



**Rosemary McGuirk ·
Cut Paper
New London, N.H.
Images out of paper**

Rosemary McGuirk uses cut paper to create simplistic, yet life-filled landscapes and scenes representative of the quaint, small-town feel and relatable moments of life in the Kearsarge/Lake Sunapee area. She focuses on finding the

simple, unfettered character of rural New England life, recreating it into scenes that, near and far, we as Americans can all appreciate.

McGuirk began cut-paper artwork through a multitude of experiences that all seemed to lead to a similar place. As a child, McGuirk remembers sitting on her couch, usually while on the phone with her best friend, staring at a painting done by her mother. Years later, she still attributes this early exposure to handmade art as influential on her interest in art, and on her personal creative style.

As for cut paper, McGuirk was first introduced to the concept from an unlikely source: a favorite childhood television movie called “A House Without a Christmas Tree.”



“When the movie would morph to and from commercials, the screen would turn into a cut paper collage,” she says. “It took the idea of cut paper to a whole new level for me.”

It wasn’t until college (the University of Richmond) that McGuirk really began to take her paper cuttings seriously. She was asked to create sketches for paintings, but she says, “I remember just feeling frozen — and then I pulled out my construction paper.”

She began using cut paper to create the plans for her paintings until one day an honest friend told her, “I find your cut paper more interesting than your painting.” And it was from that moment she began creating images out of cut paper to be enjoyed on their own.

As with the materials she uses, McGuirk’s process can shift from being free form and organic to more planned out and analytical, depending on the idea in mind, the textures she chooses, and the subject matter.

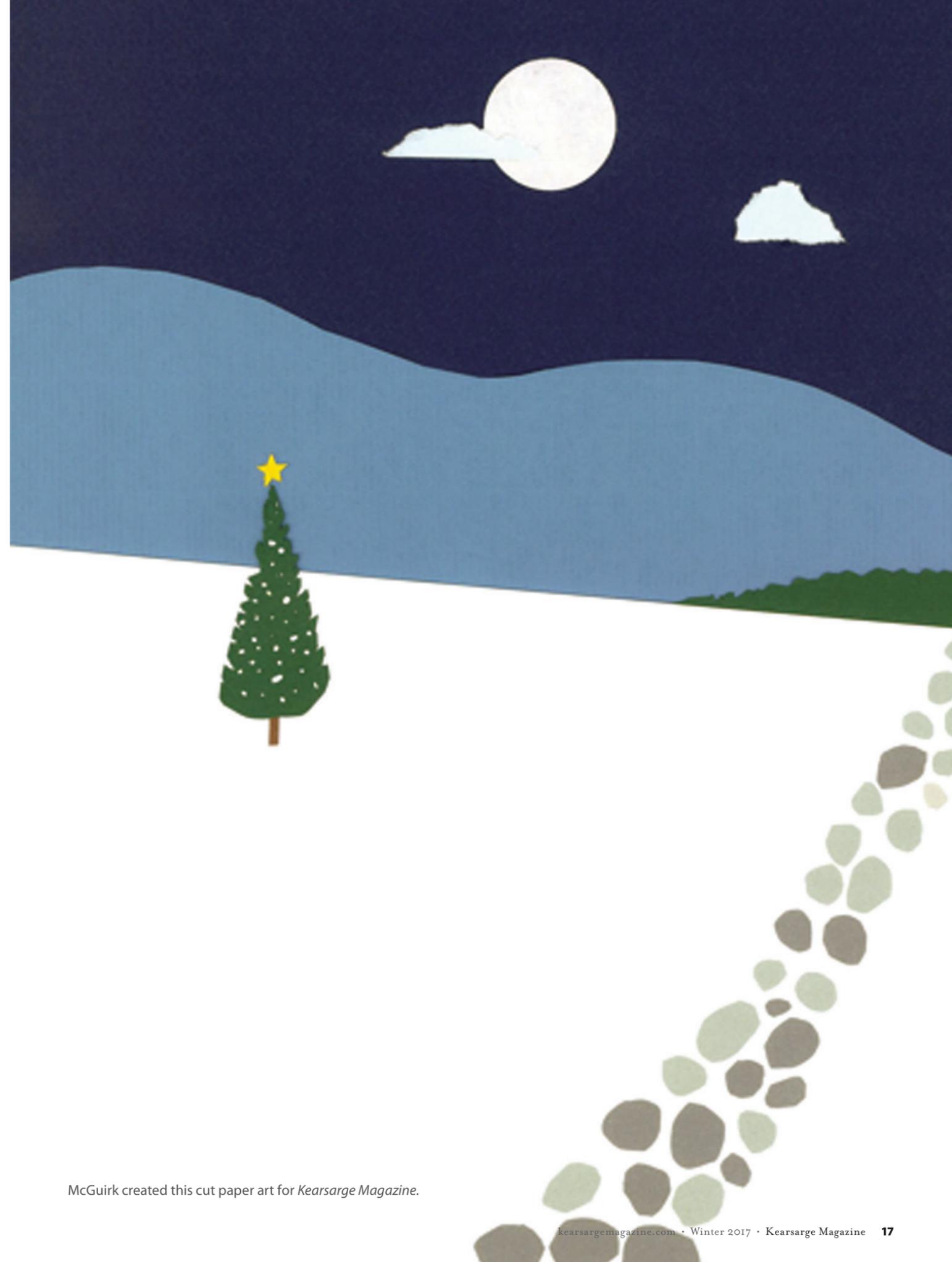
“Usually there’s a sketch of some sort that I use as a reference, but sometimes there isn’t,” she says. For more complex and defined shapes — like animals — she will trace her shapes from references. But for more organic shapes, like foliage and water, McGuirk will use a combination of cutting and tearing.

“I cut different pieces in many different colors and shapes,” she says, until, like a puzzle, the right piece finds its home on the page. For McGuirk, finding the right colors, and the right color harmony, is important to creating a piece that will grab the viewer’s attention.

McGuirk’s paper cuttings create scenes that feel simultaneously familiar and intimate, but also quintessentially classic in their portrayal of American life. “A lot of people relate to it,” she says. Where there are people in her scenes, she says viewers will say to her, “That’s me and my sisters, or that’s me and my brothers.” As New Englanders, and as residents of the Kearsarge/Lake Sunapee area, there’s something familiar in McGuirk’s work that reminds us of ourselves.

McGuirk’s artwork is at Main Street BookEnds in Warner, Tatewell Gallery in New London, and in the winter at the Danbury Market, the Gallery of Gifts at the Library Arts Center in Newport, and the Holiday at the Fells event in Newbury. KM

Katie Bushueff is a freelance writer and photographer for Kearsarge Magazine. She loves all things New Hampshire, and spends as much time as possible exploring this great state.



McGuirk created this cut paper art for *Kearsarge Magazine*.