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# INTERVIEW WITH LOCAL ARTIST AND VEGAN PRIVATE CHEF MB BOISSONNAU

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by Ashley Berry

Say what you will about the superficiality of social media, but without it, I'm not sure that I would have ever connected with local artist and vegan private chef, [MB Boissonnault](#). I first came across MB's paintings on Instagram a handful of months ago and was immediately captivated. After a number of "likes" and a blue heart emoji-filled comment left by yours truly on a post of a painting from MB's latest wave series, MB and I connected over our shared passion for healthy food and set a date to meet in person.

When I met MB at her studio space in Venice, I was greeted by the barks of her two little dogs, who settled down quickly after giving me a few good sniffs, and MB's relaxed, welcoming vibe. She gave me a little bit of background on the space, which was originally a whiskey distillery and then a Coke bottling plant before its current incarnation as an airy, 9-studio work space for local artists, and then we settled in to talk art, wellness, and everything in between.



As we chatted, I noticed that MB has a rare openness about her. While she's far from being gabby and, in fact, carries herself with a certain degree of reserve, she speaks in a candid, matter-of-fact manner as she shares personal stories and her thoughts on her dualistic work life. To be honest, there were many moments during our conversation where I was quite distracted by MB's paintings that lined the walls of her workspace. Her recent series of land-and-waterscapes are simultaneously earthy and ethereal, and they have a depth, movement, and vibrancy that causes something to stir inside of my chest and makes me only want to stare more deeply into them.

After a couple of hours of discussing everything from the importance of nourishing food to the current state of politics to the ways that artists relate to perfectionism, MB's assistant arrived and, while I could've easily spent several more hours chatting with MB, I knew it was time to let her get back to her work.

Since our meeting, I have found myself so inspired by the beautifully creative and

deeply authentic life that MB has built for herself. She infuses so much passion into everything that she does, and really, there's nothing more lovely to see than that. Read on to find out more about MB's thoughts on her local community, wellness, creativity, and inspiration in her own words...



### Interview with MB Boissonnau

**You're a longtime resident of Venice and have a strong sense of connection to the local community. Can you share a little bit about what Venice means to you as well as what spots top your list of favorite local places?**

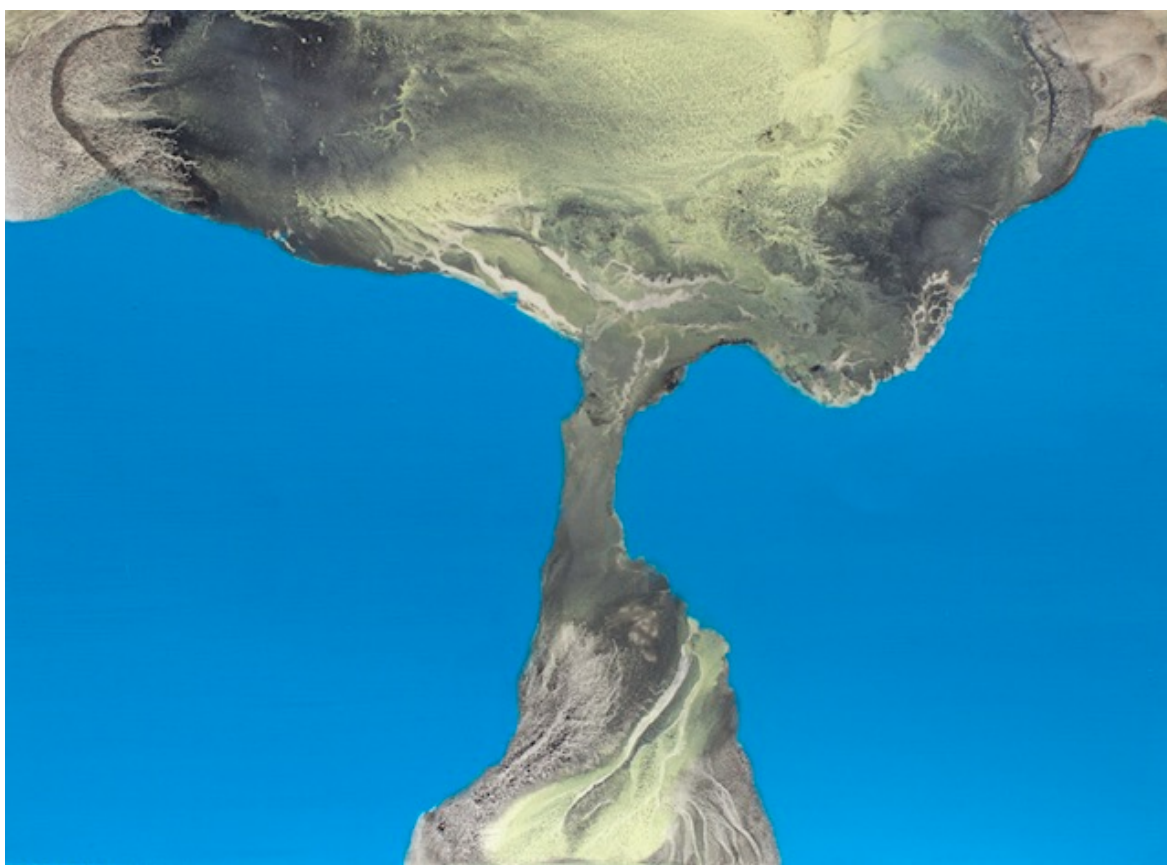
This is the 1st place I've ever considered to be my "home", after years of moving to

different countries. I majorly connected to artists like Ed Ruscha and Larry Bell back in my 20s while studying at the Art Academy Duesseldorf, without knowing that it was Venice that was a big part of the story—they were just "L.A. Artists" to us at the time. It was the light force in that work that struck me—probably related also to living in somewhat dreary Europe, where it can be gray for weeks and weeks on end.

The mix of people, income-levels, outlooks on life, and style just struck me immediately as perfect, which is why I am so heart-broken when I see the lower and middle-classes being bought-out and priced out here. If you love monotone, move to Brentwood—why are you coming here and buying in Oakwood and then complaining about drug-dealing on your corner?

The fact that Hal's is slowly being re-created in the old Primitivo space with Casa Linda to boot is really making me happy! I can roll right down there from the studio or home and it's feeling like a good place to be, finally. As a vegetarian/90% vegan/Gluten Free-er, it's not that easy to go out and enjoy a meal. I get used to eating a "small plate" and having a cocktail, but that gets old. I'm a big farmer's market shopper, so Venice on Fridays and Mar Vista on Sundays are key for keeping my small circle of clients fed.

I don't really shop for "stuff" anymore; it bores me unless it's food. Or paint ;)



**Creativity is a fundamental part of your work life, both as an artist and as a private chef. What do you find to be most likely to block creativity and what do you find to be most likely to support the creative flow?**

I don't suffer from blocked creativity...and I know I'm fortunate. About 10 years ago I had a revelation that was like a punch in the face. "Your time here is finite." That solved that. Good, healthy food is what really keeps me going and I'm working more than I ever have. If I don't eat right, I'm toast the next day. A nice sleep is also so, so huge and under-valued!!

**As a vegan private chef, what advice would you give someone who is considering becoming vegan? Are there any particular resources or tools you would recommend?**

I'd first and foremost say, "DON'T BELIEVE THE HYPE!!" You will be so full of energy, you WILL get enough protein, and you will love it, once you start to feel how your body reacts. There are a lot of naysayers who want you to think that "it's so hard". To me, hard is feeling like dog doo-doo every day and eating things that ruin your

well-being. I have so many recipes that are just as easy as any others—cooking is an endeavor of love, no matter what type of diet you call it. I love [Rich Roll's new book \*The Plant Power Way\*](#). It gives a very good A-Z of ideas and I'd say definitely spring for that high-end blender; it's a life-changer!! I also cannot live without my pressure-cooker. Soaking grains and nuts is a really good way to up your nutrition, and then there's my new passion: fermenting!! I make my own bitters and that has been so fascinating and great for the gut, too.

**I know that you are very conscious of the ways in which what you eat supports your physical health and overall wellbeing. What are some other ways that you support your own wellness?**

There are things that I do to keep my balance that no one will ever know about because they are very deep belief systems that have worked for me over the years—but they're not part of the standard...not sure how to explain it, but it's almost like a remote-viewing of my own life and those around me, to see how I'm operating and how I'm responsible for anything and everything that arrives on my doorstep. As a painter, it's normal for me to spend 8-10 hours a day alone, with a version of reality that may or may not be working. My job is to figure out how to connect with source and make the piece follow suit, so my whole life is ritual and stress-releasing while being very physical. I am very lucky that this is work for me, because it's a daily exploration of the planet and its energy. That is painting for me.



**Your art has gone through a striking evolution over the years, but there are certain consistent elements that give your work a unique and identifiable style. What or who would you say has had the most prominent influence on who you are as an artist and what would you cite as some of your greatest sources of inspiration?**

There are many stretches in my painting career where everything was gray and tough and militaristic (thank you, Germany!!), and now it's this wild combo of California-meets-Europe with traces of my home state, Vermont. I think the light here by the water has been the biggest influence, and the old-guard of CA artists who talk about that in their work a lot have been huge for me: Larry Bell, Vija Celmins, Ed Ruscha, and Richard Diebenkorn. I saw the [Turner at The Getty](#) a few months back and it was like taking acid—the best paintings I've seen in some time and utterly modern. Lisa Adams, Mark Bradford, and Rebecca Campbell are three of my favorite artists working in L.A. right now, and Barnaby Furnas is one painter I cannot get enough of.

**What is the best compliment someone could give you as a private chef? As an artist? And as an individual?**

It's the same for all three: That what I gave was Love. Last night I fed a new client who is 46 years old and is recovering from several cancer-related surgeries, and I loaded the meal with bright orange, fresh turmeric, and ground black pepper (which unleashes the chemical potential of the anti-inflammatory powers of turmeric), and I made sprouted mung bean & basmati rice pancakes with carrot-top pesto. She texted me later and said, "What an extraordinary meal and thank you for gearing it towards my healing. You are a flavor master." I'd like that to be the case in all aspects of my life.



If you're dying to have one of MB's prints or paintings in your home, her work is available for purchase in local shop, [Late Sunday Afternoon](#), on Lincoln Blvd. in Venice, on [MB's online shop](#), or you can [contact MB](#) directly for inquiries!

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**G.Norman Boissonnault** 6 days ago

She is so brilliant , and knows what's good for you and can cook it good.She is a great painter. she is one of the best.

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