

Arline Jacoby's solo show, *Made In America*, at Gallery RIVAA, 527 Main Street, is not just a great show, but one of the most ambitious undertakings likely to be seen in any small gallery. So demanding was it to set up that Saturday morning, the day of the opening, Ms. Jacoby was still scrambling to put up its final touches.

An artist's reception for *Made In America* was held on November 13, and the show will run until December 12. For this exhibit only, Gallery RIVAA will be open every day. Monday through Friday hours are from 1:00 to 5:00 pm. On weekends, you can see this show from 11:00 am to 5:00 pm.

Unusual in a space better known for quiet expressions of visual arts, Jacoby's show is more a statement of insights forged from personal experience along with a collection of convictions about current events.

This exhibit can't be viewed in the way we usually see things at RIVAA. There are paintings, yes, but they are nearly lost among bold statements embedded in collages and installations. It's as if the theme inspired Jacoby to summon her most passionate ideas and they were too big to be contained in less than three dimensions.

In a bright, almost playful collage, *Puzzling Founding Fathers*, she presents George Washington and his colleagues as an incomplete jigsaw puzzle degenerating into disconnected abstractions. Disguised as a cartoon, it's a history lesson about their legacy.

If *Puzzling Founding Fathers* is a tease, *The Way of Working Is Not Working* is anything but. In an intense work of political satire, Jacoby imagines a country struggling to hold itself together around the central idea of work. While a "Team America" poster is being sucked into a vortex, near the middle of the collage, a red elephant and a blue donkey, representing the major political parties, are fused, their heads facing in opposite directions.

In a deft nod at this gallery's struggle to keep its place in the context of a politically volatile situation, she added a small collage directly below: *RIVAA Occupies Main Street*. Squarely beneath a statement about disunity, the failures of leadership and class struggles, Jacoby makes clear where she believes RIVAA fits in the larger picture.

In a lighthearted turn, though, Ms. Jacoby also invited visitors at the opening to participate in the exhibit with *American Pie*. Rows of freshly baked pies were sampled with plastic forks from paper plates. The pies? Apple, of course.

This full spectrum presentation includes archival photographs of families posing for formal portraits, not quite at ease, but leaving an image that let future generations know them a little.

Nearby, an installation of a child's bedroom from the first half of the Twentieth Century, complete with books, marbles, an upright piano, a desk and stuffed toys in a simple crib, symbolizes a

sort of paradise lost in the noise of the current moment.

Two American mass media enthusiasms get the collage treatment. One is a lively celebration of sports enlivened for fans in news articles, and another, *Strike Back*, is a look at violence romantically disguised as heroic in television and movies.

*Wise* is a collage that is optimistic and referential toward an American history of hunkering down to face challenges. An iconic cutout of George Washington floats over two bold statements, one above the other: "Fix It!" and "A To-Do List For America." Jacoby insists that America has the resources necessary for fixing anything broken in the traditional can-do spirit.

In an installation suggesting the kind of quiet suburban retirement Jacoby is unlikely to experience, she has built a peaceful back porch with a rocker and dried leaves on an aged wooden floor. There's an empty basket next to the chair and, at arm's length, a flower box with symbols of autumn, ripened pears and bare branches. As visitors wandered through her opening, Jacoby (dressed in red, white and blue from head to toe) took a seat in the rocker and opened a book.

The hard work of setting up a complex exhibit with a powerful theme was over, and she relaxed for a minute or two. But this also was part of the show. As soon as she got up, a visitor, apple pie in hand, took her place, enjoying a quiet country afternoon only the imagination of an outstanding artist could smuggle into Manhattan.

(Video from the opening at: <http://youtu.be/LKeMtr9K9Ok>)