MY SOMERSET

DANIELLE FEIN is an art curator living in the village of Bruton where she runs her gallery FEIN Collections.



PHOTOS: DANIELLEFEIN

You're from New York, how did you come to find yourself living in Bruton, Somerset?
I 'blame' my husband for my love of Somerset. After moving to London to study at Sotheby's Art Institute in 2016, the arrival our daughter during Covid led us here. My mum-in-law lives in Pilton, so he claims to be 'local.' Here, I forged FEIN Collections: seven international contemporary fine artists – one from Somerset.

Tell us about your experience as an art curator
FEIN Collections was conceived over 20 years ago: artist David Hansen and I were chatting in New York: 'Dave, one day I am going to have a gallery and promote the hell out of your work.' I was in graduate school at the time where I specialised in art law and Holocaust Claims Restitution and Reparations as well as provenance research, working to help Holocaust survivors and their heirs. I kept my promise and today run FEIN Collections in Bruton.

What does your usual day look like?
This is a 24/7 job, across seven different international time zones, as well as school runs for my daughter – the most precious part of my day, hearing tales from her expansive imagination.

Running a business on one's own is madness between administration, accounts, customs paperwork, etc. The best bits: representing great artists, meeting people, and pairing clients with life-long-loved acquisitions.

What type of art inspires you most?
It's like asking what music or books I prefer: Chopin enslaves me. So does Hendrix. I harbour passion for so many different types of art: Malevich, Titian, Dada, Duchamp... Each work must 'make sense' to me – simply put – which is very much influenced by instinct. I'm inspired by artworks that teach me something and move me in a way with each day's changing light and mood and circumstance to wholly enhance the breadth and depth of my escape into the manifestation of another's vision.

What do you love about Somerset and why?
Somerset is heavenly: historic villages and towns, rolling landscapes, freedom from the congestion that choked me in London. A healthy place for my daughter to glow. And I'm a huge fan of the tractors!

Why do you like living in Bruton?
I love the community in Bruton and enjoy my daily chats with local business owners including Bruton Pharmacy, the Flower Shoppe, the Record Store. St. Mary's Church is right across the street from the gallery and I'm working on a poetry reading/display with them. And Cellarhand; the best wine shop with the nicest proprietor to have as a neighbour. We're right next to yummy Godminster Cheese too.

Where are your favourite food and drink venues?
Being part of the community is important to me. For lunch, my husband and I often meet at the Sun Inn. It's an honest place where people can just unwind and be themselves. Food in Somerset is out of this world. For date night (whilst adoring Briar!), our happy place is The Old Pharmacy: cosy and comfortable, beautiful décor and the team just make us feel at home. Thank you to The Newt: we love taking our daughter there for ice cream and to run around the gardens looking for pixies! The Creamery is stellar also.

What are you personally looking forward to in 2026?
What next? I look forward to gaining more traction with the gallery, seeing the artists gain the recognition and success they deserve. The next exhibit is going to be amazing. ●
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