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**Farmers Fare • Rockland's Historic Inns • Jess's Market  
Sweets & Meats • Maine Scallops • Recipe Roundup  
Damariscotta • Artist Tina Ingraham • The Cheese Iron**

## Tina Ingraham: *The Sustainability of Food and Art*

For artist Tina Ingraham, the iconic and figurative natures of food on canvas create a vivid statement. “I like to take food out of its usual context and put it in a nondescriptive environment. Then food becomes anthropomorphic. A carton of eggs will become a structural reminder of the Bath bridge, a few eggs broken in the carton evoke sadness, a blue cabbage is like a queen on a throne. Food and art together symbolize human relationships and states of being.”

Tina says she will paint a plate of partially eaten food at eye level. It is thought provoking, the activity of eating and capturing that on canvas. What do you eat? What do you leave? Were you interrupted while eating?

Tina tells of an early series of salt shaker paintings she completed, portable objects which she could paint while

traveling. Painting anything begs questions: “Why that? Why not another object? What is missing? If I painted salt shakers, where were the pepper mills? Painting food is painting personality, conveying celebration, and capturing life.

“I painted beets in Italy, where the beets still had their leaves. They were whole, closer to the earth, and when I painted them,



photography by Jim Bazin © 2010

City Abstraction, © Tina Ingraham. 31.5" x 39.5" Oil on linen.



L to R: Still Life With Figs and Cherries; Mandarin Oranges; Beets and Scallions I. © Tina Ingraham.

## “Food and art make us more acutely aware of the cycle of life. I see such beauty when I paint food.”

their wholeness was conveyed. I revisited the beets here in the states. Here the beets had less of their leaves intact, and were bound with rubber bands and twist ties. It really made me think about our relationship to food, the interrelated and dependent nature between the earth, humans, and food. We have the belief and force it upon the land that food is ‘ours,’ and by packaging it, binding it, bundling and processing it, we express our control over it. My interest in food is my interest in nature: harvest, sustenance, dependence.”

A pear with a leaf and a worm hole bitten out of that leaf connects food back to its natural state. Cut from its life source, Tina paints food immediately after bringing it home. “I paint so the turgor pressure is still in the leaves. But the worm has been there before us and has already made his mark.”

“In the kitchen environment, we are not invited to think about our connection to the land. Taken out of the kitchen context, food raises questions. Food is losing its life and simultaneously becoming our life source. I get closer to the cycle of life and death by painting food. Art and food make us more acutely aware of mortality. Food is life. What else can you say?”

Tina’s connection to nature comes from growing up on a farm in Ohio, life teeming around her. Chickens, cows, turkeys were all part of her grandparents’ existence. Her aunt and uncle had a turkey farm with about 100,000 turkeys, and turkey dressing

was big business. Her mom and grandma were bakers of pies and breads. “We made our own bologna, picked strawberries, and in the “summer kitchen” we separated the milk from the cream. Food was “put up” for the winter. I have vivid memories of all this. Our leftover food was used to sop the hogs, which in turn became our bacon, ham, and sausage. There was no waste; food was literally a beginning to end process.”

It was because of that connection to the land, to her grandma and granddad and their way of life, that Tina gets such a charge and inspiration now out of going to farmers’ markets. “I recall after berry picking how we’d sit around that huge, oval oak table. We learned to separate berries: those good for pies, those best for freezer berries, and a separate class well suited to becoming jam. There was a flower garden, a kitchen garden, and corn and wheat fields where I played, running down rows.

“Food is life, the love of friends, getting close to people over the dinner table, and memories. We all take it for granted.”

### On Art

“I’ve been painting all my life. As a toddler, I drew a rather sophisticated composition of three couples: six dancing, circle-people. I completed my first oil painting in 6th grade. As an undergrad in the 60s, I did watercolors, dry pastels, pen and ink, and brush and ink. I didn’t begin oils until the mid-80s. Then I took the passage, bringing a lot of knowledge over from the world



Early Snow, © Tina Ingraham. 32" x 64" Oil on linen on board.

photography by Jim Bazin © 2010

of watercolors into the world of oils. My original interest in art had always been in painting, though I started out on an unusual path to get there.”

At the University of Cincinnati, Tina did a 5 year work study program in Fashion Design/Drawing. She worked in Boston at Priscilla of Boston, learning all aspects of the business. While there, she would draw from live models, illustrate gowns, price them, and devise color names. “I learned every aspect of design and became floor manager. It was a good education.”

It was in college that Tina took design and advertising courses, learned the history of art, and became interested in portrait painting. She drew from live models in India ink and brush. “My mother was a photographic color artist, doing sepia tones and so forth. She had an interesting job.”



Portrait of Aislynn Weidelle

Graduating from college in 1970 was historic. “It was the year of the Kent State Killings. We graduated in absentia, getting a bang on the door early one morning telling us we had 24 hours to vacate the college before it would be shut down. The National Guard was everywhere in helmets...so surreal. It was total chaos, with people carrying final projects and their belongings off campus in mass exodus.

“After graduation, I worked in Boston at Jordan Marsh, made moves to Michigan, and then to Missouri. I worked at various art related jobs: as an illustrator, director of an art department, a freelance advertiser, and a teacher of a fashion design course at Stevens College. I married, had my first child, and we moved to the Philippines where my husband completed his medical training under the Berry Plan.”

A move back to Maine came in 1977. “We’d vacationed here since 1969. I’m an avid fisherwoman and enjoyed fishing in Washington County for salmon and trout, where the water is pristine. Part of my soul always wants to be in the country and wilderness. I am grounded in the countryside.”

Tina says she began painting on her own, and considers herself “self-taught.” She had two more children, and began working on watercolors, oils, and pastels at home. “We lived in Lewiston at the time, and I set up a studio in the attic. After a divorce and a move to Salem, NY, I studied portrait painting with Dan Green. In 1989 I designed my own home in Cumberland, complete with a wonderful, big north light studio and began teaching at the Maine College of Art.

“I wanted to show my works, but I didn’t go through the usual protocol of writing a letter of introduction, etc. to get my work into galleries. I simply stuffed five paintings in my car and drove around until I found a place to show my work, which happened to be Frost Gulley Gallery in Portland. I stayed at home, raised my kids, and painted and exhibited my work.

“In 1994 I went to graduate school, rented my house in Cumberland, and went to Brooklyn College of CUNY and got my MFA in painting. My final project was to study the traditional painting “Woman on a Stool” by Matisse and complete a portrait based on that idea. I painted “Portrait of Aislynn Weidelle.” For 6 months, I painted from a live model.

“I came back to Maine, got my house back, and painted for a solid year. I began teaching at Bowdoin College as a Visiting Assistant Professor. After that, I got it in my head that I wanted to apply for every residency and grant until something came along allowing me to paint and travel. I had no time to paint then. I guess once I get an idea in my head, I have to follow through.”

After residencies in Dorland Arts Colony in Temecula, CA and MacDowell Colony in Peterborough, NH, Tina had the honor of receiving a Guggenheim Fellowship. It was awarded in 1999, and with it she could go anywhere to work on still life paintings for a year. She decided on Italy, to experience all the things she’d studied in school. While there, she did figure paintings, still lifes, landscapes, in all over 100 paintings. She learned Italian, met people from all over the world, and took up the tango. “I went to Italy cold. I knew no one. I stayed in a 200 year old apartment that connected to a 1,000 year old villa monastery/converted farmhouse. My back bedroom overlooked the Tiber. It was like a dream.”

When the end of her Guggenheim neared, she learned she was awarded another grant, this time a Pollock Krasner. This bought another year abroad. During that year, Tina was commissioned a job for two summers doing portraits for a family of seven in Colorado, which paid for her third year in Italy.



A Tavola; Salt Shaker Study; Self Portrait in Black; La Colazione. © Tina Ingraham.

## “Food and art together symbolize human relationships and states of being.”

“I sang with two choirs and took voice lessons. I designed and taught an artists’ workshop for four women from the states that I met. I found it a bit of a struggle to teach and paint, though. I would teach and paint by day, and by night I became a social director. I would make reservations and introduce friends to all the best local places to eat, and in turn they’d pay for my meals. It was an amazing and enriching time in my life.”

When she returned to the states again after her time in Italy, Tina had a show in New York at the Hubert Gallery. Her show went up on September 5, 2001, and then the traumatic events of 9/11 happened. “I was there for that. At the time I was living in New York with my daughter. My paintings were selling at a rate of one a day, then...nothing. I decided to come home. I just needed to come home.

“There was a line forever at the airport, and I remember you could hear a pin drop because no one spoke a word, and there was terror in people’s eyes when they met your gaze. I flew back and forth a lot that year, actually, to Munich and Italy where I had shows.”

Following that, Tina lived with her son in D.C. then at a monastery for 3 weeks in NY, trying to get a job. She stayed with a friend in Yarmouth, and then decided she needed a studio. Her first order of business was to unload all her paintings from storage. It was time to get rooted again. Tina moved to Bath and rented a studio space there.

“I started getting requests for people to study with me. In June of 2009, I began teaching workshops in a new space. My studio is upstairs, and I rented space to use as a classroom downstairs. My students are doing wonderful work, all eager to learn and making great progress studying and applying techniques.

Since being home, Tina has focused on teaching, conducting workshops, making and stretching her own canvases, and writing a book on color theory. But she is never idle, in the kitchen or the studio.

Tina’s art work, courtesy of Greenhut Galleries, may be seen at the following locations:  
 Greenhut Galleries, 146 Middle Street, Portland, ME 04010 207.772.2693  
[greenhutgalleries.com](http://greenhutgalleries.com)  
 G Watson Gallery, 68 Main Street, Stonington, ME 04681 207.367.2900  
[gwatsongallery.com](http://gwatsongallery.com)  
 Gallery at Kismet Inn, 44 Summer Street, Bath, ME 04530 207.443.3399  
[kismetinmaine.com](http://kismetinmaine.com)  
 Tina Ingraham Studio, 4 Centre Street, Bath, ME 04530 703.463.6043  
[tina@tinaingraham.com](mailto:tina@tinaingraham.com)

### Butternut Squash and Walnut Risotto

- 2 Tablespoons unsalted butter
- 3 Tablespoons olive oil
- 8 shallots, finely chopped
- 1½ cups sliced Shiitake mushrooms
- 1 cup walnuts, chopped
- ½ teaspoon salt
- Freshly ground black pepper
- 1½ cup Arborio rice
- 4 cups (approximately) chicken broth
- ⅓ cup white wine
- 2 cups diced butternut squash
- 1 handful chopped mixed herbs

Heat the broth and maintain its medium hot temperature on a low burner.

In a large cook top ceramic pot, heat the butter and oil and sauté the shallots and mushrooms about 6-8 minutes. Stir in the walnuts. Add the salt, pepper, and rice. Stir and cook 2 minutes.

Over a medium burner, while stirring the rice mixture, add ½ cup broth and stir until the rice is absorbed. Add another ½ cup of broth and the wine, stirring until absorbed. Continue this process over a period of 30 to 45 minutes, or until the rice takes on a creamy consistency.

Add the squash about 20 minutes into the process. Add the herbs near the end of the cooking time. Serve immediately. If more time is needed before serving, remove the pot from the heat and place a clean dish towel over all and cover with a lid.

Serves 6-8



photography by Jim Bazin © 2010



### **Chicken Broth**

May be prepared the day before.

- 1 large, coarsely chopped onion
- ½ onion pierced with 8 whole cloves
- 5 large cloves garlic, crushed or chopped
- 3 stalks of celery, 2 stalks roughly chopped, 1 stalk whole

- 3 carrots, 2 carrots roughly chopped, 1 whole
- 2 Tablespoons olive oil
- About 2 cups leftover potato peels
- 1 whole chicken
- Marjoram, rosemary, parsley, thyme, bay leaf
- Salt, pepper, sugar to taste
- Dried red hot pepper, crumpled

Sauté all the chopped ingredients and seasonings in a large stock pot with olive oil for about 8 minutes. Fill the pot with filtered water and add the remaining ingredients. Bring to a boil, then reduce heat to a simmer for about 1½ to 2 hours. Check the taste and adjust seasonings.

Put in fridge overnight and in the morning skim the fat from the top of the broth. Separate or sieve all the ingredients from the broth. The chicken may be used for sandwiches!

For a vegetarian broth, omit the chicken and increase the potato peels to 5 cups and the garlic to one whole bud of crushed cloves. Do not be frightened by the amount of garlic. It is sweetly gentle and delicious when simmered.



photography by Jim Bazin © 2010

## Tina's Eggplant Parmesan

1 cup flour  
2 eggs  
2 Tablespoons milk  
1-2 cups dried bread crumbs  
1 pound fresh mozzarella  
3-4 cups grated Parmesan cheese  
2 firm medium eggplants  
½ cup olive oil  
2 cups tomato sauce (see recipe below)  
Fresh basil leaves

Prepare breadings. Place the flour on a sheet of wax paper.

Whisk the eggs and milk in a large shallow bowl. Combine the bread crumbs and cheese and place on a sheet of wax paper. Without peeling, slice the eggplant ½-inch thick. Coat the eggplant slices in flour, then coat with the egg mixture, and then with the cheese mixture. Brown the eggplant medallions over medium heat in olive oil, adding more oil as needed during the process. Drain medallions on paper towels or pastry racks.

Oil a large glass casserole dish and spread about ¼ cup Tomato Sauce over the bottom of the pan. Place the eggplant medallions over the sauce. Top each medallion with a basil leaf. Spoon a large dollop of sauce over each medallion.

Top each with a good slice of mozzarella cheese and sprinkle grated Parmesan over top. Bake at 400° for 15 minutes until bubbly and brown. Serve immediately with Italian bread and Arugula Salad.

The eggplant medallions may be eaten cold – very yummy the next day – or served individually as an appetizer after being gently reheated the next day.

Serves 6-8.

## Tina's Tomato Sauce

1 onion, finely chopped  
3-5 cloves garlic, minced  
2-3 Tablespoons olive oil  
½ cup peeled and finely chopped (or grated) eggplant  
Salt and pepper  
1 teaspoon sugar  
¼ teaspoon oregano  
⅛ teaspoon crushed red pepper  
2 - 1 pound cans Progresso chopped tomatoes or 10 fresh tomatoes, peeled and chopped  
½ cup red wine  
1 cup coarsely chopped basil  
One very small bay leaf (optional)



photography by Jim Bazin © 2010

In a large heavy-bottomed sauce pan, sauté onion and garlic in olive oil over medium heat, until transparent. Add eggplant, salt, pepper, sugar, oregano, hot pepper and stir for 2-5 minutes. Add remaining ingredients and bring to a gentle boil over medium heat. Reduce heat and slowly simmer for one – two hours. Remove bay leaf. Cool the sauce and gently liquefy in a blender.

## Arugula and Pear Salad

4 cups fresh arugula  
2 crisp pears, Bosc or Comice, seeded and thickly sliced. Peel if desired.  
½ cup shaved Parmesan cheese

Gently wash and spin the arugula. Just prior to serving, slice and add the pears. Dress and toss the salad. Shave pieces of Parmesan cheese over each serving.

Serves 4.

### Dressing:

1 cup olive oil  
⅓ cup fresh tangerine or orange juice  
1 crushed clove garlic  
½-1 teaspoon grated ginger  
Pinch sugar  
Salt and pepper, to taste  
1 teaspoon chopped tarragon or mint

Combine all ingredients in a bottle and shake vigorously. Dress the salad with desired amount of dressing just prior to serving.



photography by Jim Bazin © 2010

## Spanish Chocolate Cake

*Based on a recipe from Great Good Food by Julee Rosso, I have found it takes a great deal longer to bake this cake than the recipe states. The sides should be done and the center moist when it is truly finished. It has a rich, dense consistency. A 5x5 square pan is essential.*

- 2 Tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 1 cup ruby port
- 1¼ cups semisweet chocolate (I use pure Icelandic Chocolate)
- 4 Tablespoons unsalted butter
- ⅓ cup toasted and ground hazelnuts
- 2 Tablespoons plus 2 teaspoons cocoa powder
- 1 jumbo egg
- ⅓ cup sugar
- 1 teaspoon sugar
- 1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
- 1 Tablespoon light corn syrup
- 6-8 whole hazelnuts

Preheat oven to 350° oven.

Lightly wipe a 5x5 square cake pan with oil, and dust with half the flour. Discard excess.

In a small heavy saucepan, while stirring periodically over medium high heat, reduce the port to 3 Tablespoons.

In another saucepan, combine ½ cup chocolate with the butter and stir over low heat until melted. Care must be taken not burn the

mixture. Remove from heat and cool slightly. Stir in 2 Tablespoons of the port, ground hazelnuts, cocoa, and the remaining Tablespoon of flour. Set aside.

In a medium size deep bowl, beat the egg and sugar with an electric mixer until tripled in volume, about 5 minutes.

Thoroughly fold the egg mixture into the chocolate mixture and pour into the prepared pan. Gently shuffle the pan to ensure an even batter surface. Bake for a minimum of 35 - 50 minutes, depending on the oven, or until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out with moistened crumbs.

Place the pan on a wire rack and cool for 5 minutes. Loosen the sides by running a knife around the edges. Cool another hour, and then invert the pan onto a serving platter.

In a small heavy saucepan over very low heat, melt the remaining ¾ cup chocolate. Stir in the remaining port, vanilla, and corn syrup. Remove from heat and cool until the icing reaches a spreading consistency. Spread first over the sides, then the top of the cake and garnish with 6-8 whole hazelnuts. Refrigerate until ready to serve.

This is delicious served with fresh peaches or raspberries when in season. I also have drizzled over each slice a creamed mixture made with crème fresh or yogurt mixed with mint leaves and honey.

Serves 6- 8.