

ART ACROSS THE ATLANTIC



ART IN EMBASSIES EXHIBITION

UNITED STATES MISSION TO THE NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION, BRUSSELS

WILLEM DE KOONING **THE KEY AND THE PARADE**, 1985

Oil on canvas, 70 x 80 in. (177,8 x 203,2 cm). Courtesy of The Willem de Kooning Foundation

INTRODUCTION

Art Across the Atlantic is a fitting theme for this extraordinary exhibition of art presented at Truman Hall, courtesy of the U.S. Department of State's office of ART in Embassies. The works were created by European artists with ties to America and American artists with ties to Europe. They reflect not only the transatlantic spirit of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization but also my own background, as someone born and raised in Europe who now represents the U.S. at the one organization that unites Europe and North America.

Willem de Kooning, whose painting *The Key and the Parade* was the first work selected for the exhibition, exemplifies this transatlantic theme. Born in the Netherlands, at age twenty he stowed away on a ship to New York City, where he prospered, becoming one of the great artists of the twentieth century and an American citizen. The key in this painting symbolizes the "opening of doors," a recurring subject in de Kooning's work. American Linda Colsh has lived for nearly twenty years in Belgium. Her quilt, *Drift*, is based on a photo she took in Budapest, Hungary. Mindy Weisel was born in the displaced person's camp at Bergen-Belsen immediately after World War II to parents who survived Auschwitz. Weisel immigrated to the U.S., ultimately becoming a citizen and an important contributor to our artistic heritage. Her fused glass piece, *Light Survives*, reflects the indomitable nature of the human spirit.

Two leading Belgian artists are featured in the exhibition. Isabelle de Borchgrave, internationally known for her pioneering works made of paper, has loaned *Delphos Dress*, which was the centerpiece of an exhibition in Venice of works based on the designs of couturier Mariano Fortuny (1871-1949). The hand-painted paper dress stands in front of a paper tapestry backdrop created especially for this exhibition. Arne Quinze, who divides his time between the U.S. and Belgium, has loaned two cutting-edge mixed media pieces, *Stilthouse* and *Bidonville View*, which powerfully combine his concerns about the future with issues of housing and communication.

As we began work on this exhibition, we found that we had embarked on an unexpected personal journey. The art drew us in, challenging our thinking. As exhibition artist Bernd Haussmann has said: "A painting is a window into a new experience. Painting is not about what you see, it is about what you don't see."

We are deeply grateful to those who have made this exhibition possible: foremost the artists, galleries, and foundation that generously loaned work; our remarkable Curator, Camille Benton; U.S. NATO Mission Advisor, Nancy Minsky; Registrar, Jamie Arbolino; and ART in Embassies for organizing the exhibition and creating this publication.

We hope that you get as much pleasure as we have from this remarkable exhibition, which symbolizes the vibrant and enduring relationship between Europe and the United States.

Ambassador Ivo H. Daalder and Elisa D. Harris

Brussels, March 2011

ART in Embassies



Established in 1963, the U.S. Department of State's office of ART in Embassies (ART) 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, ART curates temporary and permanent exhibitions for the representational spaces of all U.S. chanceries, consulates, and chief-of-mission residences worldwide, commissioning and selecting 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 ART's presence in more countries than any other U.S. foundation or arts organization.

ART'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."

"The ART in Embassies program reveals the rich history and cultural heritage of the United States and the communal experiences that we share with peoples of different countries, backgrounds and faiths, binding us closer together. Through its temporary exhibitions and permanent collections, the ART in Embassies program intrigues, educates, and connects – playing an ambassadorial role as important as that served by traditional diplomacy."

— *Hillary Rodham Clinton*
Secretary of State

PAT BADT

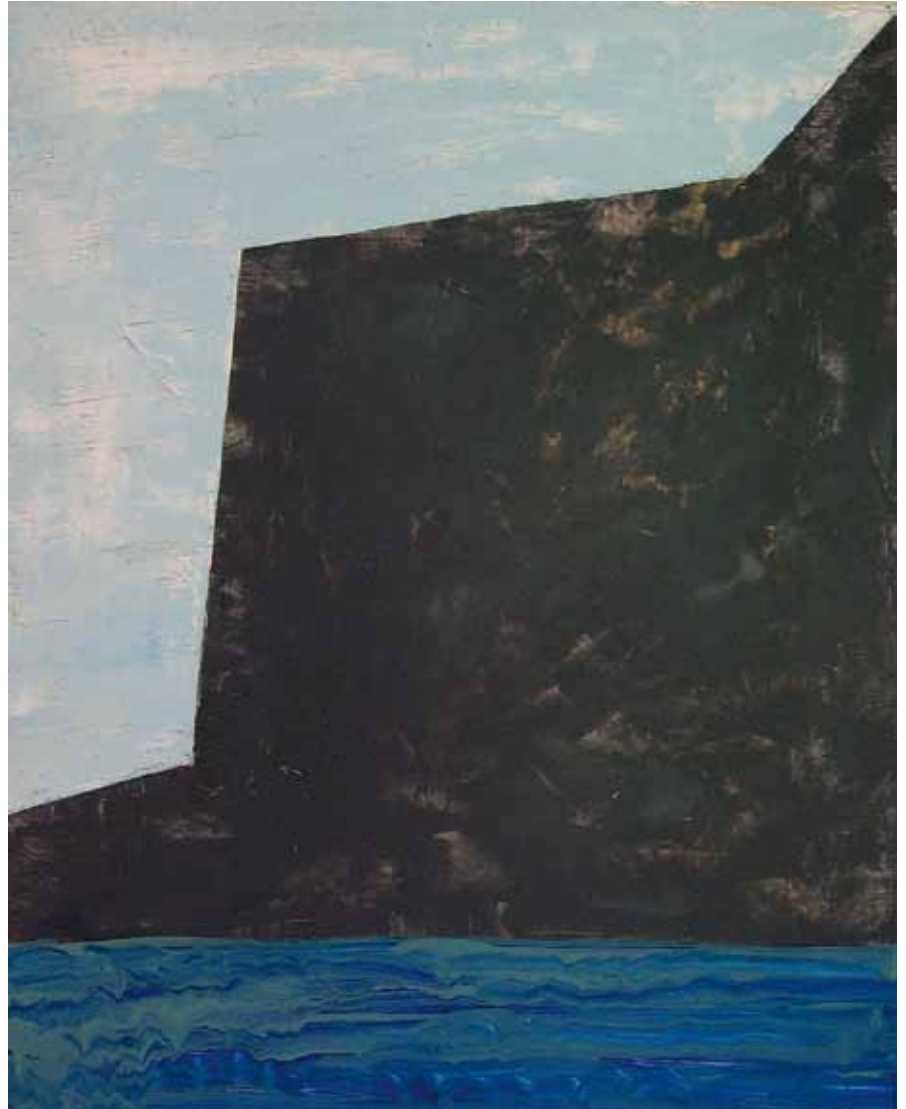
This work was inspired by a residency in Reykjavik, Iceland, hosted by SIM, The Association of Icelandic Visual Artists. “While in Iceland I was taken by the youngness of the landscape and how the processes that formed it were so apparent.

Painting is an activity that filters experience through sensibility. My interest is in recording and making visual the events gathered from real experience, walking in the landscape or city, weather and light. Noticing color and texture is an activity worth paying attention to. Transferring these perceptions to painting becomes a process of reaction and interaction that propels one to a sense of place, of being and of understanding. Through painting the textures of living are discovered.”

www.thethirdbarn.org

ESJA, ICELAND, 2008

Oil on canvas on wood, 30 x 24 in. (76.2 x 61 cm)
Courtesy of the artist, Orefield, Pennsylvania



ANN CITRON

“The *Ezekiel Series* was based upon a very graphic description of the vision Ezekiel the prophet had during the Babylonian captivity. On the basis of that vision, a whole school of art and ideas has grown up about the ‘chariot’ and the angels that Ezekiel saw. The angels are described as having four faces – a man, a lion, an ox, and an eagle, and as being able to move in any direction because they are accompanied by wheels (which have eyes). I have used enameling, fiber, and found objects in this piece. I continue to be fascinated by the account of the vision, as have many artists over the centuries.”

“... I have been working with beads for the last five years. They can be sewn to a piece of material, strung on thread and wrapped around an armature, or sewn in such a way that they can function as sculpture without any other support. Seed beads are very small and time-consuming to work with, but their luminosity, depth of color and sparkle makes them attractive to handle and to look at. It is a tactile and visual pleasure to use beads, as well as shells, buttons, sequins and found objects in my work, and to combine textiles and beads in unexpected ways. It is my hope that viewers will enjoy seeing the combinations as much as I enjoy creating them.”

– Ann Citron



ANGEL 1, 2003

Fiber wrapped on a wire armature, beads, enameled faces, wire, thread
40 x 20 x 12 in. (101,6 x 50,8 x 30,5 cm)
Courtesy of a Private Collection

LINDA COLSH

“My work is often figurative, starting with photographs I take of real people who are, to me, anonymous. In my imagination and on paper, I create a ‘character’ who I place in a setting and surround with items – props – that define the character or the narrative I envision for the character. I work with images on my computer and then with surface design processes to put everything on cloth. Then, I compose and stitch together squares and rectangles of my surface-designed fabric into designs that tell the stories, make the comments, and express the things I have to say.

I am currently working in several series with themes that focus on aspects of growing old, invisibility, isolation, privacy, identity, and our concepts of what is beautiful (or not). I like the push-pull of looking at something from all sides and then, carrying that looking further by imagining that same thing not there at all. What is important is what is seen, what is not seen, and what is imagined.

I love how a walk in the fog sets the mind’s eye working to see more than plain eyesight reveals, to fill in the blanks and imagine what is obscured. I approach making my art with the goal of trying to achieve that combination of the visual with the challenge of mystery.”

www.lindacolsh.com

DRIFT, 2006

Fabric, dye, and paint, 57 x 52 in. (144,8 x 132,1 cm)

Courtesy of the artist, Everberg, Belgium



ISABELLE DE BORCHGRAVE

While dedicating a significant amount of her time to painting, Isabelle de Borchgrave has become a world leader in the field of design using paper. She is now passionately committed to the development of collections of dresses and decors in paper, creating the appearance of lace, sumptuous Renaissance brocade, or silk in the style of Madame de Pompadour.

Another inspiration is the work of designer Mariano Fortuny (Italian, 1871-1949), whose name will forever be associated with his sublime pleated sheath dress. He was an artist passionate about Egypt, ancient Greece, Arabic culture, and the Italian Renaissance. All these influences are visible in his hand-painted fabrics and haute couture creations, and it is this mix of cultural influences that is so attractive to de Borchgrave. In re-creating Fortuny's elegant sheath dresses such as the famous Delphos dress from 1907, chasubles, and diaphanous shawls with gilded arabesque highlights, de Borchgrave discovered the artist's many sides, including painter, inventor, photographer, decorator, textile alchemist, and Renaissance prince. A couturier who never called himself such, Fortuny turned the most beautiful women of the early twentieth century into Greek goddesses, dressing them in his most refined creations.

www.isabelledeborchgrave.com



SLEEVELESS DELPHOS DRESS, 2007. 65 $\frac{3}{8}$ x 15 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 14 $\frac{3}{16}$ in. (166 x 40 x 36 cm). **TAPESTRY**, 2009. 96 $\frac{7}{8}$ x 68 $\frac{1}{8}$ in. (246 x 173 cm). Both: Paper, gold leaf, dye; silk Kaftan. Courtesy of the artist, Brussels, Belgium

WILLEM DE KOONING (1904-1997)

In 1926, Willem de Kooning was a Dutch stowaway in pursuit of an American Dream. Withstanding New York's poverty during the Great Depression, alongside a maverick group of artists, he found an arena of possibilities, one in which, with incredible dedication, he became one of America's greatest painters.

On the rare occasions when de Kooning ascribed titles to his paintings of the 1980s, he chose them based on spontaneous ideas or images which arose as he looked at them. Titles were neither implicative of a narrative nor of social consciousness. De Kooning was after all an abstractionist, and ambiguity was characteristic of his work. Nonetheless, the title, *The Key and the Parade*, appears to be as evocative as the painting itself. No longer grappling with the angst of earlier years, de Kooning seems to offer instead a joyful *parade* of color and form. He reveals a spirited Matisse or Mondrian in lieu of Ingres, Picasso or Soutine. "*The Key*" had multiple meanings for de Kooning, according to studio assistant, Tom Ferrara. The key was the essence of something. It opened doors, and opening doors was a recurring theme for de Kooning. Open up one door, and another door opens up to you. It was both an escape hatch and "the way in".

– Amy Schichtel, Executive Director
The Willem de Kooning Foundation



THE KEY AND THE PARADE, 1985
Oil on canvas, 70 x 80 in. (177,8 x 203,2 cm)
Courtesy of The Willem de Kooning Foundation



BELOEIL, BELGIUM, 2004

Photograph, 19 x 19 in. (48,3 x 48,3 cm)

Courtesy of Catherine Edelman Gallery, Chicago, Illinois

LYNN GEESAMAN

American photographer Lynn Geesaman first started traveling to France and Belgium in 1987, when she realized that the gardens she most sought were outside the United States. Based in Minneapolis, Geesaman learned photography when she was thirty-three years old in an effort to take pictures of her children. Working as a math teacher in middle school, Geesaman developed a hobby that quickly became a full-time career, as she created her own way of seeing and style of printing. A pivotal photographic assignment led her to shoot in a public garden, which she had previously found to be intimidating. Although she had found Minneapolis stimulating, she realized that her favorite gardens and parks were from another century – places that remained untouched by human decadence or industrial intrusion, and they became her subjects.

[www.edelmangallery.com/
geesaman/geesaman-bio.htm](http://www.edelmangallery.com/geesaman/geesaman-bio.htm)

BERND HAUSSMANN

“I am interested in if and how the spiritual, material, cultural, and natural environments influence our subjective environments and vice versa; if and how they meet, connect, or overlap; and if and how my art can become a connector and stimulate interaction.

I am curious how the environment of my paintings affects the environment of the viewer and, as a possible result, how this exchange of information might affect the natural environment that we are all part of.”

www.berndhausmann.com

www.chasegallery.com



OFFENE HERZEN / UNTITLED, 2004

Oil and acrylics on canvas, 22 x 26 in. (55,9 x 66 cm)
Courtesy of the artist and Chase Gallery, Boston, Massachusetts

EVA ISAKSEN



BLUE MORNING, 2008

Collage on canvas, 30 x 36 in. (76,2 x 91,4 cm)

Courtesy of the artist and Foster/White Gallery, Seattle, Washington

“My work has always been inspired by nature: organic forms, cycles, seasons, land, water, sky, order, rhythm, repetition, growth, life, regeneration. For some time now, I have been using papers as the primary material in my work. The thin papers, which I print on, draw on, cut up, mix, are layered endlessly on the canvas. No ‘found’ papers are used. I print them all, using yarns, fabric, seeds, pressed plants, and other organic material.

My work is an exploration of complex color schemes and contrasts. I seek ways to bring my work to new levels of my personal interpretation of nature. My work is about color, line, material, form, space, and about art as process that always changes and grows.

Where to stop? How far to push? How little? How much? Color is intense. It overpowers me. After working with it for weeks on end, I step back, peel the color away. What is underneath? Something new. Somewhere to grow from again.”

www.evaisaksen.com

www.fosterwhite.com

JOHN KENNEDY (1931-2004)

“The interchange between male and female in all its complexity had always interested me as an artist. As an incurable romantic, I seek to capture the warmth and tender closeness, the caring and feeling, as well as the joy, and often the whimsical side of these very personal human emotions. This is why I use the human body as a ‘point of departure’ simplifying the figure to a lyrical composition.”

www.codagallery.com/artists/john-kennedy.php

HOPE, undated
Bronze, 15 ½ x 5 x 5 in. (39,4 x 12,7 x 12,7 cm)
Courtesy of CODA Gallery, Palm Desert, California



GYÖNGY LAKY



Photo: Ben Blackwell

Gyöngy Laky's art is a call for attention to everything that she is worrying about in the world. "Of course I want that my art moves the viewer visually with beautiful, interesting or attractive forms. But I find it at least just as interesting that each symbol radiates a statement. I hope people understand this and that it gets them thinking ... I think humanity is brilliant, intelligent, smart, skillful, and creative; I love that we are that way. I love my computer. But we are overdoing our materialism. We are so smart, so intelligent, so skillful, and so creative. We should use these gifts more wisely. That is why in my work I always look to combine nature and human progress."

<http://169.237.209.26/laky/gyongy1.0/index.html>

GO AND . . ., 2007

Ash branches, paint, screws, 40 x 46 x 4 in. (101,6 x 116,8 x 10,2 cm)
Courtesy of the artist, San Francisco, California

BRIGITTE MCREYNOLDS

“My work is a continuous investigation of abstraction and exploration of the human form. It is a visual diary, a ‘paper trail’ of a process, spontaneous yet deliberate, personal yet universal.

I work in series that can start as a concept of the mind, an idea, a thought, a vision of a finished work, or it can begin as an emotion, a feeling, a process of the heart. When I work on a theme, like stripes for example, I explore it in oil, acrylic, and encaustic, working figuratively and abstractly until it exhausts itself or leads to another theme. I apply what I’ve learned from working with shapes, forms, and lines in my abstract paintings to finding the simplicity that is needed for abstracting a figure. Similarly, my abstract work profits from my figurative experience.

I work in layers of paint, creating luminous color, depth, and voluptuous texture. Painting for me is a dynamic intuitive process. A drip or smear can reveal part of that process. I like that!”

www.brigittemcreynolds.com

RADIANT FIGURE WITH STRIPES, 2009
Oil on panel, 60 x 40 in. (152,4 x 101,6 cm)
Courtesy of the artist, Sonoma, California





ARNE QUINZE

Arne Quinze's talent lies in his ability to fuse polar extremes – passion and chaos with controlled elegance. He creates immaculate, urbane, and polished works that are balanced with a certain contradicting tension, giving them a refined yet exuberant appearance. He realizes his ideas with verve and is able to generate crossovers between art and architecture as if it's child's play.

“I love chaos. I'd love to freeze one of these sublime moments when the logic of chaos, the only thing that is real, reveals its incomparable beauty and harmony ”

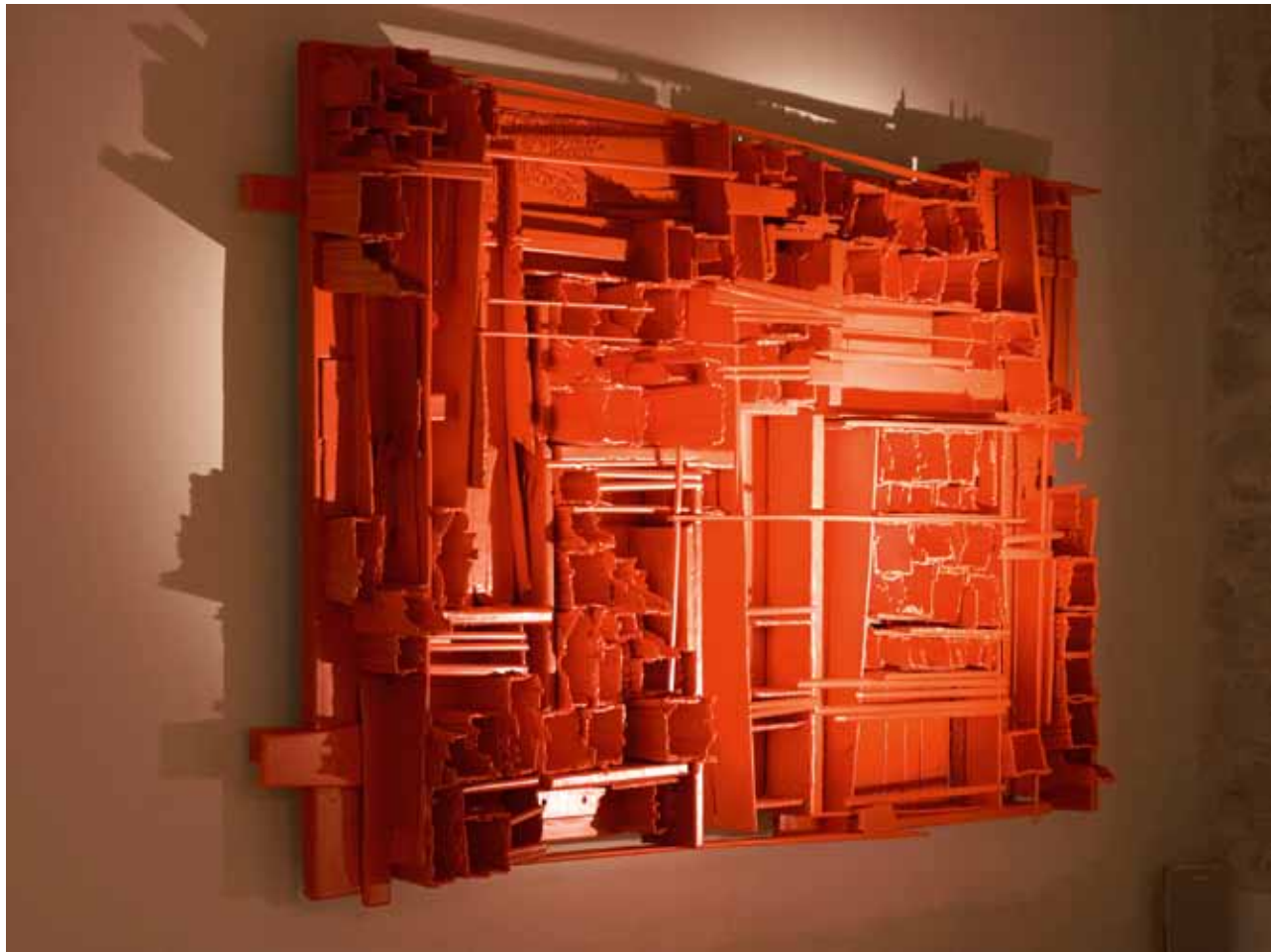
*www.arnequinze.tv/#/en/home
www.guypietersgallery.com*

STILHOUSE, 2009

Mixed media, 66 ¹/₁₆ x 22 ⁷/₁₆ x 32 ⁵/₁₆ in.
(170 x 57 x 82 cm). Courtesy of the artist and Guy Pieters Gallery, Sint-Martens-Latem, Belgium

ARNE QUINZE **BIDONVILLE VIEW 06.01.09**, 2009

Mixed media, 50 ¹³/₁₆ x 84 ¹/₄ x 10 ¹/₄ in. (129 x 214 x 26 cm). Courtesy of the artist and Guy Pieters Gallery, Sint-Martens-Latem, Belgium



LISA VERSHBOW

Lisa Vershbow was trained as a silver and goldsmith, but her work has evolved into creating designs that juxtapose materials not often found together in jewelry. Her wearable pieces often combine silver with anodized aluminum, pearls, plastics, feathers, or stones. Frequently combing the shelves of hardware stores in search for materials that have inherent beauty, Vershbow likes to challenge traditional concepts of value, and rarely incorporates gold or gemstones in her wearable art. She explains: “I try to make jewelry that is appreciated for its design and craftsmanship more than for the value of its materials.”

Vershbow creates both jewelry and objects. *White Tower* is a basket form made from industrial painted steel screen, acrylics, nuts, and bolts. It is adorned with anodized aluminum cut into the delicate leaf forms that are a recurrent theme in many of her jewelry designs.

A resident of Washington D.C., Vershbow has a studio at the Torpedo Factory Art Center in Alexandria, Virginia, where she is also on the metalsmithing faculty of the Art League School. During diplomatic postings with her husband abroad, Vershbow has always maintained a studio, made connections with local artists, and conducted lectures and master classes for local art students. She received the American Foreign Service Association’s 2005 “Avis Bohlen Award” for cultural diplomacy during her time in Russia.

www.lisavershbow.com



WHITE TOWER, 2008

Painted steel, acrylic, anodized aluminum
14 $\frac{3}{16}$ x 5 $\frac{1}{8}$ x 5 $\frac{1}{8}$ in. (36 x 13 x 13 cm)
Courtesy of the artist, Washington, D.C.

NELDA WARKENTIN

“Design features found in Nature, particularly rhythm, pattern, and line, are the basis of my work. For me, one bird in flight is interesting, but birds flying in formation are mesmerizing. The same is true for other patterns around me – ocean waves, trees, blades of grass, etc. Color is used to convey light in a landscape, a mood or emotion.

My art also contrasts images in Nature with the architectural straight line. By constructing each quilt in sections, the lines, created where the sections join, give each work added interest.

Using layers of painted transparent silk over a background image, I create abstracts that have depth and complexity, as the viewer can see through the surface to the colors underneath.

Living in Alaska and Maine and traveling often exposes me to an array of visual influences. Images and patterns created by the sunlight, colors and the environment unique to each locale are my inspiration.”

www.neldawarkentin.com

www.artiqueltd.com



Photo courtesy John Tuckey

OCEANIC, 2008
Painted silk, 70 x 60 in. (117,8 x 152,4 cm)
Courtesy of a Private Collection

MINDY WEISEL



Mindy Weisel's heritage as the only daughter of Holocaust survivors has long spurred her work as a painter, author, and lecturer ... Weisel began working in glass several years ago almost by accident, taking an informal class near where she makes prints. There she discovered the medium's "ability ... to hold the moment, the memory, the feeling" more effectively than painting. Weisel starts each piece by writing calligraphic marks and then manipulates, improvises, stains, and sometimes breaks up several pieces of the molten material to fuse and layer into a single composition.

www1.american.edu/academic.depts/cas/katzen/museum/exhibitions06fall.cfm#4

www.mindyweisel.com

LIGHT SURVIVES, undated
Fused glass, 16 x 16 in. (40,6 x 40,6 cm)
Courtesy of the artist, Washington, D.C.

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