

Art in Embassies Exhibition  
*United States Embassy New Delhi*



**Phoebe Brunner** *Four Red Trees*, 2013  
Oil on canvas, 66 x 48 in. (167,6 x 121,9 cm)  
Courtesy of the artist, Santa Barbara, California

# Art in Embassies



Established in 1963, the U.S. Department of State's office of Art in Embassies (AIE) plays a vital role in our nation's public diplomacy through a culturally expansive mission, creating temporary and permanent exhibitions, artist programming, and publications. The Museum of Modern Art first envisioned this global visual arts program a decade earlier. In the early 1960s, President John F. Kennedy formalized it, naming the program's first director. Now with over 200 venues, AIE curates temporary and permanent exhibitions for the representational spaces of all U.S. chanceries, consulates, and embassy residences worldwide, selecting and commissioning contemporary art from the U.S. and the host countries. These exhibitions provide international audiences with a sense of the quality, scope, and diversity of both countries' art and culture, establishing AIE's presence in more countries than any other U.S. foundation or arts organization.

AIE's exhibitions allow foreign citizens, many of whom might never travel to the United States, to personally experience the depth and breadth of our artistic heritage and values, making what has been called a "footprint that can be left where people have no opportunity to see American art."

<https://art.state.gov/>

# Welcome

One of the many privileges of being a U.S. Ambassador is the opportunity to collaborate with the State Department's Art in Embassies program to display the paintings of American artists in my residence. I have chosen the theme of American landscapes and have been fortunate to work with curator Tiffany R. Williams and registrar Jonathan Arbolino. We have selected seven paintings from four artists.

The anchor of the exhibition is three paintings by Wolf Kahn, who is widely considered one of the preeminent landscape painters in America. His three works are *Barn in Winter*, *White River*, and *Black Near the Horizon*. They illustrate Kahn's mastery of both pastel and oil, and embody his synthesis of modern abstract training under Hans Hoffman, the palette of Matisse, Rothko's sweeping bands of colors, and the atmospheric qualities of American impressionism.

Another artist, Phoebe Brunner, has provided a large oil-on-canvas painting entitled *Four Red Trees*. Brunner presents an alternative view to traditional landscape painting. She reconceives landscapes of the American West, inviting the viewer to experience one's surroundings with a new perspective. Through the interplay of light and space, and unorthodox colors, patterns, and movements, Brunner achieves a sense of both real and surreal. *Four Red Trees* is an excellent representation of this style.

A third artist in the exhibition is Liron Sissman. Her *Late Summer Sail* is a scenic and soothing oil-on-canvas painting. Sissman's paintings transport viewers by engaging the senses, uplifting the spirit, and bringing the transformational power of nature indoors. *Late Summer Sail*, which depicts a scene on one of the lakes in Harriman State Park in New York, stirs these feelings.

The final paintings in the exhibition are two watercolors on cotton paper by Debbie Abshear. They are entitled *Lake Ripples* and *Sonoma Coast*. Abshear is a watercolor artist who specializes in plein air landscapes. This style of painting, executed out of doors and representing a direct response to the scene in front of the artist, captures the luminous effects of natural light and pulls one into her landscapes.

All the artists have generously loaned their works for this exhibition. I hope these paintings of American landscapes draw you to the United States and provide as much pleasure for you as they do for me.

**Ambassador Kenneth I. Juster**

*New Delhi, India  
April 2018*

## Phoebe Brunner (born 1951)

*“By creating an alternative view to traditional landscape painting, my re-conceived landscapes of the American West and the coast of California, simultaneously real and surreal, invite the viewer to experience our surroundings with a new perspective and to lose oneself in an environment of nature enhanced and unexpected. Through the interplay of light and space, unorthodox colors, patterns, and movement, a symbolic narrative with a mystical presence arises. Primal emotions and instinctive, intuitive forces from—within the human psyche are accessed through awareness of our natural world.*

*Derived from, but not documentations of, specific places, these views are ‘re-imaginings.’ The viewer is led to wonder where these landscapes exist—with a longing to visit, and at the same time search in their own subconscious to find a personal location.”*

[www.phoebebrunner.com](http://www.phoebebrunner.com)



***Four Red Trees, 2013***

*Oil on canvas, 66 x 48 in. (167,6 x 121,9 cm)*

*Courtesy of the artist, Santa Barbara, California*







## Liron Sissman

*“Every painting is a self-portrait. I do not paint flowers. I use form, color, and texture to convey emotions. Having no faces of their own, flowers in my paintings represent images with which viewers of diverse backgrounds can relate. Overcoming superficial dissimilarities, they serve as portraits of universal appeal.*”

*My landscapes like my flowers are not merely intended to reflect nature but rather to project an inner reflection, a metaphorical journey. I admire the emotions found in the works of the expressionists. Like them, I too mix my soul with my paints.”*

[www.Liron.com](http://www.Liron.com)

**Late Summer Sail, 2018**

Oil on canvas

24 x 36 in. (61 x 91,4 cm)

Courtesy of the artist,  
Stamford, Connecticut

## Debbie Abshear (born 1954)



**Lake Ripples**, undated  
Watercolors 100% cotton paper, 21 x 28 in. (53,3 x 71,1 cm)  
Courtesy of the artist, Gardena, California

*"I am an artist who is very interested in landscapes, especially the California landscape as that is where I live. I strive to depict the feeling, atmosphere, and mood of what I am seeing and translate that into a watercolor. I painted Sonoma Coast in full color to depict our beautiful California coastline. The second painting, Lake Ripples was inspired by Madrona Marsh that is near my home.*

*Given the choice as an artist to paint from my photographs or painting outdoors, I would choose outdoors any day. The challenge of capturing a scene before the light changes is exciting. It is also a way to introduce people to my work and to explain plein air painting to them. I feel great joy passing on my love and passion of painting to others."*

[www.debbieabshear.com](http://www.debbieabshear.com)



**Sonoma Coast**, undated  
Watercolors on 100% cotton paper, 28 x 21 in. (71,1 x 53,3 cm)  
Courtesy of the artist, Gardena, California

## Wolf Kahn (born 1927)

Wolf Kahn's paintings, pastels, and prints capture the universal explorations of color and landscape that humanity experiences similarly, despite differences in location and culture. In a quote published in the early part of the 90s, Kahn's seventh decade, he explained his fascination with landscape: *"Through our investigation of landscape, we can express our sense of the connectedness of things, where we stand in relation to them. Above all, we come in touch with those over-arching abstractions that govern our perceptions: the great and the small, near and far, up and down, sharp and soft, smooth and rough. None of this is likely to change soon."*

[www.wolfkahn.com](http://www.wolfkahn.com)

Top right:

**Barn in Winter, 2004**

Oil on canvas, 36 x 52 in. (91,4 x 132,1 cm)

Courtesy of the artist, Brattleboro, Vermont

Top left:

**White River, 2014**

Oil on canvas, 36 x 52 in. (91,4 x 132,1 cm)

Courtesy of the artist, Brattleboro, Vermont





***Black Near the Horizon, 2015***  
*Oil on canvas, 28 x 22 in. (71,1 x 55,9 cm)*  
*Courtesy of the artist, Brattleboro, Vermont*

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