

Gallery

SITKA™

GALLERY SITKA REPRESENTED ARTIST

MELISSA A. RICHARD

IN PEACE | SOLO SHOW | 2022

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Support The Arts

IN PEACE

MELISSA A. RICHARD

ARTIST'S STATEMENT

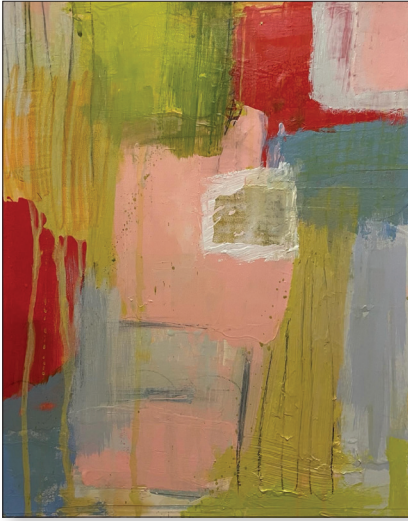
"The work created for this show was born out of my searching for a way to process a lot of things during a very difficult period in my life. At the start of 2020 not only had the world been hit with a global pandemic, but I was fresh out of the hospital from a severe depressive episode. I found myself facing some really complex issues in my life. Creating the work for this show allowed me a way to reflect on, process, and let go of a lot of difficult emotions and got me through a particularly turbulent time.

"That being said, I feel that these works hold much hope. They are very literally a representation of my personal search for light, resolution, and inner peace. It is my hope that in sharing them I can pass along that strength and peace of mind that I gained through the time I created these works."

IN SEARCH OF PEACE #1-12 (2020-21)

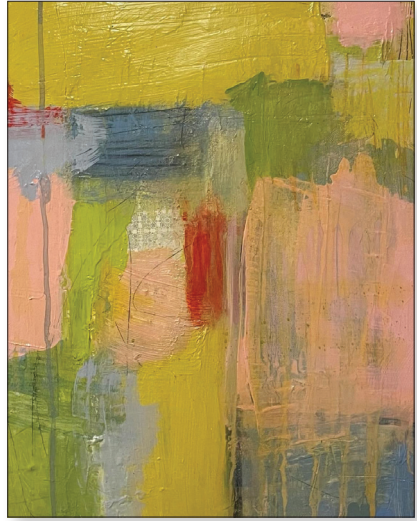
"**In Search of Peace #1-12**, were created in the second half of 2020 through 2021 as a way for me to work through a lot of what I was experiencing internally. At that time I was desperately grasping for light in my life and fighting to emerge from a very deep depression. I was put in a position where I had no choice but to create some drastic new boundaries in my personal relationships and make other huge shifts in my life to heal and get well mentally. While this process eventually brought relief and new hope, it was fraught with obstacles and emotional upheaval. It was anything but easy, in many ways it was one of the most challenging things I have experienced. These twelve paintings really are my search for peace through that process and represent my mental and emotional metamorphosis through that difficult time.

"The colors were chosen deliberately to appear calming, but there are still streaks of red-orange that abruptly break up the compositions. There are pencil and oil stick markings, scribbles and scrapes, which create lines and boundaries or stumble across the canvases as if they are lost. The nature of the brushstrokes and movement of my tools as I worked hold all the emotions I was experiencing at the time. Like a channel from my mind and heart to the canvas. I see these as a visual diary of my journey of emotional healing."



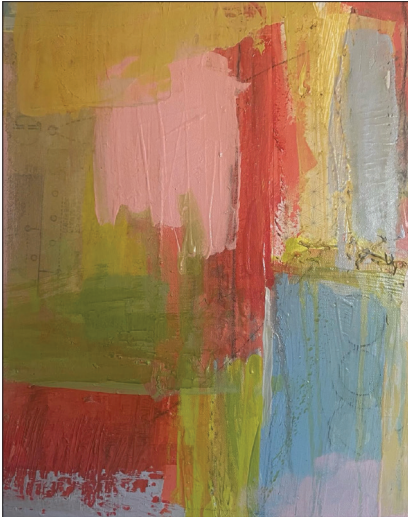
In Search of Peace, 1

Mixed Media on Canvas
2021-2022
16" x 20"
\$800



In Search of Peace, 2

Mixed Media on Canvas
2021-2022
16" x 20"
\$800



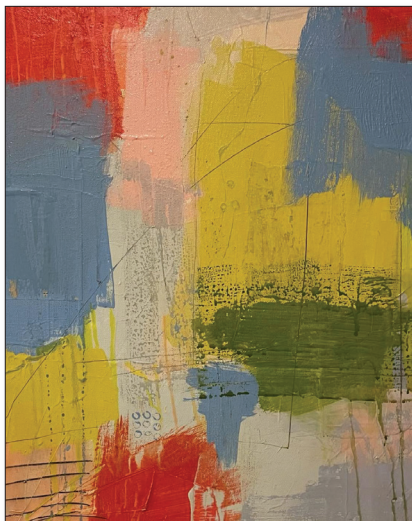
In Search of Peace, 3

Mixed Media on Canvas
2021-2022
16" x 20"
\$800



In Search of Peace, 4

Mixed Media on Canvas
2021-2022
16" x 20"
\$800



In Search of Peace, 5

Mixed Media on Canvas
2021-2022
16" x 20"
\$800



In Search of Peace, 6

Mixed Media on Canvas
2021-2022
16" x 20"
\$800



In Search of Peace, 7

Mixed Media on Canvas
2021-2022
16" x 20"
\$800



In Search of Peace, 8

Mixed Media on Canvas
2021-2022
16" x 20"
\$800



In Search of Peace, 9

Mixed Media on Canvas
2021-2022
16" x 20"
\$800



In Search of Peace, 10

Mixed Media on Canvas
2021-2022
16" x 20"
\$800



In Search of Peace, 11

Mixed Media on Canvas
2021-2022
16" x 20"
\$800



In Search of Peace, 12

Mixed Media on Canvas
2021-2022
16" x 20"
\$800

GARDEN OF THE MIND #1-6 (2021)

"In late 2019 I was hospitalized for a severe episode of depression. I was in such emotional darkness, so tired, so emotionally exhausted that I didn't think I could go on. During my first meeting with my medical team I had no words, only tears. I honestly don't remember much of that first day, but I remember one thing my doctor said when they were leaving my room...my doctor pleaded with me that I "find the light". That became the theme of my hospital journal during my stay, a standard psych unit issue black and white marble composition notebook which I filled with collage work, drawings and notes.

"These six small works are created from some of the collage pages in my hospital journal. At first, my thought was to make one large artwork by making acrylic transfers of the pages, which I did in early 2020. The large piece I created never quite felt finished to me, however, and in 2021 I made the decision to cut it up and rework it in smaller separate images. What emerged as I reconfigured these, during the same time period I was creating my In Search of Peace reminded me of the idea of something I heard when I was in the hospital. On my last day at the hospital we had a group therapy session that encouraged us to 'tend to the garden of our minds'. We discussed what this might mean, in effect weeding out the negative thoughts and planting what we want to grow, nurturing positive thoughts.

"For me this series now represent what I want to grow in my mind's garden: love, hope, beauty and peace."



Garden of the Mind, 1

Mixed Media on Paper
2021-2022
8" x 10"
SOLD



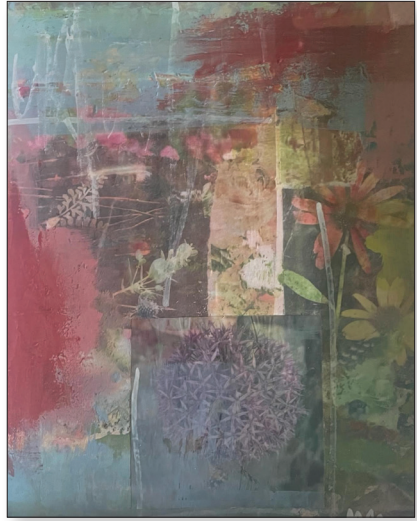
Garden of the Mind, 2

Mixed Media on Paper
2021-2022
8" x 10"
SOLD



Garden of the Mind, 3

Mixed Media on Paper
2021-2022
8" x 10"
SOLD



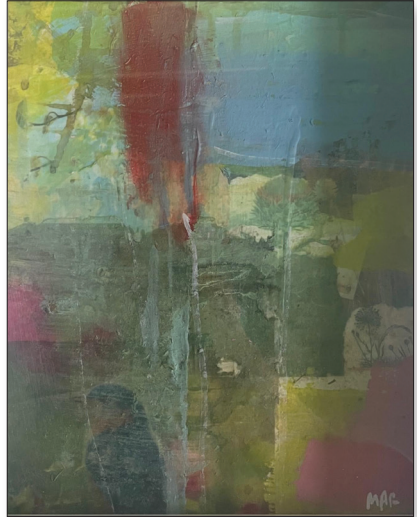
Garden of the Mind, 4

Mixed Media on Paper
2021-2022
8" x 10"
\$200



Garden of the Mind, 5

Mixed Media on Paper
2021-2022
8" x 10"
\$200



Garden of the Mind, 6

Mixed Media on Paper
2021-2022
8" x 10"
SOLD

TRANQUILITY (2022)

"I started this painting shortly before I began my In Search of Peace series. One can see I was already working toward a particular color palette, as similar hues are echoed in my twelve paintings. When I started this work I did not yet know what direction I needed to go in my life to get well. The early stages of this painting showed a lot of desperation. It strongly reflected my struggle and frustration of looking for light and joy where the disease of my mind was obscuring it. I shelved this painting for the time being. Then in late 2021, early 2022 when I decided to put this show together I pulled it out again and resumed painting. After nearly two years I felt that I finally had found my way out of the dark. I wanted to show that. I felt that a self-portrait of some kind needed to emerge from the painting. I wanted to express my release from the grips of depression and reflect my new headspace and my attaining to some level of inner peace and tranquility. I feel like this work is the pinnacle of the show for me. Not only as the last work completed for the show, but as a representation of the end of this part of my journey; a picture of me in this moment. Of me.... In Peace."



Tranquility

Mixed Media on Canvas
2021-2022
24" x 30"
\$1,800

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 26, 2022

Insightful Painter Looks Deep within Herself, Will Exhibit at Shirley Gallery Friday, March 4

Some visual artists look at the world and simply record what they see. They hold the mirror up to Nature and use their artistic skills to create an accurate rendering of the world around them. Other artists go one step further and interpret what they see. They reflect on their own strongly held opinions and judgments about the world, and then build that personal view into their paintings, drawings and sculptures. Finally there come artists who turn the mirror on themselves. All their artworks tend to be, in a very real sense, self-portraits. They seek not merely to understand the world, but to understand themselves. Melissa Richard seems to be one of these artistic soul-searchers.

"In Peace" is Ms. Richard's exhibition of works completed from about the summer of 2020 to the end of 2021. The general theme of the show is the yearning for peace — perhaps most especially peace of mind. The subject matter is rendered in bold, abstract-expressionist style, but their inspiration derives from wrenching events of the artist's own life, beginning in late 2019. She explains that, by early 2020, she found herself "fresh out of the hospital from a severe depressive episode" that forced her to face up to some very daunting and difficult issues. Melissa managed to turn these troubles into an artistic opportunity.

The works in the show fall into three different groups, or series. First comes "In Search of Peace," which includes twelve canvases, each 16" x 20". The title of this series is appropriate indeed. Melissa sees these twelve paintings "as a means for me to work through a lot of what was going on internally for me...through that difficult time."

Next is "Garden of the Mind," which Ms. Richard reports "started as one large work in 2020," before she "made the decision to cut up the piece and rework it." Again ever in search of what is going on inside of her, the artist made use of pages of a journal she was keeping while she was hospitalized in 2019. At that time, she "had no words," so she created collage images in the journal. "I really wanted to use the pages without destroying the journal itself," she says. She solved this dilemma by making photocopies of some of the pages and then applying a technique called "acrylic transfer." This is a print-making process whereby the exact image of the collage that she created in the journal took on the acrylic paint, which adhered to a new surface of very heavy paper. She explains that this process allowed her to give the pages "a whole new life and a totally different aesthetic than the originals." By such methods does this intensely introspective artist translate her inner life into striking and beautiful pictures.

The last series includes only one painting, a large (24" x 30") canvas entitled "Tranquility." It came to her first "as a kind of abstracted self-portrait, and I wanted flowers to be growing out of my head." This surprising (and rather optimistic) image gives the artist a good deal of satisfaction. "This painting feels like the pinnacle of the show — me, finally reaching some level of tranquility."

The show opens on Friday, March 4, at 4:30 p.m., at The Phoenix Park, 2 Shaker Road, Suite D101, in Shirley, Mass. Art lovers may want to visit <https://gallerysitka.com/product-tag/melissa-a-richard> for more information about Ms. Richard's artwork.



Piece 1

Mixed Media Collaged
on Matboard
14" x 14"
\$260



Piece 2

Mixed Media Collaged
on Matboard
14" x 14"
\$260



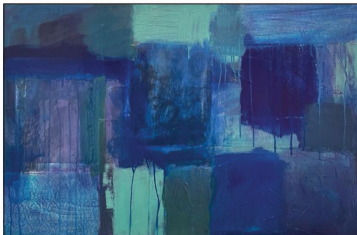
Feelings Are Messy 4

Mixed Media
on Bristol Board
12" x 15"
\$360



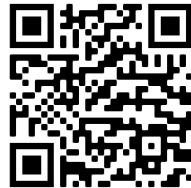
Hollyhock

Transparency Photograph
on Mixed Media
8" x 10"
\$400



Maiden of the Sea

Mixed Media on Canvas
2022
30" x 40"
\$3,600



More from Melissa A. Richard

ARTIST'S BIOGRAPHY — MELISSA A. RICHARD

Melissa Richard is a mixed media artist and painter working out of a studio space in Amherst, NH she has named The Girl From Mars. Melissa's work is often abstract and heavy with intriguing imagery, bold color, and rich texture. Thoughtful and deeply emotional, her pieces carry notes of sadness, even a subtle dark undertone at times; all the while remaining bright with hope and wonder. It is this juxtaposition created by the artist that makes her work so introspective and keeps the viewer coming back. This dichotomy of mood in Melissa's work reflects the complexity of relationships, search for self-identity, and the messiness of life that are common themes in her art. As an artist, it is important to Melissa that viewers have their own unique emotional journey through her work; seeing their own story in the narratives of her collage work and their own feelings reflected in the colors and brushwork of her larger abstract paintings.

Born: Lowell, MA | 1978
Studio: Amherst, NH



Melissa A. Richard

[READ MORE AT GALLERYSITKA.COM/MELISSA-A-RICHARD](https://www.galleriesitka.com/melissa-a-richard)

HISTORY OF GALLERY SITKA

Gallery Sitka™ opened in May 2014 and was part of Sitka Creations®, a design studio. We adopted the name Gallery Sitka™ in August of 2015.

We opened another location on Friday, July 8, 2016, in downtown Fitchburg, MA. Our Ribbon Cutting was at 10 AM on July 8th and our Grand Opening and Solo Reception for Gosha Karpowicz was on July 9th from 1-4 PM. On December 1st, 2018 we closed our Fitchburg location. On June 15, 2019 we opened a tiny gallery in Shelburne Falls, MA which we closed on November 1, 2019. We currently operate out of our Shirley, MA mill space at The Phoenix Park.

We hold art exhibits in our space in Shirley. We also manage the Artist's Walkway at The Bull Run in Shirley, MA, as well as a number of other restaurants and offices in New England and in NYC.

MISSION

Our mission is to support the arts, to be part of the creative economy and provide a space for emerging artists to be seen and to have the experience of showing their work in a gallery-style atmosphere.

In terms of the style that we wish to share with the public, we feel like one of our favorite artists, Ilse Buchert Nesbitt, that "art should uplift". To that end, the work that we carry enhances and beautifies spaces. Generally, the shows we host do not attempt to create conversation relating to political or social situations in our world today. The style we focus on is abstract contemporary.

In terms of policies on work that we accept, as we are a family-friendly gallery, we limit the amount of nude work that comes in the door. We also do not wish to display work that makes grand political, religious or social statements, preferring to beautify our walls and provide refreshment to viewers, than to engage in deep conversations via the work about the state of the world. We hope you will find the work we display encouraging and uplifting.

Gallery
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