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Painting by  
Tina Gagnon

Tina  
2012

# ARTIST PROFILE

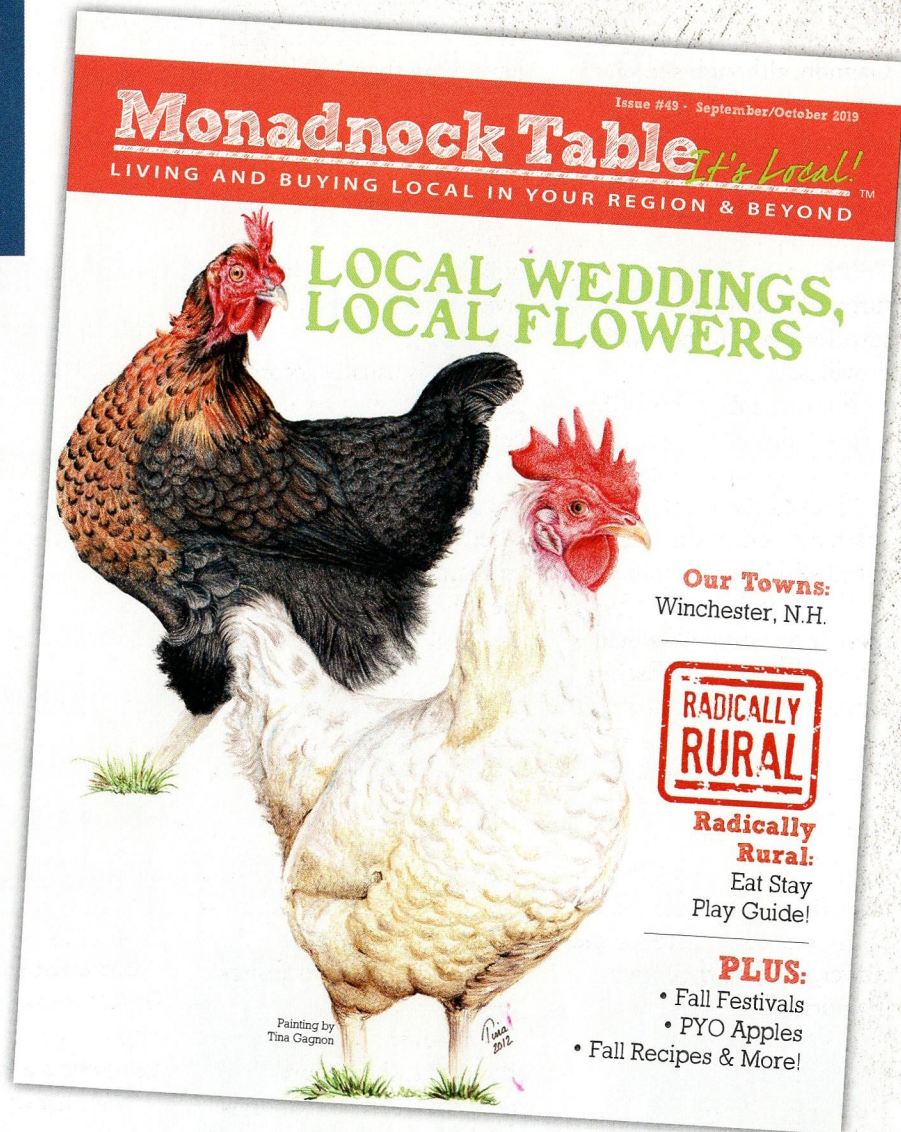
By Peg Lopata,  
Photos Courtesy of Tina Gagnon

Becoming an artist is done in as many ways as there are artists. For Tina Gagnon, a self-taught artist, she cannot recall a time when she wasn't drawing.

Her path to becoming a fine artist began in the commercial art industry where she was on the cutting edge of her profession, lecturing at national industry conventions and writing articles in trade magazines. As a successful graphic artist, she was highly skilled in balancing both the precision and creativity required in this profession. Her background in mastering both these approaches is evident in her colored pencil artwork today.

Although she achieved much in the graphic arts, Gagnon felt something was missing. So she took some classes and workshops in watercolor, acrylic, sculpting and other mediums. But she didn't find her passion until she discovered a set of colored pencils from her childhood in a bottom drawer of her desk. Gagnon remade her vocation as a fine artist working only with 100%, waxed-based colored pencils.

She's quick to point out that this isn't "work." When she gives advice to children about art, she says, "When it becomes work, it isn't art anymore."



“Drawing is just part of me —  
always has been, always will be”

Tina Gagnon

Almost anything inspires Gagnon, although she says nature and nostalgia move her the most.

“With nostalgia, it’s about evoking a memory by looking at the art piece,” she explains. “With nature, it’s about capturing the subtle colors and textures that Mother Nature provides.”

For example, contrasting colors captured her eye in the scene in the cover image.

“I loved the way the fancy colored chicken was juxtaposed with the all-white one.”

Not surprisingly, Gagnon’s favorite artists are Norman Rockwell and M.C. Escher, artists known for their details and intricacies; Rockwell, especially for his nostalgic images.

“Nostalgia lends itself to detail,” she explains. “The more detail, the more the image will come alive for the viewer, evoking their own memories.”

## Patience is the key to her art.

“I spend about an hour working on a square inch. More complex pieces can be twice that time,” says Gagnon. “It’s

not uncommon for a piece to have more than 100 hours put into it.”

Her process begins with lightly sketching an outline of the subject matter. Then she adds colors, light to dark. She builds up the colors in light layers until, as she says, the color “pops.”

“This is usually accomplished in five to six layers of color,” she explains.

Gagnon is, therefore, using the old master technique where thin layers of transparent paint are layered one atop the other. This method, called “glazing,” was used by painters since the invention of oil painting. The result is highly realistic paintings. Gagnon discovered this works with colored pencils as well.

She says, “By allowing fine details, the medium of colored pencils helps me express a high degree of realism that recreates my subjects just as they are in life.”

However, Gagnon’s work shows that she knows it’s more than details that draw us in. Her works are compositionally well considered. Being both an exemplary draftsman and a creative soul, Gagnon creates works of art that are more than just pleasing to the eye: they speak



to us. Her path to becoming a fine artist was guided by an inner vision to create for us appealing artwork that brings us to our memories.

Her list of accolades attests to her artistic accomplishments, such as being accepted into the New Hampshire Art Association and having her drawings juried into the 2017 and 2018 Colored Pencil Society of

America’s international shows. Locally, she’ll be participating in a Pop-Up Art Gallery at the Searles School and Chapel, Oct. 19 in Windham, New Hampshire. To see more of her artwork, visit the Farm Directory in this magazine. To see her artwork online and a list of additional upcoming shows go to [www.TinaGagnon.com](http://www.TinaGagnon.com). 🌐