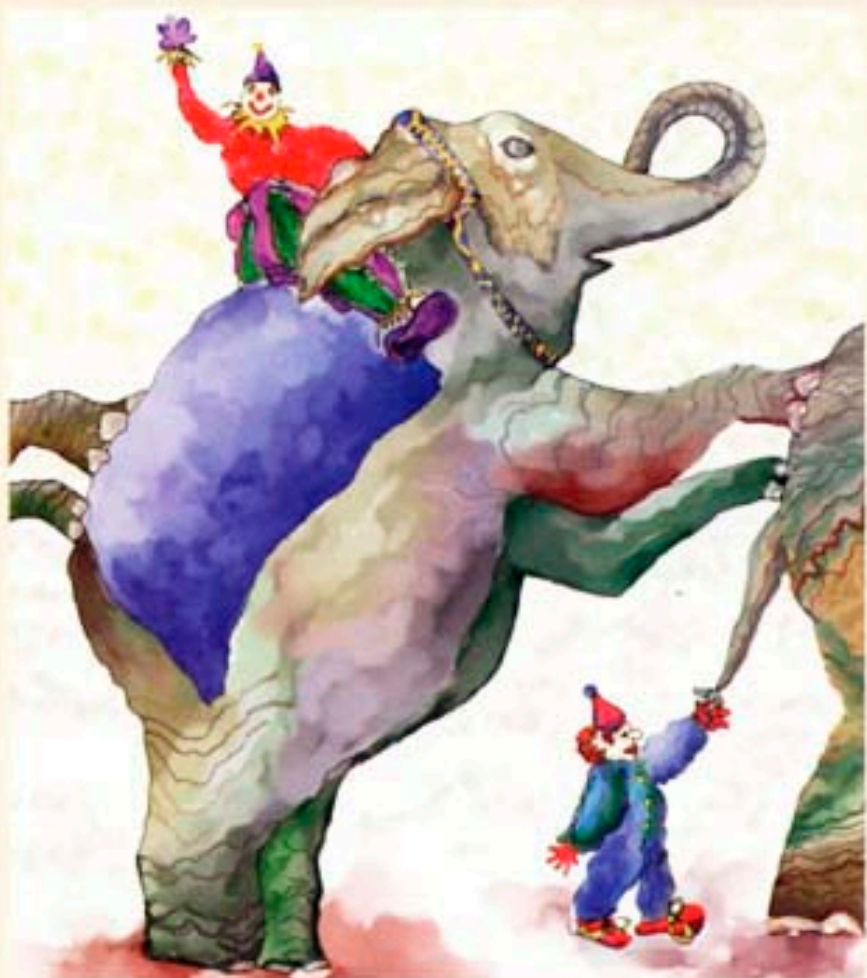


want for drawing, and it's all so nice and neat."

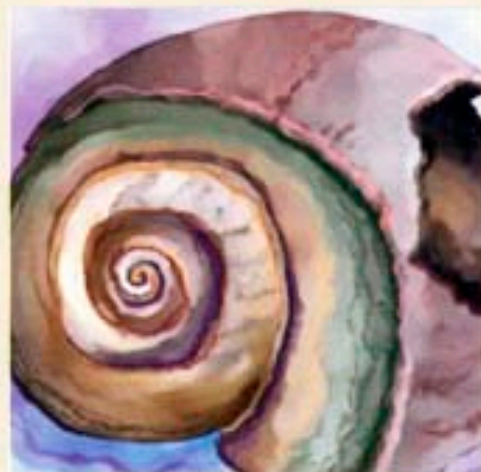
One computer feature Devenuti finds indispensable is the ability to redo or re-create a piece of artwork that she's working on. "It's easy to take risks," she says, "and not ruin what you started working on. Since I can always save my painting in stages, I can create several versions of the same idea and not have to begin each piece from scratch. Working traditionally with watercolors, I would always be afraid of ruining my piece when I was experimenting." She says she doesn't like re-creating the same painting a hundred times. With computer art, there's no need to.

Some artists scan drawings and photographs directly into their computers. Devenuti generally starts out with a blank screen, creating the entire piece of artwork right on the computer. "There are two ways to actually draw on the computer," she says. "One is by using the computer's mouse, which is a bit like painting with a brick—it doesn't react or feel comfortable the way a pencil does. The other way is to use a pressure-sensitive pen-tablet such as the Wacom Art Pad. The stylus, which looks like a normal pen, is not attached to the tablet and reacts just like a pencil or a brush. If you press down hard, you'll get a thicker line; less pressure creates a thin one." Working in layers, Devenuti builds up her watercolor painting on her computer in the same way she would when working traditionally, except that on her computer she has a million colors to choose from—all at her fingertips. The completed artwork is issued from the computer as an IRIS print, which is a digital color print. IRIS prints can be made on various paper stocks, including watercolor paper.

The learning curve for computers varies from person to person and from program to program. One of the best ways for learning about the use of a particular program, Devenuti says, is to take a class at a local university or community college. Students are often given unlimited use of the university's computer facilities. It's also a good idea to read up on the technology in a computer magazine such as *MacUser* or *MACWORLD* and to look at the many



Above: *Circus*, 1995, digital print, 9 x 7 1/2.



Left: *Shell*, 1995, digital print, 4 x 4.

how-to books available (Devenuti recommends the *Visual Quick Start Guides*, published by Peachpit Press in Berkeley, California).

Merging creativity and technology, Devenuti now creates illustrations and graphic and multimedia interface design work for companies such as American Express, *Reader's Digest*, and Pepsi. She was recently profiled in a chapter of *Fractal Design Painter 3.0*, by Dawn Erdos and Janey Brano (MIS Press, New

York City), which included several of her computer illustrations. She is currently showing her art on the Internet through Artliaison Virtual Art World (<http://artliaison.dor-sai.org>), and in the "Virtual Gallery" section of *Visual Radio*, an on-line interactive entertainment magazine (<http://www.visualradio.com/>).

*Terry Sullivan is an associate editor of American Artist.*