

# BANKRI

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### **The BankRI Galleries Present: Artist Thea Ernest at Turks Head Gallery**

Artist's "Watercolors and Drawings" series on display March 7 through May 1, 2024

**Please note: There will be two Gallery Night receptions, March 21 and April 18, from 4 to 6:30 pm.**

**Providence, RI (February 26, 2024)** Thea Ernest has the aura and presence of a dear family friend or a valued aunt, not what most imagine the image of a lifelong artist and creative to be. But Ernest is just that. From her early childhood, Ernest was that kid always drawing in the school's art room. Thea came to the Rhode Island School of Design in the 1980s to study jewelry and light metals and although she describes herself "as the most boring-looking person on the RISD campus," Ernest is decidedly not boring in her approach to life and art.

She has designed cabinet hardware, lighting fixtures and picture frames. She has worked at Adler's Hardware store on Wickenden Street and doled out seafood at Whole Foods in University Heights. She has made sculptures out of wire and illustrated children's books, most recently *Billy the Rescue Dog*. During the pandemic, Ernest bought and renovated a cottage on a dead-end street in Riverside.

Somewhere along the line, Ernest returned to her first love, drawing. She was searching for "a kinder, gentler way of working and wanted to tell more stories." Ernest began to experiment with watercolor and pen and ink. She loves to be out in the world chronicling the ever-changing landscape of the state.

Ernest's latest accomplishment is founding the Rhode Island chapter of the group Urban Sketchers, (<https://urbansketchersrhodeisland.com/>), an organization founded 25 years ago in Seattle. Wandering place to place, an evolving and adventurous group of artists draws what they see and shares it with the world on Instagram and Facebook. Places vary from the tree-filled Swan Point Cemetery on the East Side of Providence to Lang's Bowlarama in Cranston to Fort Wetherill in Jamestown. There are no fees and anyone can join.

Ernest's watercolor sketches are spontaneous reactions to her environment. She is curious and willing to draw anything that catches her eye – an industrial building, tomato plants in their cages, people in a cafe, a sycamore tree or her neighbor's house. She has an intimate, easy style that's more about capturing the feel of a place than cataloguing details. Ernest has come full circle, back to the young girl in the art room always drawing.

The Turks Head BankRI Gallery is curated by Paula Martiesian, a Providence-based artist and arts advocate.

The BankRI Galleries are curated by Willy Somma, an artist and arts advocate. For additional information and images, please contact Willy Somma at [willysomma@gmail.com](mailto:willysomma@gmail.com) | 917-374-3262.

**Attached image files:** Attached image files: Two Watercolors, *From Prospect* and *Meet Me*, photograph of Thea Ernest in her Riverside home.

