

Rural Intelligence

“ROZ CHAST: AT HOME” (IN NORTHWEST CONNECTICUT), PANDEMIC EDITION

Aug 24, 2021 | By: [Lisa Green](#)



Chast's pandemic pysanky eggs

Who doesn't love [Roz Chast](#)? Who among us cannot relate to the cartoonist/illustrator/writer who displays her anxieties for all the world to identify with? In cartoons for *The New Yorker*, its covers (one just [last week](#), in fact), in a memoir, in children's books, her works, said Barbara Hoffman of the *New York Post*, are "typically sketchy depictions of things that keep her awake at night: rats, water bugs, doctors, Ebola and more." One can only imagine her panic during the COVID-19 lockdown.

Actually — and lucky for us — we don't have to imagine. Stuck at home, Chast kept herself busy, and the evidence of that is on display at [Carol Corey Fine Art](#) in Kent, Conn. The enforced timeout revived her passion for craft which, she says, "keeps her hands moving and helps quiet her anxiety." Embroidery

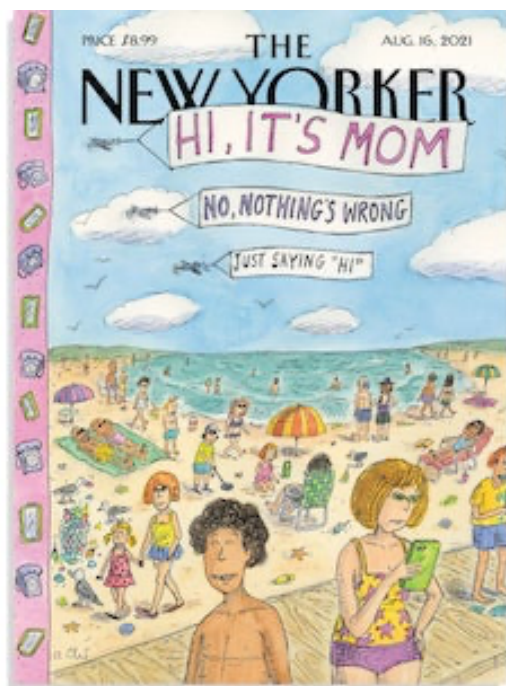
and pysanky eggs, along with her drawings of the past year, reflect the surreal quality of this period, Chast style.

All are included in “Roz Chast: At Home” at the gallery through September 19. The artist, who lives in Ridgefield, Conn., was present at the opening on Aug. 14.

“Roz is very much like you’d anticipate,” says Corey, the gallerist who has represented Chast since 2012. “She’s funny and self deprecating. But what may be surprising is that she’s super professional. She believes that she’s disorganized and chaotic, but she’s not.”

Pre-pandemic, Chast had been traveling all the time, but confined at home, she continued to work for *The New Yorker*. This protracted period brought her back to embroidery (and not your mother’s alphabet sampler, shall we say), hooked rugs and pysanky eggs. Creating these Ukrainian dyed eggs is a long and meticulous process, Corey says, “but it was distracting and calming and something she really enjoyed doing. She made more than 100 of them, and we’ve sold close to 70 already.” They’ve been shipped all over the country, “with no mishaps,” Corey adds.





The pysanky eggs incorporate Chast’s distinctive imagery, from cats and cockroaches to Chast characters and one titled “Nuggets of Doom” (sorry, sold).

Likewise, the embroideries reflect her reality in colorful pastiches — shelves of blobby canned goods, floating viruses, robots.

It wouldn’t be quite accurate to say Chast is having a moment — there doesn’t seem to be a time when she wasn’t being acclaimed (her graphic novels have reached the *New York Times* best seller list and won a National Book Critics Circle Award). And she’s been cartooning for the *The New Yorker* since the late 70s. So it’s perhaps only a coincidence that the Chast exhibit in Kent opened on the heels of the artist’s latest *New Yorker* cover (with inside Q&A) and an interview with Chast in the summer issue of [The Paris Review](#).

Corey, the gallerist, came to the area with her own pandemic story. She has over 30 years of experience in the field of contemporary art, and ran a gallery, Danese/Corey, in Chelsea with her friend and business partner Renato Danese. Sadly, he passed away in April 2020.

“Between his loss and the pandemic, I couldn’t keep the gallery open anymore,” Corey says. “I managed to negotiate an exit, then came up here last June. I rented a house in South Kent and tried to regroup. I’d heard about Kent Barns — I went to school with [James Barron](#) — and had been debating about taking a space there.”

In October, [Jane Eckert](#), who was moving her gallery from Kent Barns to North Adams, Mass., called Corey and encouraged her to move into the former Eckert space. In December, Corey began to show group exhibitions. She’s fortunate, she says, to be working with many of the artists from her former gallery, including Chast.

“What drew me to Kent was the sense of community in the area,” Corey says. “The other galleries here have been so supportive and welcoming. I feel like everybody’s rooting for everybody. Plus, there are a lot of people interested in the arts up here, both collectors and artists.”

Although she’s originally from Massachusetts, Corey never thought she’d leave the city, but she doesn’t miss it.

“It’s just gorgeous here. I love it.”

Roz Chast: At Home, through Sept. 19, 2021

Carol Corey Fine Art
12 Old Barn Road, Kent, CT
(917) 797-9654
Open Thursday to Sunday, 11 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.