

MAM

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What Does a Taylor Swift Song Look Like? Find Out at the Montclair Art Museum.

Join Sarah Kraning, an artist with synesthesia, for a talk and live music painting performance at MAM's 10th Annual Gaelen Family Artist Lecture on May 28, 2026.



Artist, Sarah Kraning

MONTCLAIR, N.J., May 12, 2026 — Most people hear music. Artist Sarah Kraning sees it!

Kraning has synesthesia. She experiences sound as color, shape, and motion. On May 28, she brings that world to the Montclair Art Museum for *You Hear Songs, I See Them: Art, Music, and Synesthesia*. The evening is part of the Gaelen Family Artist Lecture series.

Drawing on her background in neuropsychology, Kraning will explore the science behind her condition, the evolution of her artistic voice, and the intersection of creativity and mental health.

The program will conclude with a live performance in which Kraning will paint a Taylor Swift song into a work of visual art. At the end of the evening and through the weekend, the completed canvas will be auctioned online, giving attendees the opportunity to bid on a one-of-a-kind artwork created in real time at MAM.

“I don’t just hear music — I see it, I feel it, and I translate that into color and motion.”

— Sarah Kraning

Kraning’s artwork and story have been featured by the Guggenheim Museum, People, Wired, HGTV, TEDx, and the Beatles Museum, and her videos have reached millions of viewers across TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube. Kraning’s work has drawn comparisons to Wassily Kandinsky, who also had synesthesia, and whose experience of seeing sound became the foundation of abstract art.

A self-taught artist from Minnesota, Kraning kept her synesthesia and the paintings it inspired private for much of her life before sharing both with the world in 2021. Since then, her live painting performances have taken her to stages and events around the world, including Lollapalooza and Climate Week NYC 2025.

Kraning has also collaborated with notable figures in music and culture, including Kevin Jonas of the Jonas Brothers, James Hunt of RÜFÜS DU SOL, Perry Farrell of Jane’s Addiction, and Armani White. She also currently serves as a creative ambassador for Re:wild, Leonardo DiCaprio’s wildlife conservation organization. Her co-authored *Soundscapes*, a one-act play inspired by her childhood experiences with synesthesia, made its international debut at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe in 2025.

At MAM, Kraning will speak candidly about the neuroscience behind synesthesia, the years she spent concealing a trait she feared would be misunderstood, and the moment she chose to share it with the world. Her lecture will explore sensory difference, mental health, creativity, and the deeply personal process of transforming sound into visual art.

Evening Schedule

6:00 p.m. | Taylor Swift–inspired friendship bracelet making for all ticketholders | Leir Hall

6:00 p.m. | Private VIP cocktail reception benefiting MAM’s education programs | Robert H. Lehman Court

7:00 p.m. | Lecture and live painting performance, followed by live, silent auction of the finished work | Leir Hall

Tickets and additional information are available at montclairartmuseum.org. This event is made possible through the Gaelen Family Artist Lecture Endowment Fund.

About the Montclair Art Museum

The **Montclair Art Museum (MAM)** champions American and Native American art—past and present. Through bold exhibitions, hands-on programs, and deep community ties, MAM sparks creativity, connection, and conversation. Guided by its core values of respect, collaboration, education, and inclusion, the Museum is a vibrant hub where art meets ideas, and everyone is invited.

About the Gaelen Family Artist Lecture

Now in its 10th year, the Gaelen Family Artist Lecture brings nationally and internationally recognized artists to MAM for an evening of conversation, discovery, and inspiration. The series is made possible through the generosity of the Gaelen Family Artist Lecture Endowment Fund.

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Gallery Hours: Friday, 10 a.m.—6 p.m. / Saturday, 10 a.m.—6 p.m. / Sunday, 11 a.m.—5 p.m.

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