

W*NDERWITCHeART

•ARTZINE•

#1



BY ~
MONIQUE
BARRETT★

W*NDERWITCHART

ARTZINE

#1

I would like to acknowledge the traditional owners of the country in which I live and work, and offer my respects to the custodians of the Kulin nation. I pay recognition to the Djaara and Taungurung people and hope one day they and those whose languages were erased, may reclaim their song and sovereignty.

March 2025



WELCOME TO MY FIRST
(PROPER) ARTZONE!

The look that
inspired the
painting!

Hi, I'm Monique
Barrett and I'm an
artist!

she/her



self portrait

I thought I'd introduce myself in case you've come across my art and wanted to know more about the person behind it.

I'm 24 and art has been a lifelong passion of mine. I have AuDHD (autism and ADHD) and while that used to be something I was ashamed of as a child, now I'm very proud to be neurodivergent. When I was very little, I communicated things to my mum like wanting to wear my favourite pair of jeans by drawing pictures and giving them to her. Art has always been the way I could communicate to the world and to myself, even after I learnt to also use words.



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It is my dream to be a professional artist.

Art has forever been my biggest passion, but I always assumed it couldn't be more than just something I did on the side. I assumed that I would finish high school, go to university and get an impressive job – and then everyone would be happy and I would prove to myself that I was like everybody else, despite my autism.



The first drawing I did in the psych ward. (May 2017)

CW: mental illness

But things turned out very different: In 2017, when I was 16, I reached new lows in my depression after experiencing some serious trauma, and I attempted suicide, leading to a psychiatric ward admission. Everything changed – I dropped out of school and fell apart. The biggest thing that kept me okay back then was my parents saying I could pursue art.



#monofaces
Instagram hashtag I used for this challenge

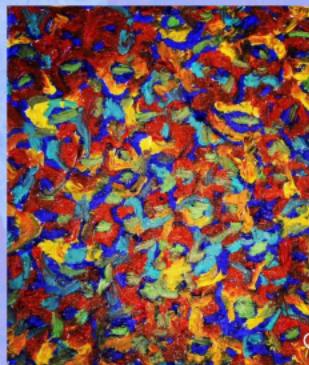
The last drawing I did in the psych ward. (May 2017)



With this permission, I felt like I had purpose. I painted all day and every day, and it was so necessary to me being okay. This was the time I started the 100 Faces Project, because I adored painting portraits and the goal of an exhibition was so motivating. The dream was to paint 100 faces on 100 different canvases.

My favourite thing to do was to grab a canvas and start painting a random face in impossible colours. Often there were no references – even though that would've helped me to improve – just pure feeling, and through this passionate paint-slashing, I was introduced to art as therapy.

Can you see faces in this? (Sept 2017)



Later that year, I met my partner Bea and I really got to celebrate being queer. I loved loving a beautiful genius who also believed in art as therapy. Bea's writing and art inspires me to be a better artist and writer, and they have always been my biggest supporter both in my dreams and my mental health. I would not be where I am now without them.



Clay pride pins I made
(September 2021)



Depiction of "the alien" in art therapy (March 2022)

This was especially true when I experienced severe psychosis in 2018, and needed a lot of support. This was when I first hallucinated "the alien" on the road as a car passenger, late at night. I saw an impossibly tall humanoid creature with no facial features and no clothes, and this creature became a monster that I thought was following me, mind controlling me and wanting to harm me. I was incredibly afraid back then. I stayed in a psychiatric ward for nearly two months and was later diagnosed with schizoaffective disorder.



Alien 1 (August 2018)

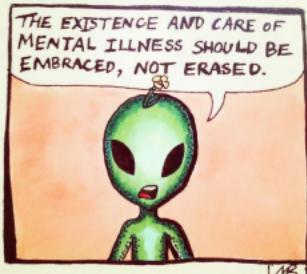
Things were hard when I got home. Just like when I came back from the psych ward in 2017, everything was different. Things that I used to be able to do, I couldn't do anymore.

What I could do though, was create art.

When I was in hospital, I painted nonstop. I'm so grateful for being given gifts of paint and canvases back then, as they were necessary for me to process. These two paintings were representations of my alien hallucination, and paintings like these were very therapeutic and essential to my recovery.



Alien 2 (August 2018)



(December 2018)

I didn't want to be afraid of the "alien" anymore. I decided I wanted to change how I saw that hallucination – rather than something menacing, he could be my cute little alien OC who talked about mental health and had a flower growing on top of his head. By rewriting the alien, I was able to take control and not be scared. And that is how my character and comic "Pluck" was born.

My Dreams

While my life turned out very different than I thought it would, I love that I'm pursuing art just like my child self would've wanted. Pursuing art was a choice I had to make as to be okay. I will forever work hard and do what I need to do as to be a professional artist, while respecting the limitations my conditions bring me. I have many dreams that all involve art in some form and I want to share what they are with you.



I'll start with a dream I've had since I was a child, that I've now actively started - having a market stall to sell my own art! My beautiful aunty Chris and I worked together to share our first market stall on February 23rd 2025, and it was successful!

Markets



It was at the Castlemaine Artist's Market and a lot of loved ones came. Chris sold her amazing crochet creations and I sold paintings, and things like stickers and prints. We plan to continue doing a market every month! This is a huge step towards my dreams.



Pluck

Pluck is my comic that is currently being written and he is also the safe, compassionate character that I created as to rewrite the scary alien in my hallucinations. I always wanted to create a comic that was meaningful and powerful. I want it to focus on emotional intelligence and mental health, among other things. I've got big plans for Pluck and over the years it's gone through many changes.

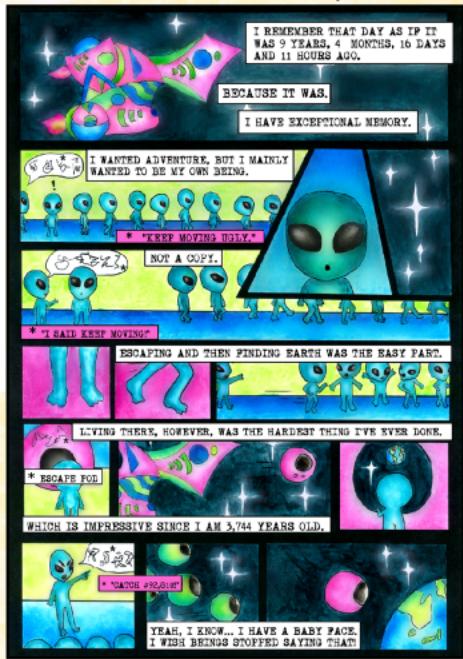


June is now the second main character (July 2024)

All the Pluck stickers were made in 2021-2023



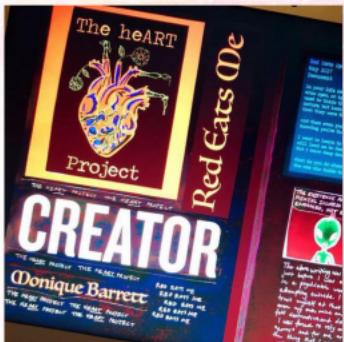
A main character was Red, who has now been replaced (March 2019)



I'm starting this comic over, but I still like this old page from 2020

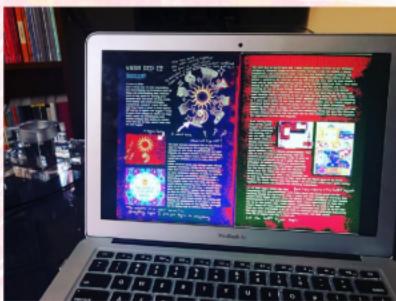
The heART Project

Book
Show
Game
Film
Soundtrack



(March 2019)

A massive dream of mine is completing 'The heART Project,' which is a linked series of works that are all different types of media. Something about me is that I can't stick with just one kind of art. And why should I? It has always been my dream to be a published author, to write, record and edit a film, to create my own game, to animate my own cartoon and more. I want this project to reflect who I am as a person, and for it to have themes that explore what I believe in and what is important to me. I want each part to be something I'm proud to have created.



I played with how the heART Book could look like (March 2019)

This is going to take many years to complete and I'm very much at the very beginning of creating this project. Right now, I have only got the start of the book's first draft, but I am very excited to see what it all becomes.



Exhibition



Exhibition preparations – the products I made for that exhibition I ended up using for my market stall!
(August 2021)

One of my dreams is to have another exhibition and to be able to enjoy it fully. I would love to experience an opening night and to reexperience the magic of being surrounded by my own art. So to make that happen, I've got to paint!

I was going to have my first exhibition in 2020, but because of COVID, it had to be postponed.

So I finally had my exhibition in August 2021, but COVID still meant that most people couldn't come. A lot of work went towards preparing for that exhibition, so there's a part of me that was disappointed, but my friends and family did so much to support me then, so I'm very grateful.



This exhibition was called "Faces" and the paintings are from my 100 Faces Project (August 2021)

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The heART House

I remember when I was 17, my dad and I searched for community spaces for people with mental illnesses that offered support, and we didn't really find much. This led me to dream of one day creating a space like that myself.

I'd want it to be welcoming, to be a great source of art therapy, to have creative events suited to neurodivergent needs and for it to be inclusive, especially for people of colour, and for the LGBTQ+ and disabled community.



(July 2021)

When I met my partner, they had a similar dream – a community space for art as therapy. We would dream together about "the heART House," or on an even grander scale, what they called "MOTA" (Museum of Therapeutic Art).



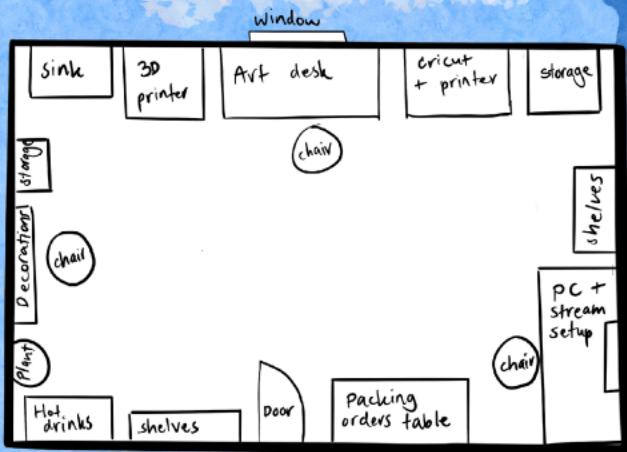
My handmade Pride Pins (September 2021)

It would have a gallery space, a cafe, and even a mascot. It's so wonderful to dream as big as you can, because if you fall short, you'll still land somewhere great. I don't know if anything like this will ever happen, but it sure is worth it to try.

Professional Art Studio

Another dream I have is to one day have an art studio that is separate from my home. I love the idea of "going to work" to a separate building as to do all the different kinds of art I hope to make part of my job as a professional artist.

That includes making traditional art like painting and drawing, making products for markets and my online store, streaming on twitch, recording and editing video content for YouTube, making my comic, writing, packing orders, and more. I have many interests and while making traditional art will always be my number one love, I will always be an artist of many passions.



A sketch of my dream studio from
June 2022

Patreon & Ko-fi

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I have been a patron of a wonderful artist called

Leigh Ellexson (IG: @leighellexson) since 2021, so for years now I

have received art postcards and stickers, as well as witnessed Leigh have my dream job as an artist on patreon. In my view, supporting another artist to do this is paying

it forward, in hopes it could one day happen for me too.



This is not on any of my socials
(July 2023)

Ever since I started being Leigh's patron at the start of 2021, I've also been secretly writing posts as a patron creator too. It's not as active as it would be if it was actually public, but I've been sharing secret art, WIPs, behind the scenes of my art process and my dreams, writing pieces and more. I did this in hopes that when I'm successful enough to share my Patreon to the public, it'll have a lot of content already ready for any possible patrons. I dream of the day of sending monthly art to people who would actually want that.



I have started a ko-fi too, where I'm sharing my Pluck comic and this zine. This one is actually public already. It'd be amazing if I could do this too.



My Dream Of being a Professional Artist

Me with my month-long challenge of drawing every day (November 2022)

I talked about this already, but I think I'll finish this always growing list of art-related dreams and goals with what a lot of it ends up leading to - I want to be a professional artist. This means being able to do art as my career, and hopefully earning enough from it as to support me and my household. However, money is definitely not the focus; the focus is being able to pursue art completely, while still keeping in mind the limitations I do face.

I didn't expect I would be lucky enough to treat art with the same degree of importance as it has within me. I hope to share the progress of all my dreams and future ones I haven't even fathomed yet. This artzine will document this process and hopefully show my journey of things like having my first few market stalls to publishing my first art book, or having my first opening night for a future exhibition. I want nothing more than to be an artist.

This is not my first artzine...

I've tried to make an artzine many times in the past and I'm excited to make this one actually work. Ever since I was a child, I loved the idea of making my own magazine or newspaper. I remember being delighted and making many mock newspapers about nothing when I found newsletter templates on Pages, back around 2010. I love writing, art and design so I know I'm going to love making an artzine.



↗ One of my past artzines that has never been printed more than once.

After my first market stall went well on February 23rd 2025 and I was so full of hope for my art business, I decided to invest in a good printer! My printer at the time could only print black and grey, with colour prints being marked with unwanted lines, plus the quality was not great in the first place! A good printer meant that I could make new and better products for my art business, including this artzine!



Recent Art



Recently, my sister's husband commissioned me to paint a watercolour painting of a wedding photo for their first wedding anniversary. He wanted a watercolour because the gift theme of the first anniversary is paper. I thought that was a very thoughtful gift and I had a lot of fun working on it. The hardest part was probably all the details in the greenery; that took a long time. I added metallic watercolours, so things like my sister's wedding dress shines in certain angles. I'm so glad that they liked it. Watercolours are a challenge!



As I said before, I have made artzines in the past, but this is the first one that

I'm planning to officially share to others. One thing I have learnt from making those past artzines is to not limit what you can write about.

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My cat Jasper yawning next to all the paper bags I ordered for markets. (March 2025)

Each issue might be different - this one focused on me and my dreams, but others might focus on recent art, or market preparation adventures,

or my thoughts on art, or discussing my old paintings. I want to be completely free with what I make this to be.

With that being said, thank you so much for supporting me and my dreams by reading this artzine and I really hope you liked it. I'll see you next time in issue #2!

Thank you for reading.



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*This issue talks about the person behind the art
and their art-related dreams and goals in life.*

*Come join my journey in
becoming a professional
artist.*

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