Hi there! My name's Laura Daligan and I am an artist, a practising witch, I work with the tarot and I'm a historian.

It is hard because you get – again, it’s two ends of the spectrum – they’re either the ugly hag, warts on nose, you know, or the sexy seductress that can't be trusted. And you know, that's the, often the depictions you get. I mean, usually it's the hag and, you know, that is usually the image that comes up. And I find that really sad because it's demonising the old wise woman, really. For me, out of all the depictions of witches, I, I think it's absolutely stunning, absolutely beautiful. And in many ways, you know, quite accurate. She's got a chalice there. In a ritual we’d use a chalice to connect with the elements of water. And she's got a wand there. And in a ritual we'd use a wand, and that's the element of fire, and it’s to cast circles.

The one issue I have with it is she is powerful, she is magical, but she's also a figure of almost fear and the idea that feminine power and witchcraft is something that is disempowering to others because you've got, you know, you've got Odysseus in the background – or Ulysses – looking a bit anxious, looking a bit nervous. And then you've got the boar next to her, which is one of his shipmates that's been turned into a boar and probably sacrificed. And there’s the idea with this one that maybe she's turning them into their true selves. You know, their inner nature becomes their outer nature. And with the boar it’s a symbol of, in a lot of myths it's a symbol of, you know, power and victory and the fact that she's sort of defeated it, I think is a very good touch there.

It is, there is something that he's captured in this painting, which probably the model was really feeling as well – that it is what it is to be connected to, to something greater, something more powerful than yourself and channelling it. And the feeling of that, which I do relate to. That when I have been in rituals and you are working with the goddess or you’re channelling the goddess in a ritual, you become that other, that, that higher energy and that other worldly feeling.
So, I don't think it's meant to create the depiction of a bad woman, as it were. But there was that little bit of maybe this power and sexuality she holds can be quite fierce. And maybe the artist sees himself as Ulysses in the background, a little bit afraid of what's going to happen next [LAUGHTER]. She is still, you know, a subject of the male gaze, that she's there very sexily dressed. Yeah, I mean, it's a tough one because of the power in that energy and the fact that witches don't always, you know, they don't always practice with clothes on – it is kind of realistic in a way. Yeah, it's, it's a strange thing because usually magic is nowhere near as glamorous as any images depict. It's work. It's a craft. It's like learning any skill you have to put the work in.