

# ARTIST STATEMENT

My painting practice explores the parallels between the human body and the natural world. I construct fragmented landscapes that reflect the fragility, resilience, and transformation inherent in both nature and illness. These organic forms are collected, digitally collaged, and rendered in gouache on clear plastic sheets. The transparency of the material allows for layering and interplay with mixed media – often acrylic or watercolor on canvas or paper behind the plastic – creating a sense of depth and dimensionality. This transparent surface also serves as a quiet nod to the experience of invisible disability – present, but often overlooked.

Patterns of stripes run throughout the work—fallen trees, rock striations, rivers, and waterways – as a commentary on the brutality of our environment and a reference to the zebra, the international symbol for rare diseases. In medical training, doctors are taught, “When you hear hoofbeats, think horses, not zebras” – a warning against jumping to rare conclusions. But for those with rare illnesses, this logic can delay diagnosis and care. By embedding zebra-like patterns into the landscape, I push back against that erasure, using the motif to assert complexity, presence, and persistence.

This body of work is rooted in my lived experience with chronic illness. The fragmented waterways and striated forms mirror the physical and emotional terrain of navigating a shifting body—fluid, unpredictable, but enduring.



Cover: *Show Me Where It Hurts*,  
Molly Lastra

Left: *To Be Well*, Molly Lastra



**artspace** 201 E Davie St. Raleigh, NC • [artspacenc.org](http://artspacenc.org)

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## YEAR OF THE ZEBRA

Molly Lastra

08.01.2025 - 09.28.2025



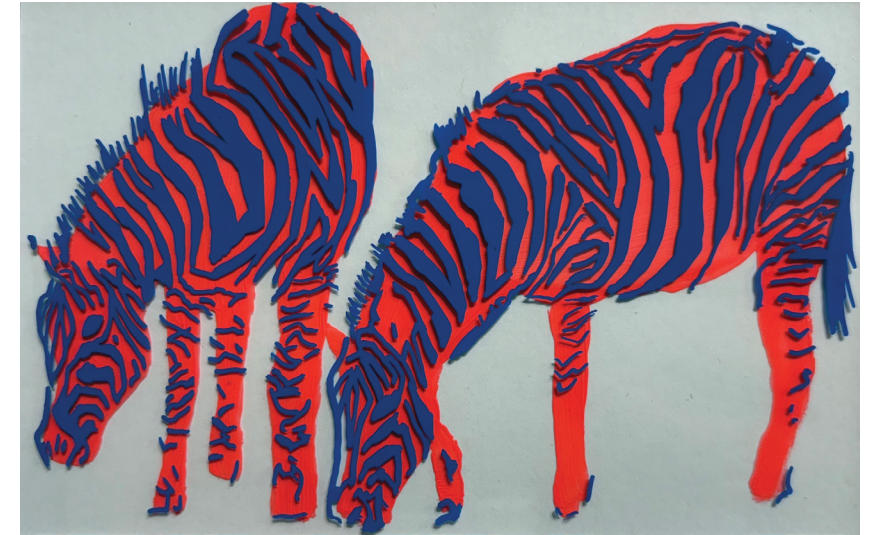
Above: *Laugh A Little*, Molly Lastra



**MOLLY LASTRA** is a visual artist whose work explores the parallels between the body and the natural world, reflecting the cyclical, ever-changing nature of both landscapes and the self. Living with a chronic illness, she draws on personal experience to explore themes of fragility, growth, and resilience through environmental imagery. Her paintings are shaped by a deep sensitivity to the body's rhythms and nature's quiet transformations.

Molly holds a BFA in Painting and an MS in Psychology, a dual background that informs her introspective and intuitive approach. She has exhibited throughout New England, New York, and the Southeast. Her achievements include a residency at ChaNorth and two individual artist grants from the National Endowment for the Arts. After fifteen years split between Boston and Charlotte, NC, Molly is now based in her hometown of Manchester, NH. She teaches part-time, balancing her studio practice with workshops and classes at the Currier Museum of Art, community outreach programs, and sessions in her home studio, where she fosters creativity and connection through art.

On right (top to bottom): *Fool's Paradise*, Molly Lastra; *You're Laughing, But I'm Not Kidding*, Molly Lastra,



**THE UNIVERSAL ACCESS RESIDENCY** is awarded each year to an artist who identifies as having a disability. The month-long residency provides funding, private studio space, and professional support for a national artist to produce a solo exhibition immediately following the residency at Artpace. The goal of the residency is to provide artists with the space and opportunity to devote themselves to their creative practice, and to amplify the work of artists in the disability community.

