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PAINTING MUSIC

Creating a new performance to explore the relation between music and painting.

Written reflection within degree project

The sounding part consists of the following recording:

Painting Music - Ángel Belda Amorós
Abstract

This work seeks to explore the relationship between two arts: music and painting. The aim of this thesis is the creation and execution of an interdisciplinary performance in which music and painting dialogue live, "Painting music", to investigate how both arts relate and influence each other when they are part of a single artistic act and how performers and audience perceive this relationship. To do so, we will investigate interdisciplinary performances, synesthesia (union of perceptions) and the different ways in which painting and music can relate to each other.

Keywords: Interdisciplinary art. Synesthesia. Music. Colour.
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1.- Introduction

Music and painting are two of my great passions. Both have the ability to move us, which for me is the ultimate goal of art and my task as an artist: to study deeply the work of a composer, to be able to move and enrich the lives of others, giving them a deeper meaning.

I have always felt a great attraction for this profound quality of the arts to "move" and, especially, a great predilection and interest for performances in which arts "work" together, in an interdisciplinary way.

Some of these artistic relationships are common and are part of our artistic heritage, such as ballet and opera, where in a single "artistic act", and with a specific name: "opera" or "ballet", we refer to a union of the arts complex and complete, with which they create a single spectacle. In them we find music, dance, color -through lighting, scenography and costumes-, architecture -in the design of the scenic space-, fashion and sometimes, if the work demands it, even circus, sculpture, etc.

On the other hand, there is no tradition, and therefore no specific name, for performances that combine other types of arts and that do not yet have an established tradition.

For this reason, with the interest to explore the union between arts and the way they are related, and because of a personal interest as a performer to know how the sensations would be and at how they would affect my performance in a live creation show with other artists, I thought of creating a music and painting show, through which to explore the sensations and relationships.

We will reflect on the interdisciplinary arts, to know the background and present some examples of artists working in Interdisciplinarity. We will investigate on synesthesia, that will be offered through a live show in which it is intended that the sound is reflected in colours, shapes and strokes and that the colour, shapes and strokes, in turn, influence the sound in a continuous loop of synesthetic feedback.

Jörg Jewanski and cols 2020 define synesthesia as an unusual form of experiencing the world in which music may elicit colours, numbers may be visualized as a line running through space, and words may have tastes. The experiences tend

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to be automatic and consistent over time. The condition is linked to structural and functional differences in the brain. We know throughout history, influenced musicians and painters such as Kandinsky, Scriabin or Korsakov in the creation of their works.

With our show we will try to emulate this sensation of synesthesia, in an intimate relationship that will be established between the artists.

The main purpose of this thesis is to explore and create a live performance of music and painting. To achieve this, we will create the context in which music and painting will be related within our performance and we will collect feedback from artists and the audience. That will allow us to evaluate the perceptions and sensations experienced throughout the show.

2.- Methodology

This project aims to create and explore a live performance of music and painting.

For this purpose:

- We have conducted a prior research for literature in PubMed and Google, with the keywords in MeSH terms: "interdisciplinary performances", "interdisciplinary music", "painting and music", "synesthesia", "synesthesia sound", "synesthesia music", "synesthesia music colour", "synesthesia, music, taste".

- In order to create the project "Painting Music", we decided to:

  - number of and specific artists,
  - music we will use,
  - the artistic proposal for the visual artist and the materials we will need,
  - the location of the artists on the stage,
  - our possible sponsors,
  - the appropriate spaces to carry out the performance, etc...
  - how music and painting will be related during the performance.
- We have created a monthly diary that collects the steps we followed for the creation of this interdisciplinary project.

-In order to collect specific data on the artistic process and on the sensations generated, we created a survey for the performers and another for the audience, which will be evaluated with numerical values from 0 to 10, 0 being the minimum and 10 the maximum value.

The questions that were posed to the artists are:

1.- Rate your level of interest in “Painting Music”.
2.- Why were you interested?
3.- Rate your level of connection with your music/painting in a regular concert/work situation.
4.- Rate your level of connection with your music/painting during “Painting Music”.
5.- Rate the connection you had with the music/painting during the performance.
6.- Rate how your interpretation was influenced by music/painting during the performance.
7.- What influence did the music/painting have on your work?
8.- Can you appreciate the influence of the two arts in the finished painting?
9.- What level of influence did the music have on the colours?
10.- What level of influence did the music have on the shapes?
11.- How satisfied were you with the project?

The questions posed to the public were:

1.- Rate how much were you interested in this performance (“Painting Music”).
2.- Why?
3.- Rate your overall level of attention/concentration when listening to a live concert.
4.- Rate your overall level of attention/concentration during the Painting Music performance.
5.- During the performance, on which of the two arts did you focus your attention the most?
6.- During the performance I felt that there was a connection between the two arts.
7.- During the performance I felt that there was a connection between the artists.
8.- During the performance I felt that there was a connection between colors and music.
9.- During the performance I felt that there was an influence between shapes and music.
10.- During the performance I felt that artists influenced each other.
11.- During the performance I felt that final result had a coherence with what I had experienced.
12.- The project aroused my interest in interdisciplinary projects.
13.- How satisfied were you with the performance?

- We collected and analyzed the results of the performance and will present some final conclusions form what we have gathered from this experience.

3.- Discussion

3.1.- Interdisciplinary performances

Our performance "Painting music" aims to be an interdisciplinary performance between music and painting.

We found no relevant results in PubMed during the search for "Interdisciplinary performances" and "Interdisciplinary music". The search engine result for these words were 0.

We use the term Interdisciplinary -although other terms such as pluridisciplinary, multidisciplinary or transdisciplinary could also be used-, to refer to that which is related to more than one branch of knowledge, be it a product, result, methodology or procedure.

The term is used in all creative activities, i.e. it also refers to the science. In many instances it is considered to be a scientific procedure.

In arts field, we use the term "interdisciplinary" to define shows that blend different scenic languages such as theater, dance, audiovisual, music, sculpture and others. These performances usually go beyond the barriers of specific genres. Due to their creative nature, in which none are prioritized over the other, they are called interdisciplinary.
When we speak of something "interdisciplinary", we speak of an interdisciplinary result, which combines different professional or of a procedure, which produces a result that is not necessarily interdisciplinary.

Some artists have used the influence of other disciplines in their work although that does not always result in an interdisciplinary work.

Since the end of the 19th century we have found artistic references that inspire us, and stand out in the field of interdisciplinarity. Although there are many examples of this, we would like to mention some of them that seem to us especially memorable for their singularity, their contributions in this field or their connection with the project.

Worthy of a mention is Oskar Schlemmer, German painter, sculptor and designer related to the Bauhaus School, who in his most famous creation, *Triadisches Ballett* (1922) made actors appear dressed as geometric figures, turning them into living sculptures, as part of the stage.

We find other examples of interdisciplinarity in the collaboration of John Cage and Merce Cunningham in Un jour ou deux, where Cunningham choreographed John Cage's music, and in the hypnotic *Einstein on the beach*, which in 1976 presented
what was the first collaboration between Philip Glass (lyrics and music), Robert Wilson (production and set design) and Lucinda Childs (choreography).\(^2\)

The piece was classified as an opera, although it did not respect the conventions of the genre as there was not plot, narrative coherence or characters. It is scenically articulated around certain recurring visual motifs, abstract choreographies and unclear scenes that constantly refer to metaphors on the theory of relativity with lighting devices, thus giving light an essential protagonism in the scenography (currently it can be seen openly on Youtube in the 2014 Théâtre du Châtelet's production, with the musical direction of conducted by Michael Riesman).\(^3\)

*Einstein on the Beach*

The composer Heiner Goebbels also deserves special mention for the diversity and quantity of his interdisciplinary works, which can be found in detail on his website. In his performative installations he combines his compositions with light, sound and multimedia content, as he does in *Stifters Dinge*, or with the ballet, as in *Tränen des Vatersland*, which he subtitles *Concert for dancers*.


\(^3\)Helen Gouzman, “Einstein on the Beach - Knee Play 1” video, 32’56” accessed June 27, 2021 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6XqEwCTXHZU&t=28s.
Goebbels (Stifters Dinge)

We also find worthy of mention performances by LRM Performance⁴, who define themselves as an interdisciplinary collective, that ignores the boundaries between artistic disciplines, their works being non-conceptual, non-narrative visual, auditory and live movement creations. And Kim Schonewille’s⁵ H2O project, in which live music, dance and film will meet in water.


In my country, Spain, it is worth mentioning the company *La fura dels baus*\(^6\) that, with an absolutely interdisciplinary approach since 1979, has combined all kinds of artistic disciplines with an approach that continues to reinvent itself every show.

They are capable of creating large format shows that involve thousands of people, such as the inauguration of the 1992 Barcelona Olympics, different avant-garde operatic performances, intimate theater projects with just a few characters, and all kinds of productions that combining light, colour, sound, acrobatics, fire, costumes and all other technology.

In a smaller format and intimately related to the project we intend to create; we would like to mention the festival *Quinze vint-i-dos. Diàlegs creatius entre disciplines artístiques* that has been taking place since 2018 in Manresa, having presented this year the fourth edition.\(^7\)

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The festival was born with the idea of offering creative dialogue between artists from different disciplines that happen for the first time live. Its uniqueness lies in the fact that there are no previous rehearsals for the artists, who sometimes have never met.

The dialogues offered by the festival until now are as follows:

- Bass and electric guitar music * dramatic interpretation of texts about change and mutation.
- Music (voice and piano) * acrobatic dance.
- Percussion * classical dance
- Music (voice and piano) * two-handed acrobatics.
- Jazz music * poetry * theater
- Classical music * electronics * dance
- Singer song writer * physical theater
- Percussion * classical dance * urban dance

In this show, as in “Painting music”, some previous conditions are agreed with the clear intention of creating a performance. This creation takes place live, so the importance lies in the experience, the now, in what happens in real time.

“Quinze vint-i-dos. Diàlegs creatius entre disciplines artístiques” is the closest show to “Painting music” in interdisciplinary terms. Although so far, painting has not been part of it in any of the dialogues offered.

In recent years a growing number of artists investigate and explore interdisciplinarity, joining their art to that of other colleagues, resulting in very interesting projects.
The artists who work with this approach must have very specific human characteristics that allow them to work together, on an equal basis with artists from other disciplines. Human and artistic generosity are essential.

Interdisciplinary work expands the perceptive and associative capacity, allowing us to creating, presenting new mental schemes. On the other hand, interdisciplinary work reinforces the elements that converge, and hearing and vision nourish each other.

Total works of art have been a constant throughout history and it did not begin with Wagner -for an exhaustive and complete analysis we recommend reading the third chapter of *The music of painting: Music, modernism and the visual arts form the romantics to John Cage* by Vergo⁸-. 

According to Duthie 2020⁹ the interaction between visual art and music has become an integral part of art theory and history. On a deeper level, there are also parallels between the terminology of music and visual arts, such as texture, balance, form, line, and harmony, which also share abstract qualities. For example, texture in visual art translates to the physical thickness and roughness of the medium, while texture in music refers to the audible activity of voices and the number of appearances and movements vertically notated along the staves.

In our research, we have not been able to find consistent examples of live interdisciplinary performances between painting and music.

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⁹ Amanda Catherine Duthie. "Do music and art influence one another? Measuring cross-modal similarities in music and art" (2013). Graduate Theses and Dissertations. [https://lib.dr.iastate.edu/etd/13163](https://lib.dr.iastate.edu/etd/13163)
3.2.- Synesthesia

Synesthesia is a neural phenomenon in which stimulation in one sensory or cognitive stream leads to associated experiences in a second, unstimulated stream. These activations occur involuntarily, automatically and consistently over time\(^\text{10}\). The term comes from two words in Greek etymology: sen-aesthesia (union of perceptions).

Synesthesia is involuntary and automatic, so it cannot be motivated or encouraged. But as an artistic phenomenon, and according to the meaning of its Greek etymology: sen-aesthesia (union of perceptions), it can be shown to the public.

In "Painting music" senses from two worlds are united: the world of sound and vision. In this way, both are influenced by the other. From this point of view, "Painting music" could also be classified as a synesthetic show.

Synesthesia (Greek, syn = together + aisthesis = perception) is the involuntary physical experience of a cross-modal association, the stimulation of one sensory modality reliably causes a perception in one or more different senses\(^\text{11}\).

In our performance there is a three-performer synesthetic relationship, working as one brain. In a live performance, music will be transformed into lines, colours and shapes. The colours will evoke a musical interpretation, which will be influenced by colours, shapes and textures of the visual artist.

In order to know the current status of the studies carried out in this field, we have made a literature review with the keywords in MeSH terms in the MEDLINE/PubMed database.

Searching for word "synesthesia" we obtained 791 results: 41 written between 1947 and 2000, and 751 between 2000-2020. We can confirm that it is a relatively modern phenomenon, which has quite considerably increased, especially between 2011 and present day. In this period PubMed refers to the publication of 523 articles, a boom

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which Jamie Ward also refers in his article Synesthesia\(^\text{12}\) published in volume 64 of the Annual Review of Psychology.

Searching "synesthesia sound" we obtained 111 results, and "synesthesia music", 65. From this 65, 36 refer to it very briefly and 29 deal directly with the synesthetic relationship between music and another sense.

With the searches "synesthesia music colour" we obtained 48 results, and with "synesthesia music taste", 8.

From this we can conclude that, although there is scientific evidence of synesthesia since 1812, when Georg Tobias Ludwig Sachs published the first medical dissertation on synesthesia\(^\text{13}\), scientific studies are relatively modern. In the field that concerns us - synesthetic relationship between painting and music - we only find 29 articles written between 1957-2020.

We have not found any scientific studies that report the experience of live creation in interdisciplinary shows or synesthetic relationships created in them.

The characteristics of synesthesia are:

It is **idiosyncratic** - synesthesia manifests itself in a personal way for the same stimulus. Thus, in grapheme-colour synesthesia, each individual perceives the same letter as having a specific color

Most types of synesthesia are **unidirectional**, a number may evoke a color, although the colour will not evoke the same number. However, cases of bi-directional synesthesia have been reported.\(^\text{14}\)

Synesthesia is **additive**; that is, it adds to the normal perception and does not replace or mask it.


Synesthesia is an **emotional experience**; the synesthete has the conviction that that perception is significant and real. Many synesthetes feel shocked when they discover that other people do not share the same form of perception.

One of its main features is that these sensations are completely **involuntary** in nature. This involuntary union can occur between all the senses: hearing, sight, taste, touch, smell and movement.

We present our show without knowing beforehand if the audience is synesthetic or not.

In the previously cited study entitled *Colours, flavors, numbers...: Synaesthesia in a Spanish sample*\(^{15}\), the analysis of the answers given by 803 participants suggests that 13.95% of the tested experiences some synaesthesia. The analysis of the relative frequencies shows that the most frequent modality is spatial sequence synaesthesia (44.6%). 33.9% see colours when listening to sounds and/or music, 25.9% associate colours to temporal concepts, 20.5% assign gender and personality to letters and numbers, 10.7% experience grapheme-colour synesthesia and 5.4% feel a specific taste when listening to words.

In this sense, it is interesting to include here the view of some specialists in the field, such as Drs. Bragança, Marques Fonseca and Caramelli, who in their article *Synesthesia and music perception*\(^{16}\) argue that mere musical perception is in itself synesthetic even in non-synesthetic people. For them this latent synesthesia (without explicit sensory manifestations) would be functional, aiding the construction of abstract associations between different perceptual fields. Musical meaning might be constructed largely by synesthetic processes, where the sensory associations from sound activate memories, images and emotions.

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3.3.- Introduction: how to approach music-painting relation

“Hear with your eyes, and see with your ears” - Charlie Parker.

For creating our show, we will study the different ways in which music and painting can be related, in order to fully understand the process, we want to carry out, and to decide the way in which we will relate them in our project “Painting music”.

Among the studies that focus on the twentieth century, the work of the composer Yves Bosseur (1998) on the relationship between music and painting stands out. In his book *Musique et arts plastiques, interactions au XXe siècle*\(^{17}\) he organizes the material into chapters whose titles reveal a certain classification of the different relationships between music and the visual arts.

The first three chapters are entitled "Sensory Correspondences," "Time/Space Interactions," and "Structural Equivalences." The fourth and fifth chapters evaluate the presence of one art in the other, such as the representation of music by visual artists, as well as the attitude of composers towards the visual arts. Cases that fall between these categories are grouped together in the sixth chapter.

Just looking at the index of the book, it becomes clear that it is impossible to classify this complex phenomenon according to these categories, and that we are faced with art forms that can hardly be classified in a single group of those mentioned above.

Although it is about music style and focused on the influences of jazz and blues in African American visual art, the book *The Hearing Eye: Jazz & Blues Influences in African American Visual Art* presents the different ways in which music and painting can be related through interviews and a very wide range of images\(^{18}\).

In the book different types of influences are collected, from transforming the work of a musician into images to record its importance, to painting with music letting the sound influence us freely. Ellen Banks tells us, using music as inspiration for painting using only its structure, not the music itself, thus avoiding the interpretation of a third subject (p. 287 of the book) and being able to determine the way they use space (in

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authors like Sam Middleton, Wadsworth Jarrell), or in their choice of texture (in Joe Overstreet, Ellen Banks), the colours and the shapes.

In her interesting article *On the Interrelationship between Music and Visual Art in the Twentieth and Twenty-first Centuries: A Possible Typology Derived from Cases Originated in Argentinean Artistic Field*19, Cintia Cristiá will focus our attention on the first phenomenon, particularly in the transformation from music to the visual arts and vice versa. She asks the questions: how does a drawing become a melody? What type of operation allows the passage from one material to the other?, the migration from one medium to the other, from one art to another seems to happen on five levels: emotional, material, morphological, textural and conceptual.

She defines the basics characteristics of "migration (in five levels) or convergence" as follow:

1. **Emotional level**: This is a first level of interchange of holistic nature. Painting a picture “letting oneself go” or trying to evoke the atmosphere of a piece of music while listening to it constitutes two examples. It is one of the most commonly employed levels in pedagogical experiences that aim at developing artistic and perceptual awareness.

2. **Material level**: It is based on the correspondence or association of pairs of constitutive elements and/or analogous parameters. They can be previously established or spontaneously drawn, theoretically justified or arbitrary. Some pairs of elements usually associated include colour and pitch (i.e., The higher the sound the lighter the colour), colour and timbre (i.e., yellow can be used to represent the sound of a trumpet), or graphical shape and sound configuration, as in Kandinsky’s correspondence between a point and a single percussive sound.

3. **Morphological level**: It involves imitating macro shape –the structure of a work–, or micro shape –the material configuration– in a different artistic medium. Certain parallelisms concerning the material level and the parameters usually related to the musical score and the conventions associated with it are tacitly established.

Needless to say, Western musical notation is the meeting point of music and visual expression. Thus, the association between the position of a symbol on the staff and

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its pitch (i.e. the higher the symbol according to the vertical axis, the higher the pitch) tends to be used as fundamental for morphological associations (i.e., an undulating line usually turns into a melody that ascends and descends by steps). Symmetrical or asymmetrical relationships and internal articulations among other aspects are liable to pass from one art to the other through this level.

4. **Textural level**: Related to the previous one, this level specifically refers to the internal or synchronic relationship of the materials between themselves, creating textures in music and painting.

5. **Conceptual level**: This is where migration from one field to another is achieved by resorting to an idea or a concept that author uses as central.

In its article “Aesthetic Emotions Across Arts: A Comparison Between Painting and Music”, Miu, Pițur y Szentágotai-Tăta ²⁰ compare perceptions regarding frequency of aesthetic emotions, contributing factors, and motivation which characterize the experiences of looking at paintings and listening to music.

Compared to painting-related emotions, music-related emotions were perceived as more similar to emotions in other everyday life situations. Participants reported that stimulus features and previous knowledge made more important contributions to emotional responses to painting, whereas prior mood, physical context and the presence of other people were considered more important in relation to emotional responses to music.

Self-educational motivation was more frequently associated with looking at painting, whereas feelings of well-being and social motivation were reported more frequently in relation to listening to music. Participants with visual arts education reported increased vitality-related emotions in their experience of looking at painting. In contrast, no relation was found between music education and emotional responses to music.

“Painting music” provides the possibility of uniting the sensations of one and the other art in a single show, which could be an interesting subject for emotional research.

3.4.- Painting and music in “Painting Music”

Knowing different ways in which music and painting can be related, we will make them converge in the following way:

We will choose a musical ensemble that makes the project possible: a piano-clarinet duet; as well as a visual artist with the artistic and personal characteristics that make him interested in the project: Pacoco Gil.

According to mentioned characteristics of synesthesia (idiosyncratic, unidirectional, additive, emotional experience, involuntary), in our project, the union of music and painting happens this way:

**Idiosyncratic:** In our performance, the artist's work as if they were a single person with one brain that feels the synaesthesia. Three of them create a single idiosyncrasy for the public, being bidirectional with constant feedback.

**Unidirectional:** Although synesthesia usually has a unidirectional character, in our show, synesthesia is bidirectional and continuously feedback. Sounds elicit lines, colours and shapes and at the same time, and simultaneously, those traits, colours and shapes provoke changes in the interpretation, modifying the sound parameters of intensity, timbre and phrasing.

**Additive:** In "Painting music" the result offered is extremely additive, since it offers, to all audience—whether they have the ability to experience synesthesia or not—, the opportunity to feel a synesthetic feeling.

**Emotional experience:** In our performance we offer a unique emotional experience, which is created live and is unrepeatable. The results will show how the audience and performers feel.

**Involuntary:** In "Painting music" synesthesia is not involuntary, but created by the performers, offering the experience to the audience. It becomes a voluntary act of live synesthetic creation.
In order to consider the relationship established between music and painting, we will take as a reference the classification made by C. Cristiá in the aforementioned article\textsuperscript{21}.

The way in which music and painting are related in our project is simultaneous, that means that they do not influence each other afterwards, but during the process, giving importance to "happening at the same time".

The \textbf{emotional level} mentioned by Cristiá is fundamental in the relationship established between the artists in "Painting music". A holistic exchange takes place, liberating the artists from mental conditioning, making them aware, and fully perceptive. It is an invitation for creativity, attention, emotional and perceptual awareness.

\textbf{Material level} and \textbf{textural level} are involved in "Painting music". Visual artist recreates phrases, melodies, tempo and rhythms in its work, and musicians add the musical textures and traits.

In “Painting Music” the same stimuli do not necessarily provoke the same responses, and the associations made are spontaneous.

\textbf{Morphological} and \textbf{conceptual level} are not clearly seen in "Painting music", as the complete musical program is reflected in pictorial art.

The self-evident, according to Theodor Adorno, that “music is a tempory art, (...) that creates tempory relationships among its constituent parts, justify their temporal relationship and synthesize them through time (...). Painting is a spatial art, as a reworking of space (...) and its idea approaches transcendence toward time”\textsuperscript{22}.

According to Adorno’s idea, after the performance, there will be a pictorial representation, but we will focus our attention on “during” and not so much on the result.


"Painting music" is developed on a musical program of our choice, that seems especially evocative and expressive to us. This program is sent to the visual artist beforehand to choose and find the pictorial materials we will need.

Our interdisciplinary performance is carried out without rehearsing, although there is a previously agreed musical repertoire. We are trying to create a "spontaneous" mood for the performance, where we can explore how the artists relate to each other, to measure the artists sensations and how they influenced each other.

Trying to answer these questions, we propose a brave, unique and unrepeatable performance in which, with some premises established, leaves space for improvisation. This improvisation provides us with a deep feeling of "here and now", grabbing our attention and opening our mind.

3.5.- Painting music daily

Setting up a project like this involves: finding a venue to carry it out, finding an artist who is interested in the project. It also means having the financial resources to cover the costs of the materials, choosing the appropriate musical program, and organizing the whole process.

I summarize in this brief diary how was the process of creating this show so maybe it can be used in the future for people wishing to create similar projects.

April 2014

Due to my interest in interdisciplinary projects, especially in relationships between painting and music, I start to think about what could be my master’s final thesis.

I like the idea of creating a not previously rehearsed show where spontaneity and creativity are important. Because of this I look for a visual artist interested in the project and who could help in the organization.

I want to create a show where creativity and art combine and in order to achieve this, I need to find an artist who is passionate about the concept.

Since I am not in my country and my social relationships are non-existent, I think of asking for help at the Spanish Embassy. With the support of an official institution, the project could also have more visibility and long life.
I am thinking about asking the Spanish Embassy to help me with this project as they will have more contacts with artists.

May 2014

In my first contact with the Embassy in May, I received great interest in the project and I’m told to contact Pacoco Gil, a Spanish artist living in Sweden. He is specialized in interdisciplinary projects, live creations and has already collaborated with them.

I contact Pacoco and, after explaining the project in detail, he became very enthusiastic about “Painting music” and agrees to be part of it. As we share artistic thoughts and values, I believe it will be an interesting experience to share this project with him.

At the end of May we meet José Pedro (principal of the Spanish Culture in Sweden) to plan the project and decide "where", "when" and "how" we could carry it out. Although it is my master’s thesis, we all feel it is necessary to find the right place to perform as it is not a conventional concert.

The Embassy recommends we prepare a dossier that includes the project plan and a breakdown of our needs and requirements. My friend Hans Lunell helps me translate into Swedish, the required documentation for the Embassy.

September 2014

I have a second meeting with Pacoco, to finalize all the details of the show. From that moment I focus on the choice of music. It should be descriptive, evocative and mood inspiring, to encourage the interaction between the artists.

October 2014

After two months without any news from the Embassy, we decided to contact them again, and are informed of their inability to help us until they know their 2015 budget.

After several weeks of doubt, we contact the Embassy again to check the level of interest in the project. Even though Jose Pedro informed us of his intention to continue supporting us, he made it clear that the Embassy will not be able to confirm any economic or management contribution until December 2014.
The Embassy’s decision is delayed, so we decide to start looking for alternative solutions, in case we do not get response from them in December.

A week later, I request a meeting with my tutor, Ambjörn, who also suggests that I should start thinking about a B Plan. During this time, I also meet Karin Hjertzell (KMH thesis supervisor), who also offers her help.

December 2014

Without any news from the Embassy, and with Karin Hjertzell’s support, the Stockholm Konstakademien offers us their hall to perform the show.

February 2015

After three months without an answer from the Embassy, we get, thanks to Pacoco’s mediation, a grant for the pictorial materials from the Embassy.

March 2015

The Embassy informs us that it is impossible to find a convenient place for our show.

Stockholm Konstakademien changes their mind about us using the hall, as they are afraid about the damage that paint may cause on the floor.

After several weeks of negotiations, and thanks to my thesis supervisor, we receive the approval to stage our project in KMH in Stora Salen. We agree to protect the entire floor and any delicate surfaces, to ensure that nothing will be damaged.

Once we know the place where the performance will take place, Pacoco and I start to talk about the project itself, we listen to the musical program, decide which materials we will use, calculate the dimensions of the "pictorial object" and its location on the stage.

April 2015

Erik Lanninger (piano teacher at KMH) and I start rehearsing, and Pacoco receives a recording of the rehearsal, and asks some questions regarding the musical scores.

21 May 2015

On the 21st of May 2015 we stage "Painting music".
3.6.- The artist and the music

Pacoco Gil is an integral artist not afraid of exploration and live creation, as he showed in "Marks" (2013): a micro-residency in Candyland Gallery, Stockholm, made in collaboration with the Spanish Embassy in Sweden, in which during two hours, and with a budget of less than 2 €, the artist wanted to capture space and time. Using the gallery as an improvised photo-call, in which people passing by could get involved in the artwork, posing somewhere against the wall. The artist would portray him/her tracing his/her silhouette to later fill it with granite, generating this way the sensation of bodies in space.23

Other examples of his artistic commitment and versatility are *Budget 6€*, *Kötest lust* and *Utställningar*.

He is a versatile artist, able to create with limited budget, great artistic involvement and social conscience.


The musical pieces are:

1. - *Paisatge*\(^25\) - Marcel Olm (5’): It is a 21\(^{st}\) century piece, by a catalan composer, born in 1932, who is a friend of ours.

It is a descriptive and evocative piece that transport us to a soundscape, harmonic and full of colour.

The score begins with a clarinet solo, which joins the piano, increasing texture and colour. As an invitation to dialogue, the clarinet invites the piano, and both together invite Pacoco to start painting in a gradual and creative way.

2. - *Duo concertante*\(^26\) - Weber II. Andante con moto (4’)

The second movement, Weber’s *Duo concertante*, is an original 19th century romantic piece for clarinet and piano, with an expressive clarinet melody, which allows for expression and singing, creating conversations between the piano and the clarinet. Music tells a story that links very well with *Paisatge* by Marcel Olm.

3. - *Quatre Paysages Italiens*\(^27\) - Christian Manen (8’): This work by the French composer born in Boulogne-Billancourt in 1934 and died in September 2020, is itself a synesthesia, since it is the transformation into music of the paintings of Svetlana C. Manen (his wife) entitled *Quatre Paysages Italiens*. Manen entitled the score: *Quatre Paysages Italiens* (d’après des tableaux de Svetlana C. Manen).

Manen and his wife had throughout their marriage a mutual influence on each other. Svetlana, of Russian origin, was a realist painter who worked in painting mediums such as oil, watercolor, gouache, acrylic, pastels, Chinese ink, etc.

Her paintings were mainly landscapes, but also compositions (based on musical or poetic works) and still-lifes (flowers and fruits). Both were mutual inspiring to each other.


These four movements by Manen, in which he uses his wife's paintings as inspiration, are undoubtedly the most contemporary language of the program. They offer, being a synesthesia, the possibility of creating a third synesthetic relationship.

The paintings of Manen’s Quatre Paysages Italiens are listed in the following web page https://sites.google.com/site/svetlanamanen/oeuvres/cotation-des-oeuvres.

It brings together the works that are part of the collection of the maison-musée located at 27 rue Steffen in Asnières.

The first movement, Du haut du Campanile (Venetian landscape) refers to this painting by Svetlana C. Manen, which was in the living room.

The second of the paysages, La chapelle aux ifs (paysage ligure) is a huile sur toile (oil on canvas), found in her house-museum in the dining room and whose image we could not find. The third one, L’estate (paysage toscan) is an oil on canvas of 73 x 100 cm located on the 2nd floor staircase and the fourth one, Rome parmi toits et coupoles, is a watercolor conserved in his house-museum in the 1st floor office and whose image we can see below.

4.- Añoranza\textsuperscript{28} - J.B. Meseguer (4'): A 21st century work written by a Valencian composer. It is a descriptive work, with accompanied melody. The piano presents harmonic colours and the clarinet, with its melody, describes a sweet atmosphere. Because of its softness, we think it is an appropriate work to inspire colours and shapes.

\textsuperscript{28} Juan Bautista Meseguer. \textit{Añoranza}. Without publisher.
5.- Cantilène²⁹ - L. Cahuzac (5'): Louis Cahuzac was born in Quarante, in Languedoc, in the south of France (12 July 1880 – 9 August 1960) and was a clarinetist and composer. Cahuzac was an outstanding performer and one of the few clarinetists who made a career as a soloist in the first part of the 20th century.

His compositions were mainly for clarinet and all are inspired by his native region in Southern France.

6.- Rhapsody for clarinet and piano³⁰ - Debussy (9')

Debussy composed the Première Rhapsodie towards the end of his life. The piece was commissioned by the Paris Conservatoire for their annual examinations in 1910. This piece is actually a "Solo de Concours" (competition solo) written to test the abilities of the clarinet students at the Conservatoire.

As the title implies, the Première Rhapsodie is a free form piece. In a whirlwind seven plus minutes, Debussy poses immense challenges on the performer. The difficulties include a number of significant technical obstacles, tests of endurance, breath control, and subtleties of tone, intonation, and nuance.

Although originally conceived as a competition solo, the work was quickly recognized as a masterpiece for the clarinet, and soon began appearing in programs on the concert stage. Debussy was so pleased with this work that in 1911 he orchestrated the piano part so that the piece could be performed by a soloist with orchestra. The orchestration is brilliant and offers a very special addition to the repertoire for clarinet and orchestra.

The Première Rhapsodie is challenging for an advanced player, and that is the reason why I thought it appropriate to include it as the conclusion for "Painting music". A master piece of clarinet-piano repertoire that is a technical challenge and a musical gift as a highlight of our performance.

3.7.- Surveys

This project was born for the purpose of creating and executing an interdisciplinary performance, in which music and painting communicate live, in order to find out how

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both arts relate and influence each other, when they are both integrated into a single artistic act.

We seek to understand how music and painting relate to each other in our project, and what the performers and audience perceptions are.

In order to provide feedback on both result and process in a field of subjective connotations, we created a survey to be answered by artists. In its questions related to synesthesia, interdisciplinary performances, perceptions and sensations are scored from 0 to 10.

Although it was not possible to answer the surveys right after the performance, we considered that the results were interesting enough to be collected and to be valuable.

3.7.1.- Artists: The creative process and feelings

The questions that were posed to the artists were:

1.- Rate your level of interest in “Painting Music”.
2.- Why were you interested?
3.- Rate your level of connection with your music/painting in a regular concert/work situation.
4.- Rate your level of connection with your music/painting during “Painting Music”.
5.- Rate the connection you had with the music/painting during the performance.
6.- Rate how your interpretation was influenced by music/painting during the performance.
7.- What influence did the music/painting have on your work?
8.- Can you appreciate the influence of the two arts in the finished painting?
9.- What level of influence did the music have on the colours?
10.- What level of influence did the music have on the shapes?
11.- How satisfied were you with the project?

Questions 1 and 2 tell us what the interdisciplinary performances meant to the artists. Questions 3 to 10 provide us information about the type of migration that took place in our performance. Questions 7, 8, 9 and 10 will give us data on the peculiar synesthesia that performers created in this performance. Question 11 will show us the degree of satisfaction with the project.
The answers collected from the performers are presented in a table and are shown below.

Answers given by the artists confirm that there is growing interest in interdisciplinary performances.

Answers to questions 3 to 6 discuss the emotional level of the migration between music and painting. Emotional migration in a project like "Painting music" is essential, as the artists are constantly providing feedback. This kind of migration involves a great artistic and creative development with perceptual awareness.

The three performers scored their performance attention level as a 10. Sharing the stage with other artists during live performances, seems to increase the level of attention experienced, considering it as the "flow" described by Mihaly
Csikszentmihalyi 1990, the "presence" described by Eckhart Tolle 2001 in *The power of now* or the phycological "mindfulness".

All of them are mental states achieved by focusing one's awareness on the present moment, while calmly acknowledging and accepting one’s feelings, thoughts, and bodily sensations. This state of mind makes room for richer and faster artistic responses.

"All true artists, whether they know it or not, create from a place of no-mind, of inner stillness. The mind then shapes the vision or creative impulse", the state described by Eckart Tolle 2001 made emotional migration in "Painting music" possible.

Consequences to question 4 can be seen in question 10, where the artists, having been asked about their satisfaction level, scored it with a 10, that related to the level of connection achieved during the performance.

Pacoco's answer to question 7 shows relationship created during “Painting Music” declaring "my work was not only influenced by music, IT WAS CREATED BY IT, from my hand I translated those musical notes into spots, colours and shapes", taking advantage of the opportunity that music offered the painter to create a multi-sensual experience or a mimetic representation.

Performers scored effectiveness and quality of the synesthesia created (questions 7, 8, 9, 10) with values from 8 to 10, that give us positive feedback to the migration at a material and textural level. The level of synesthesia achieved and offered to the public, according to the opinion of the performers, was satisfactory.

From question number 5 we learnt a lesson that will aid us in future interpretations of "Painting music". It refers to an artist’s placement that was not initially taken into account. The pianist’s location during the performance was not suitable, and made the visual interaction with the other artists difficult.


Question 6, asking about the influence music or painting have on their work, were rated with scores between 8 and 10. The pianist score is conditioned by the placement of the piano, which does not seem to affect the quality of influence described by the three artists as follows:

"Inspiring", "we had a special connection", "making my performance much more artistic", "less thought about technical difficulties", "the painting had a special impact on the audience, regarding attention and presence", "this painting in real time creates the impression of musical improvisation".

All the artists' clarifications to this question leads back to the feeling of absolute connection with the performance, which lifted them to a creative state.

3.7.2.- The public: The sensations

The questions posed to the public were:

1. Rate how much were you interested in this performance ("Painting Music").

![Graph showing response distribution]

2. Why?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A very interesting combination of arts, which also contains some improvisation.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The painter put colors to the music and it interact together in the moment.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awsome combination! Nice for both the ears and the eyes.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I really liked the idea of combining two forms of art - classical music and painting. Seeing the artist interpret the music through the painting gave a new perspective on the music. This, without making a controversial change in how the musical piece itself has been interpreted.</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beside the interesting and variegated choice of music repertoire, this concert was an out of ordinary experience, was &quot;synesthetic&quot;, and an example of multimodal communication: the audience was reached by both audio and visual messages. Moreover, it is fascinating to consider that music can inspire a sudden creative process in visual arts... could be interesting to see how it works viceversa, with music improvisation to a painting process!</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. Rate your overall level of attention/concentration when listening to a live concert.

![Bar chart showing ratings from 1 to 10]

4. Rate your overall level of attention/concentration during the Painting Music performance.

![Bar chart showing ratings from 1 to 10]

5. During the performance, on which of the two arts did you focus your attention the most?

![Pie chart showing distribution of attention]
6. During the performance I felt that there was a connection between the two arts.

7. During the performance I felt that there was a connection between the artists.

8. During the performance I felt that there was a connection between colors and music.

9. During the performance I felt that there was an influence between shapes and music.
10. During the performance I felt that artists influenced each other.

11. During the performance I felt that final pictorial result had a coherence with what I had experienced.

12. The project aroused my interest in interdisciplinary projects.
13. How satisfied were you with the performance?

Regarding the responses from audience, it should be clarified that the attendance on concert’s day was low, and subsequently, we were only able to collect the opinions from 5 people.

Knowing that these figures are not enough to draw binding conclusions, we want to collect them as a sample of these 5 experiences during the performance.

These 5 people feel displayed great interest in interdisciplinary shows (with scores were between 9 and 10), this shows us as artists, a wide and interesting path to explore this field.

From answers 3, 4 and 5, we can see that the average level of attention is 8.6 in a regular performance compared to a scored of 9 for "Painting music", and all agreed that their attention did not focus on one particular art or another, but fluctuated smoothly from one to the other throughout the entire performance.

As for the answers to questions 6 to 10, which refer to the connections between the arts throughout the performance, the audience felt that there was a connection between the two arts (in terms of general connection, colours and shapes) with ratings between 6 and 10.

However, in terms of the connection between the artists, two people rated this item with 5 and 6 respectively, one person with 9 and two people with 10. We would like to continue the research in this field, to better understand how we could make this connection clearer and effective.

It would be also interesting to know if the piano placement had anything to do with the audiences feeling.
Perhaps in a new study with more people, we could draw clearer conclusions.

Asking about the coherence between the final result and what they have experienced, question 11 shows an overall rating between 7 and 10. We can conclude that the audience felt a connection between what they experienced, and the way music and painting were related during the performance.

Asking if "Painting music" aroused their interest in interdisciplinary projects, shows a slight decrease, from the initial 9.4 in question 1, where we evaluated the average interest of the audience in interdisciplinary projects, to 9.2 in question 12.

Although both scores are high, it decreases by 0.2 with respect to the general interest, and we think we should make "Painting music" a more interesting and inspiring show for the audience in order to achieve the score 10.

Finally, from the last question we can conclude that the audience's general satisfaction with the show was high, since it obtained an average score of 9.
4.- Conclusions

Our conclusions are as follow:

1.- Interaction between arts generates interest in both public and performers. The creation of interdisciplinary performances has been of interest since the 16th century, and there are many companies and artists exploring the possibilities of this interaction. However, we have not found too many examples of live performances of music and painting. There is still a long way to go in the field of interdisciplinary live shows in general, and in particular in those involving music and painting.

2.- Synesthesia is a condition linked to structural and functional characteristics of the brain, so some people cannot feel it. Our interdisciplinary live creation performance "Painting music" provide meaningful synesthetic experiences to non-synesthetic people.

3.- There are very exhaustive studies during recent years on how music and painting relate. There are no studies that explore this relationship in live creation. Likewise, there are studies that compare perceptions and emotions in painting and music, but there are no studies that investigate the enrichment of perception and the emotional world when they are presented together. Our results suggest that perception and emotions in these cases are additive.

4.- “Painting music” provides a synesthetic experience that is idiosyncratic, bidirectional, additive and plenty of emotional feeling. Music and painting are related with a migration at an emotional, material and textural level. This way of connecting music and painting is effective in the level of satisfaction of the show. The artists satisfaction level 10/10 and public satisfaction level 9/10, indicates that the show and the way it was designed show the success in the joining of the arts.

5.- The emotional migration that is produced in the interaction of painting and music in "Painting music" is clearly effective for the artists, as the level of connection/flow/presence/attention of the performers is 10/10, compared to the 8'6/10 they usually feel in their solo performances. We conclude that the way we create this interdisciplinary show made the emotional migration possible. This meant a greater connection with art and allowed them to be more present, in spiritual terms.

6.- Satisfaction level of the performers in "Painting music" was 10/10, which seems to indicate that there is a relationship between emotional migration, the level of perceptual awareness and inner satisfaction. This would be a broad field of study for
future research in music psychology about concentration and attention in the interaction between arts.

7.- The location of the artists on stage is a parameter to be studied in interdisciplinary projects since it influences the interaction between the artists, and can affect the outcome of the show.

8.- In interdisciplinary performances, the audience’s attention is greater and the quality of perception is better than in unidisciplinary performances. This may be due to an enrichment between the arts, and to the fact that emotional experience is additive.

9.- It would be necessary to carry out more research on interdisciplinary performances that connect painting and music in order to draw conclusions about the special synesthesia produced in these types of shows. The performers seem to have a greater sensation of achievement (in terms of shapes and colors related to the musical content) than the audience. As we do not have enough data, it would be interesting to continue the research in this field.

5.- Subsequent evolution of the project

During this time, in which we tried to continue the project, these are our conclusions:

Interdisciplinary performances are an interesting field, that surprise and stimulate the desire to experience more, but as they have more material and structural requirements compared to standards productions, these kind of projects are more frequently rejected by the cultural event planners.

In all this time between its presentation in May 2015 and May 2020, despite having prepared dossiers in Spanish and Swedish, and having contacted more than 30 institutions, we have not been able to put "Painting music" on stage again.

From which we conclude that it is not easy to find a venue for small companies that present interdisciplinary projects.

In the professional world the rewards are not always money. Elaborating this project took years of study and dedication until 2015, when we finally made it a reality, as my final master thesis at the KHM in Stockholm. Despite not having been able to
perform it again, sensations and perceptions experienced that day, made it worthwhile and filled me with satisfaction.

Having written this final thesis has raised the enthusiasm in "Painting music" and, after having discovered the festival "Quinze vint-i-dos. Diàlegs creatius entre disciplines artistiques" we will present our dossier to the organization for its evaluation.
6.- References


Gouzman, Helen. “Einstein on the Beach - Knee Play 1” video, 32’56”. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6XgEwCTXHZU&t=28s (Accessed 30/06/2021).


7. Appendix

PAINTING MUSIC

21/Maj/Stora Salen

Ångel Belda, Klarinett
Erik Lanninger, Piano
Pacoco Gil, Artist-Painter
Program

I.

Paisatge - Marcel Olm (1932-) 5'

Duo concertante - C. M. Von Weber (1786-1826)
   II. Andante con moto 5'

Quatre Paysages Italiens - Christian Manen (1934-) 9'

-10' PAUS-

II.

J. Bta. Meseguer (s.XX – XXI) - Añoranza 4'

Cantinele - L. Cahuzac (1880-1960) 3'

Rhapsody for cl. and piano - C. Debussy (1862-1918) 8'
Programkommentarer

Projektet “Painting Music” är en föreställning som presenterar musikaliskt och måleriskt skapande i kombination för publiken och där ett sammanhålllet konstnärligt verk växer fram under föreställningen. Således syftar föreställningen inte bara till att ge möjligheten att lyssna på en konsert med klassisk musik eller betrakta en konstnärs skapande, utan att få vara med om en unik och icke-repeterbar process där de båda sidorna kompletterar och knyter an till varandra.

Översättning: Hans Lunell

With the collaboration of the Spanish Embassy