

Joyce Kozloff: Voyages

Hangings: On a visit to Chiapas, Mexico, Kozloff was seduced by the painted houses, their deep hues and bold color contrasts. Returning to New York, she painted geometrical, architectural shapes in a simulation of those colors on heavy, coarse paper that felt like walls. When a friend from Mexico brought her tissue paper ornaments that are strung along the streets on the Day of the Dead, she realized that their skulls echoed the shapes on the Venetian "carnevale" masks which she was then painting, and the two series melded.

Ultimately, *Voyages* included festival arts from many cultures, particularly those that related to carnival. She explored the ways this theme had morphed around the world: paper dragon kites from China, kitsch witches and ghosts at Halloween, Japanese kites with funny, smirking faces. These 40 collage paintings were mounted on eight long canvas strips, each painted a bright color to stand out in front of the busy brick surfaces at the Arsenale in Venice, where they became elements in a large ensemble, "*Voyages + Targets*." The juxtaposition of jovial patterns and intense colors with death images is found in many cultures, although it might be considered macabre in ours.

Masks: During the fall of 2004, the artist was in residence at the Camargo Foundation in Cassis, France, overlooking the Mediterranean. The sea was always present, framed by every window and door, changing with the hours of the day and the seasons, present during waking hours and in her dreams. During that time on a visit to Venice, she became aware of the cheap, kitschy "carnevale" masks sold at every tourist kiosk, loathed by the locals. She purchased unpainted, pressed paper pulp masks to decorate with maps of islands in the Mediterranean, on shades of blue that recall the ocean.

Woodblocks: Shortly afterwards, she worked on woodblock prints at the Hui No'eau Cultural Center on the island of Maui, creating large images of two Hawaiian islands imprinted on translucent rice paper. Thereafter, she began painting Pacific islands on the masks, breaking from the traditional colors of water and land, evoking more widespread emotional states and cultural associations. Eventually, islands all over the world emerged on several different generic carnival faces.

Later that year, the hangings, wood block prints and masks came together in a large-scale installation at Thetis,* a not-for-profit space in the Venetian Arsenale. The theme was the history of navigation and the central role of

Venice in that history, particularly during the "Age of Discovery" (also the greatest period of Venetian painting and cartography). European ships built in the arsenal sailed around the world, and colonized it. Sixty-five masks were displayed at eye level inside the windowpanes, with sunlight entering through their eyes. Eighteen wood block prints swung from the ceiling, and eight hanging banners framed the windows along the longest wall. The visitor crossing that vast 160' space was meant to feel as if he/she were on a voyage around the planet earth. At the end, "Targets" awaited the viewer, its door open, inviting him/her to enter.

*Images of the art in situ are under "Installations."