

Joyce Kozloff: China is Near

Joyce Kozloff has never been to China, but had planned a trip on the Silk Road in May-June, 2009 with two friends.

Circumstances in their lives caused them to postpone. The title of this project, which is about NOT going to China, is appropriated from a 1967 film by Marco Bellocchio, *China is Near* (*La Cina è vicina*), which is not about China either – it's about young Maoists in Rome. In the more than 40 years since the artist saw it, China has moved ever nearer to the West. Everywhere we turn, we see Chinese kitsch, knock-off pocketbooks, computers and cell phones, all newly arrived on our shores.

Kozloff started by pasting tissue paper cutouts that her parents brought back from China in 1978 into a sketchbook. Then friends gave her cutouts that they had acquired over the years, and she collected new ones in Chinatown - the selection became more varied and reflected the styles of different decades. Later, she copied old maps of the Silk Route onto these pages - some in Chinese, some in English. Finally, she began to paint into these cartographic collages in the bright colors of contemporary Chinese pop culture.

Next she went to Google Maps to search for China, which appeared all over the globe: China, New York; China, Indiana; China, Tanzania; China, Mexico. Then Google became creative and spun out China Kichá, Costa Rica; Chinna Ganjam, India; Chi Nê, Vietnam; Chinacotá, Colombia, all of which entered the mix. She printed the pages, and eventually collaged over these too. Then she photographed China's exports in her own neighborhood, the piles of stuff on Mott Street and East Broadway, eventually also taking pictures in the Chinatowns of Flushing, Queens; Sunset Park, Brooklyn; San Francisco and Oakland, CA. Kozloff's "China is Near" became a visual book, dense and cluttered, full of wacky juxtapositions and cross-cultural leaps, an artist's representation of the 21st century global Silk Route.