

# ÇaFleureBon Profiles In American Perfumery: Brian Goeltzenleuchter of Contraposto Living + Olfactory Memoirs Draw

 [www.cafleurebon.com/cafleurebon-profiles-in-american-perfumery-brian-goeltzenleuchter-of-contraposto-living-olfactory-memoirs-draw/](http://www.cafleurebon.com/cafleurebon-profiles-in-american-perfumery-brian-goeltzenleuchter-of-contraposto-living-olfactory-memoirs-draw/)

July 11, 2015

*Brian Goeltzenleuchter, San Diego, 2015*

**Profile:** I was born in Poway, California, which is a suburb of San Diego. I was very fortunate to have a mother who believed that learning and socialization came through play. We didn't have a lot of money, so play was improvised and self-made. There were always musical instruments around. There were props and raw materials – stuff that didn't seem to have a purpose until you invested it with one. My mom ran a daycare center out of our house; it was mostly comprised of kids from single-parent families. This meant that, while I had very little privacy, I always had actors for my plays or members for my band.

*Brian directing and acting in a front yard play*

My earliest scent memory is of making “burglar soup.” My father was a warehouseman who used to work the night shift. When I reached the age where I was scared to go to sleep without him around, my mom would pull out the spice rack, the blender, and some dish soap, and we would make a stinky concoction that we would pour into a really nice cup and leave out on the kitchen table before bed. She told me that if a burglar entered the house he would take one drink of that, get sick, and leave. Even now, I still have an aversion to garlic powder!

*Contraposto Boutique at Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego*

When I was 14 I made the conscious decision to be an artist and a teacher. I didn't consider either to be work. I had a profound distaste for conventional approaches to work and adulthood. This was due in part to observing my dad feeling constantly demoralized by his employer. It was also due to coming of age in a border town in which the distribution of wealth was incomprehensibly unfair. Art offered a secret world in which I could test propositions, explore unpopular ideas, and converse with great minds.



### *Brian working on a composition*

Art turned out to be an incredibly good fit for me. Fellowships and scholarships paid for my graduate and undergraduate education. During college I developed a way of working that antagonized both the idea that there was a “hierarchy of senses” and the notion that the senses should exist in isolation. I began blending essential oils and infusing them in sculpture that took the form of soap and candles, some of which are still available through my ongoing company-as-conceptual-artwork, [Contraposto Living](#).



### *Institutional Wellbeing exhibition at 1708 Gallery, Virginia*

I became a university professor in my mid-twenties. When I received tenure and promotion to associate professor at age 30, I suddenly realized I had been affiliated with educational institutions in a full-time capacity since I entered kindergarten. I worried that I was getting complacent, so I resigned my post and began working exclusively on art.



### *Sillage at Santa Monica Museum of Art*

I have been making olfactory artworks for museums and galleries since 2006. There is no “typical” way I treat scent in a museum context. I have diffused it through HVAC systems in grand olfactory installations ([Institutional Wellbeing](#)), microencapsulated it for tactile interactions {

[c \(pronounced /k/\) Wellness Centre](#)}, and literally sprayed it on museum patrons ([Sillage](#)). My current project, [Olfactory Memoirs](#) collects written scent memories of childhood, which will be used in olfactory performances in the near future. I invite anyone who has a story to participate in this project.



### *Avant Nez bespoke perfume*

Other than a line of bespoke perfumes I make under the label Avant Nez, I don't make perfume as such. While I use many of the same techniques, processes, and materials as perfumers use, the questions I am asking are specific to the history of art. However, I am indebted to the indie perfume community for its willingness to share its knowledge and resources with me and to answer what must seem like absurd questions from a crazy artist.



*Brian finalizing an accord*

**On American Perfumery:** I'm so enthusiastic about and thankful for the current state of indie perfumery. In some respects it reminds me of the "secret world" that art once was before higher education turned MFA education into a glorified little league in which everyone gets a trophy. The indie perfumers I have met over the last decade are some of the most passionate, articulate, and creative people I have ever met. I

recently participated in an event with the [FRAGments](#) indie perfume collective, and those folks epitomize this spirit. Not only are they driven to take on all aspects of their craft – from the juice to the packaging to the distribution – but many of them are asking philosophical questions of the nature of scent. [Éva-Marie Lind](#) is another great example of this. In addition to her deep experience in perfume, her explorations in eco-sensory design have reached into the health and wellness communities. This type of work is creating new paradigms.

*John Cage – Bacchanale for prepared piano (1940)*

**Favorite American Artist :** I draw constant inspiration from John Cage, as well as many of his contemporaries from the experimental wing of the American avant-garde. That era was a time when the borders between artistic and scholarly disciplines were extremely porous. I love the cross pollination of ideas. Cage's creative inquiry seeped into everything he did: music composition, writing, art, performance, and teaching. He was such an influential teacher.

**Brian Goeltzenleuchter**, scent artist and founder of [Contraposto Living](#)

*Buddha Candle, Venus of Willendorf Soap, and Les Fauves Home Fragrance*

Thanks to Brian we have a draw as follows: For a [US registered reader](#) we have a swag bag of scented goods from Contraposto Living's line of home accessories. To be eligible please leave a comment with what you found fascinating about Brian's path. Draw closes July 14, 2015

You can follow Brian on Twitter [@bg\\_projects](#)

Please like

[CaFleureBon Profiles in American Perfumery](#) and your entry will count twice.

**We announce the winners on our site and on our Facebook page, so [Like Cafleurebon](#) and use our RSS option...or your dream prize will be just spilled perfume**

**Leave a Comment**

