



UNITED STATES EMBASSY ABUJA

ART in Embassies Program

Cover Susan Middleton and David Liittschwager, "Florida Panther," 1997, photograph, 48 x 48 in. (121,9 x 121,9 cm)

Welcome

American artists have taken inspiration, and often their subject matter, from the grandeur of the American landscape. Americans have responded to this artistic vision, and subjects such as the Hudson River in New York, and the Brandywine Valley in Delaware and Pennsylvania, have long been very popular. So, too, has been the art of such photographers of the American landscape as Ansel Adams. Awareness of the importance to our national life of a balanced ecology has been sustained by this artistic tradition, and that tradition has also re-enforced it. Most emphatically since the mid-twentieth century, but led initially by such seminal nineteenth century figures as President Theodore Roosevelt, the preservation of endangered species, both flora and fauna, has become a national preoccupation.

Nigeria, like the United States, is a huge country with a wide range of ecosystems. Nigerians, like their American friends, are increasingly concerned about preserving and restoring their natural landscapes, especially the animals that inhabit them. There is now an ecological movement in Nigeria, and the Federal Government has moved to establish and strengthen parks and reserves. The purpose of this exhibition in Abuja is to acknowledge our shared concern and effort, as represented by five contemporary U.S. artists whose work features the North American natural environment. They have all generously lent their art to us, as arranged through



the U.S. State Department's ART in Embassies Program.

Three acrylic on linen paintings by Dozier Bell focus on the cosmos, both the mystery of outer space and the beauty of the earth's landscape. Karl Kuerner's three watercolors and one acrylic depict the lushness of the intensely cultivated land

of agricultural Pennsylvania, long a breadbasket of North America. Two paintings by Donald Neff depict animals in their natural environment in the Pacific Northwest. And six photographs by Susan Middleton and David Liittschwager depict iconic North American animals and a variety of Valley Oak, all endangered species. The presence of the totem pole by Doug Coffin, a Potawatomi/Creek Indian, pays tribute to the Native American tradition of respecting and living at one with the natural environment rather than exploiting it.

It is my hope that our Nigerian friends will take delight in these works, and be encouraged by them as they work to preserve and enhance their own magnificent natural environment.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Campbell".

Ambassador John Campbell
Embassy of the United States of America
Abuja, Nigeria – December 2004

Dozier Bell (born 1957)

“These three paintings explore the differences and similarities between the capabilities of 21st century technology and the traditional properties of divinity, such as seeing beyond the visible, keeping watch from the heavens, creating and destroying from a distance. They are efforts toward an iconography of faith that encompasses both our present-day awareness of the potential for destruction on an unprecedented scale, and the corresponding vastness of the divine.”

Dozier Bell was born and raised in coastal Maine, where she still lives. She earned a Bachelor of Science degree from Smith College, Northampton, Massachusetts (1981), and a Master of Fine Arts degree from the University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia (1986). As a graduate student, she studied painting with renowned landscape painter Neil Welliver at the University of Pennsylvania, and at the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture, Maine (1985). Bell has received numerous awards, including fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts (1987), the Pollock-Krasner Foundation (1993 and 2003-2004), and the Rockefeller Foundation (1993). She has been a Fulbright artist-in-residence at the Bauhaus University in Weimar, Germany (1995-1996), and was the recipient of the Achievement Award and Honorary Doctor of Fine Arts degree, Maine College of Art, Portland (1997).

<http://www.dozierbell.com>



Oculus, 2002
Acrylic on linen
46 x 44 in. (116,8 x 111,8 cm)
Courtesy of the artist, Waldoboro, Maine



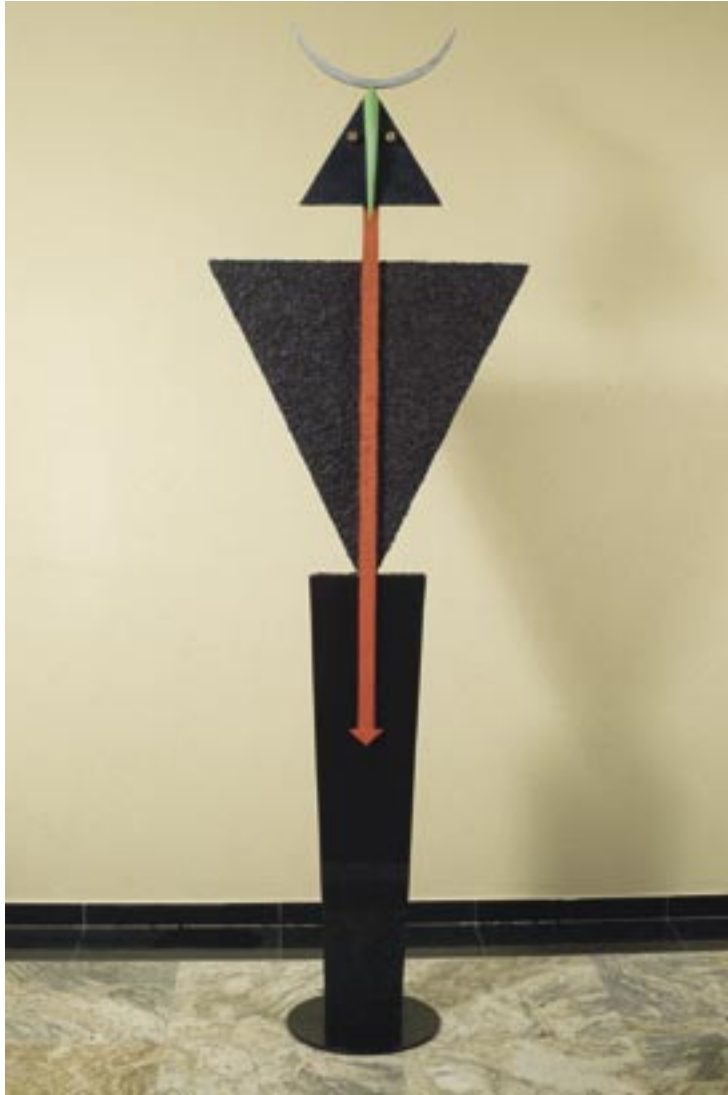
Pneuma, 2002
Acrylic on linen
46 x 44 in. (116,8 x 111,8 cm)
Courtesy of the artist, Waldoboro, Maine



Watch, 2000
Acrylic on linen
50 x 89 in. (127 x 226,1 cm)
Courtesy of the artist, Waldoboro, Maine

Doug Coffin (born 1946)

Doug Coffin attended the University of Kansas, Lawrence, earning a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree. After serving in the United States Marine Corps, Coffin returned to the study of art, earning a Master of Fine Arts degree in metalworking at the Cranbrook Academy of Art, Bloomfield Hills, Michigan, in 1975. The same year, he received a national teaching fellowship from the Fort Wright College in Spokane, Washington. He has since been an instructor at the College of Santa Fe, New Mexico, and the Institute of American Indian Arts, Santa Fe. Coffin is best known for his monumental, brightly painted steel and mixed media sculptures. In both sculpture and painting, the artist has developed a style that suggests a fusion of the ancient totemic form used by many Native cultures with the abstraction and geometric forms of the modernist.



Moon Bird (preparatory study), c. 1997

Wood, metal, and paint

100 x 34 x 16 in. (254 x 86,4 x 40,6 cm)

Courtesy of the artist, Abiquiu, New Mexico

Karl J. Kuerner III (born 1957)

As grandson of two Andrew Wyeth subjects, Karl and Anna Kuerner, Karl J. Kuerner has become a leading force in American realism today. Born January 12, 1957, in Chadds Ford, Pennsylvania, this painter had the opportunity that very few people had – to watch Andrew Wyeth at work. For him it was a natural occurrence while growing up on the family farm. Even with this and his seven-year tutelage under Andrew's sister, Carolyn, Karl has his own voice and style. Andrew Wyeth once told him, "Karl, you paint as if you have something to say."

"Studying with Carolyn Wyeth, I was taught to paint what I love and know. Having been influenced by Robert Henri, my philosophy is do your own life history."



Percheron in Chadds Ford, undated
Acrylic, 19 ³/₄ x 41 ³/₄ in. (50,2 x 106 cm)
Courtesy of the artist, Chadds Ford, Pennsylvania



Pinned, undated
Watercolor, 18 x 31 in. (45,7 x 78,7 cm)
Courtesy of the artist, Chadds Ford, Pennsylvania



Old Cut, undated
Watercolor, 23 ⁷/₈ x 42 ¹/₄ in. (60,6 x 107,3 cm)
Courtesy of the artist, Chadds Ford, Pennsylvania



Reward Farm, undated
Watercolor, 12 x 41 1/4 in. (30,5 x 104,8 cm)
Courtesy of the artist, Chadds Ford, Pennsylvania

Susan Middleton (born 1948) David Liittschwager (born 1961)

These photographs were selected from *Portraits of Vanishing Species*, a retrospective exhibition of the work of award-winning photographers David Liittschwager and Susan Middleton presented by the National Academy of Sciences, Washington, D.C. Middleton and Liittschwager are known for their photographs of rare and endangered species. Working as a team since 1986, “these intrepid photographers travel the country and work closely with scientists who have intimate knowledge of each plant and animal they photograph. The artists visually isolate each of the species from its natural habitat, thus creating a compelling and stunningly-detailed portrait that effectively conveys the intricate uniqueness of each species.”

<http://www7.nationalacademies.org/arts/exhibitions>



Rallus longirostris levipes:
Light-Footed Clapper Rail

Photographed: 7/30/1987; San Diego, California
44 x 44 in. (111,8 x 111,8 cm)
Courtesy of the artists, San Francisco, California



Quercus lobata: Valley Oak

Photographed: 6/17/1988; Central Valley, California
44 x 44 in. (111,8 x 111,8 cm)
Courtesy of the artists, San Francisco, California



***Ursus arctos horribilis*: Grizzly Bear**

Photographed: 9/11/1991;
Olympic Game Farm, Sequim, Washington
36 x 36 in. (91,4 x 91,4 cm)
Courtesy of the artists, San Francisco, California

***Felis concolor coryi* (adult): Florida Panther**

Photographed: 1/23/1997;
Lowry Park Zoological Garden, Tampa, Florida
48 x 48 in. (121,9 x 121,9 cm)
Courtesy of the artists, San Francisco, California





***Haliaeetus leucocephalus*: Bald Eagle**

Photographed: 8/16/1990;
San Francisco Zoological Gardens,
San Francisco, California
36 x 36 in. (91,4 x 91,4 cm)
Courtesy of the artists, San Francisco, California

***Gymnogyps californianus*:
California Condor**

Photographed: 9/18/1993;
Los Angeles Zoo, Los Angeles, California
48 x 72 in. (121,9 x 182,9 cm)
Courtesy of the artists,
San Francisco, California



Donald Neff (born 1950)

“I paint the places I love to be. I paint the freshness of eternal nature, icy lucid streams, thunderous waterfalls, and soaring granite crests over silent lakes... I paint luminosity filtering through the landscape, reaching to the foundation of a stream, bouncing off rocks, and illuminating the shadows... painting realistically is merely my means to an end. I want the viewer to connect with the places I love to be.”

Donald Neff is an Oregon native who spent his childhood years in Pasadena, California, and eastern Texas. After moving to the San Francisco area in the late 1970s, Neff founded and eventually sold a successful computer software company. He retired from his computer science career to devote full time to his art. He lives and paints in the San Francisco Bay area.

<http://www.donaldneff.com>



Morning Drink, 2004
Oil on canvas, 22 x 28 in. (55,9 x 71,1 cm)
Courtesy of the artist, San Jose, California



Master of His Domain, 2003
Acrylic on canvas, 22 x 28 in. (55,9 x 71,1 cm)
Courtesy of the artist, San Jose, California

The ART in Embassies Program

The ART in Embassies Program is a unique blend of art, diplomacy, politics, and culture. Regardless of the medium, style, or subject matter, art transcends barriers of language and provides the means for ART to achieve its mission: to promote dialogue through the international language of art that leads to mutual respect and understanding between diverse cultures.

Modestly conceived in 1964, this visual diplomacy initiative has evolved into a sophisticated program that curates exhibitions, managing and exhibiting more than 3,500 original works of loaned art by United States citizens. The work is displayed in the public rooms of some 180 U.S. embassy residences and diplomatic missions worldwide. These exhibitions, with their diverse themes and content, silently yet persuasively represent one of the most important principles of our democracy: freedom of expression. The art is a great source of pride to U.S. ambassadors, assisting them in multi-functional outreach to the host country's educational, cultural, business, and diplomatic communities.

Works of art exhibited through the program encompass a variety of media and styles, ranging from eighteenth century colonial portraiture to contemporary glass sculpture. They are obtained through the generosity of lending sources that include U.S. museums, galleries, artists, institutions, corporations, and private collectors. In viewing the exhibitions, the thousands of guests who visit U.S. embassy residences each year have the opportunity to learn about our nation – its history, customs, values, and aspirations – by experiencing firsthand the international lines of communication known to us all as art.

The ART in Embassies Program is proud to lead this global effort to present the artistic accomplishments of the people of the United States. We invite you to visit the ART web site, <http://aiep.state.gov>, which features on-line versions of all exhibitions worldwide, and hyperlinks with artists and lenders.

Acknowledgments

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Marcia Mayo – Publications Editor

Sally Mansfield – Publications Project Coordinator

Abuja

Ann Coughlin – Assistant General Services Officer

Edward “Ted” Burkhalter – General Services Officer

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Warrington Brown – Management Counselor

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