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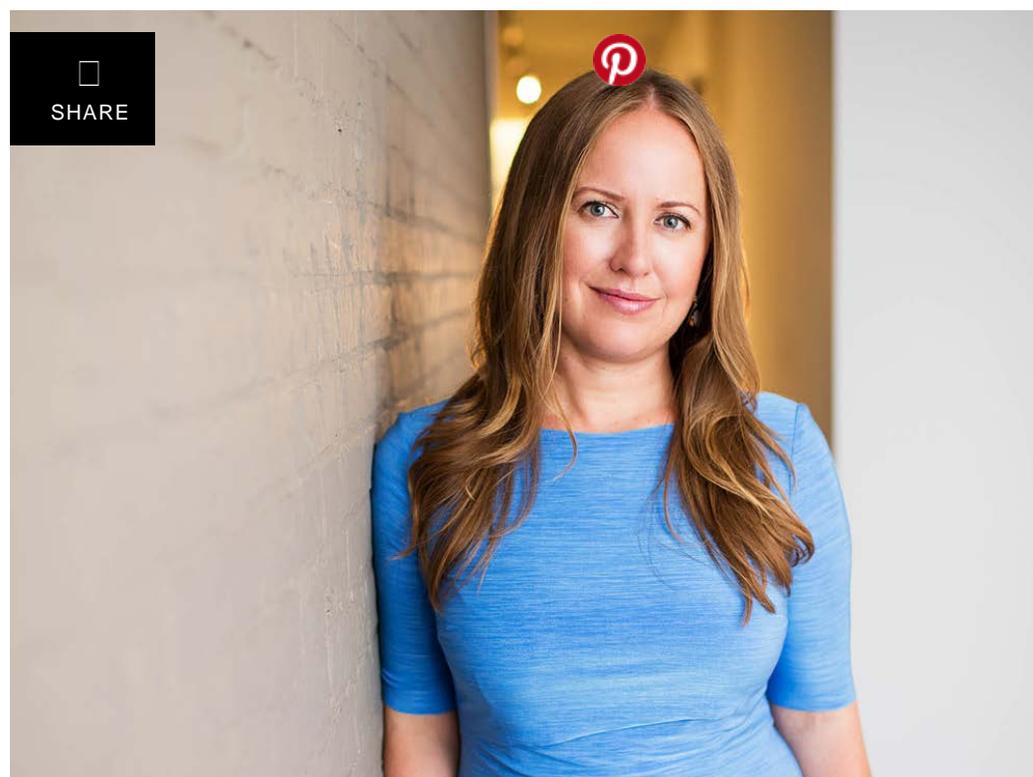
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Bridgette Mayer on 'The Art Cure' & How She Hopes to Empower Young Women

By Michelle Mass | August 22, 2016 | [People](#)

We caught up with Bridgette Mayer to chat about her new memoir, what her foundation will focus on, and why she feels such a connection to art.



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[Bridgette Mayer on 'The Art Cure' & How She Hopes to Empower Young Women](#)



To say that [Bridgette Mayer](#) had a tough upbringing is an understatement. Despite living with her troubled mother, who was a drug addict and alcoholic, and being thrown into the foster care system at a young age, Mayer never let that stop her from pursuing her lifelong dreams.

Now as the only person from her biological family to attend college, Mayer not only went to school but excelled at Bucknell University, before hurling herself into the captivating and thrilling world of art. Then in 2001, she opened her namesake gallery right here in the City of Brotherly Love at the age of 26, and continues to work with the same energy and passion that propelled her at the start of her career today. The successful business owner nurtures her fiery passion for helping young women succeed in her field with the creation of The Art Cure Foundation, and details her inspiring life story in a new memoir.

Here, *Philadelphia Style* spoke with Mayer about *The Art Cure: A Memoir of Abuse and Fortune*, and how she plans to leave her footprint in the art world.

Tell us about what made you want to write your first book.

BRIDGETTE MAYER: I wanted to write a book to share my experiences from growing up in a tough family environment: going through the foster care system and adoption, and being able to pull my life together in an incredible way. I ended up being the only person in my natural family to go to college, and then went into the art world at a young age. Being in the arts is one of the toughest industries to be in—and I want to share that journey with artists and young women who might need inspiration and mentorship to realize that they can create a successful career in the art world.

Your earlier childhood was filled with difficult experiences. Can you tell us how it shaped who you are today?

BM: I used to wonder why I came out of my childhood in such a positive way as it was an utter nightmare. I was lucky to be adopted into a wonderful family at the age of 9, and was exposed to great experiences. I learned about work ethic through working on my adopted dad's farm growing up [...] As I got older and went to college, I knew I wanted to create an incredible life for myself and made that my focus. I was able to work 60 plus hours a week and focus, as I knew that going backwards was not an option for me. I felt that I owed it to myself and my adopted family to be the best I could be. After having success in college and in business, I have realized now for me, the important thing is what my contribution to the world is, and giving back.

In the first chapter you discuss your earliest memory of color. Can you recall the moment when you realized you wanted to dedicate your life to art?

BM: The first chapter of the book is incredibly intense, and when I wrote it, I realized that at that age in my life, art was a safe haven for me, something I could do to feel more secure in the world. I didn't have one moment where I said I wanted to dedicate my life to art; I kept having various professional moments that led me forward, and I had to rely on my drive, work ethic, and trust that this was my path. I didn't have a lot of support at the time, and I think most people were not sure my gallery would succeed when it opened in 2001. The more I kept moving forward with it, the more I [knew] it was what I was truly meant to be doing professionally.

How has your gallery changed in the last few years, and how do you see it changing in the next few years?

BM: This past May, I celebrated 16 years of being open on Washington Square. When I was featured on Anderson Cooper's CNN program, "On the Rise," my business exploded in 2003,



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and I had artists and clients from all over who were interested in what I was exhibiting. I was then focused on emerging Philadelphia artists, and my curatorial focus was abstraction and process-based paintings. In 2008, I expanded my program to include artists from outside of Philadelphia, including New York and LA, and in 2009, I further expanded my program to include artists from overseas. I created an artist-in-residency program here, and invited artists from outside the US to come live and work in Philadelphia and exhibit in my gallery [...] I also facilitated three local artists doing overseas residencies, which created a major impact on their work.

Right now, I shifted my business to a private, by appointment only gallery, and am focused on global projects with eight Philadelphia artists and eight artists from around the US and Europe. I have also been helping younger artists, coaching small groups of artists, and working with artists one on one. I'm [also] working on a seminar that I expect to launch this fall.

Tell us a little about your consult business, and how it ties in with your gallery.

BM: After working with a handful of serious collectors over the years, many of them started to ask me to consult for them in their corporate spaces and in other homes they had around the US. I was also approached by several Universities, including Temple, to help them create various collections on campus. I realized that I loved the challenge of consulting on large projects. With my knowledge of the marketplace and also my contacts, I have also been assisting individual clients with collecting museum level art or selling museum level artworks. It is challenging and I love that aspect of it. I have worked on some exciting sales in the past several years the most exciting to me being a rare Pollock painting that sold to a client in NY.

How does artwork inspire you?

BM: Artwork has always inspired me whether by the making of it or collecting of it. [At home], I love being surrounded by the unique pieces I have collected over a 20-year period—it connects me to my own humanity and intellect. It can also be a reminder of my relationships with artists or my travels. I feel most creative and alive when I'm surrounded by art and artists. I also love going into other environments such as corporate spaces, and seeing how art inspires and influences people working [there].

Tell us about your foundation at the end of the month , and what made you want to start it.

BM: I am always thinking about my one, five, and 10-year plans, and for a while, I was asking myself what my purpose was, and why I am alive and functioning on the planet in such a great way. Many people that had my start in life might not have survived. For me, that speaks to my greater purpose and what I have to share. I will be launching a foundation this fall called The Art Cure Foundation, and [through that], I'll be working to establish grants and opportunities for artists and young women. I have some incredible professional contacts who would like to make an impact in the world with their money, time, and expertise, and this will bring together many things that I love doing, and making a difference in Philadelphia.

Bridgette Mayer's book will be available for purchase through bridgettemayer.com on August 31.

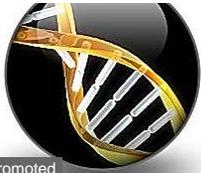
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