



UNITED STATES MISSION TO THE AFRICAN UNION, ADDIS ABABA **ART IN EMBASSIES EXHIBITION**

ART IN EMBASSIES

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

Modestly conceived in 1963, ART has evolved into a sophisticated program that curates exhibitions, managing and exhibiting more than 3,500 original works of loaned art by U.S. citizens. The work is displayed in the public rooms of some 200 U.S. embassy residences and diplomatic missions worldwide. These exhibitions, with their diverse themes and content, 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 multi-media installations. They are obtained through the generosity of lending sources that include U.S. museums, galleries, artists, institutions, corporations, and private collections. 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 international effort to present the artistic accomplishments of the people of the United States.

JOHN FOLSOM *Botany Bay Plantation Salt Marsh, 2009*
Archival pigment prints on board with oil and wax medium
48 x 72 in. (121,9 x 182,9 cm)
Courtesy of the artist, East Point, Georgia

WELCOME to the Residence of the American Ambassador to the U.S. Mission to the African Union in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, the diplomatic capital of the African Continent. My wife Linda and I are honored to display the art work of such distinguished artists as Bruce Bobick of Carrolton, Georgia; Peggy Blood of Savannah, Georgia; Sage Dawson of Springfield, Missouri; John Folsom of East Point, Georgia; Kendall Messick of Jersey City, New Jersey; and Preston Jackson and Joyce Owens, both of Chicago, Illinois. Each artist captures life and life's experiences in places in which we have lived and worked, thus making the selection of these works a personal reflection of valued time we have spent with family and friends. Each piece is like a guided tour through the artist's creative genius, and our collective memory. Also, every image and brush stroke upon the canvas draws the viewer closer to the artist's imagination and soul. Equally as intriguing are the still photographs of African American traditions, lifestyles, and places.

The U.S. Department of State's Office of ART in Embassies creates the exhibitions for embassies and missions worldwide, and it is important to us to have the works of the artists listed above displayed in our residence. We have been patrons of the arts for many years and our choice of the theme, *African American Life*, resonates with our experiences growing up in the United States, a place in which freedom's trail has been blazed with the elements of hope and change.

We are grateful to the artists for allowing us to display their magnificent work for the African Union Community of fifty-three nations and thirty-five African Union Partner Group Nations. We express appreciation to Melissa Coskuner and her staff for the meticulous care taken to display it, and to our ART in Embassies Curator, Claire D'Alba, for assembling this fine exhibition.

Ambassador Michael and Linda Battle

Addis Ababa, July 2010

BRUCE BOBICK 1941

"Sapelo is one of the Georgia barrier islands, and the first time I went there, I was struck by its unspoiled natural beauty. There was no commercial or residential development, only wide grayish-white sandy beaches, large dunes, and wild vegetation. Gigantic live oaks, with their gnarled branches draped with Spanish moss, also held the most gorgeous vines, which, as they dropped to the ground, created a multitude of interesting visual spaces.

As a watercolor painter, I love space and the white areas between forms. *Sapelo Island Vine Forms* is one of a group of works I have completed in an effort to simulate the subtle-hued vines of Sapelo Island by allowing one color to flow into another, while at the same time being careful to create interesting white shapes between the forms of the vines."

– Bruce Bobick

Bruce Bobick is professor and Chairman Emeritus of the department of art at the State University of West Georgia. He holds a Master of Arts Education degree from the University of Notre Dame, Indiana, and Bachelor of Science degree in arts education from Indiana University. He has exhibited his work in venues across the country, including Western Illinois University, the University of West Georgia, Jacksonville State University, and Mount Mercy College.

BRUCE BOBICK

Sapelo Island Vines, 2002

Watercolor on paper, 30 x 22 in. (76,2 x 55,9 cm)

Courtesy of the artist, Carrolton, Georgia



PEGGY BLOOD 1947

“My creative works are composed of vibrant bright hues and muted darks. Each painting tells a story about life observed in the US or through my travels. Many of my painting have multi-views of different experiences in one composition; the viewer is led from one area to various related shapes. Most works are of mixed media; natural and tangible objects that overlap with rhythmic motion and streams of colors for an expressionistic type of genre painting.”

Dr. Peggy Blood is a professional artist, veteran teacher, and administrator of thirty-five years. She has spent most of her professional career in northern California. Savannah, Georgia, has been her home since 1998. Dr. Blood is the past department chair of the Savannah State University fine arts program and holds the title of Distinguished Professor, 2004-2005.

Blood studied painting under John Howard of Arkansas, a protégé and colleague of Hale Woodruff. As a student in the segregated South, she was the first black American to receive a Master of Fine Arts degree from the University of Arkansas in Fayetteville. In 1978 she earned the title of Outstanding Bay Area Artist in Oakland, California. Dr. Blood holds a Master of Arts degree in administration education, Master of Fine Arts degree, and doctoral degree in administration and art education.

<http://fineartamerica.com>



OP and Rose, 2008 Oil on canvas, 30 x 60 in. (76,2 x 152,4 cm) Courtesy of the artist, Savannah, Georgia

PEGGY BLOOD

SAGE DAWSON

1982

Using mixed media, Sage Dawson draws from experiences in the landscape and architectural research she conducted in Israel (2004) and India (2008).

Dawson received a Master of Fine Arts degree in printmaking, with a minor in museum studies, from the University of New Mexico. There, both in collaboration with the Tamarind Institute and alone, she worked beyond the constraints of the traditional press bed size using multiple panels to create large-scale prints. Most recently, she has exhibited work at the International Print Center, New York City, and the University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, during Philadelphia's city-wide program *Philagrafika*. Her current projects draw upon the history of cartographic rendering: mapping a metaphysical landscape in order to investigate collective experiences, sublimity, and the distinct identities of spaces.

www.sagedawson.com



Missouri Study I, 2007
Collograph, gold leaf, and acrylic
26 x 18 in. (66 x 45,7 cm)
Courtesy of the artist, Springfield, Missouri



Missouri Study II, 2007
Collograph, gold leaf, and acrylic
26 x 18 in. (66 x 45,7 cm)
Courtesy of the artist, Springfield, Missouri

JOHN FOLSOM 1967

John Folsom is a mixed media artist born and raised in Paducah, Kentucky. He received his Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in cinema and photography from Southern Illinois University. His work deals primarily with the way in which images of landscape are used or fictionalized to present a personal sense of place. Folsom's photographic paintings have been widely exhibited for the past ten years and can be found in many collections worldwide.



Botany Bay Plantation Salt Marsh, 2009
Archival pigment prints on board with oil and wax medium
48 x 72 in. (121,9 x 182,9 cm)
Courtesy of the artist, East Point, Georgia

KENDALL MESSICK 1965

Corapeake

Messick's first significant body of work was *Corapeake* (1995-2002). In this award-winning project, the artist intimately documented the remembrances of the elderly African American residents of *Corapeake*, North Carolina, with still photography, audio recordings, and moving film. The stories of love and loss and hope and faith that are at the heart of *Corapeake* are universal in their depiction of a time and experience not limited to African Americans or even small towns. They depict a disappearing way of life that was typical throughout rural America during the early and mid-twentieth century. According to Michael Wilmington of the *Chicago Tribune*, "*Corapeake* is a human chronicle of great sympathy, warmth and insight, photographed and edited with seemingly effortless artistry."

This initial project culminated in a feature-length documentary film directed by Messick, and an installation-based exhibition that has traveled to museums and galleries since 2002, and is currently scheduled to travel through 2011. *Corapeake* has been repeatedly broadcast by a number of PBS affiliates throughout the country and was named a United States pre-selection finalist for INPUT 2003, which showcases the best of public television programming from around the world.

Kendall Messick is an artist who constructs installations of still photography, film, video, and an ever evolving assemblage of two and three-dimensional media to tell stories. According to Messick, "At the core of my ongoing body of work is an exploration of memory, intimacy, acceptance and humanity. I strive to not only preserve and share stories that resonate on an emotional level but also to inspire viewers to reflect on their own life experiences."

Having studied at the International Center of Photography and the School of Visual Arts in New York City, Messick was the still photographer and co-creator for the acclaimed documentary video *There is No Such Word as Can't* (1998). During the winter of 1999 he worked in Eastern Europe as the associate producer

and still photographer for *Here and Now*, a documentary film on the Gypsies of Bulgaria. Messick's photographs are in numerous public and private collections, including the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of American History in Washington, D.C., and the Museum of Modern Art in New York City.

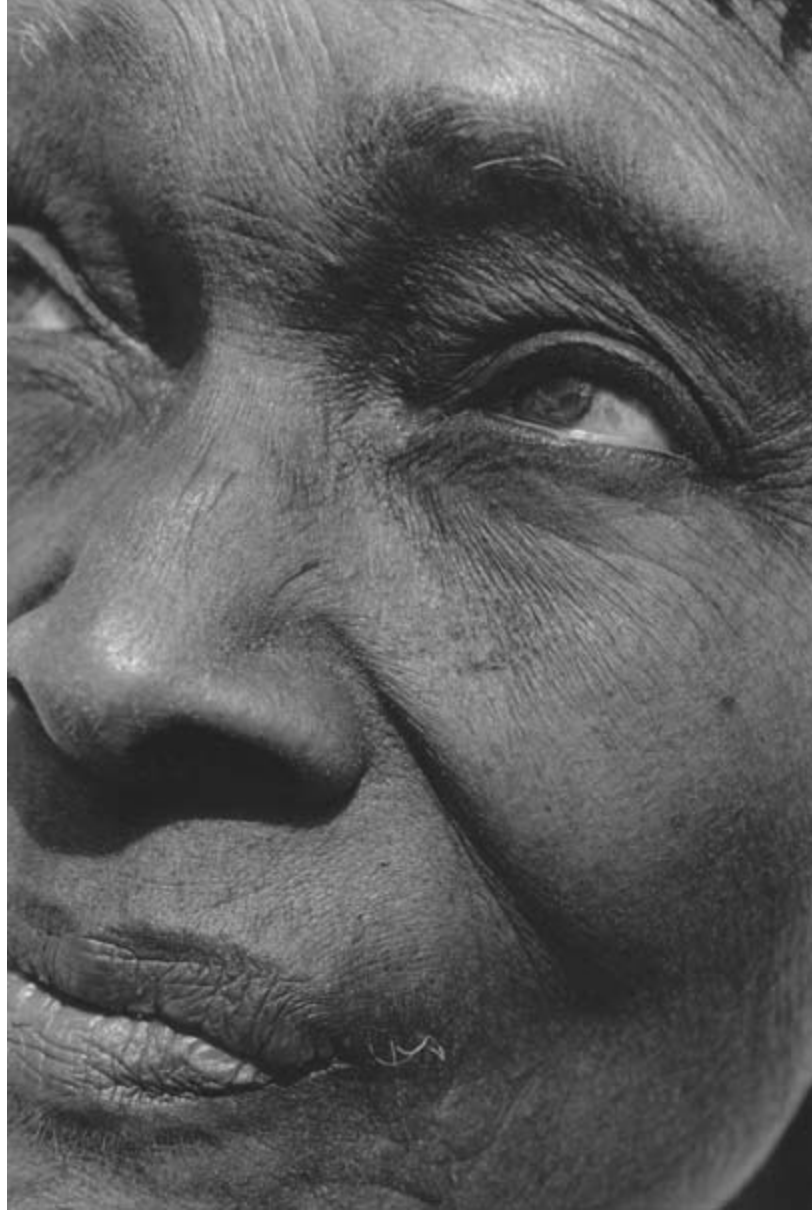
www.kmessick.com

KENDALL MESSICK Inspiration (edition of 15), 1996

Silver gelatin print, 16 x 20 in. (40,6 x 50,8 cm) Courtesy of the artist, Jersey City, New Jersey



KENDALL MESSICK
Eley Otelia Demiel (edition of 15), 1996 Silver gelatin print, 20 x 16 in. (50.8 x 40.6 cm) Courtesy of the artist, Jersey City, New Jersey



KENDALL MESSICK
The Great Dismal Swamp (edition of 15), 1996 Silver gelatin print, 20 x 16 in. (50.8 x 40.6 cm) Courtesy of the artist, Jersey City, New Jersey

PRESTON JACKSON 1944

“My two-dimensional work shows a continued interaction with human nature. I have combined the trusted realism of photography with the expressive drawing and color rendering from my own experience to present a view of unsung heroes giving life and meaning to their existence. Those who have no claim to fame are given their due respect by focusing on their portraits. My two-dimensional portraits show not only diversity in a physical sense, but also mentally. Beliefs in our society have a definite effect on our physical appearance. My goal is to communicate my life interpretations to the observer.”



Remember the Amistad, 2009
Acrylic on board, 48 x 36 in. (121,9 x 91,4 cm)
Courtesy of the artist, Chicago, Illinois

A professor of sculpture at the School of the Art Institute in Chicago (Illinois), Jackson is the head of the figurative area and has served as chair of the sculpture department. Jackson’s recent work deals with the subject of our history – both precise depictions of well known historical figures, as well as innovative portrayals of individuals whose lives, though unfamiliar to us, are part of our history. His latest series, *Fresh from Julieanne’s Garden*, reveals the lives and personalities of his ancestors and the stories of all of our forbears who lived in the southern United States in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This work reflects an admiration for the resolution and resiliency of each individual.

www.prestonjacksonart.com

Priscilla's Diary, 2009
Acrylic on board, 24 x 18 in. (61 x 45,7 cm)
Courtesy of the artist, Chicago, IL





Revealed: Truths and Myths II, 2009-09 Acrylic on canvas, 26 1/2 x 18 1/2 in. (67.3 x 47 cm) Courtesy of the artist, Chicago, Illinois

JOYCE OWENS 1947

“I am a figurative artist who wants people to look beyond the outer layer of skin, and search the many levels of personality and humanity within. To look beyond the masks – the many faces we all wear. I want us to appreciate, in particular, the range of surface appearance among African Americans and then look longer and deeper to find the beauty, both obvious and hidden.

I want people to see the range of colors and facial features of African Americans and also to encourage us to think of histories that existed beyond the Euro-centric model. I want Americans to see that through our shared, common historical bond of slavery, European and African heritages are intertwined in my country and the world. That if we acknowledge that we are related by blood and accept that our relationship is real, we may be able to, as most families must, embrace our similarities and cherish and admire our differences.

The mask imagery in my work serves as a conduit into the depths of identity, ethnicity, humanity and multiplicity in an attempt to expose racial stereotypes. I use folded and draped stretched canvas to reflect the inevitable wrinkles in life. I work with weathered wood and multi-planed canvas to create constructions that will lead the eye to look at human imperfection as a natural and positive force.

The work here is a continuation of those explorations. Its intent is to place in context the African American presence within the larger world. To create images that will inspire the viewer to re-evaluate limited perceptions of African Americans. To expand our senses, aesthetics, and perspectives so that we might see how beautiful every-day African Americans are; that we might understand and appreciate their everyday heroic acts; and that we will come to see they have been the pillars of our nation, our history, our culture.

This body of work is presented as a means by which we are able to examine and place into perspective our differences and similarities, within and outside of our immediate and superficial orientations, and appreciate how this variety enriches us.”



JOYCE OWENS

Revealed: Truths and Myths V, 2005-09

Acrylic on canvas, 18 x 14 in. (45,7 x 35,6 cm) Courtesy of the artist, Chicago, Illinois

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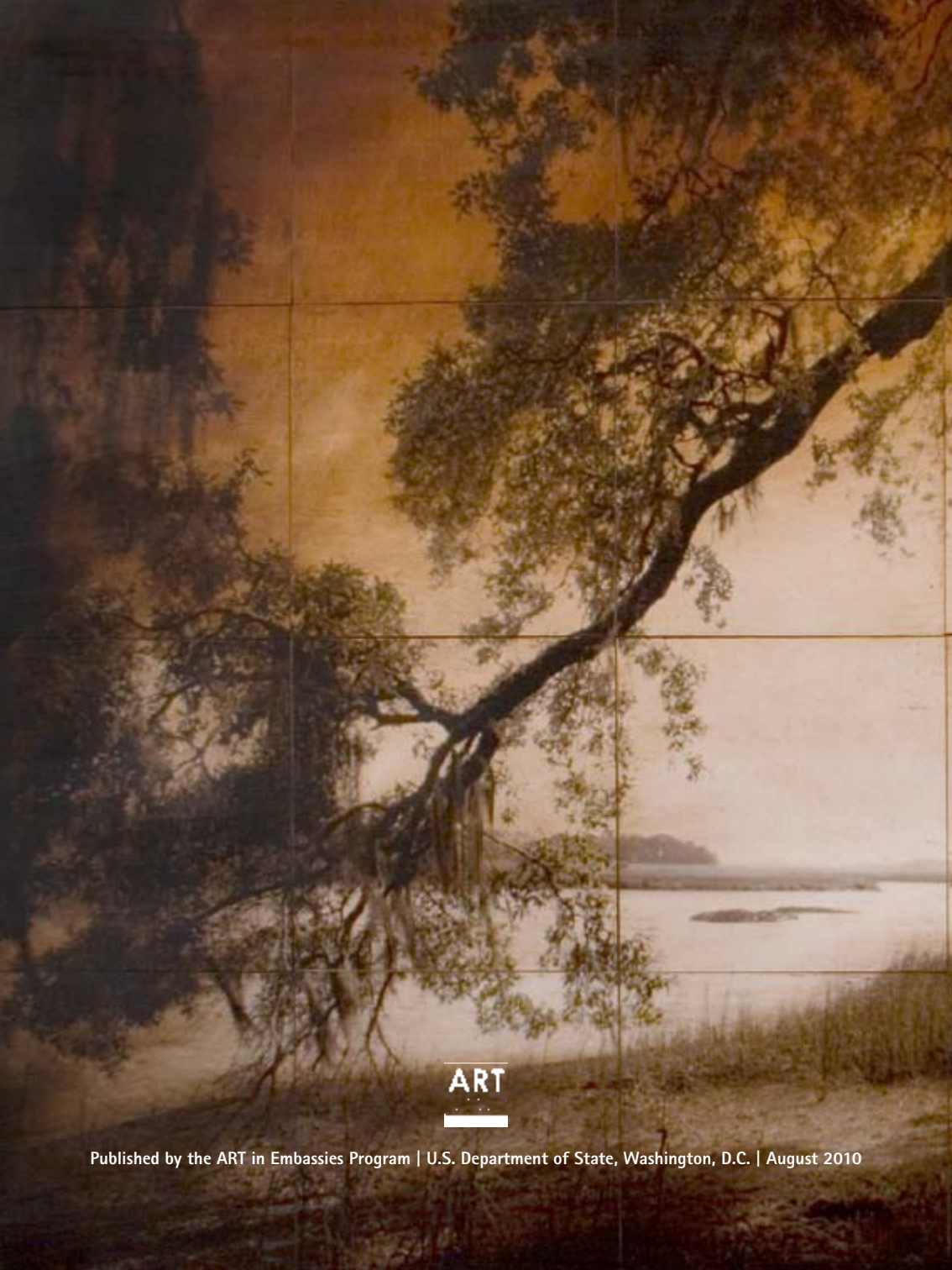
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