



*United States Embassy Kampala*  
**ART IN EMBASSIES  
EXHIBITION**

BRADFORD ELLIS

***Dash #2***

*48 x 48 in. (121,9 x 121,9 cm)*

*Encaustic and collage on canvas*

*Courtesy of the artist, Dallas, Texas*

*United States Embassy Kampala*  
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# ART IN EMBASSIES

<http://art.state.gov>



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."

*"For over fifty years, Art in Embassies has played an active diplomatic role by creating meaningful cultural exchange through the visual arts. The exhibitions, permanent collections and artist exchanges connect people from the farthest corners of an international community. Extending our reach, amplifying our voice, and demonstrating our inclusiveness are strategic imperatives for America. Art in Embassies cultivates relationships that transcend boundaries, building trust, mutual respect and understanding among peoples. It is a fulcrum of America's global leadership as we continue to work for freedom, human rights and peace around the world."*

— John Forbes Kerry  
U.S. Secretary of State

Art is a passion of mine. Creating and appreciating art is what makes us human. It can be understood across barriers of time, language, and outlook and helps societies develop a deeper appreciation and understanding for each other. For the Art in Embassies exhibition for my Residence in Kampala, I wanted American art that echoed the diversity, vibrancy, and energy of Uganda's own artistic traditions. I also wanted to highlight different media from paint to textiles to glass, showcasing the many ways that artists can express themselves, just as they do here in Uganda.

*Big City #3* by Ayn Hanna could be a dress glimpsed out of the corner of the eye while walking on a crowded street or looking out over the city at night. *Dash #2* by Bradford Ellis could be a silk print worn by a young Ugandan artist, and is a play on language, on dance, on rhythm; all essential parts of the Ugandan experience. George Mason's works pay homage to ancient textile traditions, and at the same time reflect the vibrancy of modern life. *Warm Tones with Vertical Lines*, *Warm Tones with Ochre Patch*, and *Warm Tones with Half Circle* remind me of the ancient cloth of the Buganda people, bark cloth, which predates weaving. While formerly reserved for royalty, bark cloth has recently experienced a revitalization effort and has been featured on the runways of European fashion houses.

*Tears* is artist Karen Hampton's examination of the complicated history of the United States; traditional hand-stitching and weaving techniques and materials were used to connect to those displaced Africans who lost their freedom to slavery. Sharif Bey's *Copper Cherry* is a bold and original statement in porcelain – it pushes the boundaries of the traditional ceramic form while recalling traditional African adornments. The workmanship is subtle and superb; it is part rebellion and part unbridled enthusiasm.

The blown and cut glass of Ethan Stern's *Grey Flag Pair* is a conversation about space, light, and texture – the same conversation that is ongoing in Uganda now as cities build, rebuild, and modernize. I'm grateful to the wonderful artists and curators who contributed to the great Art in Embassies program, and I am excited to be able to show these works in Uganda, and to draw parallels between the American and the Ugandan experience. Enjoy the exhibition!

**Ambassador Deborah Malac**

*Uganda  
October 2016*

# SHARIF BEY

1974  
Pittsburgh  
Pennsylvania

"I like to make stuff. I'm inspired by being prolific. I like to surround myself with things. That's how I cultivate my own energy, for the studio and for my life."

Sharif Bey applies that model of open engagement to all aspects of his multifaceted career. As an artist immersed in clay from a young age, he has taken his unique exposure to a diverse range of influences and synthesized them into original statements – various bodies of work that allow him to express dimensions of clay and of himself. Bey considers himself a classical potter at heart; a maker of what he terms 'subtle' functional wares and decorated vessels. Yet he has also rebelled against convention with striking figurative sculptures that combine ceramic forms with nails, metal, and clay shards. He mines social and political issues from his own perspective as an artist of color. His series of dramatic neckpieces fashioned of oversized clay beads interprets traditional African adornment while exploring a new concept of ceramic form.

Bey is an associate professor at Syracuse University in New York. He earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in ceramics from Slippery Rock University of Pennsylvania, a Master of Fine Arts degree in studio art from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, and a Doctorate in art education from the Pennsylvania State University. As a doctoral student in 2003, Bey was awarded a Fulbright Scholarship and conducted research on post-socialist art education reforms as a scholar and artist in residence at the Academy of Fine Arts and Design in Bratislava, Slovakia. In recent years Bey has been an artist in residence at the McColl Center for Visual Art in Charlotte (North Carolina), Hunter College in New York City, and the Vermont Studio Center in Johnson. He is the 2008 recipient of the Regional Artists Grant from the Winston Salem Arts Council for his studio-based research on ancient Egyptian adornment and material culture in Cairo.

He has conducted numerous lectures, workshops, and presentations and exhibits widely in the United States and internationally. His studio work ranges from decorative/functional pottery to conceptual ceramic works that are influenced by ritual and identity.



# BRADFORD ELLIS

1958  
Tulsa  
Oklahoma

“The way I approach making an abstract picture is to start with a concept such as ‘language’ or ‘dance’ and then find ways to incorporate those concepts into works of art. I typically start each painting by building up layers of collage materials that consist of found or created paper and fabric elements. These collage pieces are then cut and mounted on to the canvas or board in a specific way to form the underlying pattern for the painting. This helps lay the foundation for the initial imagery and paves the way for the following applications of other mediums.

The next phase of making the painting is the part I refer to as rhythm. This starts the mark making portion of the piece as I begin incorporating expressionistic brush work to create different lines, forms, and shapes that get worked and reworked in order to strike the right balance and to create a sense of ‘surface tension’ that is very important to me.”

Brad Ellis is a mid-career, Dallas-based artist whose focus is on abstract painting. He has continually experimented with imagery from tightly rendered, systematic patterns to loosely composed, expressionistic compositions. Consistent features of his paintings are his interest in color, form, surface treatments, and the pure physicality of paint and various collage elements. He has distinguished his career by embracing the ancient medium of encaustic – also known as hot wax painting – a process by which heated bees wax is mixed with pigments and applied to board or canvas and then fused to the surface with a heat source. Ellis earned his Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from the University of Tulsa (Oklahoma). His work can be found in many prominent private and corporate collections throughout the country.





# KAREN HAMPTON

1958  
Los Angeles  
California

“As an artist of color, I have made a lifelong commitment to creating artwork that responds to the lives of my ancestors. My lens is anthropology and I study my own genealogy. I travel in my ancestors footsteps, I walk the roads where they lived, explored the plantations where they were enslaved, I am the storyteller. As their medium I provide a vehicle for my ancestors’ spirits to transcend history and remain as historical memories. My medium is cloth – whether digitally printed, hand woven or aged linens – pieces are imbued with the hopes and visions of African American lives, telling their stories from a maternal perspective.”

Karen Hampton draws on her multicultural heritage to examine the complicated history of America, replete with dreams of freedom and loss resulting from displacement. By employing the traditional arts of hand-stitching and weaving, as well as materials such as indigo, cotton, and raffia cloth that allude to African American culture, Hampton embeds her work with symbols, images, and text that chronicle the stories of her ancestors. Her incisively poignant work speaks to the broader struggle to find one’s own voice and identity in the United States today.

She has exhibited at the Muskegon Museum of Art, Michigan; College of Marin, Kentfield (California); Design Gallery (now the Design Museum) at the University of California, Davis; the Ruth and Elmer Wellin Museum of Art at Hamilton College (Clinton, New York); the Honolulu Museum of Art (Hawaii); and the San Jose Museum of Quilts and Textiles (California); among others. Awards include the Sacatar Foundation Award, the Fleishhacker Foundation Eureka Fellowship, Marin Arts Council Award, and the Ellen Hansen Memorial Prize. Hampton graduated with a Master of Fine Arts degree from the University of California, Davis.



# AYN HANNA

1962  
Moline  
Illinois

"I am a mark maker. I love to draw, map, and organize thoughts, plans, spaces, and the world around me. Drawing and mark-making, seeing the artist's hand, an honest glimpse into one's mind and heart— these are the qualities I value and strive for in my art. It is through drawing, visually mapping ideas that I make sense of the world.

I am inspired by our many systems for mapping and organizing ideas, stories, data, and place. I enjoy the overlaps that exist between art and science – shapes, models, diagrams, formulas, patterns, etc. I am also fascinated by connectors and connections, both physical and spiritual. My work combines imagery and personal symbols to convey my feelings, to share a story of places and experiences."

Trained as a professional fine art printer, Ayn Hanna began working with textiles in 2005. Her current work is focused on merging processes and techniques from her printmaking background with the fabrics and threads of the textile medium, the results of which she calls textile paintings. Hanna maintains an active exhibition and show schedule. Her work has been shown in numerous regional and national juried exhibits and gallery shows throughout the U.S. Born in Illinois and raised in Kansas City, Missouri, Hanna moved to Colorado in 1981 to attend college at Colorado State University where she earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in graphic design and a Master of Fine Arts degree in printmaking and sculpture. After completing her graduate degree, she moved to New York City and spent several years working as a professional fine art printer in a master printmaking (etching) studio in Manhattan. Hanna returned to Colorado a few years later, where she continues to live and maintain a studio in Fort Collins.



# GEORGE MASON

1951  
Salem  
Massachusetts

"I am asking whether the visual inquiry can be a relational vehicle that builds community and honors place. I am noting that putting work in unlikely places affords the audience opportunities for an utterly fresh response. I am seeing that light and shadow, color and texture can nourish without telling a story. I am suspecting the object may not be the 'art'."

George Mason has a background in ceramic architectural tile and he explores materials and history. Made with rich texture and bold saturated colors, the largest of his "relief tapestries" are pieced together panels that occupy entire walls. Mason combined encaustics with layered paper cutouts while teaching in Jerusalem, Indonesia, and India. Eventually, these works led to a multi-faceted question that challenged the artist to synthesize several divergent interests. A recipient of three National Endowment for the Arts awards and a founder of Watershed Center for Ceramic Arts (Newcastle, Maine), Mason taught at Cranbrook Academy of Art (Bloomfield Hills, Massachusetts), the College of Ceramics at Alfred University (New York), Ohio State University (Columbus), University of Colorado Boulder, and Haystack Mountain School of Crafts (Deer Isle, Maine).

In his home state of Maine, he exhibited work at the Portland Museum of Art and the Center for Maine Contemporary Art; with solo shows at the Farnsworth Museum and the Bowdoin College Museum of Art. Mason has completed numerous Percent for Art architectural ceramic projects for schools in Maine and New York City between 1986 and 2003, including a commission for the Federal Reserve Bank in Atlanta, Georgia.



# ETHAN STERN

1978  
Ithaca  
New York

Pushing glass beyond the anatomy of the vessel, Ethan Stern's work is an ongoing exploration of abstraction, color, texture, and light. While glass reflects light and has a shiny and dense appearance, as an artist he is drawn to a richer, more luminous effect that can be achieved by carving and engraving the surface.

Stern began examining the effects he could achieve through engraving in 1999, while at the Pilchuck Glass School in Washington. Carving the surface of the glass allowed him to pull together elements of color, form, pattern, and texture to create a unique voice within the material. He explains, "The evidence of the hand, the subtleties of surface, and the creative process are vital to the creation of my work."

Stern has established himself as a major upcoming artist in contemporary glass sculpture. He studied ceramics at the TAFE Institute in Brisbane, Australia, later transitioning from ceramics to glass while enrolled at Alfred University in New York. In 2010, he received the "Best Emerging Artist" award from the Museum of Glass in Tacoma, Washington. His work has been featured in solo and group exhibitions across the United States and is featured in the collections of the Eboft Glass Museum in Denmark, the Museum of American Glass in New Jersey, and the Palm Springs Art Museum in California. Stern taught at the Pilchuck Glass School and Pratt Fine Arts Center, both in Seattle, Washington; the Penland School of Craft in North Carolina; the Pittsburgh Glass Center in Pennsylvania; and the Appalachian Center for Craft in Tennessee. Stern currently lives and works in Seattle, Washington.





## Object Description

### 4 SHARIF BEY

#### **Copper Cherry, 2016**

23 x 23 x 2 ½ in. (58,4 x 58,4 x 6,4 cm)

*Vitreous china, mixed media*

*Courtesy of the artist, Syracuse, New York*

### 6 BRADFORD ELLIS

#### **Dash #2**

48 x 48 in. (121,9 x 121,9 cm)

*Encaustic and collage on canvas*

*Courtesy of the artist, Dallas, Texas*

### 8 KAREN HAMPTON

#### **Tears, 2016**

26 x 24 in. (66 x 61 cm)

*Silkscreen on double hand-woven linen, fiber reactive dyes, pigment and wool*

*Courtesy of the artist, Inglewood, California*

### 10 AYN HANNA

#### **Big City #3**

20 x 20 x 2 in. (50,8 x 50,8 x 5,1 cm)

*Cotton fabric, hand and screen-printed with dyes, thread, batting*

*Courtesy of the artist, Fort Collins, Colorado*

### 12 GEORGE MASON

#### **Warm Tones with Vertical Lines, 2014**

#### **Warm Tones with Half Circle, 2014**

#### **Warm Tones with Ochre Patch, 2014**

*All three artworks, 28 ½ x 18 in. (72,4 x 45,7 cm)*

*Hydrocal plaster, burlap, casein paint, encaustic*

*Courtesy of the artist, Nobleboro, Maine, and Snyderman-Works Galleries, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania*

### 14 ETHAN STERN

#### **Grey Flag Pair, 2010**

28 x 8 x 3 in. (71,1 x 20,3 x 7,6 cm)

*Blown and wheel-cut glass*

*Courtesy of the artist, Seattle, Washington*

## Acknowledgments

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