

## From the Law Office to Painting the Stars of Late-Night TV

BY PAUL GRONDAHL



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**“It’s very rare for a middle-aged professional to be able to do something completely different. I’m lucky to have a supportive, understanding wife.”**

Geoffrey Stein '86 likes to call himself “a recovering lawyer,” which makes sense when you learn that he received an MFA from the Slade School of Fine Art in London in 2007 and has been painting full time for 17 years.

“I paint to find out what I think about the world, to discover the things I do not have words for,” he wrote in an artist’s statement on his website ([www.geoffreystein.com](http://www.geoffreystein.com)).

Growing up in Westchester and Amherst, Mass., he made wooden and welded sculptures as a kid, and was a photographer for the local newspaper in high school. After studying product design at Parsons School of Design, Stein graduated from Bard College with a degree in sociology. At Albany Law School he met his wife, Patricia Poglinco, a classmate. A romance blossomed when both worked together on the *Law Review*. “It’s very nerdy, I know,” he said. Both landed jobs at New York City law firms. Stein clerked at the Third Department before coming to the City where he practiced insurance law at various firms, ending up at Mendes & Mount. Poglinco focuses on securities law at Seward & Kissel.

“My wife has been at the same law firm the entire time, she’s very happy and is a successful senior partner,” Stein said.

Stein struggled to strike a balance working as a full-time lawyer who made art on the side. For many years, he squeezed in art classes at night, on weekends and during vacations. His wife got tired of hearing him complain about being a lawyer. She said that if he wanted to leave the law, he should go to art school full-time.

“But if I didn’t take the chance, she didn’t want to hear me complain about being a lawyer again,” he said. “I needed that tough love to make the leap.”

Stein trained in figurative painting at the New York Studio School before being accepted at London’s Slade School. He is represented by galleries in New York and London. A recent solo show in Pound Ridge, N.Y., gained media attention for Stein’s portraits of late-night comics, including Amy Schumer, Jimmy Fallon, Samantha Bee, and John Oliver. Stein’s portraits incorporated newspaper clippings, magazine articles and other printed material that related to the subjects of his collage portraits.

He works in an artist’s studio in Manhattan’s Garment District, a short subway ride from their home in Greenwich Village. “It’s very rare for a middle-aged professional to be able to do something completely different. I’m lucky to have a supportive, understanding wife.”