Melissa Wallen — About

Melissa Wallen approaches painting as a relational space, where color, gesture, form, and atmosphere continually act upon one another. Her paintings occupy a shifting threshold between abstraction and representation, allowing forms to suggest landscape, body, vegetation, architecture, or atmosphere without fully resolving into any one thing. Wallen is drawn to these moments of unstable recognition, when an image begins to take shape while continuing to hold the possibility of becoming something else.

Perspective collapses, scale becomes uncertain, and distinctions between figure and ground, body and landscape, and abstraction and representation begin to loosen.

Landscape enters Wallen’s work not as a fixed place but as a condition, porous, mutable, and continually reorganizing. Drawing from memory, lived experience, and the physical sensation of moving through the world, her paintings can at times operate as indirect forms of self-portraiture, embedding personal experience within spaces that remain deliberately unresolved.

Across the work, Wallen constructs images that remain in a state of becoming. Familiar forms become strange, disparate elements coexist without needing to reconcile, and recognition remains provisional. Painting becomes a means of testing how a world can be constructed, how we locate ourselves within it, and how quickly that world can change.

Melissa Wallen — CV

B. 1987, Voorhees, NJ
Lives and works in Miami, FL

Education

2010 BFA in Painting and Fibers, Florida International University, Miami, FL

Solo Exhibitions

2025 “you are not an island”, MDD, Miami, FL
2024 Between Sleep and Sky, Baker—Hall, Miami, FL
2023 Worlds Behind You, Laundromat Art Space, Miami, FL

Selected Group Exhibitions

2025 From the Cup, Treefall, West Palm Beach, FL
Windows, Baker—Hall, Miami, FL
2024 NADA Miami, Alissa Alfonso & Melissa Wallen, Miami, FL
House in Motion, de la Cruz Collection, Miami, FL
People, Places, Things, online presentation V Projects, New York, NY
2023 Seeing Double, Clandestina, Miami, FL
2022 The BluPrnt, Bridge Red Space, Miami, FL
2011 Xerox as a Verb, Tomm El-Saieh Galley, Miami, FL
2010 Private Investigations: A Participatory Mystery of Found Photography, Mastodon Mesa Gallery, Hollywood, CA
Chrome Yellow, The Frost Art Museum, Miami, FL Off Leash, Nina Torres Gallery, Miami, FL
2009 Future Shock!, Black Mangrove Collective, Miami, FL
10 x 10, Site-Specific Performance, West Palm Beach, FL

Melissa Wallen — CV

2008 Feminazi, Black Mangrove Collective, La Cueva, Miami, FL
Swarm, Black Mangrove Collective| Miami, FL
Sleepless Nights, Shifting Light, Miami Beach Botanical Gardens, Miami, FL
Au, Go! Go!, Studio 1415, Miami, FL
5054, Florida International University, Painting Studio, Miami, FL

2007 Your Show, Florida International University, Painting Studio, Miami, FL