

## Joyce Kozloff: Maps & Patterns

From 2013-2015, Kozloff challenged herself to bring the decorative and cartographic together. Spurred by recent travel along the silk route, she returned for the first time to the Islamic star patterns that structured her early art. A group of works titled "If I Were a Botanist" and "If I Were an Astronomer" revisit two artist books Kozloff made in 1977, in which she manipulated the black-and-white diagrams in Islamic geometry books, morphing and tessellating the patterns to create kaleidoscopic compositions saturated with color. Using these earlier pages as templates, Kozloff employed digital processes to reimagine the arrangement and expand the scale of the patterns. She then infused these intricate paintings with collage elements comprised of outtakes and trial proofs from previous projects. Merging the biographical and the political, each panel becomes a microcosm of the artist's career. In "If I Were a Botanist: the Journey," patterns radiate and converge in constellations of interlocking shapes unfurling across thirty feet of canvas. The maps in "If I Were a Botanist: the Pale" and "If I Were a Botanist: Gaza" invite comparison between today's occupation of Palestine and the Pale of Settlement, the territory within Imperial Russia restricted for Jews from 1835-1917, to which Kozloff traces her ancestry. Their joyful aura disguises the embedded political content, visible on closer inspection.

"The Tempest" was completed in 2014, a 10' x 10' work based on a Chinese 18<sup>th</sup> century world map, in which the Great Wall traverses the upper levels and turbulent seas surround the land mass. Because she has long interrogated the implications of mapmaking in her art, Kozloff has collected and been given dozens of globe-themed tchotchkes. These tokens of friendship and purchases

on eBay— earrings, ashtrays, erasers, napkin holders, piggy banks, key chains, paperweights, pencil sharpeners, salt and pepper shakers, and yoyos—are halved and affixed to the panels. Art historical imagery featuring the famous cartographers of the Renaissance, who “explain things” while pointing to terrestrial globes, share space with the superhero Captain Planet and military figures including Joan of Arc and Napoleon. “The Tempest” conflates eastern and western systems for representing the world with ancient, early modern, and contemporary attempts to understand and navigate it, a merging of seriousness with fun.