

# Artist Profile

Bringing the local art scene to you, one piece at a time

By Travis Hill



## Tara

It's the most difficult decision an artist can make. But Tara Ferreira hedged her bets.

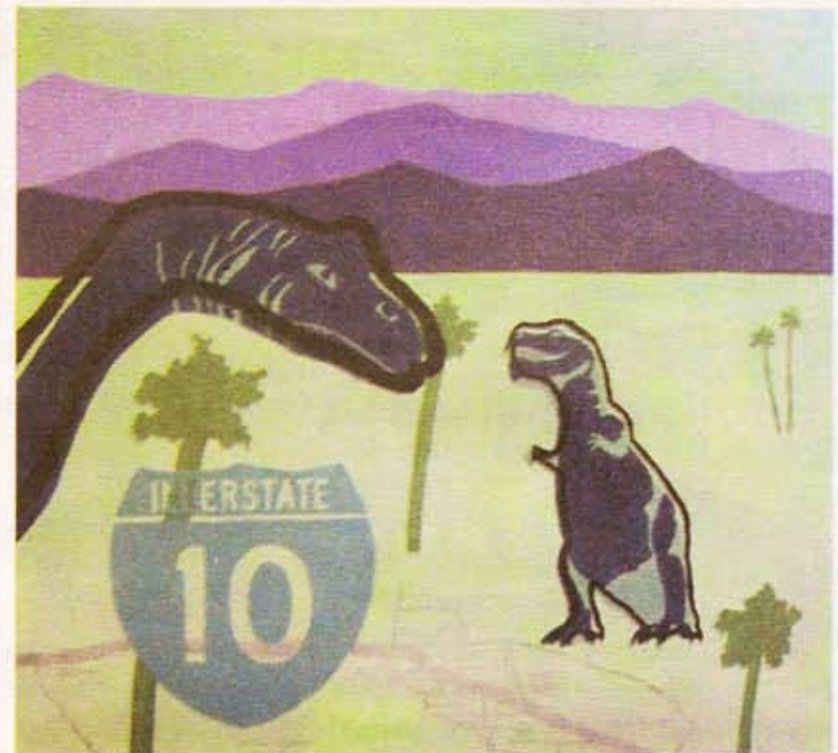
She wasn't just quitting her job to become the creator of the dopest t-shirts in St. A. She was quitting her job to make jewelry, do styling for photo shoots, be a painter and even a costume designer for plays along the First Coast.

"It was a huge leap to become an unemployed artist," Ferreira said as she sipped a coffee at Café 11 recently. "They call them starving artists for a reason, that's for sure. It's scary."

But when Ferreira put her drink down, she smiled. Scary, but worth it.

Ferreira has become something of a St. Augustine renaissance woman. She is involved in a slew of projects from hanging her artwork in local restaurants to being the costume designer for the recent production of *The Quiltmaker* at Winter Wonderland.

But probably the most famous is her emerging line of hand-made t-shirts. So let's start there.



# Ferreira

"I started making the shirts three years ago," she said. "We did it for the Panache recycling fashion show."

Ferreira had some old neck ties that her dad owned in the 1970s. And as we all know, ties in the 70s had the coolest patterns ever. So she cut them up and sewed them into new shapes on some t-shirts. Ferreira and her husband Seth modeled them in the fashion show (the annual event put on by Panache salon where all the models wear nothing but recycled outfits) and suddenly, they had something hot on their hands.

"I sold a couple right after the show," Ferreira said. "And it's grown from there. Now we get a lot of special orders."

These days you can find Ferreira in thrift stores around town, trolling for ties to cut into her next creation.

Yes, they cost around \$50, but it takes her somewhere around five hours to make one. Every shirt is a true original, and the blend of meticulous planning and wild stitching is special.

"I don't like anything rigid," she said. "I like the craziness of loose stitching."

She also likes to stay as green as possible. She never buys a new tie, and the t-shirts come from American Apparel, a sweatshop-free brand.

"I know it's trendy to be 'green'" Ferreira said, air-quoting for green. "But of all the trends out there, it's a good one to be. I think it's important."

The t-shirts are starting to spread around St. A, and she has made them for the folks at Troika Studio and for Zach Thomas Photography.

Of course, we know at least one person at Troika would want one; her husband Seth is its Interactive Director.

"Seth is my best critic," she said. "He always lets me know how I'm doing. ... And he did my site for me. I just have to make him dinner every now and then."

If you go on tarafferriera.com, you can see how busy she really is.

If you click on her paintings, you can see her obsession with all things vintage. It's not just the 70s-era ties – she loves the old-school.



"On our honeymoon, Seth took me to Palm Springs (California)," she said. "It's the home of stuff like that. Right now, I'm working on a series of paintings of vintage road signs. I love them."

You can also see all the jewelry that she has made. In fact, jewelry is her background. She went to Flagler to learn how to work with metals. When she graduated in 2004, she got a job with Neff Jewelers.

"It was fun," she said. "I was learning the old-school way of casting in fires. It's nice to still have those skills."



