

SKETCHES

CHECK OUT SOME ART ON YOUR FALL COLORS DRIVE

Aaah, autumn. The air is crisp, the sky is blue, and the leaves are turning. The perfect complement to drinking spicy apple cider and jumping in crunchy piles of leaves is the Chippewa Valley's third annual **Falling Leaves Art Studio Tour, Sept. 30–Oct. 1 from 10am to 5pm**. This self-guided tour is the perfect excuse to drive in the autumn-colored country and check out some original local art. The tour will showcase a total of 11 studios, specializing in acrylic and oil paintings, pottery and ceramics, watercolors, printmaking, candle making, and glass staining. It's a great way to sample not only the artistry, but also the outdoor canvas of our region. Plan a route, pack a picnic, or discover a quaint little diner alongside of the road for pumpkin pie on your journey through scenic Fall Creek, Augusta, Fairchild, and Osseo. Get more info and driving directions at www.artistsnartisans.com. — SK



ART GETS A LITTLE FRESH

Just a short drive away in Pierce and Pepin counties, you'll find the **Fresh Art Fall Tour**, another self-guided celebration of rural country studio artists and galleries. The tour is heading into its eighth year and will be held **October 6–8 from 10am to 5pm**. Fifteen studios and galleries will be featured. The tour is near beautiful Lake Pepin, allowing you to drive through hilly woods, winding roads, and river bluffs. Locals already know about Goatback Road, but now you have the chance to check it out and discover Diane Millner's pottery, the artist who lives and creates pottery there. Other original art featured on the tour includes stoneware, gold and silversmithing, watercolor collages, glass cutting, and outdoor sculptures. If you're looking for a meal, try The Pickle Factory in Pepin or Bogus Creek Café in Stockholm. Log on to www.freshart.org for additional tour sites, food, lodging, and directions. — SK

VISUAL ART

LOCAL & TOURING VISUALLY CREATIVE ENDEAVORS

I LOVE TO PAINT THE EYES

Tatiana Zank captures emotion in her ultra-photorealistic paintings

BY ERIC RASMUSSEN

There is a lot of art out there that elicits the same statement from the average person: "I could do that." At the risk of offending some of you artists out there, I tend to agree. What separates the average Joe or Jolene from some types of art is not ability, but is instead motivation and inspiration. On the other side of the canvas, though, is the type of art that inspires awe because the onlooker knows that no amount of time, training, money, or practice would lead them to create something even close to the piece hanging on the wall. This type of art can even instigate a little disbelief that human hands and simple brushes could produce such a painting.

Unbelievable is definitely one of the adjectives that surround the work of Bloomer artist Tatiana Zank. She paints ultra-photorealistic works that pricey digital cameras and Kinko's best printers could not mimic. If Tatiana were a seventy-year-old master painter who had been practicing her craft for decades, maybe the level of intricacy in her paintings and the striking yet subtle emotions on the faces of her portraits would be a little more understandable. "I love to paint the eyes, and capturing the emotion of a portrait is the most important thing I do," explains Tatiana. But Tatiana is only in her mid-



"Sweet Dreams" (Wolfy) — oil on canvas, 30" x 24"



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Zank, originally from Russia, attended UW-Stout and now earns as much as \$15,000 for commissioned portrait work, spending 200-300 hours on one painting.

twenties, and she has only been painting for three and a half years.

Tatiana's story is as unique as her art, at least in modest north-central Wisconsin. She grew up in Uzbekistan, one of the republics within the Soviet Union, and when USSR dissolved, she and her family moved to St. Petersburg — Russia's "modern" cultural city (St.

work, she is constructing two of her own collections. One will feature works that interpret the four seasons through paintings of young women. The first entry in this collection, Winter, features an attractive young woman in a silk nightgown lounging on a bed, and the blues and whites of the picture definitely elicit a sense of cold and snow.

I like to paint beautiful things. So many painters paint the grotesque, but I focus on beauty.

— Bloomer-based artist Tatiana Zank

Petersburg is only 300 years old, whereas many of Russia's other major cities are, like, 50,000 years old). There she enjoyed a wealth of museums and cathedrals and the fine art they all house. Then, seven years ago, she moved to Wisconsin, married her husband, Don, and enrolled in fashion courses at UW-Stout. After success in a drawing course, she switched her major to art, and now she spends 200-300 hours creating a single painting. Her most recent commissioned work for a wealthy New York stockbroker earned her \$15,000, and one of her earlier commissions was for the Chief of Transportation for the NYPD.

"I like to paint beautiful things," says Tatiana. "So many painters paint the grotesque, but I focus on beauty." In addition to commissioned

Her other collection features black and white paintings of photographs her father took when she was a child in Russia. One of these paintings was awarded entry in the National Juried Exhibition at The Phoenix Gallery in New York. Only 23 artists were chosen for this show from 587 applicants.

Tatiana spends twelve hours a day painting while overlooking the Bloomer airport — her husband owns the airport, builds and sells airplanes, is a musician, and would need a separate article to tell his own story. Tatiana has a clear goal in mind. She says, "I want to support myself with my painting, move away from commissioned work, and be featured in a gallery of my own some day. If you are going to set a goal, why not set it high?" Most of her current work is on display at Gallery 310 in Stillwater, Minn., and she is happy to show patrons the works she has on display in her home. Much of her work can also be viewed on her website, www.tatianazank.com, although when you see her paintings, you may not believe them. But trust me, they really are paintings, and incredible ones at that.