

# Room for art

## Local designer uses her skill as a painter to bring interior spaces to life

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Whether art imitates life or life imitates art, Slingerlands' own Deidre Gatta is transforming everyday objects into pieces of art one room at a time.

Gaining national recognition for her designs in magazines such as *House Beautiful*, *Better Homes and Gardens*, and *Good Housekeeping*, Gatta lives and works in Bethlehem with her husband and two teenage daughters.

"I really try to stay locally, due to my children," Gatta said while showing off some of the artistic touches she has incorporated into her own home. "I do receive calls from people all over wanting to purchase some of my work."

At first glance, Gatta appears to live in a relatively normal suburban home on the hillside of a cul-de-sac with an in-ground pool and two beautiful Akita dogs, but the furnishings inside her home are anything but ordinary.

Ornate curtains and sashes drape over the windows, expertly detailed faux finishes sculpt the walls, and extraordinary paintings cover the shades of her lamps. If the rooms of her home look like they came right out of the pages of a design magazine,

it's probably not too far off because her work is increasingly being picked up by a variety of interior design publications.

In her living room hangs the one painting she hasn't sold and the only one she won't.

"It's called 'Open Field,'" Gatta said with a smile, pointing to the landscape scene prominently displayed. "This is my inspiration."

The painting netted her several awards from Alfred University while she was there, and her husband even used it as a label on one of his homemade wines. (She joked that her husband wishes he were a wine maker instead of the CEO of Portadam, Inc.)

Graduating from Alfred with a bachelor's degree in fine arts, Gatta has turned her skills as a painter into a blossoming design career.

Her company, Artistic Designs by Deidre, serves residential and commercial clients and offers a variety of services, from design consulting to plaster finishes and studio art. However, if you're trying to sneak a peak at her upcoming works, you may be out of luck because Gatta doesn't let anyone into her studio.

"That's off limits," she said with a gentle laugh.

Gatta uses a variety of materials when it comes to renovating a room or a home, or she focuses her creativity on transforming a single object or piece of furniture.

"Sometimes I'll do the whole space, or sometimes I get an order for a specific piece ... or sometimes I'll even get a call

for the restoration of a whole house," Gatta said. "I'm always looking around and seeing materials. ... I always try to find something unique and interesting to add to the space, and, if all else fails, I usually have to make it myself."

Gatta will work with homeowners or clients to get the look that best suits them. Other times she will be given carte blanche to reinvent a living space as if given a blank canvas.

"Some people have set ideas and just let me do it," she said. "Once we come to an agreement, then we put it together. What I usually ask is, what kind of materials do you envision?"

Gatta said a common question when people see her work inside of a home is, "How long will this take?"

"I think that has a lot to do with all of these home improvement and home makeover shows," Gatta quipped. "A lot of my work is customized."

Although Gatta applies her talents to a variety of objects and furniture, from table legs and floors to outlet covers and end tables, she hasn't gotten a totally far-out request — yet.

"We're in Albany, so we're not going to get that many that funky requests," she said. "I have done a dentist office where we've done a mural. ... Murals would be where you kind of get to go crazy."

Examples of her work can be found at her Web site [www.adbydeidre.com](http://www.adbydeidre.com).

"Her work is amazing. ...



**Deidre Gatta stands in front of some of her artwork inside of her Slingerlands home. She is an area interior designer whose work has been featured in several national home design magazines. She is a painter turned designer that has turned her artwork of faux finishes into her own company called Designs by Deidre.**

*Jarrett Carroll/Spotlight*

Deidre can see something that nobody else can see," said Howard Schaffer, a family friend and public relations specialist. "She makes all of this look very easy, but it's really not."

The lifelike qualities of Gatta's craft can be tricky to the eye as she creates faux mar-

ble floors and paints uncanny three-dimensional objects right into tables and flooring. If you visit a home that she has worked on, make sure to look before wiping your feet — you may be standing on one of Gatta's original paintings.