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SERVICE SAYS**MY INSTAGRAM**

Brendan MacAllister

By **Chris Triunfo** Globe Correspondent, Updated July 19, 2019, 6:20 p.m.

Brendan MacAllister ([@buzz_macallister](https://www.instagram.com/buzz_macallister)) has a lot on his plate. The 25-year-old illustrator spends most of his time working three jobs. During his free time, he's still hard at work. He divvies up his time as a line cook at a restaurant, a custodian at a senior center, and an assistant to Boston-based artist [Jesse Khan](#). From his home in Beverly, MacAllister travels down to the city as much as he can to help Khan, an artist and professor who works with light, fiber, and time. Khan also teaches at Mac-Allister's alma mater, the Montserrat College of Art. When it comes to his own art, MacAllister spends his time making the illustrations found on his Instagram.

Q. At first glance, your art is incredibly dreamlike. What are some sources of inspiration

for your work?

A. My work definitely features a lot of elements that you could also relate to subconscious dream stuff. I'm really into [Sigmund] Freud, Carl Jung, and all that stuff. I definitely also just let symbols manifest themselves in my mind, and I'll just suddenly have the urge to paint something. Once I get started, it'll slowly gather more and more meaning. But yes, you're absolutely right, my art is very dreamlike. And it's a lot of fun to make, because I just let my mind draw from anything. I watch a lot of films and read a lot of books, and that all really helps.

Q. A lot of your art deals with and depicts different aspects of the human face. What is it about drawing faces that appeals to you?

A. I think a face is something that can be very easily identified. It just makes any piece of art more approachable. People can look at it and relate to it. Maybe they'll see an expression they've made before or see someone they recognize. It just makes it more relatable. So when things get weird or abstract, like my art usually does, putting a face in there kind of helps to alleviate that a little.

Q. What is your preferred medium?

A. Well I usually switch between traditional graphite or pastel paintings, and then I also work a lot with digital art. Whether I can't make it to the studio or if I don't have the necessary resources, I make digital art as well. But all of these ultimately end up converging and so it's all kind of up in the air with me.

Q. You had a painting recently featured at [Nahcotta](#), a gallery in Portsmouth, N.H. Can you tell me a bit about that piece?

A. So that was a show based on narrative. Every artist featured in that show was given the chance to make a painting based on their favorite story, book, or fairy tale. The first

thing I thought of was “Lord of the Flies” by William Golding. So the image I made is a depiction of one of the main characters from the story, Piggy, who was obsessed with bringing fire to the stranded kids for survival. That made me think of Greek mythology, something I also love very much. More specifically, I thought of Prometheus, who is also known for stealing fire and bringing it to humanity. So the idea of fire and how it relates to this character’s arc is very prevalent in this painting.

Q. You’re a young artist. Would you say that you have found a set style that you like to work in, or are you still exploring new things?

A. I can’t say I’ll ever find my style. I feel like that’s something that I never want to find. My art is essentially a diary. It may manifest in murky ways, but it’s a diary. It’s something incredibly personal, so the way I approach it will be very different every time. While I have my tropes, like the use of faces, and the use of particular colors, I always like trying something new. I try drawing from my life and the people in it. I hope my style will always be changing.

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