

## Multiple sclerosis fuels artist's work

Video	Audio
	---NATS piano ----
May Ling Kopecky	"When I'm playing music, and I feel like I'm able to, kind of, you know, just let myself express these things without really thinking too hard about it because it just kind of comes out."
May Ling Kopecky	"I've been drawing and painting since before I can remember."
	Something else started early in May Ling Kopecky's (koh-PECK-ees) life: multiple sclerosis.
<b>May Ling Kopecky</b> <b>Artist</b> <b>Plymouth, Minnesota</b>	"The first clear MS symptom that I had was when I was 13. I would bend my head forward, and I would get this electric buzzing sensation in my neck and spine."
	Like some MS symptoms do, that buzzing stopped in a few weeks. But at age 15, muscle spasms in her torso led May Ling to an MRI and an MS diagnosis.
<b>Eoin Flanagan, M.B., B.Ch.</b> <b>Neurology</b> <b>Mayo Clinic</b>	"Multiple sclerosis is a central nervous system disease where it's called a demyelinating disease. The myelin is the insulation that goes across the nerves.  And what happens in multiple sclerosis is your immune system attacks that myelin and tears it away, and then the nerves don't work as well. And that can be in the brain, within the spinal cord or within the optic nerves."

	While MS is more common among adults, it can affect children, usually as teens.
Eoin Flanagan, M.B., B.Ch.	"And May Ling, when she first came, was able to be diagnosed at Mayo Clinic with an extensive evaluation, and then also was placed on one of the disease-modifying treatments."
	Now as an adult, May Ling takes newer, more effective oral medications that suppress MS attacks.
Eoin Flanagan, M.B., B.Ch.	"Her MRIs have been stable, and she's not had any new attacks or new relapses."
	Gait monitoring is a tool that's helping clinicians, like neurologist Dr. Eoin (Owen) Flanagan, detect early changes in the way that patients with MS move. Tracking gait changes with new wearable devices may provide insights to help clinicians make treatment decisions.
May Ling Kopecky	"When I was being tested, I was like, 'Oh, I'm kind of walking on this foot weird sometimes, aren't I?'"
	May Ling deals with MS symptoms such as heat intolerance, brain fog and fatigue. She uses art to share what it's like to live with a chronic disease that may be invisible to others.
May Ling Kopecky	"I'm communicating with the viewers about, you know, what my experience is. And I

	always find it super rewarding when somebody else who comes up to me and says something like, 'I see myself in this work.'"
	For the Mayo Clinic News Network ...
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	... I'm Joel Streed.