



PROFILE – Geoffrey Stein

MFA Fine Art (Painting), The Slade School of Fine Art, London



If you're under the impression that you need to be a young conceptual genius to graduate from one of the UK's most prestigious art schools, 46-year-old New

Yorker Geoffrey Stein is an impressive exception. That he even enrolled at the Slade is remarkable enough, having given up his initial design studies in New York for more vocational pursuits.

"I definitely felt like I needed to go back to school and learn a trade," explains Stein of his early twenties. "I went to law school, passed the bar, joined the union and worked for years happily."

It's a familiar story perhaps, but unlike many of us, Stein never gave up on a life-long love. His drawing classes continued and a little spousal encouragement proved the decisive factor.

"In 1999, my wife said: 'If you want to do it, do it, but if you don't, never talk about it

again!' It took some tough love, but she's been incredibly supportive ever since."

Such a journey feeds into his paintings, with a loving devotion to his subjects and a lawyer-like need for a truthful resolution evident in the experimental strokes of his graduation pieces.

Stein has returned to the US now but having studied on both sides of the Atlantic, he is better placed than most to assess the differences in teaching methods.

"At the Slade I think there is incredible respect for the students and the undergraduate programme is self-directed research, which you rarely get in the States until you are MA level."

And of the MA courses, he adds: "In the States, it would be formal theory courses and art history courses. At the Slade, you pick it up through the studio, through what your tutors suggest you read. For me, that's the method I prefer."

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