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QUEEN OF ROCK CHIC

MELANIE GREENSMITH

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CREATE WHAT YOU WILL

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Despite a condition that renders her unable to visualize imagery, Peta Tranquille is producing stunningly unique works of art.

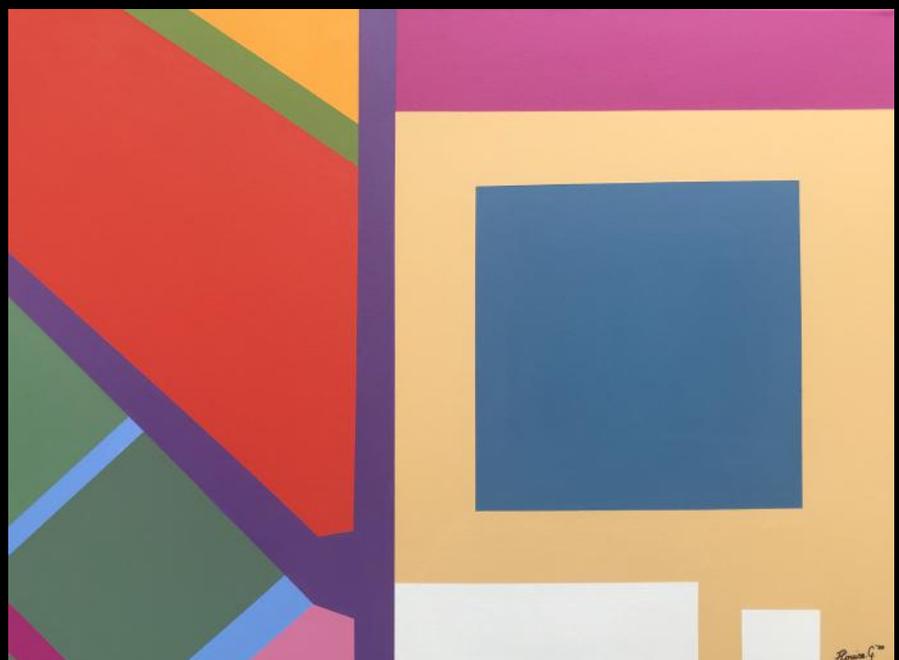
How did you discover your passion for cartographic art?

My passion for cartographic art and aerial views began when I started studying Cartography at 15. I have always drawn, but an introduction to aerial photography changed how I looked at the world; it wasn't until after a 30-year career in the mapping industry that I focused on my art full time. That was when I realised how much cartography had influenced my life, and I began to fuse it with my painting and, more recently, photographic studies of footpaths.

What is Aphantasia, and what impact does it have on your work and life?

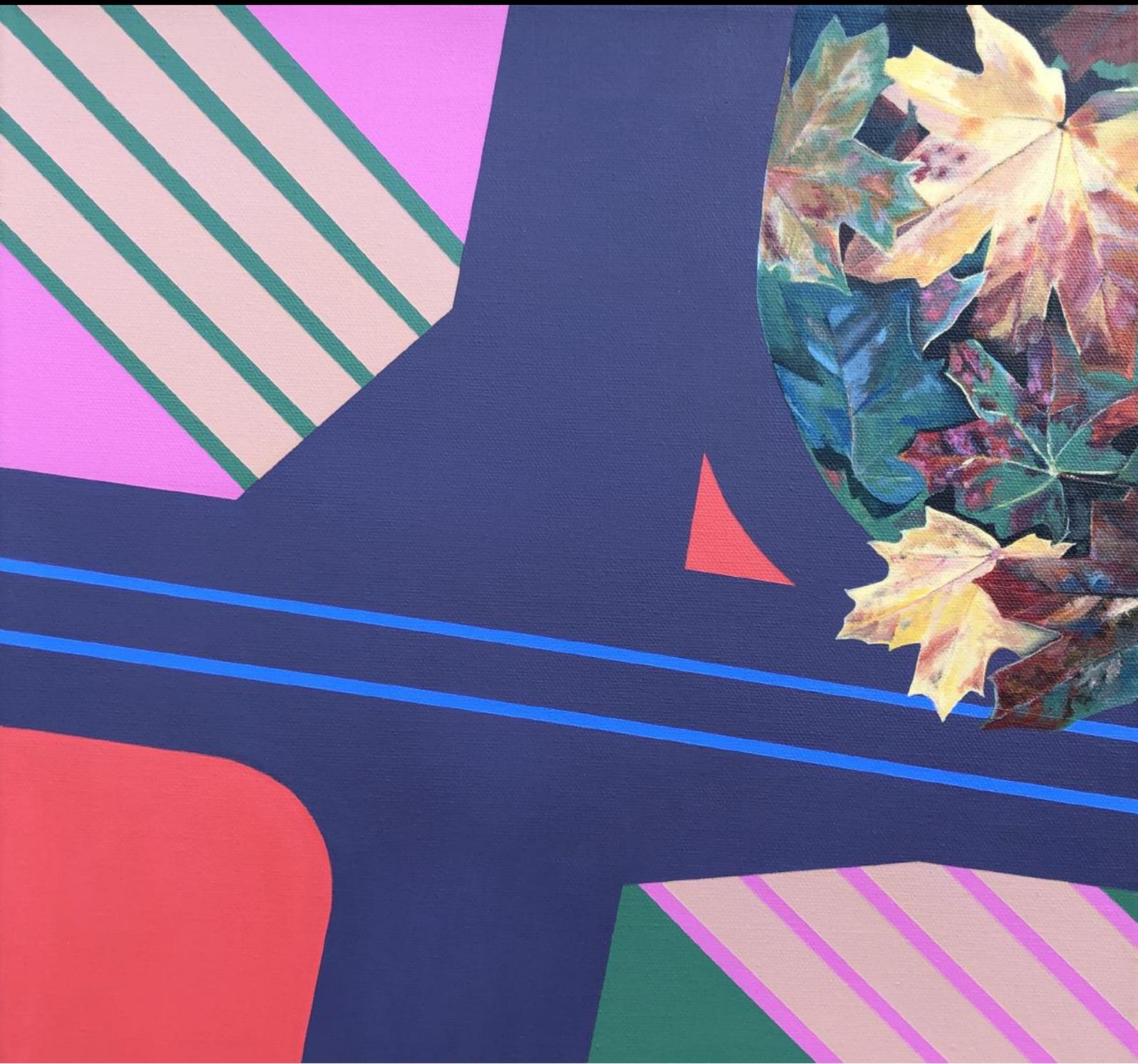
Aphantasia is a complex condition, but in simple terms, it is the inability to visualise. So, I am therefore unable to imagine artworks and instead have to work through a lengthy process. However, using formulas, photographs, google maps, and some fuzzy fragments of memory, I can design how my paintings will look on the iPad. This enables me to play with the composition and different layers until I am satisfied. It's at this stage I mixed my colours and paint the digital version on canvas.

In addition to the effects of Aphantasia on my creativity, it also impacts my life. I also have SDAM, which is Severely Deficient Autobiographical Memory. This means I have little memory of my childhood and past and need visual prompts, such as photographs, to help me remember events and people in my life. While it sounds frustrating, and it was for a long time, I have devised my methods of working around these issues.



What has been your favourite commissioned piece thus far?

There have been a lot of commissions and many that I barely recall. There was a large piece I did of Darling Harbour in 2020, and although I liked the final painting and would say it is my favourite because of the process of working with the client. It took three months of discussions to arrive at the final composition, colours, and canvas size.



Is there a key demographic interested in cartographic art?

To date, the people most interested in my work are executive men and those people with mathematical or structural interests. Other people interested in my work include those with interest in travel and geography.

Which platforms or channels do you use to sell your art?

The only place I have my art available is on my website, as I prefer not to inflate my prices to cover commissions that online galleries charge. My art is also leased across several Melbourne offices with a local business called Colourspace. I also regularly exhibit in shows around Melbourne and promote on social media.

What do you find most difficult in running your business?

I don't consider anything difficult when running my business, as my husband and I have had a drafting business for more than 15 years. I am fortunate enough not to rely on sales and can focus on finishing my study towards a Fine Arts Degree and the concept behind my current works.

Any tips for how to get your mind into its creative zone?

Aphantasia means I am rarely in a creative zone, so it is difficult to suggest any tips. However, I like to use different visual prompts, such as Art Oracle Cards, cards I created with random words, colours, and drawings. Selecting a few cards makes it possible to find some inspiration; however, it doesn't always work for me. It may seem strange, but exercise, such as tennis, running, or a walk with music, always helps put me in a great frame of mind for creating.

What is MAVA Inc?

MAVA Inc is an acronym for Melbourne and Victorian Artists Inc., a Not for Profit organisation that I founded in 2020. The original idea began as a Facebook group in 2019 to find some local artists for coffee meetups. Before long, the group had attracted nearly 2000 members from all over Victoria and is one of the most supportive and interactive Facebook groups I've been a part of. Due to the success of the group, an organisation was registered, and a website was designed offering annual memberships at \$36. Membership benefits the artists, such as exclusive exhibitions, artist directory listing, features on social media, and dedication from myself and the committee to do everything we can to support a network of local artists.

Which other visual Artists do you look to for inspiration?

I don't believe other visual artists inspire me; however, I do have several that I admire for different reasons. M.C. Escher is someone I admire because of his attention to detail, precision, and perspective. He also has a drafting background, just like me. Piet Mondrian is an artist I have admired from an early age. The simplicity of his colour palette, colour choice, and structural elements satisfy the perfectionist in me. Some of the other artists I admire are Wassily Kandinsky, Sean Scully, Lazar Khidekel, Julian Opie, and Jeffrey Smart.



Who's music have you been listening to lately?

I am a massive fan of music, in general, but my favourite playlist the last few months includes EDEN, Regurgitator, Juice WRLD, Tame Impala, Jon Hopkins, Billie Eilish, Björk, NF, and The 1975. When I run, I have a different playlist, including Armin van Buuren, Andrew Bayer, deadmaus5, and Will Sparks. When I am not listening to my many playlists, I listen to Triple J.

VISIT PETA TRANQUILLE

