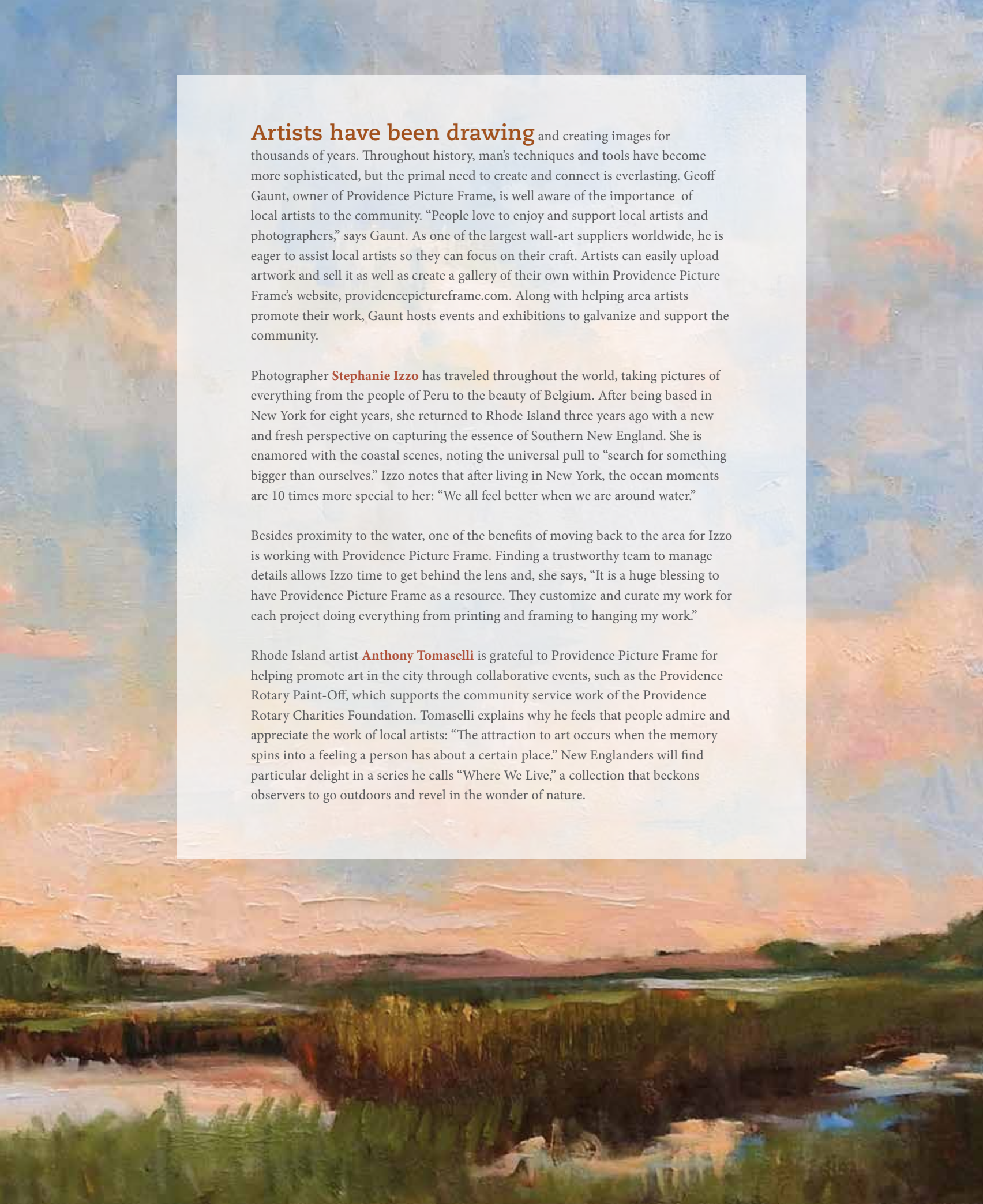


THE *Allure* OF LOCAL ART

Providence Picture Frame takes care of the presentation details, letting artists focus on their craft.

BY STACEY MARCUS

Anthony Tomaselli, "Heaven on Earth," oil on linen, 24 in x 48 in



Artists have been drawing and creating images for thousands of years. Throughout history, man's techniques and tools have become more sophisticated, but the primal need to create and connect is everlasting. Geoff Gaunt, owner of Providence Picture Frame, is well aware of the importance of local artists to the community. "People love to enjoy and support local artists and photographers," says Gaunt. As one of the largest wall-art suppliers worldwide, he is eager to assist local artists so they can focus on their craft. Artists can easily upload artwork and sell it as well as create a gallery of their own within Providence Picture Frame's website, providencepictureframe.com. Along with helping area artists promote their work, Gaunt hosts events and exhibitions to galvanize and support the community.

Photographer **Stephanie Izzo** has traveled throughout the world, taking pictures of everything from the people of Peru to the beauty of Belgium. After being based in New York for eight years, she returned to Rhode Island three years ago with a new and fresh perspective on capturing the essence of Southern New England. She is enamored with the coastal scenes, noting the universal pull to "search for something bigger than ourselves." Izzo notes that after living in New York, the ocean moments are 10 times more special to her: "We all feel better when we are around water."

Besides proximity to the water, one of the benefits of moving back to the area for Izzo is working with Providence Picture Frame. Finding a trustworthy team to manage details allows Izzo time to get behind the lens and, she says, "It is a huge blessing to have Providence Picture Frame as a resource. They customize and curate my work for each project doing everything from printing and framing to hanging my work."

Rhode Island artist **Anthony Tomaselli** is grateful to Providence Picture Frame for helping promote art in the city through collaborative events, such as the Providence Rotary Paint-Off, which supports the community service work of the Providence Rotary Charities Foundation. Tomaselli explains why he feels that people admire and appreciate the work of local artists: "The attraction to art occurs when the memory spins into a feeling a person has about a certain place." New Englanders will find particular delight in a series he calls "Where We Live," a collection that beckons observers to go outdoors and revel in the wonder of nature.



Richard Benjamin, "Prospect Park at Sunset," giclée photograph, custom sizes



Harley Bartlett, "Afternoon Solitude," oil on linen, 24 in x 36 in

Multifaceted artist **Harley Bartlett** often returns to the wellspring of inspiration he finds in the bodies of water, the marshes of grass and the groves of trees of New England. In his work, the essence of an area like a body of water is incorporated with an imprint of humanity like a sailboat or a dock. "It is the quintessential nature of the area that resonates with people," says Bartlett, who finds poetry in the quality of light in the place he calls home. He applauds Providence Picture Frame for its ability to connect him with design firms that place his work in hospitality venues. "It's a very good outfit to work with, especially when time is of the essence," notes Bartlett.



Stephanie Izzo, "Zakim Bridge," giclée photograph, custom sizes

Fine art photographer **Richard Benjamin** finds countless opportunities to connect with people in Rhode Island through his lens. The former Providence Journal photojournalist knows intimately the landmarks and landscapes of the Ocean State. One of his best-selling photographs is one he took on a snowy Saturday morning in 1993, looking up Thomas Street from North Main Street and featuring the corner of the First Baptist Church. "I have sold almost 200 copies of this image. There is something about it that people can relate to," says Benjamin. "People like to buy images that they have an emotional attachment to," he observes. He enjoys working with Providence Picture Frame and notes an increase in sales since he began working with the team last fall. "Geoff has promoted my work when meeting with prospective clients," says Benjamin whose portfolio of 50-60 photos has garnered a great deal of attention through Providence Picture Frame. "I am very happy and optimistic." **SI@HOME**

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