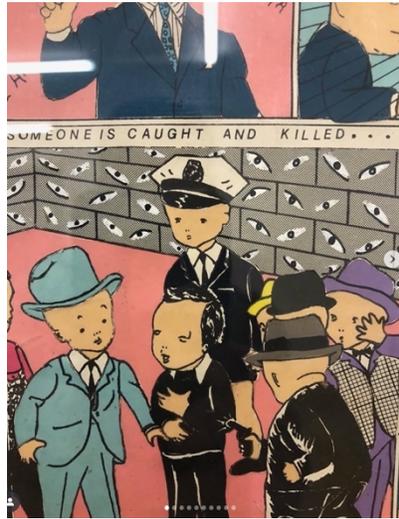


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newyorkartcriticsassociation An America, Mitchell Albus Gallery.

A commercial gallery is a business, and in our current climate—feel the chill?—an overtly political exhibition is simply bad for business. Art is bound to its markets, now more than ever. But Mitchell Albus marches to his own tune. Think: the ragtag fife and drum trio on the smoke-choked battlefield in the painting, *Spirit of 1776*. Included in the Centennial Exhibition in Philadelphia, marking the adoption of the Declaration of Independence, the work only became famous after affordable prints were produced and made widely available to those of modest means: art as a form of democracy. *An America* is a show no other gallery in New York would dare to mount today. Its own declaration. Truths held “to be self-evident.”

With works made between the 1930s and January 6, 2021, there are memorable images from Kathe Burkhart (a torture rack placed before an American flag to represent “the true essence of statecraft,” seen here in detail), Barkley L. Hendricks (a Confederate flag plate on a sinister vehicle, its hood chained shut, appearing poised to mow down the viewer), Banks Violette (doubly referencing Reagan and anarchist hardcore punk), Neke Carson (the assassination of Lee Harvey Oswald entirely enacted by children—an afterschool special!), along with works by Ed Boreal, Judith Bernstein, Deborah Kass, Lee Lozano, Paul McCarthy, Anita Steckel, and Alexi Worth. Robert Mallery’s fantastic, nightmarish drawings, although created more than eighty years ago, eerily parallel the horrors of Russia’s current “special operation in Ukraine.” A bloodied euphemism for our time.