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interviews

Interviews with contemporary female artists,
curators and gallerists from around the world.



THE HEAR AND NOW: NICOLLE CURE

BY ALICIA PUIG

Nicolle has been such a great supporter of and an active participant in the Create! Community. Kat and I also had the pleasure of meeting her in Miami last December. After learning more about her fluid, abstract works and her journey as an artist thus far in her career, I absolutely had to include her in our first ever all women issue. She is a testament to the healing power of art and proof that faith, grit and hard work goes a long way.

Nicolle Cure is a Colombian-American artist living and working in Miami, FL. She was born and raised in the seaside of Barranquilla, Colombia and moved to the U.S. when she was 17 years old. Always inspired by art and design, she studied Computer Arts Animation at the Miami Dade College and then obtained a Bachelor of Advertising from the University of Florida. She also holds academic certificates from the Sotheby's Institute of Art. Her background has allowed her to interact with many aspects of juxtaposed cultures which in turn, encouraged her to create works based on these experiences, world travels, and her own personal emotions.

Though she has experimented with a wide range of mediums, her work is primarily based on the use of acrylic ink and paint as well as oil pastels, charcoals and occasionally spray paint for certain projects. Nicolle's artworks are an unusual fusion of the abstract and the surreal, a contrast of light and shadows.

Over the course of her artistic career, Nicolle has created several art collections, for the most part, drawn from life experiences. Each particular series consists of works depicting a wide range of emotions and incidents: from life to death, from sorrow and solace to extreme joy, and new beginnings.

In 2017, Nicolle suffered from sudden unilateral deafness, an unexpected incident that led to other related chronic health conditions such as Ménière's Disease. Nevertheless, this unfortunate situation was the driving force for the creation of her latest collection titled The Colors of Sound. Nicolle's hearing loss experience and the development of her new art collection has allowed her to spark a conversation about changing the views and attitudes towards invisible disabilities.

www.nicollecure.com and [@nicollecure_art](https://www.instagram.com/nicollecure_art)



ARTIST STATEMENT

My art is a contrast of light and shadows, a combination of the abstract and the surreal. When I am in my studio, I experiment with a wide range of mediums, but for the most part, my work is primarily focused on the use of acrylic ink and paint. I also incorporate other techniques and mediums including spray painting, pastels, and charcoals.

I am fortunate to have been able to collaborate on worthy initiatives, such as animal welfare campaigns and programs promoting education and health research. Now I am proudly raising awareness about a cause that is dearest to my heart: bringing attention to the “invisible disabilities” of hearing and balance disorders. This comes as a result of experiencing—and learning to live with—these conditions myself.

YOU HAVE SUCH AN INSPIRING STORY THAT WE'RE SO THRILLED TO BE SHARING WITH OUR READERS, BUT BEFORE DISCUSSING THE MORE RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN YOUR LIFE AND CAREER LET'S GO BACK TO YOUR CHILDHOOD. WHAT WERE YOUR EARLY EXPERIENCES WITH ART?

I fell in love with art when I was a little girl. Art came to me easily as I grew up in a very artistic family. My mom is a textile and fashion designer and my dad is an architect and also a painter. Naturally, I developed a deep love for rich color and movement in my early years and my most vivid childhood memories are seeing my dad painting with oils, pastels, sanguine and graphite. I was always mesmerized by everything he created. On the other hand, I've always admired my mom's sense of style; she is very good at picking the right color palettes, fabrics, and accessories when it comes to fashion design or styling interiors.

As a kid, I would find myself constantly daydreaming, observing my surroundings quietly; it sometimes felt like I was living in a different world. I attended an all-girl Catholic school while living in my hometown, Barranquilla, Colombia. Unfortunately, the school wasn't focused on the arts at all, but more on science, social studies, philosophy, and world history (which included a bit of art history at a very basic level); but definitely no art studio classes.

Always with a pencil at hand, I would get easily distracted during class, sketching on my desk or my books and my teachers were constantly calling me out and asking me to stop and erase everything. I wish I would have had an iPhone back then just to have photos of those drawings and see what they looked like.

YOU THEN DECIDED TO PURSUE THIS CREATIVE PASSION IN SCHOOL. WHERE AND WHAT DID YOU STUDY? ARE THERE SPECIFIC SKILLS YOU LEARNED DURING THIS TIME THAT YOU STILL UTILIZE TODAY?

When I was around 12 years old, my parents enrolled me in extracurricular art classes at one of the best art academies in town. It was there where I got exposed to figure drawing, clay, ceramics, and paint in various mediums, especially oil paint. These classes were the highlight of my week as I got to share the classroom with older students who were more advanced. The head of the academy was a recognized local artist whose family had emigrated from Italy. He became my mentor, and really was the one who challenged me at a young age to experiment with Surrealism. In one of the first assignments, he asked me to “paint a song”.

When I graduated high school, my family was very insistent that I choose a college major that was not related to art, out of sheer terror of the “struggling artist” stigma. I ended up getting an A.A. in Computer Animation, and a Bachelor's degree in Advertising from the University of Florida. I continued painting and developing my art through college and also afterward when I began my professional career working for several ad agencies and international brands. It was not easy finding enough time to paint, especially since working in advertising requires long hours. Fortunately, I managed to continue creating and participating in art shows and exhibitions.

Not too long ago I took several courses at the Sotheby's Institute of Art. Since I live in Miami, I was curious about learning more about the global art market and art as an investment. With events such as Art Basel, my beautiful paradise of a city is becoming a major hub for the art market.

CAN YOU TELL US ABOUT THE WORK THAT YOU HAVE BEEN CREATING MORE RECENTLY, INCLUDING THE SERIES "THE COLORS OF SOUND", WHICH SEEKS TO RAISE AWARENESS ABOUT HEARING LOSS AND INVISIBLE DISABILITIES? YOU HAVE REALLY BEEN ABLE TO USE YOUR ART AS A PLATFORM FOR SHARING YOUR STORY AND GIVING BACK TO YOUR COMMUNITY. WHICH ARE THE ORGANIZATIONS OR CHARITIES THAT YOU HAVE BEEN MOST EXCITED TO PARTNER WITH AND SUPPORT?

My latest painting series, The Colors of Sound, was born in the fall of 2017 after experiencing sudden unilateral hearing loss. I woke up one morning and could not hear in my right ear and I couldn't feel the right side of my head. Over the next few weeks, I started experiencing other symptoms, including vertigo and issues with my vestibular system, affecting my balance. I also had a constant mental fog. I felt drained and exhausted all the time, while also continuing to experience hearing loss, tinnitus, and Hyperacusis, which is an increased sensitivity to certain frequencies and volume ranges of sound. Fortunately, I was able to receive proper medical care, and through medication and therapy, my symptoms began to recede and I was able to regain partial hearing.

In the end, I was diagnosed with Ménière's Disease, a chronic vestibular (inner ear) disorder with often debilitating symptoms and no known cure. Ménière's disease affects both hearing and balance. It took me more than a year to start feeling like my old self, even though some aspects of this condition changed me forever.

Having experienced hearing loss inspired me to create The Colors of Sound, a series of paintings that explores the relationship between sound and life, an invitation to consider how we make sense of our surroundings through what we can hear. My partner, a sound engineer, and music producer showed me on his recording equipment the sound waves and frequencies that I could no longer hear. "Seeing the sound" allowed me to capture emotions and moods which later became paintings.

My journey has also been a blessing in disguise because it has allowed me to partner with incredible organizations such as the Hearing Health Foundation and Vestibular Disorders Association (VeDA) to help them bring attention to the "invisible disabilities" of hearing and balance disorders.

I am proud to be able to do my part, and through my art help create a bridge between these organizations and individuals who are struggling with similar conditions like mine. It is a small contribution and a way for me to pay back and help raise awareness. I have met amazing people along the way, especially on social media and online forums, who were instrumental in helping me get through the most difficult times.

OVERCOMING MAJOR OBSTACLES RELATING TO YOUR HEALTH TO CONTINUE TO THRIVE AS AN ARTIST DEMONSTRATES A LOT OF PERSEVERANCE! DO YOU HAVE ADVICE TO OTHER CREATIVES ON HOW TO HANDLE CHALLENGES AND SETBACKS?

All I can say is that you should be very stubborn about those dreams you have in your heart. I like to think that my perseverance helped me gain some of my hearing back as I was diligent and determined to find solutions. I tried to learn as much as I could about my condition and the best therapies and treatments available.

I go about my art practice in the very same way. I am disciplined and I try to focus my energy on the projects I really care about. Of course, there are days when we feel drained and unmotivated, and we should know when to give ourselves a break. That's why is very important to always listen to our bodies. It is OK to take a break from time to time; however, when you feel ready to get back in the studio, push through and try to find the rhythm to feel creative again. And more importantly, enjoy the process!

WHAT ARE YOU MOST LOOKING FORWARD TO THIS YEAR? ARE THERE ANY EXCITING EXHIBITIONS, COLLABORATIONS, OR PROJECTS THAT YOU'RE CURRENTLY WORKING ON?

I am very excited about 2019. A few projects that I began discussing last year have started to come to fruition. So far this year, my art has been exhibited in several art collectives. Another project I am very excited about is that I have become a Williams Sonoma / West Elm art partner, and they are carrying prints of The Colors of Sound series throughout their Florida locations.

I also look forward to continuing nurturing and developing my relationship with the brands and health organizations I have been fortunate to collaborate with, and now that I'm feeling better, I would like to take advantage of my "good days" and have my art exhibited to be experienced in person as it is meant to be.

