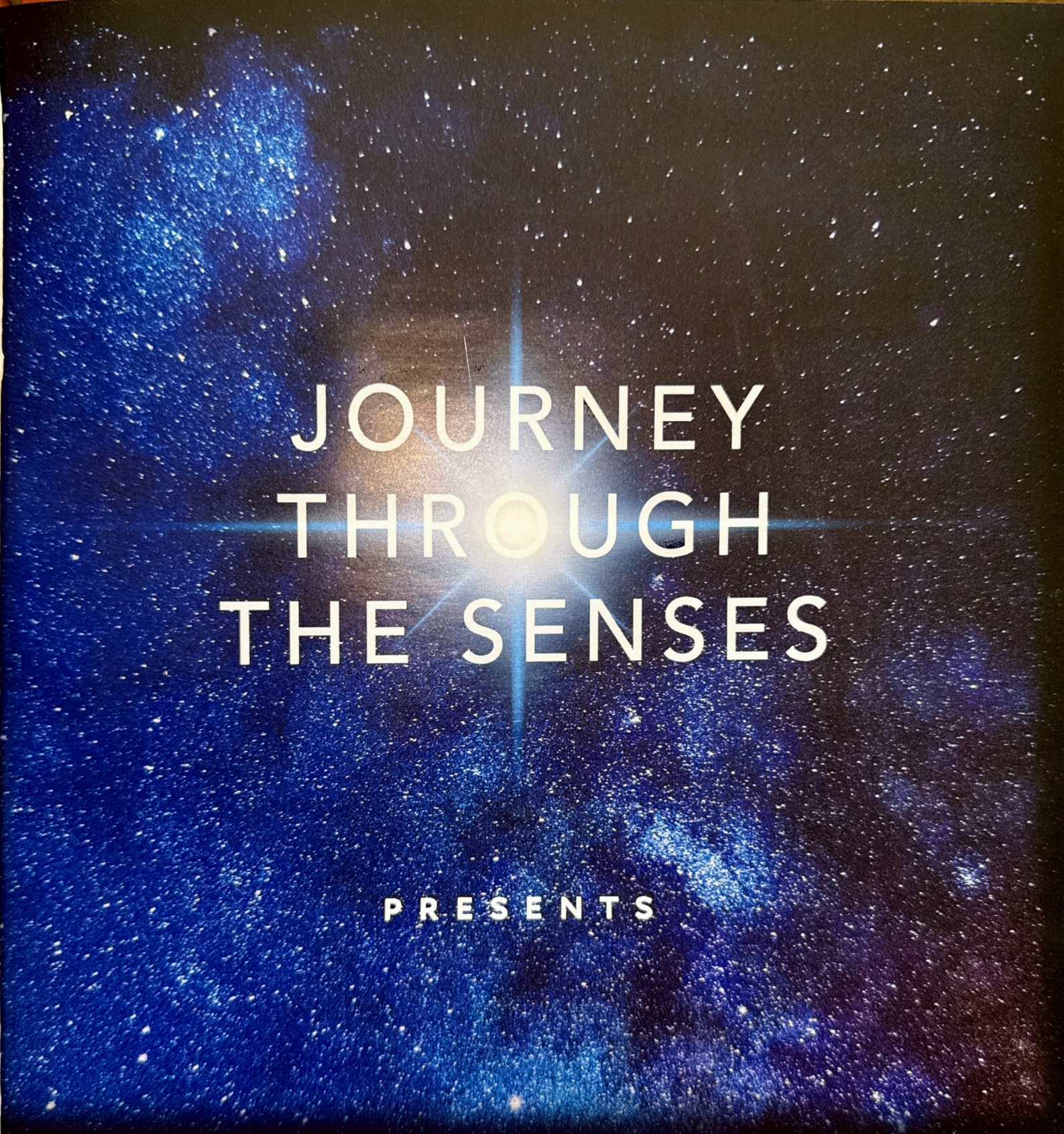


MARINA WITTEMAN

CATALOGUE

JOURNEY
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JOURNEY THROUGH THE SENSES

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JOURNEY THROUGH THE SENSES

Journey Through The Senses is an international nonprofit 501 (c) (3) organization working in alliance with universities, other nonprofit organizations and corporations worldwide to build a greater understanding and appreciation for neurodiversity, those who are neurodiverse, and the vast capabilities of our sensory perception. JTTS creates community and global engagement through events and collaborations which are widely cross-cultural and supported by our broad international network of members whose skills and insights cut across numerous artistic and scientific disciplines. Through the lens of science, the arts, new technology, and mental health research, our hands-on workshops, performances, concerts and exhibitions aim to welcome the public on a journey which is not only educational and personally meaningful, but also inspires awe and wonder for the human mind.

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MARINA WITTEMANN. LIVING COLOUR OF SYNAESTHESIA

Colour is behavior. In today's world, human adaptability and mental capacity make chromatic vision practically redundant or, at least, effortlessly ignorable. Those bright splashes outdoors, flamboyant strains and increments in jewelry and apparel, dyed, tinted and mascaraed visages, branded palettes and hand-picked hues in mass-produced packaging and chain stores' design, pigmentation disarray in urban environments, sleeky pristineness or psychedelic chaos in CGI-recreated worlds and coloration disorder in thoroughly inhabited dwellings are all basically clashed *after-effects* of either fossilised and meaningless mundanities or casual and near-random *chromatic choices*. Paradoxically, evolution and civilization have reduced our chromatic scope and acuity to flat surfaces and neat contours with colour cognitively disowned and pragmatically orphaned. Except for very rare occasions of fire exits and mind-your-head directions (whose functions are essentially contrast-, not colour-based), humans, or at least their self-proclaimed high-tech vanguard, seem to have imperceptibly transformed into a cohort of rainbow-insensitive downward-looking bipeds or, in some better versions, bewildered chameleons.



The negligence, laxity or arbitrariness of our chromatic preferences signals a long-haul struggle.



Colour is what meets and embraces you at first glance in Marina Wittemann's artworks. If there is natural inosculation of colour and affect, Marina's artistic ingenuity is its livid instantiation. Like any synaesthete who experiences additional colour sensations ("chromatic concurrents"), the artist needs no explanation about how hues, tints and tinges are inextricably ingrained in blending emotions, dazzling penchants and noetic satiation. Nothing necessitates the answers to what for, when and how colours should reciprocally interplay, absorb and retribute one another. In his artistic manifesto, Kandinsky stated that "colour is a means of exerting a direct influence upon the soul. Colour is the keyboard. The eye is the hammer. The soul is the piano with its many strings. The artist is the hand that purposely sets the soul vibrating by means of this or that key. Thus it is clear that the harmony of colours can only be based upon the principle of purposefully touching the human soul." But what if your "soul" is independently capable of generating colour? What if your world comes into being through colour, and colour, as in Marina's creative realm, has cradling pervasiveness?



Studied for more than two centuries, synaesthesia has been scientifically evidenced to be a genuine neurobiological phenomenon. For the 4% of people who have it, synaesthesia makes their senses functionally fused. Music may be relished alongside envel-

oping evocations of colourful nebulas and veils. Letters, numbers weekdays and months may come on stage of the mind as coloured projections. People's names, voices and personalities may ooze tinted auric halos. Experiencing pain, orgasm and emotions may be intricately imbued with ineffable iridescence. Colours are synaesthetic elicitations in more than a half of all synaesthetes. In most cases, synaesthesia runs in families from generation to generation being mostly a female heirloom (though some researchers insist on a draw). Synaesthesia does not alter its subjective qualities either through deliberate endeavor or lifetime's perturbations. Congenital synaesthetes are not inborn artists, and many of them do not choose this uneasy path, but with revealed enhanced visual imagination, a fervour for expressive means and creativity, upon a scientific scrutiny they do prove to avail a faintly outlined vocation. There is also a rhyme and reason to synaesthesia's exuberant cognitive-sensory couplings, as most of what triggers synaesthesia — music, letters, calendar — are social conventions. It is as if Nature with its patterned physicality nourishes the symbolic circulatory system of Culture. And this may be a tentative explanation why synaesthesia is intertwined with nuanced meaning and affect.

With all her uniquely individualised synaesthetic attunements, Marina Wittemann's artmaking is no less than a laborious search for new forms of living embodiment of colour. From haptic allure and shapely mischief to spacious expansion and biomorphic



semblance, the artist's creative venture fuelled by a commitment to building up an immersion effect of a very special kind. If, at large, meaning in the living is an ever-new manner of ordering its self-ambiguity, then *Art is an ultimate statement*. The living recognises the living through mutually adjusting (to) its self-spontaneity. This is the way powerful art seems to come about – it seems to funnel human beings' excessive spontaneity to symbolic semi-coded, open-ended, perplexing messages. If you stretch your attention span and linger when encountering Marina Wittemann's yet-to-be-defined "wall objects," you are most certain to get this arresting sway. The viewer not only gets engulfed in radiating gradient chromatic vibes, their senses burst out germinating an ambiguous urge to indulge in the gustily tactile, sensuously furrowed, and ultimately euphoric sculptured canvases. Defying rationality, biomorphic immersion in Marina's colour-breathing art leaves your senses stirred, illumed and galvanised.

Colours are light's suffering and joy (Goethe). Fleshing out living embodiments of colour entails a widest array of both. And if you cherish a surging nerve of synaesthesia, as Marina Wittemann does, you need no theory for it. You feel, act and live it.

Anton Dorso
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