

# Artist

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“It really was a discovery to experience my ancestry,” McLean said.

McLean later moved to Nashville, Tennessee.

“I became a regional arts star. I showed and sold everything I made,” McLean said. “I had incredible friendships with artists of all mediums ... The Nashville community is super supportive of visual arts. It was advanced beyond New York City, Los Angeles and Europe.”

McLean continued writing, hosting radio programs and creating art. He also started teaching art courses.

In the early 2000s, McLean moved to Texas, where he met painter and teacher John Mulvany.

“He was incredibly prolific and (made) work relating to the Iraq War and the right-wing media. His densely layered digital pieces were fantastic,” Mulvany said. “The drawings, films/animations and mixed media pieces point to his insatiable work rate and restless search for new methods of making art.”

The pair collaborated on an exhibit, “A Prayer for Clean Water.” They also created a magazine and an exhibit program.

“Paul was a force of nature in his ability to inspire and motivate people to build an art community ... At Shady Tree Studio, Paul helped to align several artists to rebrand the studio gallery as Pump Project Gallery, which went on to become a mainstay in Austin’s art scene for many years,” Mulvany said. “Paul was also instrumental in recognizing the need and opportunity to create and develop Cantanker, an art magazine which was instrumental in elevating Austin’s evolving visual art culture over several years.”

McLean later moved to California, where he earned two master’s degrees from Claremont Graduate University. While a student, McLean opened the Arts for Humans Gallery Chinatown in Los Angeles and virtual gallery, artforhumans.com.

Susan Joyce encouraged him to open the gallery. She is an associate of Survival Research Labs, founder of Fringe Exhibitions and a curator. Joyce described McLean as “someone you can always count on” and a “dear, wise friend.”

“Paul’s vision is completely unique. His work with the theory of the fourth dimension is the most intriguing and visually captivating,” Joyce said. “He does not create art that follows the art market trends ... These paintings are rather bright considering the gray of the Pacific Northwest where he resides.”

After graduating from Claremont, McLean started working on earning a doctorate degree from the European Graduate School in Saas-Fee, Switzerland. He is creating paintings to accompany his thesis.

He later moved to New York City, where he participated in solo and group shows.

“New York City has always been a place I want to make my mark. It still is. It’s the center of the art world,” McLean said. “But instead of becoming an art star, mid-career, Occupy Wall Street happened.”

McLean joined Occupy, a protest against economic inequality. He co-organized Occupy with Art, an “experimental 4D art production,” among other Occupy projects.



Photos by Alyssa Evans/The Astorian  
**TOP: Paul McLean sits inside his home studio. LEFT: A close-up of one of McLean’s paintings.**

white print ‘Walker Expeller,’ satirizes the algorithms on which the social-media parody of the American public sphere operates, where every statement has to be channeled in the one sexual-political direction or the other.”

### Finding Astoria

A few years ago, McLean searched for properties in New York for his family to move into. After searching for “Astoria rentals,” he found a website featuring homes in Astoria. He quickly realized the website featured Astoria, Oregon, instead of Astoria, New York.

“I called my wife Lauren and told her, ‘I found where we’re going to live.’ She said ‘What?’” McLean said.

In September 2018, they moved into a home near downtown.

“The timing of it was very opportune. Between the social and civil unrest, the pandemic and politics that emerged after Trump was elected, New York City is not the same place I really enjoyed prior to 2016,” McLean said.

Shortly after moving, McLean hosted a home art show, featuring dozens of his creations throughout and outside the home. Curated pieces still adorn every room in the home.

McLean is working on finishing his doctoral work. Since moving to Astoria, he’s explored different possibilities to showcase his art and collaborate with other artists and organizations. McLean hasn’t made definite plans yet but has considered partnering with a local gallery or renting space downtown.

“There are a lot of possibilities that haven’t materialized yet,” McLean said.

“Occupy was the most dynamic moment in art history of our generation, though that history pretty much is erased,” McLean said.

During the movement, McLean met artist, writer and professor Joseph Nechvatal. Nechvatal described McLean as a “multi-

dimensional artist and thinker.”

“I dig Paul’s work because I sense in it a blaming of the speed structures of information-flow for the ills of our time: the hyper-flow which we are all forced to (pretend to) communicate in today,” Nechvatal said. “For me, his art, like his black and



**A large painting of McLean’s, which he plans to paint over to create a new piece.**



**McLean discusses one of his paintings.**



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