

During that time, and speaking as a classmate of Nick's, his camera and the photos he captured were a function of our relationship as a class. We recall specific moments in which dozens of us were gathered around one computer to view Nick's photos from Prom or Spring Fest. While we all might like to think we supported Nick by cherry picking photos of ourselves from his albums and framing them for our personal shrines, online or otherwise, Nick remembers that "Mrs. Bonin was my champion. She's an incredible resource, always believed in my art, believed in me as a human being. Not every teacher understood me at the Abbey, and she saw me for who I was."

Prior to the Abbey, Nick toted a Polaroid camera, gradually progressing to a point-and-shoot, and then in his sophomore year, he graduated to a truly professional camera. It was then that he started shooting everything. "It was just fun at the time," he reminisces, unaware that it could one day be his career. And while shooting freelance for Givenchy might sound like 'making it' in the traditional sense, Nick makes it clear that ultimately he wants, "to be trusted to create things of my own vision, to shoot a campaign for a major publication," rather than executing other people's vision as he does now.

As for sources of inspiration, Nick cites Sarah Burton, current creative director of Alexander McQueen, as "a genius, connected to her art...I would love to document that," as well as the visionary photographer-director Harley Weir. Like her, Nick has no desire to bow to tradition, asserting, "I don't want to play by the rules." It is this irreverent mindset that landed Nick a spot in *Dazed* magazine's lineup of their featured 'Incendiary LGBTQ Youth' last year. Of this fact, Nick finds that "my queerness allowed me to tap into an infinity that now comes through in my work, allowing me to be anyone and no one."

Reflecting on his path into the tumultuous world of professional photography, Nick concludes, "Nothing I studied in school got

me to where I am. I asked for the job that I have now, asked people that I'm scared of, actually." As for advice for aspiring photographers and advice he would have given himself in the beginning, Nick says, "Don't hesitate, trust in your ability, and ask." Though this may be the first time you're reading of Nick DeLieto, I have no doubt that you will bear witness to his work and recognize it for the Godiva dark chocolate that it is. Whether you seek out his work yourself or one day pick up a copy of *Italian Vogue* and recognize the name on the cover, keep Nick DeLieto on your radar.

MAGGIE MORAN '07

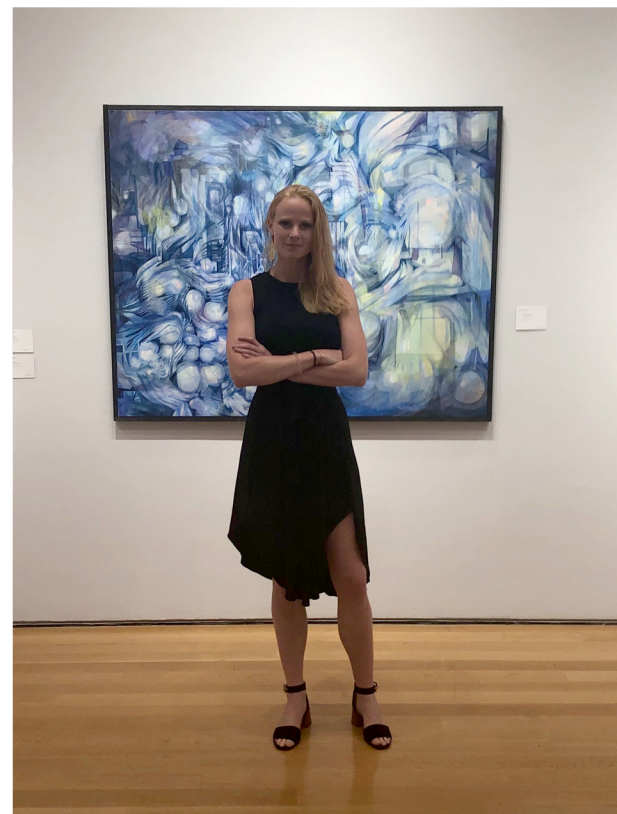
There are few people as enmeshed in the art world as Maggie Moran. Not only is she the client digital experience manager for Christie's Auction House in New York, she has also established herself as a painter in her own right. While a day's work at Christie's would be enough artistic fulfillment for most of us, Maggie paints every day after work for at least an hour. Should you view her work on her website (mgmoran.com) or on her Instagram ([mgmoranfineart](https://www.instagram.com/mgmoranfineart)) you'll likely notice her distinctive style replicated throughout three mediums. "The work I'm doing is pretty cyclical," she explains—rotating between figurative, expressive, and oil pieces. Generally, she is "moving towards applying traditional methods to abstract, non-traditional subject matter." Closer inspection of this assertion proves revelatory, as all of Maggie's work appears to be united by this cohesive effort.

Maggie's ascension to her current position at Christie's is inextricably entwined with her career as an artist. Following her college graduation she was happily surprised to find almost immediate commercial success, selling several paintings and thinking, "OMG, this

is so easy!" However after a six-month dry spell during which none of her paintings were sold, Maggie pivoted into a gallery director position in York, Pennsylvania. There she "found an affinity for digital organization of people's collections" that would suit her, not realizing that Christie's loomed in her future.

Maggie eventually moved to New Jersey to be closer to NYC and took a sales job at a gallery in SoHO. There she quickly discovered that sales was not her passion. Shortly thereafter, Collectrium, a subsidiary of Christie's, contacted her about a digital cataloging position, referencing her work back in Pennsylvania. Thrilled by the opportunity to reenter this realm of the art world, Maggie worked her way up from contracted employee at Collectrium to a full-time position in Christie's emerging digital sector.

As for her own art, Maggie finds that the new position has given her more flexibility to focus on her artistic work. She still sells her paintings, often by word of mouth,



Maggie Moran '07

enjoying success despite the limited marketing she's done for herself. That said, her work was recently shown in a gallery in New York. Furthermore, her paintings can be seen adorning the walls of the Christie's offices on the 20th floor of Rockefeller Center – acquired by the gallery during the staff auction.

At Christie's, Maggie cites the people she works with as one of her favorite parts of the job. For an artist and art lover like Maggie, to be “surrounded by museum-quality work twenty-four-seven,” as well as “access to people who know so much about those quality works,” is certainly a dream. Of course, she admits that some auctions are more fun than others. Overseeing the sale of a George Michael collection is perhaps more stimulating than, say, a late night wine auction for buyers in Hong Kong.

As for her goals as an artist, Maggie asserts, “If I could paint all day, every day, for the rest of my life, I would.” The process and study of painting clearly enchants her as she compares painting to an “unsolvable math equation that you're always just getting close to,” and that in painting, “there will always be something new to learn, something new to paint.” Maggie's passion for painting is contagious, nearly inspiring me to drop the pen and pick up a brush.

Undoubtedly, certain vexations permeate both realms of the art world that Maggie occupies. When it comes to Christie's, Maggie finds that often the “art world isn't all about art,” and that art itself, at times, “has a certain amount of pretension.” She believes that “art should be accessible, at least in conversation, to as many people as possible.” As for the tribulations she's experienced in her own foray into professional painting, she finds issues that are not dissimilar to the art world at large. It seems galleries oftentimes subtly imply that artists should be “selling yourself first and your art second.” As Instagram followers and industry connections factor into curatorial visions, the system can be difficult to navigate. It would appear that

galleries often fail to see their role in this pretension that the artwork itself so often seeks to subvert. In Maggie's own words, “It's not a blind tasting.” And yet the galleries are also an indispensable resource to the city's artists; she hopes to find a gallery that's a good fit for her work.

With New York functioning as the de facto mecca of the art world, the city often influences Maggie's work. Since her arrival, she's found “architectural elements in my work,” that weren't there before, as well as “colors that have become more muted,” the respective results of the blue-gray, geometric architecture of the skyline. Almost every day, Maggie runs “along the Brooklyn pier overlooking Manhattan,” and certain “things I see have become focal points” in her paintings.

Asked about her time at the Abbey, Maggie reminisces on the newly built art building, and delighting in its magnificence. Maggie recalls a “freedom to explore different ideas I had without constraint.” To illustrate this point, Maggie recounts a story from Mr. Hobbins' Political Science class. Maggie remembers doodling portraits of her classmates and even Mr. Hobbins, which amused him to the point that he asked to keep one for himself. And given the fact that the School was so small, “people knew I loved painting,” resulting in opportunities such as painting a giant mural for a School play, commissioned by Mr. Bragan. Certainly the Abbey was structured, “but with a personal touch,” she adds fondly.

Though Maggie has always painted, she long considered it to be solely a hobby. In fact, she planned on pursuing a career as a doctor, perhaps focusing on plastic surgery, and completed three years in the pre-med track before an epiphany in her junior year. Realizing that nothing made her happier than painting, Maggie decided to pursue it full time. Undeniably, it's worked out for her so far.

Maggie has a hard time choosing a favorite painting of hers, saying, “It depends on the day.” Eventually she decides on a piece entitled “The Storm,” which currently

hangs in a bank in York, Pennsylvania. Of this piece, she says, “I didn't have a concept when it started,” though painting it soon after hurricane Sandy nearly demolished her hometown, she recognized that the emotional elements of that loss appear in the painting itself. As for artists who inspire her, she is quick to rattle off several names, including Julie Mehretu, George Condo, Dana Schutz, Agnes Martin, Christopher Wool, and Umberto Boccioni. Lauding their originality, Maggie is moved by the paths these artists have blazed in an industry too often reliant upon tradition.

Asked what she might tell herself when she began her foray into professional painting, Maggie replies, “I don't think I'd tell myself anything,” knowing that, “I needed to feel that fear of not knowing what's next.” Later in our conversation she amends that advice slightly, saying she might tell herself, “chill out, it's all going to be ok... I wouldn't have listened to that but I'd like to hear it.”

And as it happens, it is all ok. Given Maggie's rapid success in the art world thus far, it would surprise no one if she continued her upward trajectory.

From the outside, New York may seem like some grotesque, eternally hungry beast churning through one starry-eyed wannabe after the next. However, it is important to remember that it would not be the paradigm of creativity it is today without the original vision and passionate dedication of its most daring citizens. New York's iconic character is derived directly from the colorful, imaginative characters it hosts. Counted amongst these characters are Frank, Peter, Nick and Maggie.

These four Abbey grads are proof positive that a creative career can be possible even in the most wonderfully ruthless, beautifully chaotic city on the planet.