



Subway, hand-painted etching

of gin. In the background stands the husband, small and cowering, while cats cram into any leftover space. Making use of bright colors painted into the prints, Peck's narrative lends a graphic quality to the work. More of a commentary than a portrait, Peck allows her subjects to take over, like a writer creating a play.

"Her work is just so alive," Condrick says. "They're the people she's seen at parties and characters from her family and her social life. She's good at mixing her sense of humor into her work. She's a storyteller. To me, these woodcut prints are a celebration. Even ugliness...with Adair she's trying to tell you what she sees...the awkward shapes and big nostrils...she captures the gestures. She loves these people and she wants to tell you what she sees. There's always a lot of life in her work."

One of the things that first struck Condrick about Peck was her natural feel for color.

"I never knew anyone so fearless and unafraid of color," she says. "As an artist I've always found that difficult. The motifs were the social crowds of her family and I found that inspiring. It was fun to see them come to life in her own language."

Peck's artistic courage comes across in the chances she takes, as with these new papier-mâché trophy heads.

"She's not afraid to pair things up and then see what happens," Condrick says. "She's someone who tries to shake it up, but there's always an essential Adair that comes through. She's interested in

creating her own world."

Upstairs in the studio, Peck's world is wild, but with a Saturday morning cartoon marathon air. The heads smile instead of grimace. They're alive instead of stuffed.

Anna Visscher, owner of Tart — a shop at the Emerson Center for the Arts and Culture specializing in locally made art pieces — came across Peck's work when she curated art shows at the Community Food Coop.

"We showed her huge wood block prints there, and they just felt so different from what you see in Bozeman," she says. "Adair Peck captures people so well. I felt like the characters in her pictures were going to pop out of the frame and start talking to me. Even with her papier-mâché heads...it feels like she really grasps people and personalities so well."

Not all of Peck's papier-mâché busts are of animals. She also does actual busts of real people in a medium that is usually saved for elementary school projects.

"She's working on some heads for me to display our jewelry," Visscher says. "I was so sad when the prints came down. Usually, I'm happy for her new stuff to come in. Luckily, I get her back in here in October for a showing of her papier-mâché animal heads. I'm so excited because I think there's a lot of room to take Montana icons and have some fun with them." @

*Michele Corriel is a frequent contributor to At Home.*

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