


William L. Charron

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William Charron co-chairs Pryor Cashman’s Art Law Group, and is a member of the firm’s Litigation, Intellectual Property, and Media + Entertainment Groups.

The Preeminent Litigator for Authenticity, Title + Stolen Art Disputes

Bill represents institutional and individual clients in a wide range of art authenticity, title, copyright, contract, and other disputes. His clients include collectors, museums, auction houses, artists, artist foundations, and art advisors from around the world. Clients and peers say that Bill is “outstanding,” “has the ability to break a matter down and can really make sense of it,” “is exceptional in all his work and is a fantastic litigator,” and that “his knowledge and experience is second to none. He is always on top of developments, he is very detailed and a very practical and solution-driven lawyer” who is “extremely knowledgeable, very thorough, articulate – just terrific.”

Bill is regularly sought to handle the most high-profile and high-stakes art litigations in New York. He has been the architect of a number of precedent-setting decisions, including:

- *Bakalar v. Vavra*, which helped to establish the law of laches in art title disputes
- *Martin Hilti Family Trust v. Knoedler Gallery*, which helped to establish the duty of diligence on sophisticated art purchasers when buying from reputable art dealers in art authenticity disputes
- *Free Holdings, Inc. v. McCoy*, which helped to establish the property rights that attach to non-fungible tokens that are used to certify the provenance and authenticity of digital artworks

Bill frequently lectures and writes on issues impacting the art world, including World War II restitution cases, art authenticity, and procedural law issues. Bill has won a prestigious Burton Award for Legal Writing for a law review article he wrote concerning the Holocaust Expropriated Art Recovery (HEAR) Act. Bill has also been an adjunct professor of Art Law at the University of Virginia School of Law since 2019.

Bill is ranked as a “Band One” attorney in the *Chambers High Net Worth Guide* for Art and Cultural Property Law, with one source saying Bill “is tough yet calm, strategic yet nuanced in his thinking. For any issue that comes up, he articulates and strategises exceptionally well.” He has also been named a *New York Law Journal* “Trailblazer” for his work in the field of art law.

Intellectual Property + Commercial Litigation

Bill is also commercial litigator who has successfully handled numerous complex cases involving the Copyright and Lanham Acts, the civil RICO Act, trade secret, unfair competition, antitrust, securities fraud, shareholder and

LLC membership, and contract and real estate disputes. Bill is repeatedly recognized by *Super Lawyers New York* for his intellectual property litigation work.

Bill's recent successful representations include:

- Pleadings-stage dismissal of all claims brought against creator of the "first-ever NFT" in groundbreaking cases concerning blockchain technology and NFT ownership rights (*Free Holdings, Inc. v. McCoy*, Supreme Court of New York, Kings County, 2026; *Free Holdings, Inc. v. McCoy*, U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit 2024)
- Defeated motion to dismiss claims asserting misappropriation of corporate opportunities and tortious interference brought by art advisory firm against former employee (*Barbara Guggenheim Associates, Inc. v. Asher*, Supreme Court of New York, New York County 2025)
- Pleadings-stage dismissal of defamation claims brought against consulting company by former shareholder (*Ghatak v. McKinsey and Company*, Appellate Division of New York, First Department 2025)
- Summary judgment dismissal of fraud and equitable claims brought against manager of family-owned limited liability companies (*Homapour v. Harounian*, Supreme Court of New York, New York County 2025)
- Pleadings-stage dismissal of all claims brought against the owner of a Van Gogh painting alleged to have been stolen during World War II (*Silver v. Basil and Elise Goulandris Foundation*, U.S. District Court, Northern District of California 2024)
- Summary judgment dismissal of all claims for defamation and intentional infliction of emotional distress against client Netflix recommended by a U.S. Magistrate Judge in a 132-page decision concerning the docudrama *The Wasp Network*, followed by settlement (*Basulto v. Netflix*, U.S. District Court, Southern District of Florida 2024)
- A \$13.5 million lost profits judgment, affirmed on appeal, for Virgin Hotels against a hotel owner for prematurely terminating a 20-year hotel management contract, and defeating cross-claims asserting ineffective branding and management services (*Virgin Hotels San Francisco, LLC v. 250 Fourth Development, L.P.*, California Court of Appeal, First Appellate District, Division Five 2024)
- A \$9 million summary judgment victory, affirmed on appeal, for a real estate management company against a former member for conversion of funds (*United Hay LLC v. Jacob Harounian*, Appellate Division of New York, First Department 2024)
- Summary judgment dismissal of all claims brought against the owner of two allegedly stolen paintings by Louis Comfort Tiffany on bases of estoppel and laches (*Platt v. Michaan*, U.S. District Court, Southern District of New York 2023)

Additional noteworthy representations include:

- Summary judgment on the issue of liability for direct and vicarious copyright infringement for Sony Music record labels in connection with unlicensed uses of sound recordings to promote the "Bang" energy drink and products (*Sony Music Entertainment v. Vital Pharmaceuticals, Inc. d/b/a Bang Energy*, U.S. District Court, Southern District of Florida).
- Final, unchallenged arbitration award for the film production company Nu Image, defeating a multimillion-dollar claim by a Chinese film distributor for breach of contract in connection with *The Expendables* film franchise, with award of sanctions for witness tampering plus reimbursement of attorneys' fees (*Beijing SSSH Film Investments Ltd. v. Nu Image, Inc.*, Independent Film & Television Alliance Arbitration).
- Summary judgment dismissal, and affirmance on appeal, of music copyright infringement claims brought against internationally renowned singer Nelly Furtado (*Kernel Records Oy v. Timothy Mosley p/k/a Timbaland*, U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eleventh Circuit).
- A matter of first impression before New York's highest court that dismissed a lawsuit seeking damages for breach of covenant not to sue on grounds that the plaintiff's claim should have been asserted as a compulsory counterclaim in a prior federal action (*Paramount Pictures Corp. v. Allianz Risk Transfer AG*, New York Court of Appeals).
- A precedent-setting case concerning the compulsion of personal services contracts that overturned a preliminary injunction that required the owner of the famous Eden Roc Hotel in Miami to allow a management company to continue to run all hotel operations against the owner's will (*Marriott International, Inc. v. Eden Roc, LLLP*, New York Appellate Division for the First Department).

Services

- Art
- Litigation
- Copyright
- Real Estate Litigation

Education

- University of Virginia School of Law (J.D., 1998)
- Colby College (B.A., *magna cum laude*, 1993)
 - Phi Beta Kappa

Recognition

- Ranked among the country's top Art and Cultural Property lawyers (Band 1) in *Chambers and Partners High Net Worth Guide* (2019-25)
- Recognized as a Leading Lawyer in *Legal 500's Private Client Guide for Art and Cultural Property* (2026)
- Named to the *Best Lawyers in America* list for Art Law (2024-26)
- Named to the *Super Lawyers – New York Metro* list for Intellectual Property Litigation (2013-25)
- Two-time recipient of The Burton Award for Legal Writing (2010, 2019)
- Named a *New York Law Journal* "Trailblazer" in Art Law (2019)

Community

Board Member, Congregation B'nai Yisrael, Armonk, NY

Admissions

- New York
- U.S. Supreme Court
- U.S. Court of Appeals for the First, Second, Third, Fourth, Ninth, and Eleventh Circuits
- U.S. District Courts for the Southern and Eastern Districts of New York
- U.S. District Court, Northern District of Illinois

Professional Affiliations

- Court of Arbitration for Art, Board Member
- AiA: Authentication in Art, Advisory Board Member
- PAIAM: Professional Advisors to the International Art Market, New York Chapter, Executive Board Member
- New York City Bar Association, Art Law Committee (2015-18); Professional Ethics Committee (2012-15)
- New York State Bar Association
- American Bar Association

Teaching Positions

- University of Virginia School of Law, adjunct faculty, Instructor of Art Law (2019-present)
- Columbia University School of Law, adjunct faculty, Instructor of Appellate Advocacy and Legal Writing (2010-14)

Publications

April 22, 2026

Charron Comments on World War II-era Art Restitution Challenges

ABA Journal

February 24, 2026

Charron Contends Proposed HEAR Act Amendment Eliminating Laches Defense Would Violate Article III of the Constitution

Harvard Art Law Review

August 18, 2025

Soloway Comments on Dismissal of Fraud Claims in Harounian Family Real Estate Dispute

The Real Deal

July 7, 2025

Charron Comments on Holocaust Expropriated Art Recovery Act of 2025

The Art Newspaper

December 19, 2024

Assigning Burdens of Diligence in Authenticity Disputes

In-Depth: Art Law (formerly The Art Law Review) - Edition 5

March 22, 2023

Pryor Cashman Team Noted for Win in First-Ever NFT Case

January 6, 2023

Assigning Burdens of Diligence in Authenticity Disputes

The Art Law Review

Spring 2022

What Can I Do to Avoid Being a Victim of Art Fraud or Crime?

Published in Art & Museum Magazine

March 29, 2022

Charron Discusses Art Law Disputes and How His Work is Impacting the Art World in Recent Podcast Interview

The Litigation War Room

August 26, 2021

Circuit to Warhol Estate: Google v. Oracle Does Not Dictate A Different Result

January 2021

Assigning Burdens of Diligence in Authenticity Disputes

The Art Law Review - Edition 1

December 22, 2020

Art Law Issues on the Horizon: Pryor Cashman's Look Ahead to 2021

April 2, 2020

Potential Insurance Claims for Art Businesses

December 18, 2019

"2020 Vision" - Three Art Law Trends to Consider in the New Year

July 15, 2019

Examining the Policy Implications of the Cassirer Decision

September 26, 2018

Examining the Constitutionality of the Holocaust Expropriated Art Recovery Act

April 18, 2018

Does Local Law 50 Hold Hotel Owners Hostage?

December 20, 2017

Painting Your Way to a Lifetime Tenancy Through the Visual Artists Rights Act

October 7, 2015

Blockchain Technology Used To Facilitate Licensing and Transfers of Digital Art

May 6, 2014

Should Visual Artist's Resale Royalty Right Be Considered a "Copy" Right?

November 25, 2013

A Comity of Error: Analyzing New York's Choice of Law Rules in Stolen Art Cases

May 29, 2012

When A Civil Rights Plaintiff Can 'Win' But Not 'Prevail'

May 1, 2012

Twitter: A 'Caveat Emptor' Exception to Libel Law?

February 3, 2012

FCC v. Fox Television: The 'Steven Spielberg Exception' to Broadcast Television Indecency Rules?

August 1, 2009

States Turn a Deaf Ear to the Constitution in an Effort to Promote 'Truth in Music'