

Joyce Kozloff: American History

1. "The Age of Discovery" – this piece is the happiest. Its borders are filled with sailing ships and sea monsters, like those found on ancient maps. There are images of explorers and of noble native Americans, all ebulliently frolicking together.

2. "Popular Uprisings" – this one began as documentation of the American War of Independence from the British, but the 1994 popular uprising in Chiapas, Mexico entered into the mix.

Numbers 3, 4 and 5 are called "Sing-along American History," collages created from cartographic game boards given to the artist by her mother (probably created during the 1920s). They were maps of America with excerpts from popular songs and generic scenes illustrating them. Together the music and pictures present dearly held myths that have been reiterated in film and literature to this day.

3. "White Bread" is a mélange that gently satirizes the culture of European immigrants to the New World. It is filled with cheerful people hard at work, building a young country.

4. "Cowboys and Indians" is a compilation of tales about the American West: the wars with the Indians, the culture of the cowboy - a cartoon of "Manifest Destiny".

5. "War and Race" depicts America below the Mason-Dixon line. There are vignettes of black people singing and picking cotton, Civil War battles, the whole in a rosy blush of color.

6. "Wars in Old Europe", a subtly colored work, is about World War I. Figures were culled from the catalogs of contemporary American war toys, soldiers with huge weapons that are simultaneously frightening and ludicrous. Quaint, Medieval European towns are under siege, engulfed by a storm.

7. "Nuking the Japs", an eerie page, recalls World War II in the Pacific. The children's toys across its fantasy surface are demonic and nightmarish. Beautiful antique Japanese charts were the basis for a landscape ravaged by the furies of pop culture.

8. "Twenty-first Century Crusades" appears to be an old Biblical manuscript, but is about current conflicts in the Middle East. There is Hebrew, Christian and Muslim text and imagery; it is bordered by tiny views of cities in faraway, exotic lands, like the charts carried by European crusaders on the route to Jerusalem.

9. "Going Global" is an apocalyptic projection. It began with a map of all the countries in the world that had experienced terrorist attacks, published in The New York Times. There are hundreds of skyscrapers set on top of the world's largest cities, all targets.