Diana Cercone: Profile

Illia Barger specializes in creativity

Most artists follow a different drummer. Area artist Illia Barger follows several.

Sometimes a drummer leads her to painting large, expressive flowers, fruits and vegetables that envel-op us in their worlds. Others lead her to create captivating murals that move and motivate us or to design eco-friendly art clothing that's fun to wear and expresses our own artis-tic bent. Still there are others – like the one she follows as a color con-

"I specialize in creativity, which "I specianze in creativity, which allows me to land in any medium," she says with an infectious smile, "including in my clothing." This she says as we sit in her office and studio in her home along the river in Stratters N. I.

dio in her home along the river in Stockton, N.J.

So often, she says, artists are pigeonholed into niches. "It's not that simple. Fifteen years ago, you had to specialize. I felt I was in a closet. Now it's okay to wear different hats. But that's really what it means to lead a creative lifestyle. Now there are no boundaries."

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Whether she's painting, creating murals or clothing, cooking or dancing, she says, they all feed one another. For example, she says, some of her skirts are patterned after her paintings, taking on a Dadaism and Russian Constructionism feel,

and they draw from her understand-ing of collage found in her murals. "I'm very interested in collage and recycling," she says. "It's in my DNA. I just can't waste anything ... DNA. I just can't waste anything ... can't throw things out. And I think that's part of growing up in a family with parents who are artists. You resourcefully transcend the materials at hand through your creativity." resourcettilly transcend the materials at hand through your creativity."
(Both of Barger's parents were well-known Bucks County artists. Her father, Raymond Barger, was a sculptor, her mother, Lilias Barger, a painter and classical musician.)

Illia started her clothing company Pantaluna with her partner Glen Capelle more than three years ago. All the clothes are one-of-a-kind artwear and handmade from recycled T-shirts. Of the name, she says, she thought she had coined it, but, she thought she had coined it, but, later, found a reference to the word as stemming from the belief that God and the universe are one. Though not a religious person, the meaning is in step with her concern and care for the planet. Even the logo she designed for Pantaluna is eco-conscious, a combination of mountains and moons.

Once she has the idea, Barger

says, she can envision the painting, the mural or project whole cloth in her head. "It's as if it's already done." Laughing, she says, "It's like



Illia Barger opened a new Pantaluna store in Frenchtown, N.J., this fall.

the Emperor's Clothes. Can't understand why no one else sees it until I download it to canvas or cloth."

A case in point is her mural "Winds of Change" in Trenton depicting the first reading of The Declaration of Independence.

Before she started the 33-foot by 65-foot mural she knew where she 65-foot mural she knew where she would place each figure, brick, shrub and tree from the plan she had preconceived in her mind. Once on site, she says, all she had to do was to determine where the sun was going to be. "Then everything fol-lowed." Even the large scale posed

no problem.
"I'm not daunted by large canvases and murals. They fit my vision. My scale, my perspective is as a honeybee, so I see everything large in my head."

Like most of Illia's murals, the

Trenton one is a *trompe l'oeil*.

"One of the successes of *trompe* l'oeil is to draw in someone two blocks away, who otherwise would not be interested in it. But they want to know what it is they're seeing. Is that real brick ... a real tree? The dis-belief is the magic carpet that brings



One of Illia Barger's services is as a color consultant

After that, it's Barger's rendering of the subject that engages the view-er – perhaps leading to a new level world understanding or self enrichment

enrichment.
"All art is personal," she says. "I get it'; 'I don't get it'. The final punctuation of what an artist offers is in giving something to the community. The point is to get your creative engine to make a difference in the world. That's the point of being an artist. Artists have a responsibility to stretch themselves, in expand ty to stretch themselves, to expand

... to be a tapestry of creativity."

Barger's murals are found in homes, businesses and restaurants



"Eve," a flower painting by Illia



A mural in Trenton, "Winds of Change," depicts the first read-ing of the Declaration of Independence. Illia Barger created the large-scale work

including Hamilton's Grill Room in Lambertville, N.J., and in public places, including her most recent in the Intensive Care Unit at the new Capital Health Hospital in Hopewell, N.J., and, come this spring, on Witherspoon Street in Princeton.

dcercone1@verizon.net

One Winter Night offers old-fashioned family fun in Newtown

Grace Point in Newtown invites

Grace Point in Newtown invites the community to its fifth annual One Winter Night celebration 6:30 to 10 p.m. Dec. 9.

Designed to create an old-fashioned night of family-friendly holiday fun, the evening will include music, food and celebrations to make holiday memories. Last year's event drew more than 2,000 people.

This year's celebration will feature many of the same attractions: festive music, a performance by the Connection string band from

testive music, a performance by the Connection string band from South Philadelphia, storyteller Roger Petersen, a dance presenta-tion by Spirit in Motion Ballet Theater, a special guest from the professional sports world, home-baked holiday cookies and hot

cocoa, family activities and more.
There will be a brass quartet
playing Christmas standards,
hayrides and entertainment for the kids, a live Nativity complete with petting zoo and more. From the seasonal sounds of the Council Rock North Trombone Choir, Pennsylvania Youth Chorale and Delaware Valley Wind Symphony; to the toasting s'mores around a bonfire on a crisp winter evening, One Winter Night offers something for every-

one.
Grace Point is at the intersection of Stoopville and Washington Crossing roads in Newtown. There is no charge for admission or any of the activities.



Leaving a job?

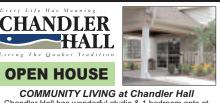


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LUNCH & TOUR - 99 Barclay St., Newtown Jordans House, Sat. Dec. 10th, 10am - 1pm

