



BIO

Born in Washington DC in 1951 and raised in Arlington, Virginia, Jean Offutt Lewis' artistic expressions were encouraged early in life and she credits her proximity to the National Gallery of Art, the Smithsonian, and Dumbarton Oaks as being strong influences on her early artistic development.

Jean graduated from Syracuse University with a Bachelors of Fine Arts degree. At S.U., she became interested in Dada, Surrealism, and Pop art and her drawings of interconnected, yet random subject matter were inspired by Magritte, Dali, and Escher, and the pop and psychedelic artists of the day. She also began working in mixed media and sculpture, creating assemblages of found objects; reimagining them into completely different uses. Marcel DuChamp and Claes Oldenburg greatly impacted that work.

After graduating from S.U., Jean got married and became Jean Govoni. She first worked as a Graphic Designer in Boston and then began her career in advertising on Madison Avenue and in London, England as an Art Director, Producer of TV commercials, and a Creative Director at various multinational advertising agencies. She started up three Creative Consultancies: Eye for Business, Ltd. in London, Jean Govoni & Partners in Sag Harbor NY, and Govoni LLC in Manakin-Sabot VA and Arlington VA. Jean won numerous awards for creativity in the advertising and design industry.

Jean taught at the School of Visual Arts in NYC, at Syracuse University (for the Semester Abroad Program in London, the College of Visual and Performing Arts, and the S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications) and at Virginia Commonwealth University, at both the undergraduate and graduate level. She taught Advertising Creative Development, Art Direction, Typography, Television Production, and Portfolio Development. She was a long-time member of the Art Directors Club in New York and served on its Board for several years.

Throughout her career, Jean also worked on her art. Drawing, watercolor, and mixed media were her main focus. After returning from living in England, Jean had a studio space on Broadway and Prince St. in NYC's Soho, where she worked primarily on large-scale mixed-media portraiture. While living on the East End of Long Island, Jean exhibited at the Clothesline Art Sale at Guild Hall in East Hampton, NY. While living in Virginia, she was invited to exhibit at the Virginia Museum of Fine Art Studio School's Group Collage Show in 2006 and 2008. Also in 2006, Jean traveled to the Dordogne region of France, to participate in a group exhibition at La Galerie des Artes de Verteillac's Summer Show, with several mixed media pieces, all based on French postcards.

In 2009, Jean was appointed by the Arlington County Board to serve as a Commissioner of the Arts. Her duties included serving as a liaison to several arts groups, attending various arts groups' shows and performances, reviewing grant proposals then making recommendations for awarding grants, and helping with the opening of a new cultural arts center.

Jean remarried in 2010 and became Jean Lewis. She moved to Santa Fe NM, devoting herself full-time to her art, sculpting and painting watercolors. She currently lives on the Northern Neck of VA, where she has been painting in acrylics, doing mixed media work, and was one of 15 artists chosen to participate in a public art program, the *Waterman's Way* project. Her over-sized white watermen's boots, "*River Critters*," are permanently installed in Town Centre Park in Kilmarnock VA. Jean has exhibited her *Dancing Diamonds* paintings in her home town of Arlington VA and most recently, in the community that inspired the series, at the gallery Objects Art and More in Irvington VA. Jean signs her work "Offutt," her maiden name, to honor where her artistic genes come from.