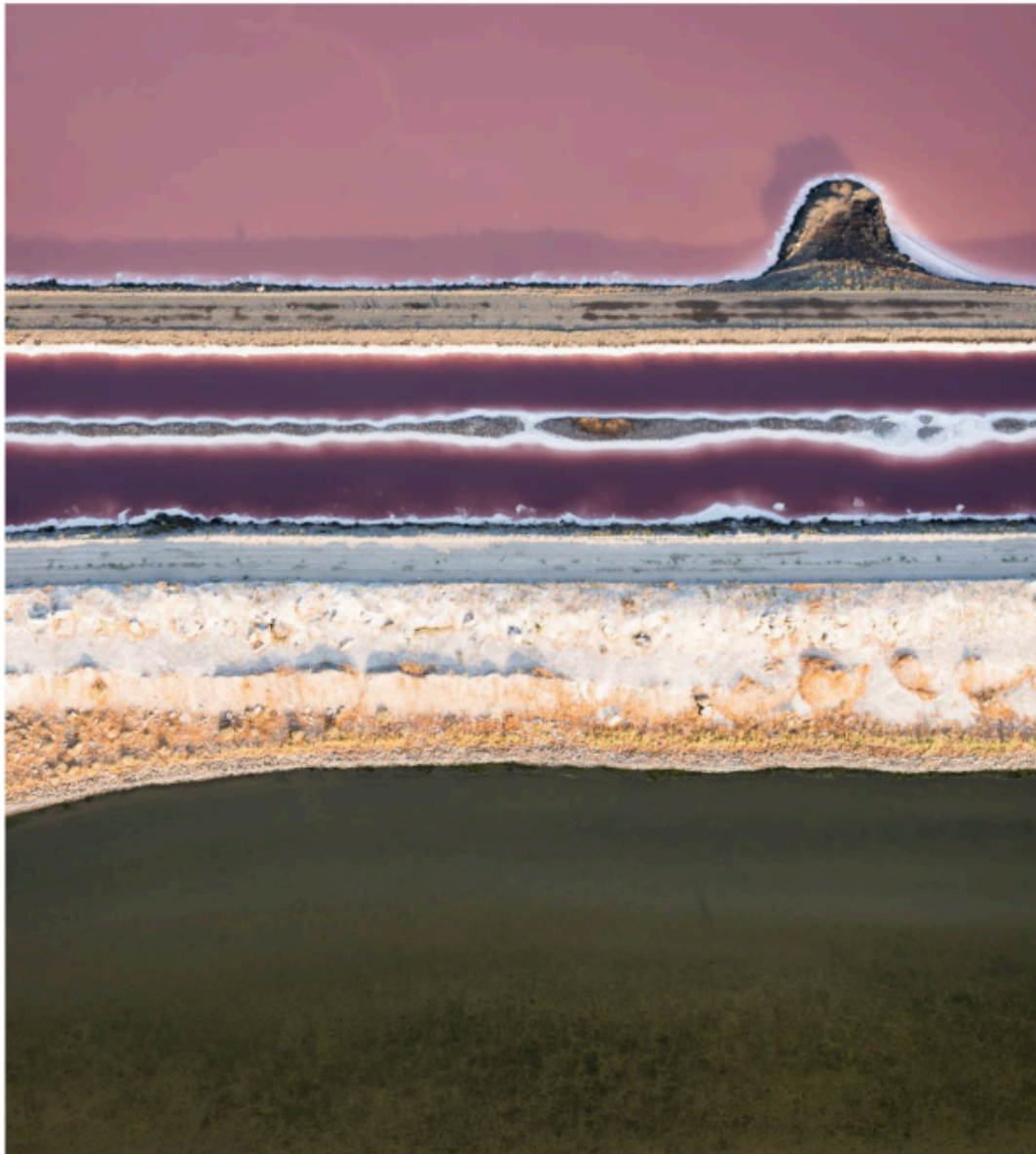


CREATIVPAPER

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/CHANTAL HEDIGER

As we rush through our lives at breakneck speed, we never pick up the finer details. Always in a rush to get somewhere or meet a deadline, the nuances of life pass us by. Artist Chantal Hediger wants us to slow down, reconnect with our roots, nature and our innermost feelings. Inspired by flora, fauna and emotions her work has evolved over the last two decades from pure abstraction and figurative to an evolved genre combining the two. We interviewed Chantal where she talks about the different mediums she uses and discovering a little more about herself with each work of art she creates amongst other topics.

Out of the different mediums that you use, do you have a favourite and why?

My choice of mediums are always changing, depending on the work I am focussing on.

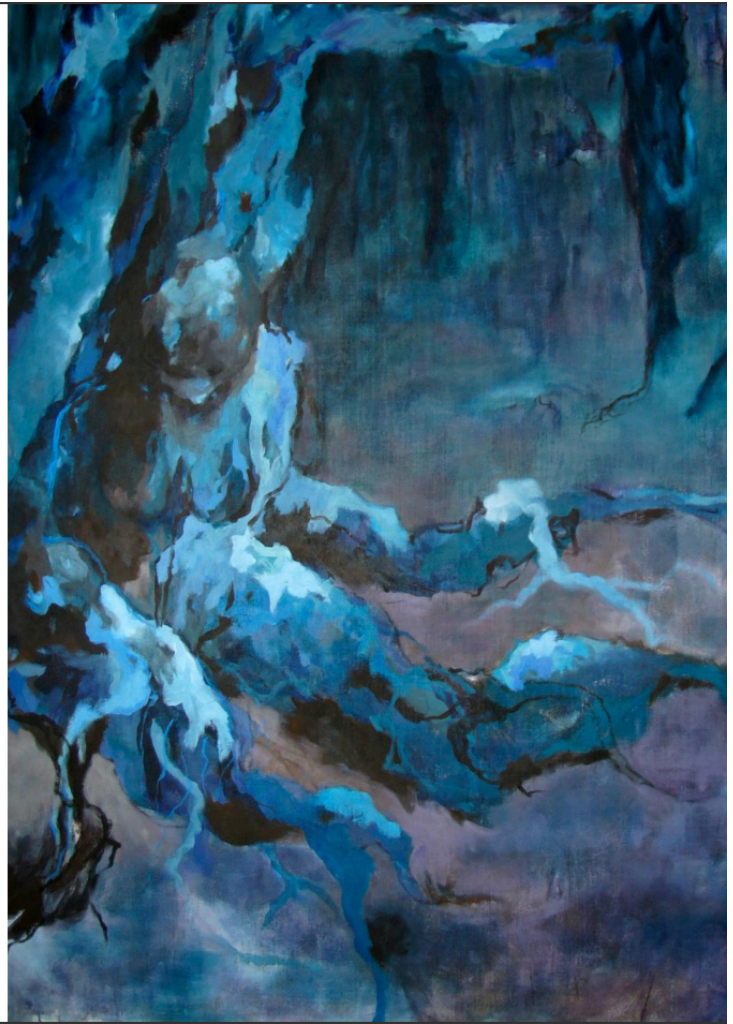
If it is a painting on canvas, I prefer acrylics, because it's characteristics, match my way of working.

When I work on paper – I love to use different mediums, like Charcoal, oil sticks, pencils, china markers, acrylics, oil colours etc.

Is it true that you started off as an abstract painter? How did your work evolve as you moved towards a more figurative aesthetic?

Actually, my very first paintings had a more figurative touch; then they evolved very quickly to abstraction. At that time I was fascinated by colours and forms, also different mediums.

As an autodidact, I experimented with everything that came to mind or what was necessary to express. Like a child, I followed my instincts and emotions, and I was



exploring the world of art. But after many years of working in that manner, I got to a point where it wasn't enough anymore, and my path took me in 2011 to a more figurative way of working, basically back to the roots.

My studies as an art therapist and my mentor showed me another level. Now it was not just emotionally expressed what had to be expressed, in addition to this, themes, subjects and personal interests were now flowing into my work. I wanted to tell stories and get a message out.

So today my artistic intention is to make or pull out something that is at first glance not immediately recognisable and thus generates a secret. I am drawn to emotions, nature, roots and trees, archaic and tribal references, daily happenings and mythology. My goal as an artist is to instil awareness for our roots, our connection with nature and our innermost feelings.

What other passions do you share apart from art?

Art is my main passion. But I do love nature, being out in nature and looking at nature as the truest artist we have on this planet. I am

drawn to beautiful things, and I am passionate about interacting with people.

Where has your work headed more recently?

My Work merges mythological themes with our daily lives, emotions, the human being and nature. I like to dig up stories from ancient times and find parallels between then and today.

Would you say you discover a little more about yourself as an artist with each piece you work on?

Yes, one can truly say that. I not only create art with a message but I also experience more about myself. For instance, art showed me the way to stay focussed and concentrate on what is important, to continue and to be patient with my work and myself.

And to dig deeper and deeper. We have so many opportunities in life that we most of the time are just scratching a bit on the surface. But it is much more important to dig deeper because then one will get to the source of things and the true treasure.



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Above: Geborgenheit III

We believe you lecture in painting and design, could you tell us a bit more about that?

As I mentioned before it is also a passion of mine to work with people. It is such a privilege to be able to do so. In one way I accompany students on their creative path and on finding their true exceptional voice in art, not copying but digging deeper. And on the other hand, they accompany me as well, because I always get so much in return.

When I see that students evolve and pursue their path, it fulfills me tremendously. So it is a give and take. When I teach, I don't teach a method or technique; instead, I try to create exercises to get students to get to the bottom of their souls, their inner voice and courage to carry it out into the world. Because in art you can only be unique by remaining faithful to oneself, everything else has already been out there.

What would you say comes first? The subject or the idea?

That is a tough question since the creative process never follows a strict rule. I think that there first is something that you are interested in, that evolves into

collecting everything which connects with that feeling, then there is the kiss of the muse whereas the subject is getting clearer and all of a sudden there is the idea to put it on canvas. But one can also go the other way round – For me this process changes all the time, and I don't think one can separate the two.

What message are you trying to convey to the viewer through your body of work titled "Nature"?

Nature is a title on my website to separate the portraits and paperwork. But in all my work nature plays a pivotal role. Nature is the greatest artist on this planet. Nature inspires me.

I have a series of work where I show a connection between trees and the human body. My message in those works is, that we should take care of nature and our planet. Because without nature we humans are lost. Also, when you look at the psychological aspect. A tree is comparable to a human, roots vs feet, stem vs body, crown (treetop) vs head, etc. So even when I paint a face, there is nature showing up in one way or another.