

VISUAL ART REVIEW

'THIRTY-SIX VIEWS OF HOME'

A print collection by Ellen Shattuck Pierce

By **VICTORIA CRAIN**
ARTS CORRESPONDENT

How many ways can you look at your living room? When do emotions change your view? What would you use to describe the virtues and concerns of your life in your home — a human space, constructed by choice and subject to whim?

Ellen Shattuck Pierce's new exhibit at Rutland's Alley Gallery, titled "Thirty-Six Views of Home," offers some answers. In this collection, Pierce looks at the details of her life, and then she looks again, and again. She repeats an image from one piece to a new context in the next. For example, "Walk in the Forest" depicts a literal string of children, braced by adults at either end, entering a dense forest devoid of landmark characteristics. Kind of like parenting, isn't it? However, using the same collaged linoleum-cut print technique, she presents her queue of people walking on a friendly trail, the path banked by Cheerios on the left and a woods on the right: new context, less mystery.

Pierce moved to Boston to pursue her art career after growing up in Rutland. She attended the School of the Museum of Fine Arts Boston,

graduated from UMass Boston and received her master's in arts education from Harvard. Being part Canadian, Pierce longed to spend time in Canada, and moved to Toronto to complete her Master of Fine Arts at York University.

Repetition is an idea that Pierce employs throughout this collection. The "Knitting Gone Awry" series demonstrates her play with both color and minimal shifts. Here sits a woman whose knitting has gotten the better of her. Yarn is in the air and creeping around the floor of the seated knitter. The scene is repeated again with a new jarring color scheme, revealing different aspects of the room and the dilemma. In a third iteration, we have either a garter stitch knit rug or a blanket falling to the bottom of the picture. There is tension and hilarity in these prints: the comedy of turmoil. Sometimes things do not go as planned.

In a different, scarier series, "The Bourgeoisie Gone Awry," we have comfortable settings invaded by dank intruders. In the living room, a bird of prey snacks on something dead. On the inviting wicker porch, snails creep across the floor, leaving their glittering

See Pierce, Page D2



COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

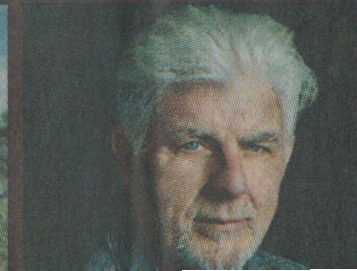
Ellen Shattuck Pierce: "Ice Dam"

■ ALLEY GALLERY

The Alley Gallery presents "36 Views of Home," an exhibit of prints about motherhood by Rutland native Ellen Shattuck Pierce, through Sept. 29, in the Center Street Alley, Rutland. Hours are noon to 5 p.m. Thursday and Friday, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday. For information, call 802-299-7511 or email vialleygallery@gmail.com. The public opening reception will be held from 6 to 8 p.m. Saturday, Aug. 11.



2018 | *New Season*



Pierce

Continued from Page D1

trail of slime. The sense of human place in these views is compromised by uninvited guests. In her way, Pierce repeats these scenes, trying out new color schemes to augment the details.

Having noticed the theme of repetition and change, you might also discern Pierce's strong affinity to patterning. The interior landscapes are filled with stripes, grids, parallel wavy lines and the like. The emphasis on patterning is particularly striking on her series of linoleum-cut tiles, which she painted with glossy color. Though the individual tiles stand on their own as complete wall objects, in the series — hung in perpendicular lines — they make a very cohesive design statement.

Each panel is unique, but occasionally the marks and shapes can be found to repeat. Some of the tiles are divided into grids, each small square exhibiting a different patterning device. In this way, they are a bit like a needlework sampler, showing the viewer the nuts and bolts of Pierce's art — the devices she has discovered, developed and refined in her "Thirty-six Views of Home" exhibit.

Pierce uses jarring color schemes. One series, "Ice Jam," depicts a

dining room with icy stalactites emerging through the ceiling. Pink with dull dark red and green show up in the various iterations of the elegant dining room with its chandelier vying for attention with icicles.

This view of home is not very pretty, in so many ways. Pierce is at work showing the viewer how emotions can inhabit a human space.

According to Pierce, this work — and all of her work — is about motherhood.

"It is a theme I cannot escape ... Daily, I am thrust into life's immediate connections to the body: dirt, hurt, nourishment, and pure joy. As a mother and art teacher, I immerse myself in the thinking, tinkering, talking, and tattling of little bodies," she says.

"If art is a reflection of life, then I have a deep understanding of life from which to draw."

Reflecting on her collection, she writes, "On good days, my kids and students are charming, my chores meditative, my art a witty reflection of the everyday mundanity and challenge of building humans. On bad days, I am sucked dry and my images are violent. Ice dam stalactites plunge through my dining room ceiling."

There it is in a nutshell.

You can see this dynamic show of collaged linoleum prints from now until Sept. 29. And you can meet Ellen Shattuck Pierce at the opening reception, featuring free libation, refreshments and live music, 6 to 8 p.m. Saturday, Aug. 11.



Ellen Shattuck Pierce: "Good Neighbor"

COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

Turner style
moves as well!"
Tickets are \$15, \$5 for 11 and
younger; call 802-229-0492, or go
online to www.lostintheater.org.
"The Show Off!"
attempts to inflate
his self-importance
as he portrays
himself as a rising young execu-
tive results in a good deal of
upheaval into the de-
Baroque London. Adantus
Loure, recorder; Thomas Jocks,
cello; and Lindsey Warren, voice
and harpsichord. The
evening listening to these young
musicians.
enjoy a summer afternoon and
shape. "Desert," and Gladding will
his collection of original poetry;
book, "The
are both
live
tmont.