

ART in Embassies Program



United States Embassy Asmara

Cover:
Kathy Lichtendahl
One Single Color (Does not a Rainbow Make)
2004
Cotton cloth and cotton batting
36 in. diameter (91.4 cm)

Welcome



Welcome to the Residence of the United States Ambassador to Eritrea. My wife, Leija, and I hope that you will enjoy this magnificent exhibition of artwork entitled *One Single Color Does Not A Rainbow Make*.

That title is taken from one of the works in the exhibition, a glorious quilt by Kathy Lichtendahl that unites a visually stunning array of colors into a rainbow of movement and harmony. Kathy's work is accompanied by a poem:

*One single color does not a rainbow make,
Nor one lone shade of skin tone a diverse world create;
How drab would be the meadow, if but one wildflower bloomed,
How sad and lonely hearts would beat if each new soul, presumed."*

Her words capture not only the essence of America, a nation that has drawn tremendous strength from its diversity, but they also speak to our shared experience with Eritrea. Ours are both nations made up of many colors, many voices, many cultures, and many faiths. And the artwork on display in our residence in Asmara reflects not only the diversity of America but vividly demonstrates the harmony and beauty that can emerge when diversity is embraced and encouraged.

The seven artists whose work we are honored to display are as diverse in their backgrounds as America itself. Two are African-American, one is a Native American, and two are naturalized immigrants. Three are men, four are women. They range in age from their early thirties to almost seventy. They work in textiles, in glass, in porcelain, and terra cotta. They use watercolors, oils, acrylics, feathers, and even horse hair to create works that are rich, warm, and textured. There is glass sculpture modeled on Northwest Coast Indian baskets, and a raku porcelain mask for which the model is of both African American and Native American heritage. There is a landscape that captures the beauty of the American autumn and another – more abstract – which offers yet another vision of America's natural beauty. There are stilt dancers radiating the vitality brought to our land by West African cultures, and there are works that combine art and architecture to reflect the broader cultural diversity of our nation.

Leija and I marvel at how these works seem to link, one to the other, reflecting America's richness, diversity, and harmony. We are delighted to be able to share them, and hope that you will find in the exhibition as much pleasure and inspiration as we have.

With heartfelt thanks to the artists for sharing their vision with us, and to the staff of the ART in Embassies Program, particularly our tremendous curator Sally Mansfield and publications editor Marcia Mayo, who have made this exhibit and catalog a reality.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Scott DeLisi". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Scott H. DeLisi
Asmara
December 2004

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.

Dale Chihuly

(born 1941)



Luscious Yellow Basket Set with Black Lip Wraps

2001
Glass

9 x 15 x 13 in. (22.9 x 38.1 x 33 cm)

Courtesy of the artist, Seattle, Washington

Photo credit: Scott M. Leen

Born in 1941 in Tacoma, Washington, Dale Chihuly was introduced to glass while studying interior design at the University of Washington. After graduating in 1965, Chihuly enrolled in the first glass program in the country at the University of Wisconsin. He continued his studies at the Rhode Island School of Design, where he later established the glass program and taught for over a decade.

In 1968 Chihuly was awarded a Fulbright Fellowship to work at the Venni factory in Venice, Italy. While there, Chihuly observed the team approach to blowing glass, which is critical to the way he works today. In 1971 Chihuly co-founded Pilchuk Glass School in Washington. With this international glass center, Chihuly has led the avant-garde in the development of glass as a fine art. His work is included in over two hundred museum collections worldwide. He has been the recipient of many awards, including seven honorary doctorates and two fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts. He has created large architectural installations in Venice, Jerusalem, Chicago, and the *Bridge of Glass* in Tacoma, Washington.

In 1971, the summer we started Pilchuck, Jamie Carpenter started collecting Northwest Coast Indian baskets. A few years later, when Jamie, Italo and I were visiting the Washington State Historical Museum, I looked at baskets and thought I would try to make them in glass. I wanted mine to be misshapen and wrinkled like some of the older baskets I had seen in storage there."

(Dale Chihuly, *Chihuly Baskets*, Portland Press, Inc., 1994)

Dale Chihuly

The *Macchia* series began with my waking up one day wanting to use all 300 of the colors in the hotshop. I started by making up a color chart with one color for the interior, another color for the exterior, and a contrasting color for the lip wrap, along with various jimmies and dusts of pigment between the gathers of glass. Throughout the blowing process, colors were added, layer upon layer. Each piece was another experiment. When we unloaded the ovens in the morning, there was the rush of seeing something I had never seen before. Like much of my work, the series inspired itself. The unbelievable combinations of color – that was the driving force."

<http://www.chihuly.com>

In 1981 I started working on the *Macchia*. In the beginning they were mostly concerned with color – usually very bright, often strange, mostly opaque color – where the outside of the piece was dramatically contrasted to the inside. Lip wraps complemented the inside color. Most people don't realize it, but blowing a piece that combines a range of colors is extremely difficult, because each color attracts and holds the heat differently. As we slowly began to figure out these technical complexities, the *Macchias* began to increase in size. It turns out that size is extremely important to the *Macchias*, and with them I felt for the first time that a piece of glass held its own in a room."

Dale Chihuly, "On the Road,"

Chihuly: Color, Glass, Form, Kodansha International, 1986



Russet Pheasant Macchia with Sea Green Lip Wrap

2001

Glass

14 x 24 x 13 in. (35.6 x 61 x 33 cm)

Courtesy of the artist, Seattle, Washington

Photo credit: Scott M. Leen

(The Italian word *macchia* means a stain or a spot.)

Johnny P. Johnson

(born 1936)



Landscape in Red

2004

Acrylic and mixed media
28 x 40 in. (71.1 x 101.6 cm)

Courtesy of the artist, Fredericksburg, Virginia

My art is a response to many different life experiences. I am sensitive to the human condition, which compels me to express, through painting, a particular opinion. I want the viewer to relate to it in his/her own way. At other times the creative process is as important as the work itself. Most of my inspiration comes from my love of people and our natural environment. Both subjects are handled in similar ways. Often I use heavily textured surfaces for my paintings. Canvas, Masonite, watercolor paper, and illustration board serve as my supports. They usually are textured with sand, sawdust, modeling paste, gesso, rice paper, and any other interesting materials I can find. I use oils, alkyds, watercolors, and acrylics as my painting media.

An effort is made to express the essence of the subject without unnecessary details. I enjoy the challenge of forcing the viewer to look at the work from many different perspectives. Social commentaries are often present in my work and are based on my own life experiences. It is exciting for me to experiment as I create."

Award-winning artist Johnny Johnson is a devoted educator and civic activist whose good works have been widely recognized. He has been named Virginia Teacher of the Year, Unsung Virginian, Citizen of the Year, and has received the Governor's Life Time Achievement Award, among others. His work has been exhibited in the United States and France, and is included in private and corporate collections, including Reynolds Aluminum and the Phillip Morris Company.

Anderson Kenny

(born 1971)

My artwork is inextricably related to cultural diversity and the built environment. I attempt to blur the lines between art and architecture, reach a broad audience, and create a sense of place about my subjects. Drawing on inspiration from classical frescos, rural outbuildings, and modern structures, it is my intention to demonstrate how these subjects relate and support one another. Through the layering of media and cultural information I create vignettes to show a glimpse of their depth and complexity."

Born in Nashville, Tennessee, Anderson Kenny received his Bachelor of Science (1994) and Master of Architecture (1999) degrees from the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, and was a recipient of the Kennedy Scholarship for Art. He has been actively exhibiting his work since 2001, and it can be found in private, corporate, and public collections, including the Tennessee State Museum and Vanderbilt University, both in Nashville. Kenny currently lives in Connecticut, where he divides his time between painting, installations, and architecture. Kenny is an architect with Centerbrook Architects. The aesthetic of rural settings combined with urban landscapes and contemporary design is a continuing influence in his work.



Jon Boat

2001

Travertine, gesso, egg tempera, ink, and graphite
18 x 18 in. (45.7 x 45.7 cm)

Courtesy of the artist, Westbrook, Connecticut

Anderson Kenny



Tile Haus

2002

Ledger paper, gesso, egg tempera, ink, and graphite
11 x 14 in. (27.9 x 35.6 cm)

Courtesy of the artist, Westbrook, Connecticut



Potbelly

2004

Terracotta, gesso, egg tempera, ink, and graphite
12 x 12 in. (30.5 x 30.5 cm)

Courtesy of the artist, Westbrook, Connecticut

Kathy Lichtendahl

(born 1958)

One Single Color (Does Not a Rainbow Make) was created in response to a challenge by the on-line quilt group, Quiltart.com. The theme of the on-line exhibition was to be *E Pluribus Unum* (From Many – One), the motto of the United States.

"As a person who has designed and constructed quilts for most of my life, rarely have I had a piece take shape in my mind so quickly. Each part of this quilt has significance: from the monochromatic 'arms' representing isolated cultures, to the multi-colored star, which stands for a diverse population. The black and white border represents barriers to diversity and each 'arm' flows over or under the border in the way people may strive to escape a culture which accepts no outsiders or unique thinking.

Many of my quilts have poems I have written on the back, and this one is no exception. The words read:

*One single color
does not a rainbow make,
Nor one lone shade of skin tone
a diverse world create;
How drab would be the meadow,
if but one wildflower bloomed,
How sad and lonely hearts would beat
if each new soul, presumed."*

Kathy Lichtendahl is a naturalized citizen of the United States. She lives in Clark, Wyoming.



One Single Color (Does not a Rainbow Make)

2004

Cotton cloth and cotton batting

36 in. diameter (91.4 cm)

Courtesy of the artist, Clark, Wyoming

Maruta Racenis

(born 1940)



October Field

2003

Watercolor

5¼ x 6 in. (13.3 x 15.2 cm)

Courtesy of the artist, Richmond, Virginia

“Certain features – light, time, weather – affect my senses and my landscapes. Even though I take forays into drawing and painting the figure or certain elements of still life, I seem always to return to the exploration of landscape. These are actual places but are translated into visual form from memory. My quest in this investigation of landscape through the painted surface is to communicate a sense of place without losing the intimacy of the experience.”

Virginia painter Maruta Racenis was born in Riga, Latvia. She attended the University of Siena and the Institute of Fine Art, Siena, Italy, and received her Bachelor of Science degree from the State University of New York, Buffalo, and her Master of Fine Arts degree at the Rochester Institute of Technology, New York. She has taught art in public school systems in New York and Virginia, and at Virginia Commonwealth University and the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, both in Richmond. Her work has been the subject of many solo exhibitions, and has been included in group exhibitions throughout the United States, receiving many awards. Racenis' paintings are in private, public, and corporate collections, including the Everson Museum of Art, Syracuse, New York, and the Capitol One Collection. She lives and works in Richmond, Virginia.

Synthia Saint James

(born 1949)

Self-taught artist Synthia Saint James was born in Los Angeles, California in 1949. Her professional career as an artist began in 1969 in New York City, where she sold her first commissioned paintings. Today she is an internationally recognized fine artist, and award-winning author, illustrator, and songwriter. She has designed over fifty book covers for such noted authors as Alice Walker, Terry McMillan, Ilyana Vanzant, and Julia Boyd, and the U.S. Postal stamp for Kwanzaa. Since 1990 Saint James has completed over forty commissions for corporations and organizations such as Coca Cola, the Girl Scouts of America, the California International Airport, and the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles. Saint James lives and works in Los Angeles.



Tchokola

1991

Print

24 x 33 in. (61 x 83.8 cm)

Courtesy of the ART in Embassies Program, Washington, D.C.

Synthia Saint James



Stilt Dancers

1988

Print

31 x 25 in. (78.7 x 63.5 cm)

Courtesy of the ART in Embassies Program, Washington, D.C.

Sally Thielen

(born 1938)

I have had high goals throughout my art career (over thirty years). I always push to do my very best. I strive to make art with sincere beauty, to show Native American people as they are while dancing at a traditional gathering, or my interpretation of their spiritual self. I also like to create art with humor to make people feel happy. Some of my work has a political point of view to encourage the viewer to think about our environment and our lives."

Sally Thielen lives and works in Davison, Michigan; she is of non-tribal Chippewa ancestry. The model for *Western Pheasant* is of Sioux heritage, and the model for *Women of the Yellow Bird People* is of Native American and African American ancestry. Of this second mask Thielen has written:

A little more than a year ago, I was invited to do a show in a gallery in Florida. The theme of the show was the mixture of Native American and African American people. I found the historical use of common objects such as megil shells, grasses, feathers, beads, and triangular shapes very intriguing. I have incorporated this idea in the masks.

Also, I could not find a name for the Native American and African American mixture, such as Creole for African American and French, or Metis for American Indian and French. I found it interesting that most people I have met knew they were of Native American descent, but did not know what tribe they were from."



Woman of the Yellow Bird People

2003

Raku porcelain mask with chicken feathers, duck feathers, simulated Flicker feathers, ribbons, and beads of horn, glass, and metal
18 x 14 x 5 in. (45.7 x 35.6 x 12.7 cm)
Courtesy of the artist, Davison, Michigan

Sally Thielen



Western Pheasant

2003

Raku porcelain mask with chicken feathers, fox fur, horse hair, Ring-neck Pheasant feathers,
and Lady Amherst feathers

25 x 18 x 5 in. (63.5 x 45.7 x 12.7 cm)

Courtesy of the artist, Davison, Michigan

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