rose!” as they rehearsed. In the 1740s, a French Jesuit monk and mathematician, Louis Bertrand Castel, defined his personal set of music and color correlations, such as C# with a pale green and F# with orange. His refined coding led to the creation of the first ‘color organ,’ a musical instrument that produces a colored light for each key on the keyboard. Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov, a major figure in the late Romantic period of classical music, saw each musical key in an alternative color, which caused him to argue with fellow Russian composer, Alexander Scriabin, about which colors correlated with which keys. (For Korsakov, G-major was a brownish gold, whereas E-major was the brilliant blue hue of sapphires. Scriabin, however, reported seeing G-major as orange-rose and E-major as a bluish white, according to the 1938 edition of the *Oxford Companion to Music*.) In a conversation with his songwriter and biographer, Don George, jazz great Duke Ellington reported seeing one set of colors and textures when his band played a piece and a different set when other musicians played an identical collection of notes. “I hear a note by one of the fellows in the band and it’s one color,” he related. “I hear the same note played by someone else and it’s a different color. If (baritone saxophonist) Harry Carney is playing, D is dark blue burlap. If (alto saxophonist) Johnny Hodges is playing, G becomes light blue satin.” (Force 245–246)

Today, both interest and acceptance of synesthesia is growing, with musicians across the globe claiming to hear colors or see shapes with sounds. Increasingly, contemporary musicians are recognizing and owning up to this once-mysterious form of perception, such as Eddie Van Halen and Will Pharrell. My personal condition of chromesthesia and subsequent research into synesthesia has resulted in enhanced interest in the nature of perception, particularly as it pertains to human experience of sound and visual artwork.

## CHAPTER FIVE

## DISCOVERY OF MY CHROMESTHESIA

Perceptual Assumptions

Finnish architect Juhani Pallasmaa indirectly relates to synesthesia in his book, *The Eyes of the Skin*. Pallasmaa is interested in the spaces we construct, particularly the internalized ones, and his linking of perception-analysis to architecture is relevant to my own investigations with sensory perception and artful creations. Quoting French philosopher Gaston Bachelard, Pallasmaa draws attention to the co-mingling of human sensory perceptions: “[Bachelard] speaks of ‘the polyphony of the senses.’ One’s sense of reality is strengthened and articulated by this constant interaction.” (Pallasmaa 41) He later asserts that “the eye wants to collaborate with the other senses” (Pallasmaa 42) and refers to “realms of sensory experience which interact and fuse into each other.” These sound like the words of an unknowing synesthete (Pallasmaa 39).

Various forms of synesthesia are a fascination for me, and one I’m very connected to because I have certain types of synesthesia, and because I reference the experience of chromesthesia in my visual artwork. I came to recognize my synesthesia late in life, due to my assumption that this ‘fusing’ of senses is, in fact, the common way of perceiving. Yet only four percent of the world’s population has it. Perhaps Pallasmaa was a synesthete and likewise assumed that certain sensory perceptions are linked for others as they are for him.

Layers, Translucency, Overlap, Stack

In concert with chromesthesia, beyond fusing color with sound, I see moving shapes and forms in my field of vision (or mind's eye, if my eyes are physically closed)—a visual activity that is often more charged and distinct than the mere shades of color they're dressed in. I allude to the chromesthetic experience in my art creation by initiating a process that responds to what organically “happened” on the surface before my own, more acute assertions of intent. It is a process-metaphor for stimuli and then “perceptual” response, and one that also results in semi-transparent layers to reference (non-representationally) the visual layering of sounds. With music, there is a layer of focused intent, but the result is always abstract. Its emotional impact or state-of-mind effect is its ‘meaning.’ Again, here is that direct line that connects music with abstract art. And in fact, this very connection between music and visual art itself parallels the perceptual connection that synesthetes engage with.

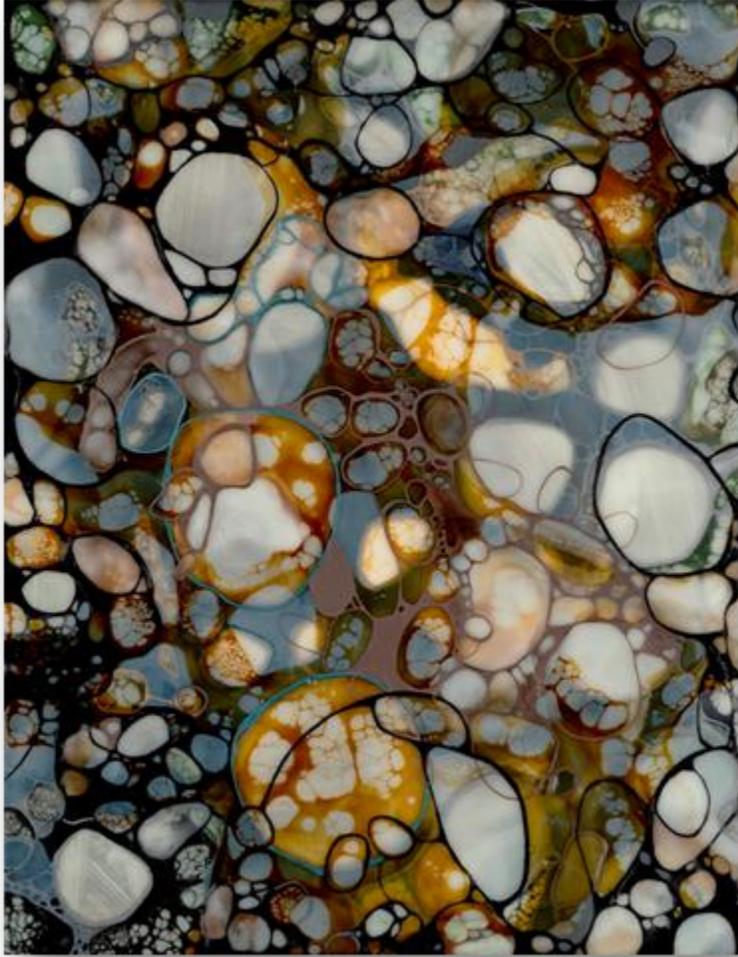


Image 7. *Shellac Song VI*. Melanie Moralez. Mixed Media Encaustic. 2022.

My personal condition of chromesthesia has inspired me to work in these semi-translucent layers that involve overlapping and stacking (as with the overlapping of visual and sound perceptions, as well as the overlap of symbolic meanings alluding to music-making experiences that I inject into or discover in my work). To achieve this sole objective of alluding to the mere concept of layering, the specific aesthetic forms created could be anything that has semi-exposed stratifications—from squares that either merge or stack, to layers of words, notes,

or even bunny rabbits. Yet I notice myself gravitating toward an organic, circular motif, understanding only that a) it feels instinctual, or “of my nature,” the way a musician can’t hide their particular groove or style of play; b) it seems particularly conducive to the process of allowing for comparable forms to peek through layers, and for playing with the interlacing of like-shapes, allowing for the piece to “speak to me” about which ones connect or don’t; and c) the forms lean toward what feels like a more ‘abstracted’ type of imagery—one that can modestly be left open to viewer interpretation, much the way jazz improvisation provides a structural lattice yet gives room for listener-feelings and corresponding ‘visions’ (chromesthetic or not) to lace throughout their experience with the song. The way my cell-like ‘windows’ connect at times—or do not—occurs through an art-making experience that I find similar to what happens in my mind when I’m improvising jazz on guitar.

### Reflections on a Chromesthetic Theme

Several of the pieces I’ve created over the past few years symbolically reflect this perceptual experience. The two most significant series that are in association are “Shellac Songs” series, I – XIII (encaustic mixed media) and “Synthetic Wave Forms” series, I – XVI (animated moving-abstraction art videos). My thesis exhibition includes extensions of artwork created in this vein. For instance, I’ve amassed several smaller-scale, abstract, encaustic and shellac paintings on wood panels, which include a layering of my cell-like motif unified within a grid. The grid formation, in part, symbolizes the physical and conceptual grids I encounter musically: a guitar fretboard, jazz charts, standard notation bars, and the overall musical ‘framework’ upon which the experience of music and improvisation rests. I also created a larger-scale, encaustic, painting presented as landscape triptychs.

In a musician's mind, the linear flow and unified feel of music exists simultaneously with being conceptually subdivided into parts. As I listen to or, especially, play a song, I'm both 'in' it, as well as shifting degrees of focus from that state of all-encompassed immersion toward elements like singling out one instrument from another, thinking in terms of subdivided rhythms (noticing when there is stray), and acknowledging chordal and key center changes along the way. Like juggling, the experience of music isn't about just one pin getting cycled through the air; the juggler's hands attend to the individual pins and the unified act, all at once. The mind splits to achieve this multitasking, aided by conditions of autopilot or muscle memory. Focus swings to the overall act and whichever element demands singular attention from moment to moment. This is a third concept conveyed through my grids (along with previously mentioned human tendency toward fragmentation, and the more direct metaphor of guitar fretboards, jazz charts, and general framework of music theory).



Image 8. *A-B-A, with 2-bar 2<sup>nd</sup> ending*. Melanie Moralez. Encaustic mixed media on 17 wood panels, installation. 2022.

## CHAPTER SIX

## ART AND PERCEPTION

*[When asked about his theory of relativity] “It occurred to me by intuition, and music was the driving force behind that intuition. My discovery was the result of musical perception.”*

—Albert Einstein

The Neuroscience of Perception

In *Action in Perception*, author Alva Noë rejects the idea (widespread in both philosophy and science) that perception is a passive process in the brain whereby the perceptual system constructs an internal representation of the world. Certainly, perception depends on what takes place in the brain; however, perception isn't merely a passive process, but more a kind of activity. Noë's main claim is “All perception is intrinsically active. Perceptual experience acquires content thanks to the perceiver's skillful activity... Perception is not something that happens to us, or in us. It is something we do.” (Noë 2)

A 2016 study from psychology researchers at UCLA provides fascinating insights into how the brain combines sound and vision. The research reveals that there's not a sole mechanism in the brain that governs how much our senses work together to process information. The study suggests that it might not be as easy as many people had assumed to categorize the way in which we perceive and learn (Odegaard). A couple of years later, Georgetown University Medical Center neuroscientists discovered that, “although sight is a much different sense than sound, the human brain learns to make sense of these stimuli in the same way.” Neuroscientists discovered

that the human brain processes visual and auditory perceptions in a shared, two-step, process (Georgetown University Medical Center).

### Fragmenting Realty

My art practice has been charged by a keen interest in the broad topic of perception—especially its neurological aspects, which link how people sense and then interpret visual art and music. I’ve come to understand that the difference between light waves versus sound waves (between visual art and music) is essentially an illusion, akin to the difference between the tip of our tongue and the back of it. We, as intellectual humans, tend to collect, label, and sort elements, such as foods, tools, ideas, feelings, political ideologies, etc. In *Another Roadside Attraction*, Tom Robbins humorously writes: “Human beings were invented by water as a device for transporting itself from one place to another.” (Robbins 12) This compulsion to dissect confuses our notion of the universe. Is our hand some part of ourselves (like a section of a pie chart) or is our hand an extension of ourselves, no different than a hammer, a fork, or a paintbrush. Regardless, all differentiations of this sort (or attempts to do so) have been devised for convenience’s sake—a methodology that has appeared to afford us, humans, success in evolving. However, the divisions and labels we create are just a perspective; they are our own inventions. Some say they represent various ‘truths’ uncovered, but perhaps this rabbit hole of endless categorization only lends us mere shells of true understanding. Despite evidence that these ‘discoveries’ we label infinitely are mere shells, we’re so mired in this innate tendency of fragmentation, down to the very way we’ve formulated music, language, and the physics of our world, that it’s in our nature to ever submit to the conventions of this way of perceiving our experiences of life. But that doesn’t mean we’re incapable of imagining beyond this way of

being. Philosophical arguments that there is no true reality are beyond fascinating; as are the valid arguments that, if there is a reality, it's solely comprised of our combined perceptions.

### Paracusia

One night at age 10, I experienced an auditory hallucination. I had been listening to a tape cassette and turned it off as it was time for sleep. However, I was surprised to then notice I could still, very clearly, hear the music. It wasn't muffled or distorted; it was a musical echo, just at slightly lowered volume. I checked my boom box, but it was off. I put my ear to the apartment wall I shared with a neighbor—imagining they had heard my music and become inspired to play the same thing. It was not coming from the wall, however. I laid back down and listened with confused curiosity; as the seconds passed away, I leaned into ever more intent listening, attending to the arrangement and instruments, until the song faded away. There was no way that my brain could create it, and yet it would seem to be the case. About 30 years later, I would discover that what I had experienced was an auditory hallucination called 'paracusia.' The most alarming and fascinating element of this experience was how perfectly replicated the song was "in my mind" ... but after all, even when I was listening to the song being played from the tape, for me, the perceived music was always just "in my mind." In the words of cognitive psychologist Charles Frith:

"What I perceive are not the crude and ambiguous cues that impinge from the outside world onto my eyes and my ears and my fingers. I perceive something much richer—a picture that combines all these crude signals with the wealth of experience. ... Our perception of the world is a fantasy that coincides with reality." (Frith 23)

I share the above anecdote and quote to evidence the malleability of this construct one might firmly hold as ‘reality,’ and to demonstrate why I tease my own perceptions and question perceptual values placed upon art.

### Role of the Subconscious

When people encounter unusual experiences like this, it tends to be a source of inspiration; a catalyst for reevaluating perspectives we might take for granted. I reflect on this experience when I consider how very little I’m actually aware of why I perceive the elements I’m sensing the way I do. In *Chromatic: The Crossroads of Color and Music*, music editor Scott Morrow touches upon the way our subconscious minds impact what we see and hear:

“As human beings, we are fortunate to be trichromats—organisms with three types of color receptor cells (cones) to better perceive... Humans are uncommon in our visual perceptions. Thanks to our evolution we have a rich visual palette. Yet despite humanity’s overt affinities for color, we often perceive it and react to it subconsciously, succumbing to unknowing attractions and fascinations. ...Some of these reactions may be rooted in cultural associations, but regardless, color plays a large role in our subconscious mind. Music...too stimulates our conscious and subconscious minds.” (Force 11)

Research has found a direct connection between musical enjoyment and the release of the powerful neurotransmitter dopamine. Similar to pleasant-tasting foods and sex, music is like a drug. Many have studied these psychological effects, even discovering therapeutic benefits to music. Likewise, science has found effectiveness in light therapy for treating mood and sleep disorders. Researchers have thoroughly explored the domain of science to unite these two realms of sensation, seeking a connection between light/color and sound/music (Force 11–12). This quest to uncover what seems to be a significant interconnection has been traversed not just by psychologists and neurologists, but philosophers, too. The ancient Greek philosopher Pythagoras hypothesized a connection between the seven known planets of early cosmology, the seven

conceived colors of the visible spectrum, and the seven lettered pitches of the Western octave (Zhmud').

### Does It Make a Sound?

“If a tree falls in a forest and no one is around to hear it, does it make a sound?” is a philosophical thought experiment meant to trouble assumptions on observation and perception, and perhaps also on the nature of reality. Many believe the origin of this question might have come from George Berkeley’s *Treatise Concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge*, published in 1734:

“The objects of sense exist only when they are perceived; the trees therefore are in the garden...no longer than while there is somebody by to perceive them.”  
(Berkeley, sec 45)

What can feel counterintuitive is that sound (like other senses of perception) is a two-way street. It doesn’t exist without the cooperation of a legitimizing receiver to grant it the right of being. “Sound is vibration, transmitted to our senses through the mechanism of the ear, and recognized as sound only at our nerve centers. The falling of the tree or any other disturbance will produce vibration of the air. If there be no ears to hear, there will be no sound.” (New Books and Publications – Scientific American, 218)

### Nature and Purpose of Expression

Artful expressions feel mysteriously compulsive to many artists. But when I analyze the purpose behind why it is I should devote my thoughts, hours, and labor to such activities as constructing an art object or performing a batch of songs, it’s not long before I watch the ground beneath my feet dissolve as I slip dangerously into the black void of existential crisis. This may

sound dramatic, but it's very real—and a problem artists can, at the very least, feel united by. My need to make is about my need to express, and perhaps, in part, my need to self-actualize. Artmaking grants a sense of interior stability and voice.

What we choose to voice is as pertinent as how we voice it, and perhaps more so.

“[Art] [s]ubjects that draw us in will continue to draw us in. Patterns we respond to we will continue to respond to. We are compelled by forces that, like the ocean current, are so subtle and pervasive we take them utterly for granted. Those odd moments when we notice the sea we swim in...” (Bayles 116)

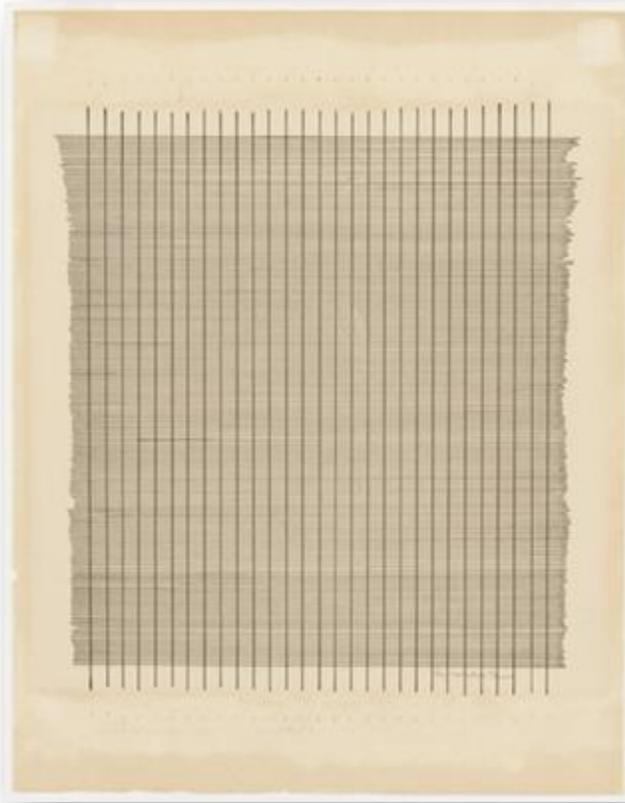


Image 9. *Tremelo*. Agnes Martin. 1962. “Art is the concrete representation of our most subtle feelings.” – Agnes Martin

I don't believe it's necessary to choose between communicating an idea versus expressing a feeling. Attempts at more didactic communications of symbolized ideas and personal experiences have been a key component of my work since the beginning. However, a more acute pursuit to communicate a refined feeling with my visual art has gained momentum.

### Beauty Aims Meets Process Art

Another motivating force I've confronted more thoughtfully over the past few years in graduate school is the impetus of beauty—that is, the desire to make art objects that achieve a sense of resolution by way of appearing beautiful, or at the very least, appear skilled and interesting to my own eye. One may derive beauty from painful concepts and deliver dark or melancholic forms of beauty, too. The feeling expressed through darker emotional content tends to be more powerful than pleasantly lighter forms of art. Regardless of the mood I set about expressing, so long as it appears harmonious, balanced, and “beautiful” in some way, I will feel a degree of accomplishment. Of course, I have stretched this belief system and experimented with making art that feels to me ‘ugly,’ ‘lazy,’ and ‘unfinished.’ The path toward attempting to better understand the relevancy of delivering beauty with my art has led me to pieces that simply feel unresolved or like failures. It's obvious that, as with all aesthetics, there is no one definition for this ubiquitous factor we call ‘the beautiful.’ And what is defined as beautiful can change for the individual, as it can change for society. Perhaps in order to expand and enrich our experience as art-makers and observers, we should actively attempt to challenge what we deem beautiful as we should likewise question all our habitual methods of perceiving art. As minimalist/abstract expressionist Agnes Martin put it: “When I think of art I think of beauty. Beauty is the mystery

of life. It is not in the eye; it is in the mind. In our minds there is awareness of perfection.”

(Martin, *Beauty is the Mystery of Life*)

My artistic pull tending toward this enigmatic concept of ‘a beautiful piece’ is where my art digresses from process art (in its generally accepted conception). Simply stated, process art focuses intensely on the making of art (rather than just on the finished product). “Instead of the perfected eternal composition, the process art movement showed interest in spontaneity, impermanence, and imperfection. (Art viewers perceived) art in a new way and again the gates opened even wider, both for artists, and for what the world valued in art.” (Foster 0:40)



Image 10. *Repetition Nineteen III*. Eva Hesse. 1968.



Image 11. *Untitled*. Melanie Moralez. 2023.

I feel that my art can be, in part, understood through the lens of process art. Eva Hesse is a well-known process artist with whom I find connection, especially in my most recent developments, which evolved from noticing some interesting creations from wax that had ran off the panels. I've begun to play with applying wax directly to the silicone protective mats in various ways, and now curl swatches up into tubular shapes I then adhere, sculpturally, onto encaustic paintings. These rose-like forms somewhat echo my flat, cellular motif while reminding me of sound clusters, as I visually perceive them, when listening to music. For instance, Hesse's "Repetition Nineteen III" is composed of semi-translucent, tubular forms that also arise from a flattened surface. While minimalist artists had recently explored serial repetition of identical units, Hesse loosened that principle. Her forms are handmade and irregular rather than manufactured and hard-edged. They're similar to one another in shape and material, but none of them are exactly alike. Hesse was flexible about the arrangement of the 19 units that make up this work; that was less the point. As I do, Hesse used a wide range of materials to make her sculptural works. Aware of the instability of materials like fiberglass, which discolors and deteriorates over time, Hesse said, "Life doesn't last; art doesn't last. It doesn't matter." (Hesse) I agree, and also I'm drawn to the way that wax—due to its fragility and temporality—mimics the fleeting nature of a song. Our human perception of time is very much in relation to the arbitrary number of years we happen to generally fit into our constructed conceptions of what a "lifetime" is (Hesse).

## CHAPTER SEVEN

## VIEWER'S PERCEPTIONS AND INTERPRETATION

Audience

*“Art is incomplete without the perceptual and emotional involvement of the viewer. Not only do we collaborate with the artist in transforming a two-dimensional figurative image on a canvas into a three-dimensional depiction of the visual world, we interpret what we see on the canvas in personal terms, thereby adding meaning to the picture. Riegl called this phenomenon the ‘beholder’s involvement.’ Based on ideas derived from Riegl’s work and on insights that began to emerge from cognitive psychology, the biology of visual perception, and psychoanalysis, Kris and Gombrich went on to develop a new view of this concept, which Gombrich referred to as the ‘beholder’s share.’”*

—Psychiatrist and professor Eric R. Kandel

These philosophical explorations revolving around notions of artist-to-beholder symbiosis have been presented in much of my art these past few years. Coming to define my own visual art ‘audience’ has become more important than first expected. I’m not making creative expressions in a vacuum or just for myself. Artmaking with the potential viewer’s perception in mind is relevant, to fluctuating degrees; I aim to hold this in balance. There is an endless dance we, as artists, can spin around locating the purpose of art; for our own making, its premier function, and whether the public, artists, collectors or anyone should strive to make art defined by any meaning at all. When I’m feeling most conceptually lost and dizzy, I find peace in the famous remark by Frank Stella: “What you see is what you see.”

Inspiration

Post-painterly minimalists like Frank Stella and Donald Judd broke from abstract expressionism with ‘deductive structure’ works, by which most aesthetic activity took place along unexpected, asymmetrical parameters. Stella’s paintings from the time of his famous quote appear antithetical to my own thick, textured, indexical encaustic paintings, as his surfaces were extremely flat and thin. Yet, the gestalt effect of his work, inviting a focused perception of his art for it to hold its own—unified, like a song—has been of enormous influence and inspiration. Compiling elements, such as layering in more literal cues meant to reference music, such as integrating notation, have been pushed to the periphery of my own work more and more.



Image 11. *Raqa II*. Frank Stella. Painting, Synthetic polymer and graphite on canvas. 1962.

Pieces like Stella’s were pure optical experiences and meant to suppress narrative. This approach relieves my own previously self-imposed pressures to ensure my narratives be received. Increasingly, any uncertainty that my visual metaphors can be read doesn’t bother me, especially if I feel that my art is successful on other levels. When I’m suspecting the narrative to

which I'm speaking through my work might be overly cryptic and get lost on the viewer, I strive to compensate in other areas. For instance, I'll consider my art to be 'successful' if it is the byproduct of having been outwardly explorative as well as inwardly seeking. Somewhere in my process of making, I idealistically attempt to balance inspiring investigations from the outside world with introspection.



Image 12. (Photograph, portion) *Oblique Strategies*. Brian Eno and Peter Schmidt. 1974.

### Happy Accidents

It's been inspiring to my practice to look outward for ways other artists spark their own creativity. Self-described 'non-musician' sound and visual artist Brian Eno coined the term: 'ambient music,' which is designed to modify a listener's perception of their surrounding environment (Prendergast 93). In *Visual Music*, Christopher Scoates writes about Eno's vast experiences with systematic methodologies for prompting creativity, from Fluxus Scores to co-creating and bringing about much professional success through the now-popular Oblique Strategies cards. Unlike Fluxus Scores (which, under much inspiration by experimental sound artist John Cage, prompted unique performance 'events'), Oblique Strategies consist of a deck of cards, which offers a challenging constraint. Then a Dada-esque prompt gets drawn, intended to help musicians break creative blocks. These cards have been found to be equally effective for visual artists, as well. In a sense, using a card is like setting a rule for yourself; let the chaos and randomness in and be artistically inspired in whichever way the card prescribes. "Eno recognized that mistakes and random errors could be productive if approached with the right mind set. Such variables could potentially provide new and unanticipated directions..." (Scoates 91).

In the book *There Will Be No Quiet*, the band Radiohead's album artist, Stanley Donwood, led me into deeper considerations of the many ways that artists can mysteriously arrive at intended expressions via seemingly random bursts of creative moments. Learning about the conceptual avenues Donwood travels for inspiration and the way he prolifically experiments and allows himself to tumble down rabbit holes to achieve a final work or series is intriguing and inspiring. One particular process-description that captivated me is his recounting of accidentally knocking over a pigmented candle, which caused wax to splatter chaotically over his

meticulously drafted, would-be-album-art, drawings. At first, he was incredibly frustrated, but then he embraced the outcome excitedly (Donwood 217). As an artist, I've found it essential to roll with these kinds of occurrences.

### Serendipitous Magic of the Unexpected

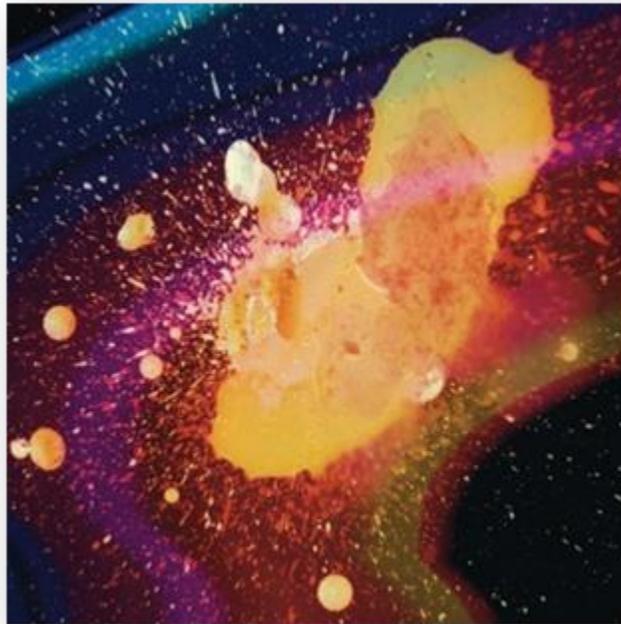


Image 13. *Effinggy*. Stanley Donwood. First edition, giclee print, Lazarides Editions. 1974.

‘Happy accidents’ like these often occur when working with my own wax and shellac-burn process; unexpected moments of appeal lock certain aspects together, like puzzle pieces joining, driving home for me the joy of art-making. However, these instances of delightfully less controlled, ‘magical’ moments still need to be in balance with the planning, staging, composing, and refining in order for my work to feel successful. They are the exhale to the inhale. They are

the improvised forms, sandwiched between the ‘heads’ (melodies) and flowing warmly over the structured chord-changes, in jazz. Eno described the idea this way:

“One of the things we respond to is a sense of magic. Magic is what happens when something apparently simple and predictable suddenly turns out to be complex and unpredictable... it seems to make us have feelings much stronger than we would expect to have given the situation.” (Scoates 380)

Both Eno and Donwood are examples of contemporary artists who let the randomness of whatever they’re exposed to in life fixedly layer into their visual art and sound work. The way certain areas of interest and input culminate into a piece is much like what happened with Donwood’s wax spill experience. Random or accidental exposures to various concepts find their resting places in the conceptual arena of his work. He opens himself up to it all and lets the wax spill—while allowing for Radiohead’s sound essence (on whatever album he’s working on) to be the primary influence. I, too, believe in the value and importance of letting all facets from the artist’s life, dreams, interests, curiosities, challenges, and emotions interplay and influence the work. These various aspects can all find their way to factor in, one way or another. And one is not more valid than the other. It’s all fuel for the fire. Opening oneself up to being surprised by what crosses our path in life can often lead to the challenging of our own perceptions—this is what is at the core of my own art.

CHAPTER EIGHT

RESPONDING TO THE PERCEIVER

Last Step of Making

*“The value of art is in the observer.”*

—Agnes Martin

Returning to the question “If a tree falls in the woods, and no one is there to hear it, does it make a sound?” I’ve found myself applying some addendums to that cliché: “Do those who hear a tree fall collaborate with the tree and the ground it hits in formulating the reality of that event?” and “What of the artist’s mere idea of the art-beholder?”



Image 14. *Embedded (I-V, installation)*. Melanie Moralez. Mixed media. 2021.

In response to the previously discussed investigations into the power and requirement of ‘the beholder’s share,’ much of my recent and current work layers in a reflection on this line of questioning. The “Embedded” series was a first venture into collaboration with ‘the perceiver’—a collaboration with all those who see stones in my work (and for those who don’t, I brought more obvious stone imagery into my work for them to unite in that perception). Due to this alternative vision, I found genuine ways to make my own work fit into that reception.

### Embedded

When I was little, I was gifted a polished agate that I immediately adored. It had been split open to reveal a rich green that pooled outward to the edges with pearly white lines, emanating from a sparkling, crystal center. At first presentation, when the two pieces of the stone are held together, it’s impossible to realize that the gray-brown, coarse, and boring exterior might be hiding swirls and layers of internal beauty. It seemed unreal that this object could happen naturally; it felt like magic. Also, opening it up was like being let in on some secret. At 7 years old, I set about using a hammer to crack open rock after rock on the cement front steps of my home, in hopes of a similar find that powerful. I soon acquired buckets filled with the treasured, split rocks I deemed special enough to hoard.

Often, experiencing art is similar to what the rock-splitting process was for me. We take in someone’s art piece with an analytical hammer in hand. We investigate it from many metaphorical angles to discover its hidden, inner ‘magical meaning.’ And then we cast our judgment: “Do I like this or not?” and “Is this good art or bad?” and “Will this be dropped in my collection bucket, or cast back out, like flinging a dud-stone in slight disappointment?”



Image 15. *Embedded III*. Melanie Moralez. Mixed media. 2021.

As discussed in chapter five, much of my abstract art involves a common motif. Others describe it in widely varying ways: from cells to river stones. For me, it's less about how the result appears and more about the myriad decisions or happenings that go into forming the imagery. I've most commonly associated the imagery with my synesthesia, and the process of creating the cell-like formations to how it feels to string lines of musical improvisations together.

Due to the fascinating experience of hearing others' interpretations, I leaned into opening myself to what was being seen. I meditated on all the ways I might personally connect to the idea of stone imagery—and there are many. I also envisioned the years it took for water to sculpt away all angles and jagged edges to produce the smooth, rounded shapes they morphed into. I reflected on how that concept can relate to the way an art beholder can unsuspectingly be powerful enough to make a work of art mean anything they want it to.

I discovered that my associations frequently circled back to music—for example, being reminded of the countless hours spent cycling over arpeggios to create muscle memory needed to improvise (the way water continuously flows to eventually work its imperceptible moldings upon the surfaces of rocks, with seemingly 'practiced' patience). Therefore, I decided to call my images that involved stones and rock imagery "Embedded." I love that this term refers to the way rocks become lodged into the earth: stuck, but simultaneously evoking visions of slumber and dreaming and our subconscious minds at play. Embedded can also allude to the way we do or don't allow initial interpretations to become fixed. This name is an homage to the power of the viewer's perception and a nod to the outsider's meaning or viewer's perception of art lodging itself into the art itself.

Focusing on visual art in graduate school has afforded me the opportunity to hear many impressions of what my art motif means to viewers. The process of forming new associations and multi-layered meanings through 'collaborations' with others' impressions has impacted me quite a lot. I no longer consider meaning as expressed through art to be traveling in a linear direction. At times, it reminds me of the chicken and the egg paradox, which often cycles me around to questioning whether there's value to art carrying symbolic meaning at all.

Beyond the See

*“For the artist, the creative process is also interpretative, and for the beholder the interpretative process is also creative.”*

—Eric R. Kandel (Art and Reductionism 18)

Interactivity can serve as a metaphor for an artist-to-viewer inherent ‘collaboration’ that occurs quietly through the simple act of viewer-interpretation. Interactivity is playing an increasingly important role in contemporary art. First, in 1917, Marcel Duchamp’s “R. Mutt”-signed urinal, called “Fountain,” challenged the conventional notion of the artist as a ‘sole creator’ of art. By submitting the “readymade sculpture” anonymously to an art exhibition, Duchamp indirectly engaged with the audience; he asked viewers to decide for themselves if it should be considered art or not. This famous work of art arguably became the very questioning and engagement activity it sparked with the audience and art world.

Almost 50 years later, Andy Warhol’s barely modified, re-representations of cultural icons and societal marketing as ‘fine art’ was also a sort of participatory engagement with his audience. Concurrently, the Fluxus, avant-garde art movement began to combine elements of music, performance art, and visual art, seeking to challenge traditional definitions of art by creating works that were usually participatory and therefore unique with each ‘happening.’

In the 1990s, through interactive technology and digital media, ‘new media art’ became increasingly engaging and participatory. Through such works, viewers began to explore their own reactions and relationships to the art in a more immersive way. This has allowed contemporary art to branch away from the traditional static forms of the past and toward more interactive and engaging forms of art. New media art often allows for an immersive subjective

experience and/or interconnects participants and artists. We can identify this trend in highly successful exhibitions like Sensation and the ‘experience museum’ phenomenon.

When contemplating contemporary art of our most recent decades, I doubt many envision 2D paintings, drawings, or prints hung flatly on the wall. We are in the high-tech, digital age in which ever-advancing technologies are stealing the show. What is increasingly more common are info-installations alluding to some widely dispersed, socially engaged project of action, or murmuring, ambient sounds vying for our attentions in galleries, competing against the even louder flickering of screens.

Contrary to the art-object ‘things’ of sculpture and paintings, 1990s “net art” pieces became somewhat like event-spaces designed to disorient, yet could also become a place of inner growth and a new ‘place’ where a person can become whoever (or whatever) they want. Anonymity created fluidity and perhaps advanced further engagement. With net art and video game art there can be a play of intimacy and attachment, which points to the sense of questioning reality and the push and pull of providing versus taking away. Cyberspace and/or videogames as a revision to the canvas or ceramic vessel became a new kind of art experience that was often extremely participatory. Involving the medium of digitized, moving light has now become somewhat of a status quo in our current art world.

In the past 30 years, our new technological age has not only been captured in the art coming from it, but has impacted the way contemporary artists have worked—their processes, as well as the spaces this type of art exists in. My installation of sound and digital ‘moving art’ pieces, called “Beyond the See,” is only a minor reflection of this vast, ever-changing field.

In “Beyond the See,” I display six graphic tablets on a gallery wall in an arrangement of how the first six notes of “Beyond the Sea” (originally called “La Mer”) are positioned on the treble clef. Each tablet softly plays its own sound, which is a merged recording I created of my voice stacked three times, singing one of the first six tones of the song. Simultaneously, each tablet plays a video of a ‘moving art’ piece animated and looped to constantly correlate with the tone being heard. I created the digital visual art by manipulating a close-up photo taken from a large-scale, mixed-media triptych of wax, oil, and pigmented shellac. This source painting, called “La Mer,” is also included in the exhibition. The interactive component is subtle. An individual can, in a sense, ‘play’ the first six notes of the song by approaching each piece in close-enough range of hearing the sound, and by progressing along from the leftmost tablet to the right. (Moving from right to left down the row of tablets would present the tune backwards, and standing back-central would sound like a soft, droning cacophony.)

There are no instructions provided for the ‘participant,’ just as perceptual instructions are not provided to a viewer approaching an abstract work. I also don’t refer to the correlating triptych in the gallery or explain its connection to my voice being stacked in three layers (or the coincidence that the string of notes contains a triplet). The painting’s horizon line is elongated and thus stretched ever-more smoothly as the second and third panel is added. This is what happens by stacking the single recording of my ASD voice; the more tracks added, the more it appears to me like a smoother line in my chromesthetic vision. Another reason I entitle it “Beyond the See” is to reference the work’s investigations into how we actualize and distinguish our perceptions, and how art pulls us to see ‘beyond’ what’s obvious—to the periphery.

These things need not be clarified for each viewer. Layers of meaning and symbolism can simply rest in the soft 'spoken' prompts that may at times exist in the conceptual margins. The viewer can choose to or happen to see it, or not.

## CHAPTER NINE

## ARTISTS AND MUSICIANS OF INFLUENCE

*“The artist has to be something like a whale, swimming with his mouth wide open, absorbing everything until he has what he really needs.”*

—Artist and songwriter Romare Bearden



Image 15. *The Savoy*. Romare Bearden. Mixed media collage. 1975.

### Meaning from Connecting

I'm interested in various types of art and music, and I'm open to influence. Both conceptual and aesthetic connections can be made between synesthetes' art, including between my own and my artist-influencers. It has felt rewarding to ponder deeper into a given artist's condition of perceptual reality, for greater context, beyond even the common array of differential factors such as gender, time period, class, and/or culture. When studying a work of art, I find

myself wondering about the artist's mindset. What relationships were important to them at that time? What could they hear? Were they warm or cold? What did they eat for breakfast? What does the color yellow feel like for them? When observing art, there are gains achieved in reflecting upon one's unique conditions of perception. I believe it's important to question why we make certain assumptions about forms and all other artistic choices, to further question how important it is for us to maintain specific perspectives on what we're looking at (Osborne; Romeo).

In my study of jazz manouche guitar, I've found that exposing myself to the 'masters' (or even musicians who are simply better than me) has been essential for growth and the expansion of my own abilities. Deeply analyzing what sets various styles of play apart within the genre is enlightening. The greats are often performing the same repertoire, but what they uniquely bring to it shows me that I have a voice of my own to express, too. Exposing myself to visual artists' work I admire has this same influence. I don't seek out ways to emulate their work, but rather, seek out ways to refine my own by paying attention to why I feel moved or inspired. And then I consider what I might bring to my own subject matter and style to achieve a similar effect.

An artist can pose these questions about why they have certain tastes and opinions that attract them to the work of other artists, which can further enrich their art practice. And inquiries about why their influences might have arrived at certain artistic choices themselves can offer valuable connections. It certainly has for me.

Synesthetes

*“The sound you do not hear but see, and the visual you cannot see but hear, is the work.”*

—Artist and musician Rob Mazurek



Image 16. *Composition VII*, Wassily Kandinsky. Oil on canvas. State Tretyakov gallery, Moscow. 1913.

There are many artists and musicians with synesthesia who both directly and symbolically express the condition or how their given art forms are in connection with it (for example, visual artists Wassily Kandinsky, Vincent van Gogh, and David Hockney; poet Arthur Rimbaud; and musicians Duke Ellington, Franz Liszt, and Tori Amos).



Image 17. *Duke Ellington the Painter*. Unknown. Photograph. Circa 1945.

The types of creations these synesthetic artists produce may not appear to be connected, but knowing they share in my condition of perceptual fusing leads me into deeper investigations of their works. In doing so, I haven't been able to help feeling a sense of comradery, as well as a more open attitude to embrace whatever forms of expression they stylistically exude. Situating the type of art I'm making within a historical context has served to bring meaning to my practice. Therefore, I have gained much by studying all art genres and movements, especially with a focus on the past couple of centuries of art history.

Non-Synesthetes

Image 18. *Untitled*. Nam June Paik. Mixed media, Estate of Nam June Paik. Photo courtesy of The Museum of Modern Art. 1993.

Plenty of non-synesthetic artists have heavily explored musical concepts in their art, including Hieronymus Bosch, James Whistler, Juan Gris, Pablo Picasso, Salvador Dali, Georgia O'Keeffe, Marc Chagal, Joseph Beuys, George Brecht, John Cage, and Nam June Paik. The list of famous and historical artists conveying deeply symbolic references with musical themes and/or the meaningful ways music situates itself in the world is extensive. They've all played their part in shaping me as an artist.



Image 19. *Asemic Front*. Federico Federici. Ink on paper. 2017.

Contemporary non-synesthetic artists who lean on music as a theme are a continuous source of inspiration to my practice as well (including Stephen Malinowski, Federico Federici, Ben Patterson, Johannes Kreidler, and Jon Lodge). There is no evidence that figurative artist Romaine Brooks had synesthesia, but I enjoy the idea by author Cassandra Langer, about an artist being able to evoke synesthesia in the viewer: “Think of a Brooks painting as a musical composition made up of varying and subtle movements of colored spaces saturated with symbolic meanings like hallucinations, dreams, and nightmares. They are objects that echo the emotions and return the gaze, sometimes to the point of enabling synesthesia.” (Langer 78) Or, in

the words of color field abstractionist, Mark Rothko, “A painting is not about experience, it is experience.” (Zhou)



Image 20. *Ghost*. Mark Charlton. Mixed media on canvas. 2022.

And, of course, artists who don't habitually reference sound/music themes can be, nonetheless, incredibly enlightening to me, too (for example, Louise Bourgeois, Mark Rothko, Max de Winter, Mark Charlton, Ana Dévora, and Jeffrey Tover). All artists of influence or general interest to me tend to share the trait of expressing a (seemingly) intended feeling or state, as well as delivering the impression of deeper meaning—a relevance I can connect with on some touching and personal level.

## CHAPTER TEN

## THE ART-MUSIC RELATIONSHIP AS A MICROCOSM OF LIFE



Image 21. (detail) *Voice Scape, Triptych I*. Melanie Moralez. Mixed media. 2021.

Ceramicist Margaret Bohls was teaching ceramics at the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities, when I was an undergraduate student there. In her 2020 article “An abiding interest in history,” Bohls describes curiosity as being her driving force in artmaking. Like her, I feel that the catalyst for my expression comes from questioning and exploration. This investigation into the process cycle in art practice mirrors what happens in the cycles of my own life. Bohls expressed that she’s interested by the way forms or the mere 2D arrangement of imagery as ‘art’

can embody an idea, and as she put it: "...evoke emotion, reinforce cultural identity, and express narrative." Like many other styles, genres, and movements of art, craft forms are continually renewed, much the way jazz standards get repeated and recycled across the decades.

Another way of linking art with living is that maintaining a steady/consistent art practice and exercising discipline are required to keep moving forward, successfully, in both music and art fields; practice and discipline are important values reflected in the approach to one's lifestyle. These cyclical practices inform each other; they each remind me of the importance of being genuinely invested in and curious about music and art, as in life. Therefore, I believe there's value in reflecting wonder and questions through the work, and joyfully inviting 'happy accidents' into it, as with life (Hyde). Life's endless patterning performs similarly to the very use of symbolism—we can endlessly note parallels, creating infinite echoes. Everything is interconnected this way. In practice, to reflect this investigation, I've reveled in conceptual art more than ever before.

The deeper we examine anything in life, the more it slips from conventional understanding. Perhaps this is at the root of our proverbial 'existential crisis.' For instance, the notion that all representational art is abstract, and all abstract art is representational, is a conceptual echo of the quantum theory (fascinating philosophers and physicists alike), which states that by the very act of watching, the observer affects the observed reality. Highly controlled experiments, from Thomas Young's 1802 'double-slit' experiment to today, confirm how a beam of electrons is affected by the mere act of being observed, revealing that "the greater the amount of 'watching,' the greater the observer's influence on what actually takes place." (ScienceDaily) And what a lovely, mysterious paradox to consistently find in various shapes,

colors, and sizes—squirming underneath every stone we lift. We find surprisingly lively magic under what seems so predictably heavy and still. And so it goes: the more one examines the intricacies involved with perception, the more one loses the ability to divide what seemingly should be simple ideations with clear-cut definitions, such as fragmenting our senses into tidy compartments. Letting go of our crutch of compartmentalization is, itself, a microcosm for other aspects of life.

## CHAPTER ELEVEN

## A CONCLUDING NOTE ON MY PRACTICE

The art studio feels like a holy place at times, and a playful jungle gym at others. Most recently, it's seemed like a science lab as well, where I experiment with various substances and timing—from wet to dry and from hot to cold states—using fire, paintbrush, or cold, metal carving tools. I love the word 'alchemy' to describe what I'm doing with encaustic and shellac burn in the studio. Essentially, it feels like I'm chasing moments. When working with the highly time-sensitive materials of wax and shellac there's a fun and exciting kind of urgency. I have fleeting opportunities to manipulate the wax before it cools and solidifies again. And working to open the shellac 'cells' with a flame is incredibly delicate, transient work. Somewhere inside the flow state of my working hours, I must constantly remind myself that I am wielding a blowtorch and so need to be present and keep moving with what's happening. The challenge is not getting mesmerized by the surface that's unfolding.

When I'm creating encaustic pieces, I get the feeling that it's somehow not completely me making the work; it's an amalgamation of many natural, inherent, happy accidents that combine to create, often, beautifully laced surfaces beyond what my own hand is capable of producing. In the best of working moments, the imagery seems to emerge apart from me. I'm still around but almost watching from the outskirts, floated to the periphery. At the very least, it's a call and response, but I'm not in the kind of control that I have when I'm, say, writing or cooking. In the most joyful states of making, I'm simply lost, while still feeling safely close to home. And it's a similar experience to when I'm improvising on guitar. I maintain some presence of mind to be highly aware of the chord changes and arpeggios or scale fingerings, but

my fingers enter phases of release when I'm not in full control. Muscle memory combines with some unknown external force and then my fingers seem to have a 'mind' of their own. And just as with music-making and with life at large, with my visual art, I'm attempting to trust the process more and more—letting myself get lost in the work, while noticing what's going on, and openly questioning where it's going.

With all of my visual art pieces, from assemblages to ceramics, I'm trying to work with what the materials 'want' to be, and the work flows from that. It's also been joyful for me to observe how my art processes can connect to many things in life, not just music. I think this underlying 'current of universality' embedded within the process, revealing itself through the finished artwork, is what resonates with observers. And that goes back to the aspect of it mirroring nature. There's something inherently pleasing in the reflection, and at the same time, it brings back knowledge—perhaps some deep knowledge of the world, of nature, of how all things work. And experiencing this visual version of it, one is reminded of that deep knowledge.

The distinction between visual art and music is challenging to define and the boundaries between perceptual modes blur, seemingly more so the deeper we investigate. Such is true for many facets of life. My graduate program artwork has expressed an exploration into the relationship between visual art and music. It visually and symbolically echoes considerations on the ways art and music are intertwined, despite inclinations to differentiate perceptions of visual art from sound art.

WORKS CITED

- Alexander, Stephon. *The Jazz of Physics: The Secret Link Between Music and the Structure of the Universe*. Basic Books, 2017.
- Bayles, David, and Ted Orland. *Art & Fear: Observations on the Perils (and Rewards) of Artmaking*. Image Continuum Press, 2001.
- Berkeley, Samuel C. Rickless. "Treatise Concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge" (1734). In: *The Bloomsbury Companion to Berkeley*, section 45. Edited by Bertil Belfrage and Richard Brook. Bloomsbury Academic, 2016.  
<https://doi.org/10.5040/9781474217170.ch-006>
- Bohls, Margaret. "An Abiding Interest in History" *Studio Potter*, 1 Aug. 2020.  
<https://studiopotter.org/abiding-interest-history>
- Cytowic, Richard E. *The Man Who Tasted Shapes*. MIT Press, 2003.
- Cytowic, Richard E. *Synesthesia: A Union of the Senses*. MIT Press, 2002.
- Deroy, Ophelia. *Sensory Blending: On Synaesthesia and Related Phenomena*. Oxford University Press, 2017.
- Dysphonia International* (formerly National Spasmodic Dysphonia Association).  
<https://dysphonia.org/research>. Accessed 3, Dec. 2022.
- Force, Chris, and Scott Morrow, editors. *Chromatic: The Crossroads of Color and Music*. Alarm Press, 2011.
- Foster, J. "The Process Art Movement." *YouTube*, uploaded by J Foster, 11 June 2013,  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z3ymteGwJ3c>.
- Frith, Chris. *Making up the Mind: How the Brain Creates Our Mental World*. Wiley, 2013.
- Georgetown University Medical Center. "Brain Processes Sight and Sound in Same Manner." *ScienceDaily*, 18 Apr. 2018.  
<https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2018/04/180418144725.htm>
- Goman, C. K. (2022, June 7). Why your CEO needs a vocal coach. *Forbes*. Retrieved April 8, 2023, from <https://www.forbes.com/sites/carolkinseygoman/2022/06/06/why-your-ceo-needs-a-vocal-coach/?sh=4dede87e7ffe>
- Gross, Jessica, interviewee. "From upspeak to vocal fry: Are we 'policing' young women's voices?" *Fresh Air*, 23 Jul. 2015. Retrieved December 3, 2022, from <https://www.npr.org/2015/07/23/425608745/from-uptalk-to-vocal-fry-are-we-policing-young-womens-voices>.

- Hesse, Eva, et al. *Eva Hesse, Sculpture: Published in Conjunction with the Exhibition Eva Hesse: Sculpture*. Organized by the Jewish Museum and Presented from May 12 to September 17, 2006. Jewish Museum, 2006.
- Hunter, Eric J., Kristine Tanner, and Marshall E. Smith. "Gender Differences Affecting Vocal Health of Women in Vocally Demanding Careers." *Logopedics Phoniatrics Vocology*, vol. 36, no. 3, 2011, pp. 128–136. <https://doi.org/10.3109/14015439.2011.587447>.
- Hyde, Lewis. "Two Accidents Reflections on Chance and Creativity." *The Kenyon Review*, vol. 18, no. 3/4, summer–autumn 1996, pp. 19–35. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/4337393>.
- Kandel, Eric R. *Reductionism in Art and Brain Science: Bridging the Two Cultures*. Columbia University Press, 2018.
- Kandinsky, Wassily. *Sounds*. Translated by Emily R. Napier. Yale University Press, 1981.
- Kandinsky, Wassily. Golffing, F. *Concerning the Spiritual in Art, and Painting in Particular*. Translated by Michael Sadleir. Wittenborn, 1970.
- Kosovske, Yonit, director and producer. *A Bow and a Brush*. Written by Ingrid Matthews. WAVE~LINKS, 2020.
- Martin, Agnes. "Beauty is the Mystery of Life." ARTBOOK.COM and D.A.P. / Distributed Art Publishers, 1989. Retrieved December 3, 2022, from <https://www.artbook.com/blog-excerpt-agnes-martin-beauty-is-the-mystery-of-life.html>.
- Martin, Agnes. "Agnes Martin Quotes." *BrainyQuote*, n.d. Retrieved December 3, 2022, from <https://www.brainyquote.com/authors/agnes-martin-quotes>.
- Martin, Agnes. "The value of art is in the observer." *Quote Master*, n.d. Retrieved December 3, 2022, from <https://www.quotemaster.org/q0373a758f8014760e478af20055b0292>.
- Noë, A. *Action in perception*. MIT Press, 2006.
- Odegaard, Brian, and Ladan Shams. "The Brain's Tendency to Bind Audiovisual Signals Is Stable but Not General." *Psychological Science*, vol. 27, no. 4, 2016, pp. 583–591. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0956797616628860>.
- Osborne, Richard, and Dan Sturgis. Turner, N. *Art Theory for Beginners*. Zidane Press, 2009.
- Pallasmaa, Juhani. *The Eyes of the Skin: Architecture and the Senses*. Wiley, 2019.
- Parkin, Tim. "Thomas Joshua Cooper: An Interview." *On Landscape*, 13 Mar. 2017. <https://www.onlandscape.co.uk/2017/03/thomas-joshua-cooper/>.

- Prendergast, Mark. *The Ambient Century: From Mahler to Moby—The Evolution of Sound in the Electronic Age*. Bloomsbury, 2003.
- Romeo, Nick. “This Amazing Machine Lets You ‘Paint’ Mozart’s Music.” *The Daily Beast*, 13 Apr. 2017. Retrieved December 3, 2022, from <https://www.thedailybeast.com/this-amazing-machine-lets-you-paint-mozarts-music>.
- Scientific American catalogue. (1884). *Scientific American*, 51(23), 218–218. <https://doi.org/10.1038/scientificamerican12061884-363>.
- Scoates, Christopher. *Brian Eno: Visual Music*. Chronicle Books, 2019.
- Thomas, Doug. “How Are Visual Artists Indebted to Musicians?” *Interlude*, 30 Nov. 2020, <https://interlude.hk/when-the-eye-meets-the-ear-how-are-intricate-music-concepts-represented-in-visual-arts/>.
- U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. “Speech-Language Pathologists” *Occupational Outlook Handbook*. 28 Sept. 2022. Retrieved April 2, 2023, from <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/speech-language-pathologists.htm>.
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, National Institute of Deafness and Other Communication Disorders. “Spasmodic Dysphonia.” (n.d.). Retrieved April 2, 2023, from <https://www.nidcd.nih.gov/health/spasmodic-dysphonia>.
- Zhmud', Leonid. *Pythagoras and the Early Pythagoreans*. Translated by Kevin Windle and Rosh Ireland. 1<sup>st</sup> ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

ARTIST STATEMENT

## Artist Statement

From the time of my earliest memories, I've been compelled to create art and music, and the two expressions have always been intertwined. Time evaporates when I'm immersed in the act of creating art and no other work serves to mesmerize me in this way. As a swing jazz guitarist with chromesthesia, the music I hear and play is accompanied by dancing lights of color that flash across my field of vision. Accordingly, I seek to recreate music-like happenings in my abstractions: a conceptual expression similarly explored by artists of personal influence, such as Nam June Paik, Joan Jonas, and Laurie Anderson, as well as earlier conveyors of musical imagery including Piet Mondrian, Wassily Kandinsky, and Paul Klee.

When playing music, my improvisational approach is to weave together theoretical ideas with visual guides as superimposed across my fretboard in maps of note patterns. They are quick, visual echoes that feel like pops of magic from some unknown source. In my most recent series of abstract paintings ("Sweet Nothings," "Incision," "Shellac Songs," "Embedded," and "Sound Wave Forms") I aim to communicate this relationship between audio and visual perceptions. My current "Synthetic Wave Form" series comprises moving-artworks involving the digital manipulations of my encaustic wax and oil paintings. The onward layering of photography, re-composing, animating, and projecting/screening seem to stretch my visual creations closer to an audio reference, as they share a more similar format and processing of sound recordings and essentially move, pulsate, and flow and can therefore be perceived more like how we experience sound waves (whether organized into "music" or not).

Further reflecting on my personal connection between image and sound through the abstraction process, in jazz improvisation, one either holds predictably within the key center and melodic interplay or allows for the lead line to stray beyond the expected framework. Note by note, each musical decision coalesces into one complete form in its framework of bars, the way each touch of pigment builds a painting. In an exploration toward mimicking my experience of jazz improvisation in visual art, I allow every artistic choice to delicately balance between either intent: to reformulate, or passive yielding: to the existing context. The decision to submit or take control influences how each stone-shaped passageway relates in its context.

APPENDIX B

THESIS EXHIBITION PHOTOS



Figure 1. *Coda Peripheral* exhibition title wall, *Sound Extension* encaustic mixed media sculptural triptych painting, and *ADSD Voice Cycle* ceramic mixed media installation. 2023.



Figure 2. *ADSD Voice Cycle* ceramic installation. 2023.



Figure 3. *(Partial) ADSD Voice Cycle; Spasmodic, Post-Injection*, ceramic installation. 2023.



Figure 4. *Sound Extension* encaustic mixed media sculptural triptych painting. 2023.



Figure 5. (*Detail*) *Sound Extension* encaustic mixed media sculptural triptych painting. 2023.



Figure 6. *12-Bar, Minor Key* 12-piece encaustic mixed media paintings as grid installation. 2023.



Figure 7. (Detail) *12-Bar, Minor Key* 12-piece encaustic mixed media paintings as grid installation. 2023.



Figure 8. *12-Bar, Minor Key* 12-piece encaustic mixed media paintings as grid installation, *Perceptual Network Coiling* instrument stings installation, and *La Mer* encaustic mixed media triptych painting. 2023.



Figure 9. *Perceptual Network Coiling instrument stings installation. 2023.*



Figure 10. *(Detail) Perceptual Network Coiling* instrument stings installation. 2023.



Figure 11. *La Mer* encaustic mixed media triptych painting, *Perceptual Network Coiling* instrument stings installation, and *ABA Chord Chart with Coda* 17-piece encaustic mixed media paintings as grid installation. 2023.



Figure 12. *La Mer* encaustic mixed media triptych painting. 2023.



Figure 13. (Detail) *La Mer* encaustic mixed media triptych painting. 2023.



Figure 14. *ABA Chord Chart with Coda* 17-piece encaustic mixed media paintings as grid installation. 2023.



Figure 15. (Detail) *ABA Chord Chart with Coda* 17-piece encaustic mixed media paintings as grid installation. 2023.



Figure 16. (Detail) *ABA Chord Chart with Coda* 17-piece encaustic mixed media paintings as grid installation. 2023.



Figure 17. *Coda Peripheral* exhibition dual-galleries, *Sound Extension* encaustic mixed media sculptural triptych painting, *Sound Cradle VII (Night)* encaustic mixed media painting, *Sound Cradle IV* encaustic mixed media painting, and *Sound Cradle VIII (Day)* encaustic mixed media painting. 2023.



Figure 18. *Sound Extension* encaustic mixed media sculptural triptych painting, *Sound Cradle VII (Night)* encaustic mixed media painting, *Sound Cradle IV* encaustic mixed media painting, and *Sound Cradle VIII (Day)* encaustic mixed media painting. 2023.



Figure 19. *Sound Cradle IV* encaustic mixed media painting. 2023.



Figure 20. *Sound Cradle II* watercolor, graphite, and resin painting, *Sound Cradle I*, watercolor and graphite painting (framed), *Sound Cradle III* watercolor, graphite, and resin painting, and *(Partial) Beyond the SEE* 6-piece digital tablets playing motion art and sound in installation. 2023.



Figure 21. *Sound Cradle II* watercolor, graphite, and resin painting, *Sound Cradle I*, watercolor and graphite painting (framed), and *Sound Cradle III* watercolor, graphite, and resin painting. 2023.



Figure 22. *Sound Cradle II* watercolor, graphite, and resin painting. 2023.



Figure 23. *Sound Cradle V* encaustic mixed media painting. 2023.



Figure 24. *Sound Cradle II* watercolor, graphite, and resin painting, *Sound Cradle I*, watercolor and graphite painting (framed), *Sound Cradle III* watercolor, graphite, and resin painting, and *(Partial) Beyond the SEE* 6-piece digital tablets playing motion art and sound installation. 2023.



Figure 25. (Partial) *Beyond the SEE* 6-piece digital tablets playing motion art and sound installation. 2023.



Figure 26. (Partial) *Beyond the SEE* 6-piece digital tablets playing motion art and sound installation. 2023.