



Becoming acquainted with the artwork of Timothy Martin is like enrolling in a three-step program. First there's delight, then acceptance, followed by curiosity.

You can usually count on a smile from the first-time beholder of a Timothy Martin painting. Martin's paintings depict chairs, couches and musical instruments fashioned from a dazzling array

of flora and fauna.

Murmurs about the artist's vivid imagination accompany the delight of discovery.

As one becomes more familiar with his work, the artist's fanciful interpretations start to seem believable: a flower stalk does resemble a cabriole leg, blossoms make charming upholstery, tree branches form subtle plaids. And for the devotee of Martin's work, unbridled curiosity takes control. "What's he working on now? What will he think of next?"

## No Bed of Roses

"It all began as a pun," Martin says. "I did a painting I called Wing Chair. The chairs' wings were birds' wings and the seat of the chair cradled – what else? – eggs. Response was very positive and that became the signature piece in a show."

Martin's very unique style – one he has explored for more than a decade – takes classic landscape and still life painting and propels it into the realm of the unexpected. Whether it's a grand piano or a Regency chair, Martin's work transports the viewer to a whimsical place where snowbanks are cushions and baby chicks allow you a close-up view.

While he has not resisted the obvious – the trumpet made of trumpet vine – Martin has yet to paint a bed of roses or a camelback couch – complete with camel. Ironically, it is the animals in Martin's work, however, that give the pieces their humanity.

Sitting Pretty:

PAINTER GIVES NEW MEANING TO THE TERM PREFERRED SEATING



"I like for the pieces to tell a story and often it revolves around a rooster or a lamb or whatever," Martin says.

"I make the animals the lucky ones – they get to live in nature's living room."

### ROBIN'S EGG BLUE PERIOD

In 1993, Martin was "discovered" by the renowned Gene Moore of Tiffany & Company. Moore, widely acknowledged as the modern master of display, was a champion of young artists from Andy Warhol to Jasper Johns. Charmed by Martin's work, Moore invited the artist to display in the windows of Tiffany's Fifth Avenue flagship a number of times.

Exposure in Manhattan resulted in attention from "across the pond." For a number of years Martin exhibited his work primarily in London where it sold from Marlborough to the Middle East, gaining in popularity and value.

Predictably, Macy's came calling. In 1999, the retailer invited Martin to be part of its world-famous flower show. Ten miniature chairs recreated Martin paintings in a bank of windows on 34th Street.

### PAINTING IN THE KEY OF LIFE

Today, Martin paints in his rural Hunterdon County, New Jersey barn-studio for a growing list of patrons. He keeps in touch through a web site that includes a museum of his "greatest bits," paintings that now hang in private collections worldwide. Browsers who cannot afford the \$25,000 price tag for an original oil can still find notecards, posters and limited editions. Martin even invites visitors to recommend paintings for reproduction.

Perhaps Martin's most ambitious



Sons has commissioned Martin to paint a one-of-a-kind grand piano, the first time in nearly 70 years the venerable piano manufacturer has commissioned a painter to do so.

"A grand piano is wonderfully evocative," Martin says. "The keyboard puts me in mind of a waterfall splashing onto the piano bench. The open lid can be the spread of a peacock's plumage. The entire form is rich with imagery."

Martin will create an imagined landscape on this three-dimensional grand piano canvas, a project that is expected to take him eight months to complete.

It would appear that in the coming months, Martin won't be "sitting down on the job." He'll be making beautiful music with every brushstroke.

Timothy Martin is a 1994-1995 New Jersey Council for the Arts fellow. You can visit his web site at [HYPERLINK "http://www.timothymartin.com"](http://www.timothymartin.com)  
[www.timothymartin.com](http://www.timothymartin.com).