



United States Embassy Copenhagen

ART in Embassies Exhibition

Leigh Wen **Passage VI**, 2011. Oil on canvas, 78 x 153 in. (198.1 x 388.6 cm). Courtesy of the artist, New York, New York

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."

"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

Introduction

As the granddaughter of a Danish immigrant to the United States, it is a special privilege for me to serve as United States Ambassador to Denmark. I appreciate the strong bonds between our countries and our peoples. It is true when I say that this is a dream job – and that being U.S. Ambassador is better than any fairytale.



Photo of Ambassador Fulton by Randi Juhl

Ambassador Laurie Fulton with her daughter Lindsay Daschle and son-in-law Tommy Ross in front of the portrait of her great-grandfather Mads Jensen-Aale.

Like my predecessors, I have the privilege of living at Rydhave, the lovely late nineteenth century brick villa set on a hill looking across Øresund to Sweden. On a glorious Danish day, the view through Rydhave's windows is captivating.

Through the U.S. Department of State's ART in Embassies program, American ambassadors have exhibitions of art available at their residences. I am very lucky, for I have had two!

When I first arrived at Rydhave and expected my first official visitors in August of 2009, I was faced with large, empty walls. In a generous gesture of welcome, the Danish parliament, the

Folketing, lent a portrait of my great-grandfather, Mads Jensen-Aale, who was a prominent Danish politician and member of the old Upper Chamber, the Landsting, from 1918 to 1940. This portrait, "The Men behind the Agricultural Legislation Meeting on October 4, 1919," greets everyone who walks into the reception hall at Rydhave.

One of Denmark's finest art museums, Vestsjællands Kunstmuseum, also came to the rescue with a superb exhibition of Danish early modernism. This exhibition of works from the late nineteenth century to about 1940 corresponded with the history of Rydhave, before it was purchased by the U.S. Government. I loved living for nearly two years with this exhibition, which reminded me of my Danish roots, my various travels in Denmark, and the rediscovery I made as U.S. Ambassador of the values and many common perspectives that unite our countries.

Now the time has come to present an exhibition of American art, which I have selected with the assistance of the ART in

Introduction

Embassies program, to emphasize the boldness of the sea, the beauty of Rydhave's natural surroundings, and the strength of artistic expression that we cherish both in the U.S. and in Denmark.

The works on display by artists Sondra Arkin, Alice Baber, Prilla Smith Brackett, Diane Burko, Joel D'Orazio, Julian Hatton, Robert LaHotan, Judith Scott Larsen, Kim MacConnel, and Leigh Wen also have stories to tell in keenly felt colors, forms, and lines. We are taken on a grand tour from abstract landscapes to photorealism, from intricate patterns to works that defy categorization. Memories are evoked and linger with each work, and one might find traces of places once visited, a special atmosphere, or emotions that are common to all mankind.

This exhibition is America. The paintings are full of energy, vitality, beauty, and boldness. For me, the exhibition emphasizes the bonds that connect all Americans, as said so well in *America the Beautiful*, "from sea to shining sea."



These wonderful works have come to Rydhave through the U.S. Department of State's ART in Embassies program. I am very grateful to curator Claire D'Alba, who expertly took charge and arranged for this exhibition, and to the generosity of the artists, collectors, and galleries that have lent the works which are displayed here. My special thanks to Leigh Wen, who joined me at Rydhave to open this exhibition.

Taken together, these paintings demonstrate how American art has become a prevailing international influence today. But as you walk around Rydhave, you will see that I have been able to keep a small number of the Danish paintings from the first exhibition for a while longer. Although very different, for me, these two selections of paintings – American and Danish – are a testament to love of country and joy in living. I hope that you will be as inspired by this art as I am.

Ambassador Laurie S. Fulton

Copenhagen, December 2011

Sondra Arkin

(1959)

Sondra Arkin is a painter and curator whose forays into other media include printmaking, sculpture, and assemblage. From large, fluid watercolors in the 1980s (more organic) to labor-intensive encaustic wax in the present (more geometric), her focus has always been on the interplay of colors and textures and light. Much of the recent work is oversized encaustic panels, on which she makes luminous surfaces, saturated with color, and punctuated with texture. It could be said that the imagery is reductive: whether it is cleanly fluid or layered, poured or scraped. Even in the most simple works, it is distilled, and the celebration of color and surface is embodied in the structure of the grid, which is both explicit and implicit. The success of this work is that it reads as both vast landscape and microscopic environment, challenging the viewer within the context of its world.

Over the last decade Arkin has had many solo and group exhibitions, and her work has been included in many private, corporate, and public collections, including those of Crystal City, Virginia; Rehoboth Beach, Delaware; and the District of Columbia's Art Bank Collection.



Sterling Moss, 2010

Encaustic on Dibond, 48 x 48 in. (121.9 x 121.9 cm)

Courtesy of the artist, Washington, D.C.

Zozobra, 2010

Encaustic on Dibond, 48 x 48 in. (121.9 x 121.9 cm)

Courtesy of the artist, Washington, D.C.





The Path of the Sun Leads to the Piper, undated. Oil on canvas, 91 ½ x 49 ½ in. (232.4 x 125.7 cm)
Gift of the Estate of Alice Baber to ART in Embassies, Washington, D.C.

Alice Baber (1928-1982)

Alice Baber began painting at the age of eight, later studying art at Lindenwood College for Women in St. Charles, Missouri, and Indiana University. She also traveled worldwide, studying at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Fontainebleau, France, and lived in Paris throughout the late nineteen fifties and sixties. She was a member of the March Gallery on Tenth Street in New York City, and was art editor for *McCall's* magazine.

Baber was instrumental in organizing exhibitions of women artists at a time when women were still struggling to gain prominence in the international art world. Baber's legacy is honored at the

Baber Midwest Modern Art Collection of the Greater Lafayette Museum of Art in Indiana, and the Alice Baber Memorial Art Library in East Hampton, Long Island, New York. Her paintings are in major museum collections throughout the world.

Baber's work is recognized for its luminous, abstract shapes, particularly in stained canvases filled with clear, radiant color. Her compositions often consist of multiple round or ovoid shapes.

www.niagara.edu/cam/art_of_70s/Artists/baber.html



Green Swing, undated
Oil on canvas, 38 ¾ x 64 ¾ in.
(98.4 x 164.5 cm)
Gift of Sachs Gallery, Illinois,
to ART in Embassies, Washington, D.C.

Through Sleep to Orange, 1968
Oil on canvas, 30 ¾ x 51 in. (78.1 x 129.5 cm)
Gift of the Estate of Alice Baber to
ART in Embassies, Washington, D.C.



Prilla Smith Brackett (1942)

Prilla Smith Brackett approaches landscape in a conceptual way, exploiting her practice to convey more than the mere description of a place. Her early work emphasized the intersection of the natural and man-made worlds through the juxtaposition and fragmentation of images, while her later work grew more contemplative.

Brackett has exhibited her work at the Farnham Gallery, Simpson College in Indianola, Iowa; and at the Hess Gallery, Pine Manor College in Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts. Other solo exhibitions have included the 2002 show, *Uncertain Balance*, at the National Academy of Sciences in Washington, D.C., and an exhibition entitled *Remnants: Ancient Forests & City Trees*. Her work is in public and private collections, such as that of the New Britain Museum of American Art, Connecticut; the Fogg Art Museum of Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts; the DeCordova Museum, Lincoln, Massachusetts; the National Museum of Women in the Arts, Washington, D.C.; and the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston, Massachusetts.

Becoming # 3, 1988

Oil, pastel, and acrylic on canvas, 51 7/8 x 69 7/8 in. (131.8 x 177.5 cm)
Gift of Foundation for Art and Preservation in Embassies to ART in Embassies, Washington, D.C.





Diane Burko (1945)

Diane Burko has had over thirty solo exhibitions in galleries and museums across the United States, including solo exhibitions at the Tang Museum; Tufts University Art Gallery; James A. Michener Art Museum; and Princeton University's Bernstein Gallery at the Woodrow Wilson School. She has received numerous awards, including two National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) Visual Arts Fellowships (1985, 1991); two Individual Artists Grants from the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts (1981, 1989); a Lila Acheson Wallace Foundation Residence Fellowship (1989); a Rockefeller Foundation Residence Fellowship (1993); and the Bessie Berman Grant, awarded by the Leeway Foundation in Philadelphia (2000). Burko's widely exhibited works are in numerous private and public collections, including the Art Institute of Chicago; The Philadelphia Museum of Art; The Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts; De Cordova Museum; The Delaware Art Museum; The Woodmere Art Museum; and The Frederick R. Weisman Art Museum.

www.niagara.edu/cam/art_of_70s/Artists/baber.html

Wissahickon Reflections: East Frieze, No. 1, 1997. Oil on canvas, 65 x 92 in. (165.1 x 233.7 cm). Courtesy of the artist, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania



Joel D'Orazio (1942)

“After practicing architecture for more than twenty-five years, I have turned to a new medium. I now create art with paint on panels, mixed media works and sculpture using found and donated objects and digital art. The images are uncommon, yet suggest the familiar forms of nature. Although the paintings are varied in color and composition, each image is part of a logical yet highly intuitive progression of work.

Each work begins as an adventure and its identity becomes as valid and important as the next, with the medium playing a most important role in the discovery of solutions. Originating in the subliminal, each work is a fresh encounter with the lush, unpredictable medium.

My artistic vocabulary is devoid of obvious symbols and messages, I do not intend to tell a story or render a recognizable form. For me, the process of creating is a meditative exercise. Though the images are generated spontaneously, recurring themes of movement and

form can be found. The paintings relate only to each other, each providing clues to interpret the next. This is their power. In contrast, my three dimensional works will at times possess a sense of content or a relationship to historical themes, though only in an abstract sense.

I work under various, self-imposed constraints; sometimes I limit my palette to black and white or to metallic pigments. This economy of means is not simply the principle of ‘less is more;’ I relish restrictions as a challenge to more fully explore each image, to search for the maximum effect.

As I paint, I am preoccupied with the fluidity of the paint and the resulting density, and also the spatial concerns that are important in the creation of an illusion. I work with the reflective quality of the medium, creating many transparent layers which suggest great depths of space. I fashion complex layerings of many small areas of color in order to dissolve any central focus or subject matter.”

~ Joel D'Orazio





Bilingual, 2005
Polyurethane on panel
36 x 80 in. (91.4 x 203.2 cm)
Courtesy of the artist, Bethesda, Maryland

Julian Hatton (1956)

“Take a step. Take another. Watch yourself. You’re on shifting ground. The ground is soft, moist, forgiving, but hidden and uneven. Ankle-twisting. You’re on a path, a path through my latest body of work, in a manner of speaking. Actually, you’re on a path in the woods, in the foothills of the Catskills, on a gentle ridge overlooking a small valley. Lately the path has become a fresh carpet of colors and smells and sounds – crunching, tumbling, cooked pumpkin pie-colored rotting leaves. Look behind you.

Across the small valley, through the trees, the horizon drifts up and down, separating the fuzzy blue browns of barren trees from a tawny cream sky. Black Bark Cherry trees interrupt your vista, shooting skyward almost from your nose, their dark branches running toward the sky like ribbons of black bean soup. Lots of undisciplined foliage clutters the view. Beech trees grow in groups and fill your scene with bark skin of light green and blue grays, with wobbly meandering limbs pulsating and curving like African elephant trunks. Look down. Ferns choke the path. They’re in the middle of turning from rambunctious bright blue greens to effete amber yellows. The ground and woods are outrageously colorful. Of course they are! Its mid-October in New York! What did you expect, monochrome?!

This environment that feeds the bulk of my painting is often too complex, too rich. It’s effulgent and overwhelming. Chaotic. In fact, I wouldn’t mind a little more monochrome. But that’s what imagination is for. It helps clarify and simplify, just like the winter snows that are coming next month to cover up this path we’re on. Over the past twenty-five years I’ve enjoyed the challenge of re-organizing this physical chaos, of channeling and corralling this outdoor experience, of inventing some sort of contemporary human-made symbolic equivalence. In the art studio process of wrestling with memory and re-materializing sensation, things tend to change quite a bit, from the actual blizzard of colors, textures, and smells, to refined pigments and various mediums (linseed oil, damar resin, turpentine) applied to stretched canvas. These materials, manipulated with animal hair on sticks (paint brushes), enable some kind of strange but fundamental translation of human experience into paint on a surface. The results are always imperfect, never all-encompassing. Hopefully they convey a metaphor that communicates and fascinates.”

~ Julian Hatton

Along the West Branch of the Delaware, 2010

Oil on canvas, 50 x 68 in. (127 x 172.7 cm)

Courtesy of the artist, New York, New York



Robert LaHotan (1927-2002)

Born in Cleveland Heights, Ohio, Robert LaHotan, was known for his landscapes and still lifes of lyrical color and subtle force. Whether he was painting the Maine forest at dusk or a bouquet of wild flowers in morning light, LaHotan brought to his work an abiding sense of mystery, a personal way of distilling a poetic moment from the canvases' ethereal depths. LaHotan is represented by the Kraushaar Galleries in New York, and his paintings are in private and public collections across the United States. He was a member of the National Academy of Art and a recipient of a Fulbright Grant in 1951. LaHotan received a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree and a Master of Fine Arts degree from Columbia University and lived in New York City and Cranberry Island, Maine.

Shore, ca. 1964

Oil on canvas, 38 x 38 in. (96.5 x 96.5 cm)

Gift of Katherine Degn, Brooklyn, New York, and Carole M. Pesner,
New York, NY, to ART in Embassies, Washington, D.C.



Judith Scott Larson

Judith Scott Larsen has Bachelor of Fine Arts and Master of Fine Arts degrees in painting from Tufts University and the Boston Museum School, both in Boston, Massachusetts. Her work has been exhibited internationally and is represented in numerous collections, including the DeCordova Museum, Lincoln, Massachusetts, and the Boston Museum of Fine Arts. Larsen is the Art Editor for the *Harvard Review* and a member of the Board of Governors for the Boston Museum School. She is currently represented by RHYS Gallery, Boston and by Eli Klein Fine Art, New York.

Cobalt Vase, undated

Oil on canvas, 64 x 81 in. (162.6 x 205.7 cm)

Gift of the Foundation for Art and Preservation in Embassies to

ART in Embassies, Washington, D.C.



Kim MacConnel (1946)

Kim MacConnel was an influential artist in the Pattern and Decoration Movement of the 1970s. Working with design elements, MacConnel made frivolity a fine art. Taking cues from artist Pablo Picasso and the so-called “primitivists,” MacConnel took the primitive and made it relevant in different dialogues between cultures. MacConnel’s paintings may look as though influenced by the Cubists, which they are, but there is a deeper meaning below the surface, based in the materials he uses and the meeting place he creates through cross-cultural interactions.

While MacConnel was a seminal figure in the Pattern and Decoration Movement, his œuvre surpasses categorization. With his singular sensibility and talent, he created a unique language using color and composition. MacConnel persuades the viewer to appreciate the appeal and conceptual property of patterns, and draws inspiration from such wide-ranging and multicultural resources as the textile arts of numerous world regions, found graphic images, and artists Henri Matisse and Pablo Picasso.

In 1969 MacConnel received his Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of California, San Diego and a Master of Fine Arts degree in 1972. He taught in the Visual Arts Department in various capacities between 1976 and 1980, and continuously from 1987 until retirement in 2009. His work has been shown in the Whitney Museum of American Art’s Biennial Exhibitions in 1975, 1977, 1979, 1981, and 1985; The Museum of Modern Art’s: *An International Survey of Recent Painting and Sculpture*, 1984; The Venice Biennale, 1984; and inSite in 1992 and 1994. MacConnel’s work is in such collections as the Morton G. Neumann Family Collection, The Whitney Museum of American Art, The Albright-Knox Gallery, and the Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego.

Big Rabbit 1, 2010

Enamel on wood panel

72 x 72 in. (182.9 x 182.9 cm)

Courtesy of the artist and Quint Gallery, La Jolla, California



Leigh Wen (1959)

Leigh Wen was born in Taipei, Taiwan. She received her Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from Washington State University and Master of Fine Arts degree from the State University of New York at Albany. She has exhibited nationally and internationally since the early 1980s. In 1979, the artist won the First Prize in Painting in the Ten Outstanding Young Talents Competition in Taiwan. In 1980, she was awarded Outstanding Merit in the Young Artists in Asia Now competition in Hong Kong. A break in her career occurred following her marriage in 1985, and the raising of two children. She returned to her career in 1992 by pursuing her graduate degree and has since devoted herself to art with increasing success and recognition.

Wen has since been awarded an Artist National Taiwan Art and Humanity Foundation grant in support of her solo exhibitions in the Taipei Fine Arts Museum, and the Lungmen Art Gallery in Taipei; a New York Foundation for the Arts Fellowship; and an Artist Grant from the Pollock Krasner Foundation of New York City. Wen's paintings have been featured in many major magazines.



Passage VI, 2011
Oil on canvas, 78 x 153 in. (198.1 x 388.6 cm)
Courtesy of the artist, New York, New York



Acknowledgments

ART in Embassies, Washington, D.C.

Claire D'Alba, Curator

Jamie Arbolino, Registrar

Marcia Mayo, Senior Editor

Sally Mansfield, Editor

Amanda Brooks, Imaging Manager and Photographer

U.S. Embassy Copenhagen

Andreas Rude, Public Affairs Specialist

Omar Ingerslev, Photographer

Vienna

Nathalie Mayer, Design



Published by ART in Embassies
U.S. Department of State, Washington, D.C.
January 2011