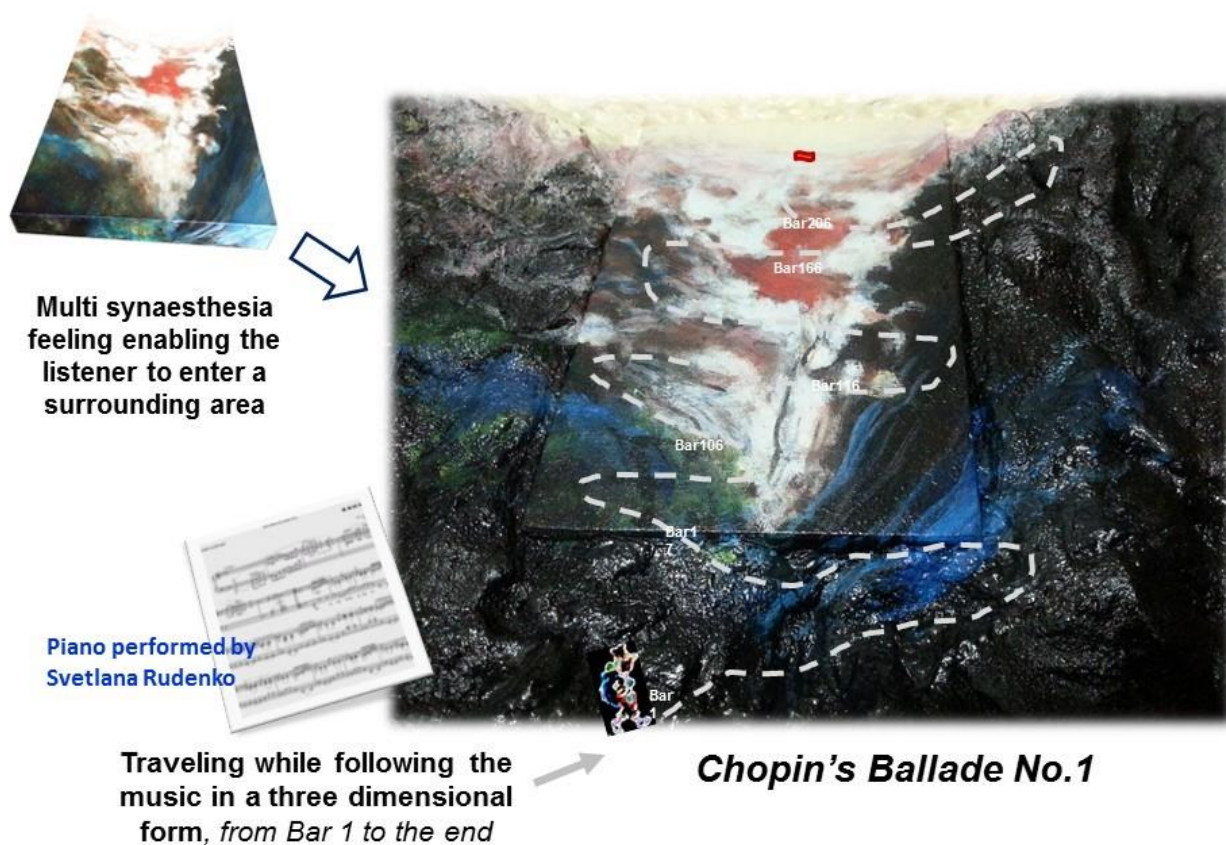


Art on Classical Music by artists-synaesthetes, Interviews 2018

Ninghui Xiong , artist synaesthete, describes his experience on creating Art visualisation on Chopin Ballad N 1: “ As an artist, I use my synaesthetic experiences to visualize classical music. For me, the painting is representing an environment, a music- space synaesthesia hyperstructure.” Ninghui has “Music/Sound \Leftrightarrow Colour and Shape, Taste, Smell, Kinetic, Touch” types of synaesthesia, he plays violin in his free time. He provided exact diagram of visualisation: the shape of melody line of the main subject and colours in reaction of changing harmonies.



12th ASA Conference
Harvard University Oct.2017

Ninghui XIONG, Art Installation, May 2017

Fig. 1 Ninghui Xiong, shape and colour Art visualisation of musical texture in Ballade N1, performance SR, piano

Marcia Smillac, Dr of Literature, synaesthete artist, shares experience on creating *Ravel in Pink* , : “I took the images because the bending of the black lines made me feel ecstatic along with the morphing shapes in pink and white. i don’t recall hearing sound at the time i took them, but later, when i looked at the still prints i heard music that sounded like ravel’s piece.” (Interview, Rudenko, [www.svetlana-rudenko](http://www.svetlana-rudenko.com), 2018)

Marcia describes her synaesthesia types as “i have many types but the strongest form is image to sound and sound to image. i also tend to personify everything i look at ... in “bended knee,” i see a woman bending which ushers in the change in the music”



Fig. 2 Marcia Smillac, Ravel in Pink, performance by Martha Argerich, piano

<http://www.marciasmilack.com>

“I photograph reflections on the surface of moving water... I simply wait as I watch the tableau of images float by on the surface of the sea, or the river.

I describe exactly what happens at 51 seconds, just at the moment after you see “Bended Knee”...I had recently returned from a summer trip to Italy and was looking at a series of reflection photographs I had taken on the surface of a canal in Venice. I

had turned on the radio in a different room so while I was looking the sound on the radio wafted under the door only I wasn't conscious of it until all of a sudden I had the most unusual sensation: the music elicited by my images (in my mind) exactly matched the sound I heard on the radio, just as the music on the radio elicited the images I was looking at. My synaesthesia was happening in two different directions at the same time. Researchers have since explained that is because I have a rare form of synesthesia called "Bi-directional" which means I hear with my eyes and see with my ears. What was new is that I had never experienced those two forms simultaneously. It was uncanny and ecstatic. Even more remarkable was finding out that Maurice Ravel who had written the music was also a bi-directional synaesthete. The musical composition I used in the video, written by Maurice Ravel, is titled "Piano concerto in G - II Adagio assai.

Geri Hanh, artist synaesthete, describes her synaesthesia types as: "I see what I hear. The timbre has a shape, texture and a colour, it moves with the direction of pitch in a landscape of time from left to right. All letters and numbers are also in colour, and I taste what I see like mouth feel, not like cinnamon or vanilla – more like eating sculpture. When people speak, I see it like a ticker tape below their chins. I do not see the timbre of their voices, but rather the colour of the words they say based on how it is spelled. I rarely make any effort to draw music that includes voices saying words. It just gets too confusing." Geri does not read music or play music instrument.

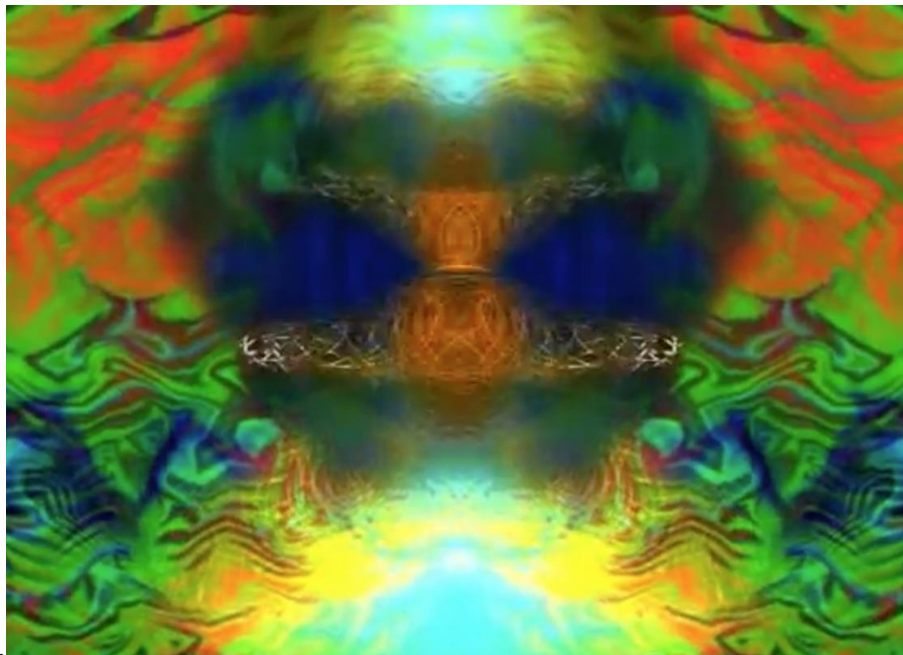


Fig. 3 Geri Hanh, Alfred Schnittke, Symphony No. 1: Senza Tempo-Moderato, Gennady Rozhdestvensky, conductor

“It represents strongly the first 40 seconds but is embellished up through 1 minute 45 seconds of this recording. I was listening to this on YouTube during a severe snow storm. It was extremely windy and chaotic out of doors with ice balls mixed with the snow pelting the glass window barely two feet from my shoulder/ ear. My speakers are in various places in my art studio, so his music was a surround sound experience. The brash chaotic first minute and a half seemed to describe the weather just beyond my window and I could even hear the ice balls in the music at about 1 minute 24 seconds. Because his work changes so dramatically from section to section, and because I can only remember the texture I see/hear in 10 to 15 second units, I chose to replay the first minute and a half several times till I felt I captured on my computer drawing pad the wonderful chaos of his various timbres. “

Audio –visual digital animation by synaesthete Lidell Simpson

Lidell Simpson, Operations Analyst Information Technology Department, got his first degree in Biological Science. He created *Dancing Lights*, audio visual digital synaesthetic animation, for the *IV Congress of Synaesthesia, Art and Science, Alcala*



la Real, 2015.

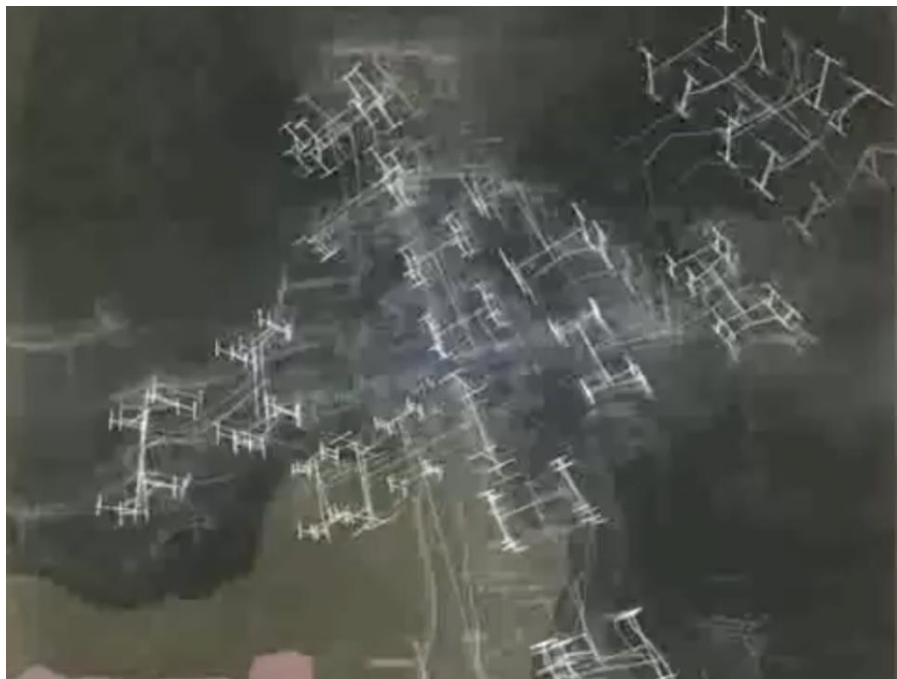


Fig. 4 Lidell Simpson – Dancing Lights. Played on my Yamaha DJX II Keyboard. It has many of my synaesthetic sounds I picked up from my surroundings.

<https://youtu.be/hVKXpezAfm>

Lidell Simpson - This one is a good representation of the sounds I hear when I observe this "Pulse"

<https://youtu.be/6kN5SA8nlkc>

Simpson describes his experience as "I have been deaf all my life and I like to say that I have never known silence. I learned at an early age that hearing people are not hearing what I hear. I called it "Photonic Hearing" before I learned the word "Synaesthesia" (Interviews, Rudenko, 2018)

He continues on how nature compensated the loss of one sense by activating others:

I remember my early childhood before I was 5 hearing neon lights blinking, hearing the stars twinkling. It is very important for it to be in sync to maintain my orientation in the world around me. Being in a very noisy environment can be very disorienting resulting in a sensory overload. My brain can only process so much sensory information without getting all jumbled up (Interviews, Rudenko, 2018)

Simpson describes his synaesthesia as: "My synaesthesia is primarily sound based. Everything I see, touch, taste, smell, even my emotion gets translated into sounds. I hear equal clarity other things that are not "sonic"... Photonic Hearing to me is the result of light. My eyes are another pair of "eardrums" to me. Every colour "emits" a tone. Intensity, brightness, position all influence the "tonal" qualities of these emissions. Driving at night for example, I see a radio tower miles ahead in the distance. On the towers are a series of lights, red or white (each colour has its own "note", "tone" or "Key" if you will). I hear the blinking of the lights and its intensity increases as I approach. Now add the reflectors along the side of the road. Every one of them I see emits its "ping", and the center striping of the road emits its own sound. Every car headlight has its tune. The tonal quality changes with respect to relative position, like the Doppler Effect. Even in the daytime I hear the sky, the trees, anything that eyes perceive emits sound. "**Touch, the science of the sense that makes us human.**"(Linden, 2015), artist **Carol Steen: coloured visual projection of pain. Mirror-touch synaesthesia.**

Professor of neuroscience quotes Thomas Fuller, 1732: “Seeing’s believing, but feeling’s the truth. (Linden, 2016). He describes ‘touch’ and skin as a “social organ”, through which humans interact with each other, feel empathy, like or rejection and their place in the physical world. Some people, synaesthetes can transfer their tactile experience or pain into visual image and colours.



Fig. 5 Carol Steen's painting Full View is an image of what she perceives when her acupuncturist removes the needles at the end of a session. Photo: Carol Steen

Jacoba Urist explains artist experience: “For most people, a bad toothache feels like a persistent throb or a sharp pain. But without a dentist visit, there’s no way to tell whether it warrants a root canal. A synaesthete, however, might wake up one morning and see the tooth glowing orange. For Manhattan-based artist and co-founder of the American Synaesthesia Association Carol Steen, physical discomfort manifests as colour (usually, a bright chrome orange). And in Steen’s case, much to her dentist’s surprise, she was able to diagnose a dying nerve before any clinical signs of tooth damage.” (Urist, 2016)

Carol describes her types of synaesthesia as “coloured graphemes including punctuation glyphs; coloured, shaped, moving sounds; coloured smell; some coloured tastes; coloured touch; coloured pain; empath - but what I experience is not quite the same as mirror touch. I have experienced a few other forms of synaesthesia but they haven't happened often enough for me to claim I have them - I'm waiting. One of these is coloured auras.”

Urist continues: “After all, synaesthetes are able to express seemingly unrelated concepts in a variety of mediums: numbers *with* personalities, colours *with* pain, moving shapes *with* sound. And unlike their colleagues, synaesthetic artists — those who use their neurological trait as a foundation of their practice — respond intuitively to what Steen calls the “multimedia-like stimuli” going on around them. An “ordinary” painter either captures a landscape before her or something she imagines. A synaesthetic one paints what she actually visualizes when hearing a specific concerto” (Urist, 2016)

Carol Steen’s mix of colours in following Art work on music is created by mixing sounds. To get right emotional colour, in her mind she had to mix two songs: “Here are two paintings to a classical piece *Las Cuatro Estaciones Porteñas Primavera*...They were done in 2013, oil on paper, about 12 by 12 inches, and 16 x 22 inches. The painting *River Man Gryphon Trio* has a hint of the colours from a song by Nick Drake in it, the brighter reds and oranges were added later to a piece that needed warmth. It is the first time I ever mixed two songs together and I really liked what happened. The other painting is pure Spring Tango.”



Fig. 6 Synaesthete artist Carol Steen's mix of two songs: Porteñas Primavera by Piazzolla and River Man by Gryphon Trio, song by Nick Drake

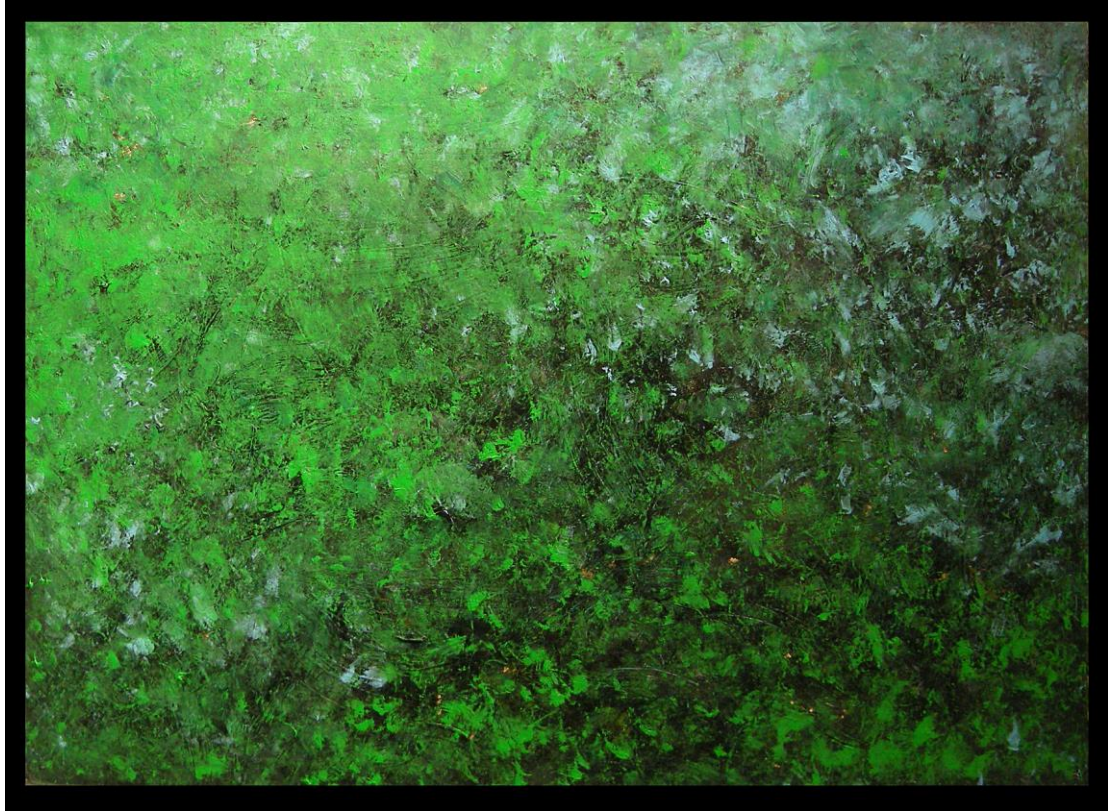


Fig. 7 Synaesthete artist Carol Steen, Spring Tango