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## HEADLINE: NYC--May 2015: Visual Artist Tina Martel Takes You On Her Journey After Being Diagnosed With Stage 2B Cancer

When visual artist Tina Martel was diagnosed with Stage Two B breast cancer she decided to document everything. Throughout her treatment she created a stream of sketchbooks, photographs, paintings and video, in response to and frequently in spite of what was happening to her. [Not in the Pink](#) is a “graphic narrative” of the pain, frustration and frequent hilarity of her day-to-day dealing with the eccentricities and bureaucracy of the medical system. It is also a candid and moving exploration of the expectations often placed on you once you are diagnosed with cancer: by the people around you, by society and ultimately by yourself.

*"The reader sees this journey because [Tina Martel](#) is an artist. The page backgrounds of her memoir are paintings and photographs that illustrate what she is saying or describing in the text. Readers find themselves poring over the details in the graphics while they read the words... This is not a page-turner in the regular sense of the word because one feels compelled to explore the illustrations before moving on to the next page. The entire concept is brilliant, a visual and writing feast for the eyes that leaves the reader seeing and remembering [Not in the Pink](#) long after the reading has ended."*

-- Viga Boland... author, *No Tears For My Father*

According to an article published in 2014 by the *Grand Prairie Daily Herald-Tribune*, Tina Martel feels “there are many myths surrounding breast cancer” including that it’s not as difficult as other cancers. Well, she certainly debunks that myth in *Not in the Pink*. My reaction to what I was reading and after I’d finished was I hope I never have to go through what Tina Martel and so many other women do. There is nothing easy about breast cancer or the treatment of it. As Tina says, “It’s a profound and life-changing experience.” And yet, throughout the memoir, Tina has found moments to laugh at herself and her circumstances and share those with her readers.

View a short video of one of her powerful radio interviews of [\*Not In The Pink\*](#). Tina speaks about the myth that cancer is easy. You disappear for a few months and then you come back to your life.

Tina says there seemed to be 2 types of books on cancer: One type is inspirational and says people call it a gift--“well,” she says, “gifts you can return,” and she could not return this gift. And the other type of book is how-to and she says, "I didn't know how to have cancer." She wanted to write a book that was real and tells it like it is. Thank goodness she has an incredible sense of humor. By combining her art work and her story it helped her to process how to understand how this all happened.

There are some important questions to ask:

1. Why is it important for your friends and family to know what actually goes on and what you are going through?
2. Why haven't we found a cure for cancer after all of the money that's donated and all of the walks for cancer people have gone on?
3. How did we get into this pink generation of minimizing cancer? Pink ribbons, pink sneakers, even men wearing pink? Will it make me feel better about myself but not help the person dealing with cancer?
4. Why did you write this book combined with your artwork?
5. What is the takeaway from reading this powerful book?
6. What is Stage 2B breast cancer?

## About the author:

[Tina Martel](#) is a Canadian artist whose practice includes mixed media, painting, drawing, books, photography, installation and video. Born and raised in Saskatchewan, she began drawing at the age of four, and later, (much later) received a Master of Fine Arts from the University of Calgary and a Bachelor of Fine Arts from the Alberta College of Art and Design. She has been the recipient of numerous grants and awards and has exhibited across Canada, the United States and in Europe. She has been teaching fine arts in the post-secondary system for the last 15 years. This is her first book.

