

The background is an abstract painting. It features a light blue-grey border at the top and sides. The central area is a mix of colors: a large, textured green shape in the middle, a bright yellow-green shape with visible brushstrokes in the lower half, and a dark blue shape in the bottom right corner. The overall style is expressive and modern.

ART IN EMBASSIES
EXHIBITION
UNITED STATES EMBASSY
PORT LOUIS

WILLIAM CONGDON **Luce: blu e verde**, 1985

Oil on panel, 44 ½ x 32 1/16 in. (113 x 83 cm)

Courtesy of the William G. Congdon Foundation, Buccinasco, Italy

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."

<https://art.state.gov/>

WELCOME

“We feel we are all islands in a common sea.”

*– Anne Spencer Morrow Lindbergh (1906-2001)
American author and aviator*

Thanks to our careers we have had the opportunity to travel and explore new cultures; this has become the theme of our lives. Our art exhibition here in our Residence of McCarty House celebrates travel and exploration, both physically – geographically, and mentally – in one’s imagination, through the creativity of American artists who are continually innovating and experimenting with new techniques and ideas.

To honor the islands of Mauritius we have selected a variety of works, some depicting beaches, the sand, or the sea, which recall islands. Some of the paintings evoke the image of islands and the water around them in abstract, unusual, or dramatic ways, with a minimal use of color and form.

The majority of the works are by twentieth and twenty-first century American abstract artists. Most, through their use of color, materials, concepts, and/or subjects, challenged traditional contemporary boundaries. Like explorers adventuring to new countries these artists pushed the limits of contemporary practice and imagination, discovering new and original forms of expression.

For example, like us, William Congdon traveled widely, seeking and finding inspiration in scenes of Athens and Istanbul, in Indian temples, French cathedrals, and Italian and Ceylonese landscapes, distilled and abstracted. The paintings by Richard Serra (*Afangar Islandic Series, Iceland* and *Afangar Islandic Series, Hreppholar II*) are the visual description of a project in which he placed very tall monoliths of Icelandic basalt in pairs along the perimeter of a small island near Reykjavik, Iceland – another island nation. Works by James T witty (*The Beach*), May H. Lesser (*To Sail with the Wind*), Edward Ruscha (*Spattership*), and Helen Frankenthaler (*Sirocco*), also evoke maritime themes. We also decided to include a work by Lori Katz, an artist whose studio is right by the Potomac River in Alexandria, Virginia, the city we consider home. We have always enjoyed walking down to the water which flows on toward the sea and which, in many ways, represents the continuity in our life.

We hope that you enjoy making your own connections to the works in our exhibition, as they represent a diverse, wide-ranging, and eclectic cultural dialogue that remains evocative across time and place. We are grateful to all the people who have helped us with this exhibition, especially the Department of State's Art in Embassies program and the William Congdon Foundation.

**Ambassador David D. Reimer
and Simonetta Romagnolo Reimer**

*Port Louis
May 2018*



Blue Turns to Blue, 1977

Watercolor, 36 ½ x 28 ½ in. (92,7 x 72,4 cm)

Collection of Art in Embassies, Washington, D.C.; Gift of the Estate of Alice Baber

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 in Bloomington. She also traveled worldwide, studying at the École des Beaux-Arts in Fontainebleau, France, and lived in Paris throughout the late 1950s and 1960s. She was a member of the March Gallery on Tenth Street in New York City, and was art editor of *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.



Luce: blu e verde, 1985

Oil on panel, 44 ½ x 32 ⅛ in. (113 x 83 cm)

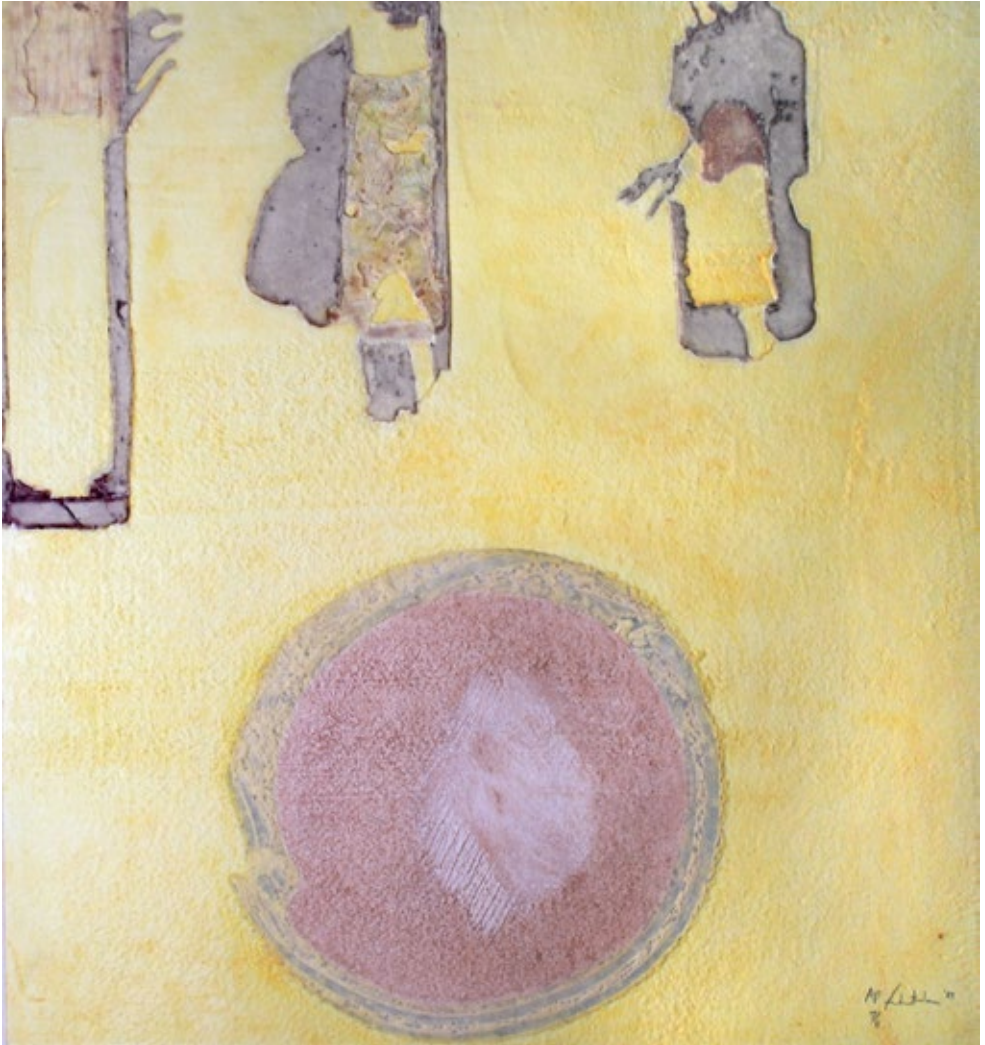
Courtesy of the William G. Congdon Foundation, Buccinasco, Italy

WILLIAM CONGDON (1912-1998)

William Congdon attended Yale University (New Haven, Connecticut) where he pursued a growing interest in art, taking painting lessons in Provincetown with Harry Hensche as well as drawing and sculpture lessons first in Boston under George Demetrios, then in Gloucester (all in Massachusetts). He later moved to Philadelphia, where he attended the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts. He produced his first paintings and traveled through Europe, becoming familiar with the various artistic trends that were developing at the time.

Congdon served as a volunteer in the American Field Service and worked as an ambulance driver during the Second World War. This experience led him to travel to North Africa, Italy, France, and Belgium and had a deep impact on his work, as evidenced by his sketches of those years. Though he spent most of his life in Italy, he remained a U.S. citizen until the end, and his painting is clearly rooted in the American tradition. Congdon's work made an original contribution to the body of American art for its unique balancing of abstract expressionism with the European figurative tradition.

Source: information provided by Congdon Foundation



Sirocco, 1989

Mixografia® print on handmade paper, 42 ½ x 40 in. (108 x 101,6 cm)

Courtesy of Art in Embassies, Washington, D.C.

HELEN FRANKENTHALER (1928-2011)

Born in New York, Helen Frankenthaler first studied with Rufino Tamayo at the Dalton School. At Bennington College, Vermont, she received a disciplined grounding in cubism from Paul Feeley, though her instincts lay closer to the linear freedom of Arshile Gorky and the color improvisations of Wassily Kandinsky's early work. In 1951 Adolph Gottlieb selected her for an important new talent exhibition, and she had her first one-person show in New York later that year.

The work of Jackson Pollock proved the decisive catalyst to the development of her style. Immediately appreciating the potential of pouring paint directly onto raw unprimed canvas, she thinned her paint with turpentine to allow the diluted color to penetrate quickly into the fabric, rather than build up on the surface. This revolutionary soak-stain approach not only permitted the spontaneous generation of complex forms but also made any separation of figure from background impossible since the two became virtually fused.



Untitled, 2017
Ceramic and mixed media, Dimensions variable
Courtesy of the artist, Springfield, Virginia

LORI KATZ (born 1957)

Lori Katz has worked as a ceramic artist in the Washington, D.C., area since 1979. She maintains a studio at the Torpedo Factory Art Center in Alexandria, Virginia, and is an instructor in the ceramics departments at the Art League School and the Lorton Arts Foundation, also in Virginia. Her first experience with clay was on the table-top potter's wheel that her niece fools around with these days.

Katz's current focus is on work for the wall. Her pieces are stoneware with some mixed media. Additions to the raw surface can include contrasting clays, slips, underglaze, and high-temperature wire. Post firing additions can include acrylic paint, oil paint, cold wax, and metal leaf. "I am intrigued by contrast, the play of dark against light, the pull of empty space against the inclination to fill it up, the placement of line and shape, the use of subtle texture, balance."



Paradigm, early 1980s
Acrylic on paper, 29 x 40 in. (73,7 x 101,6 cm)
Courtesy of Art in Embassies, Washington, D.C.

ELEANORE BERMAN LAZAROF (1928–2004)

Eleanore Berman Lazarof paired her talents for art and horticulture to enshrine her Beverly Hills garden in impressionistic paintings. Although she was educated as an artist and exhibited her paintings in galleries and museums around the world, her artistic expertise also bloomed brightly in the garden she cultivated for four decades behind the Colonial Georgian house she called home.

“Take a drawing class,” she advised other gardeners, sharing her gardening wisdom in a *New York Times* article about her. Working with artistic tools—charcoal, pen, ink—disciplines the hand, she said, and trains the thinking about what and where to plant.



To Sail with the Surf, undated
Graphic, 29 x 34 ¼ in. (73,7 x 88,3 cm)
Collection of Art in Embassies, Washington, D.C.; Courtesy of the artist

MAY H. LESSER (1927-2001)

May Lesser was the third of four children growing up in New Orleans, Louisiana; a product of a moderately well-to-do Jewish family in post-Nazi World War II America. Lesser graduated from E. Sophie Newcomb College for Women (New Orleans) first with her bachelor's degree in art, and later with a master's degree in art history.

Lesser's body of work spans her early portraits as a young woman, her increasing exposure to medicine through her joint interests with her husband, her interest and exposure to biblical studies and dreams, and finally her synthesis and portrayal of the current dilemmas and themes in contemporary medicine.



Untitled, 1983-1985
Oil on canvas, 25 ½ x 41 ½ in. (64,8 x 105,4 cm)
Collection of Art in Embassies, Washington, D.C.

DENNIS MASBACK (born 1948)

Dennis Masback received his Bachelor of Fine Arts and Master of Fine Arts degrees from Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri. He was later awarded a visual arts fellowship in painting from the National Endowment for the Arts. His work is included in selected collections such as the Rhode Island School of Design (Providence) and Emory University (Atlanta, Georgia), among others. In addition to teaching at Parsons School of Design, Masback is an adjunct professor of fine arts at the Pratt Institute, both in New York.



Untitled, 1964

Screenprint with collage, 31 ¼ x 25 ¼ in. (79,4 x 64,1 cm)

Collection of Art in Embassies, Washington, D.C.; Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Philip Berman

ROBERT MOTHERWELL (1915-1991)

A leading figure of American abstract expressionism, Robert Motherwell wrote extensively on art, and the question of abstraction in particular. Writing in 1970, he said, "It is perfectly possible in my work to see, say, windows, or to see a wave breaking in the sea, or to see a teddy bear, if you want, or the sky; but that's not the 'real' subject matter. The real subject matter is an assumption that what painting is the pressure of the brush with a colored liquid on a flat surface, that it involves placing what degree of spatial regression one wants; how much one wants to contract and shove in, or open up and expand, whether one wants to radiate a tender kind of feeling, or make an aggressive gesture, or whatever... You don't have to paint a figure in order to express human feelings."

Robert Motherwell, "On the Humanism of Abstraction," in *The Collected Writings of Robert Motherwell*, edited by Stephanie Terenzio (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 178.



All artworks are collection of Art in Embassies, Washington, D.C.;
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Philip Berman

AD REINHARDT (1913–1967)

Ad Reinhardt, born in Buffalo, New York, studied art history at Columbia University, studied painting at the American Artists School, and also studied at the National Academy of Design, all in New York. Between Reinhardt worked for the Works Progress Administration Federal Art Project and was a member of the American Abstract Artists group before continuing his studies at the New York University Institute of Fine Arts. Reinhardt's influence as a teacher and writer was as significant as his art. He taught at Brooklyn College and also lectured at the California School of Fine Arts, San Francisco; the University of Wyoming, Laramie; Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut; and at Hunter College, New York.

Reinhardt was a pioneer of hard-edge painting. In the 1950s, he limited his palette to a single color, moving from red to blue and then to his final stage of black paintings.

From left to right:

Black Series #7 (G), c.1964-1967
Screenprint, 28 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 18 $\frac{1}{2}$ in. (73 x 47 cm)

Black Series #9 (G), c.1964-1967
Screenprint, 34 $\frac{1}{4}$ x 19 in. (87 x 48,3 cm)

Black Series #10 (G), undated
Screenprint, 30 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 16 $\frac{1}{2}$ in. (77,5 x 41,9 cm)

Black Series #12 (S), undated
Screenprint, 29 x 19 in. (73,7 x 48,3 cm)



Spattership, 1990

Two-color lithograph, 44 x 35 in. (111,8 x 88,9 cm)

Collection of Art in Embassies, Washington, D.C.;

Gift of the Foundation for Art and Preservation in Embassies, Washington, D.C.

EDWARD RUSCHA (born 1937)

“Any words that I use I have to have some kind of connection to my daily life. . . . I wish I could quickly describe how my affinity to words came about. I can’t say that it really came through poetry. I can’t say that it came through literature. I think it came through my exposure to popular culture.”

Edward Ruscha works in photography, painting, and film, and he has also designed his own books and painted murals. His paintings featuring text are perhaps his best known and most celebrated. These images are clean and precise, seemingly lacking the personal hand of the artist. In their imitation of the vernacular of the commercial art world, they look familiar, but their meaning remains elusive. But that, for Ruscha, is intrinsic to art production. As he says, “I just think that the process of art making is an unintelligible act, and anybody who thinks that they understand it is missing the point. I think that making art has to come from all kinds of illogical sources and illogical steps. They can end up being heroic steps. They can end up being stupid steps. But making pictures is like shoveling stuff into a little container.”

“Ed Ruscha Interviewed by Jean Wainwright, London, 2000,” in *Speaking of Art: Four Decades of Art in Conversation*, edited by William Furlong (London: Phaidon, 2010), 199.



RICHARD SERRA (born 1939)

Richard Serra worked in steel mills to support himself while he attended the University of California at Berkeley and Santa Barbara from 1957 to 1961 where he received a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in English literature. He then studied at Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut, completing his Bachelor of Fine Arts and Master of Fine Arts degrees. Serra trained as a painter at Yale, where he worked with Josef Albers on his book *The Interaction of Color*. Serra traveled to Paris, France, on a Yale Traveling Fellowship where he frequently visited the reconstruction of Constantin Brancusi's studio at the Musée National d'Art Moderne. He spent much of the following year in Florence, Italy, on a Fulbright grant, and traveled throughout southern Europe and Northern Africa. The young artist was given his first solo exhibition at Galleria La Salita, Rome, Italy, in 1966. Later that year, he moved to New York City, where his circle of friends included artists Carl Andre, Walter De Maria, Eva Hesse, Sol LeWitt, and Robert Smithson.

www.guggenheimcollection.org

From top to bottom:

Afangar Islandic Series, Iceland, 1991

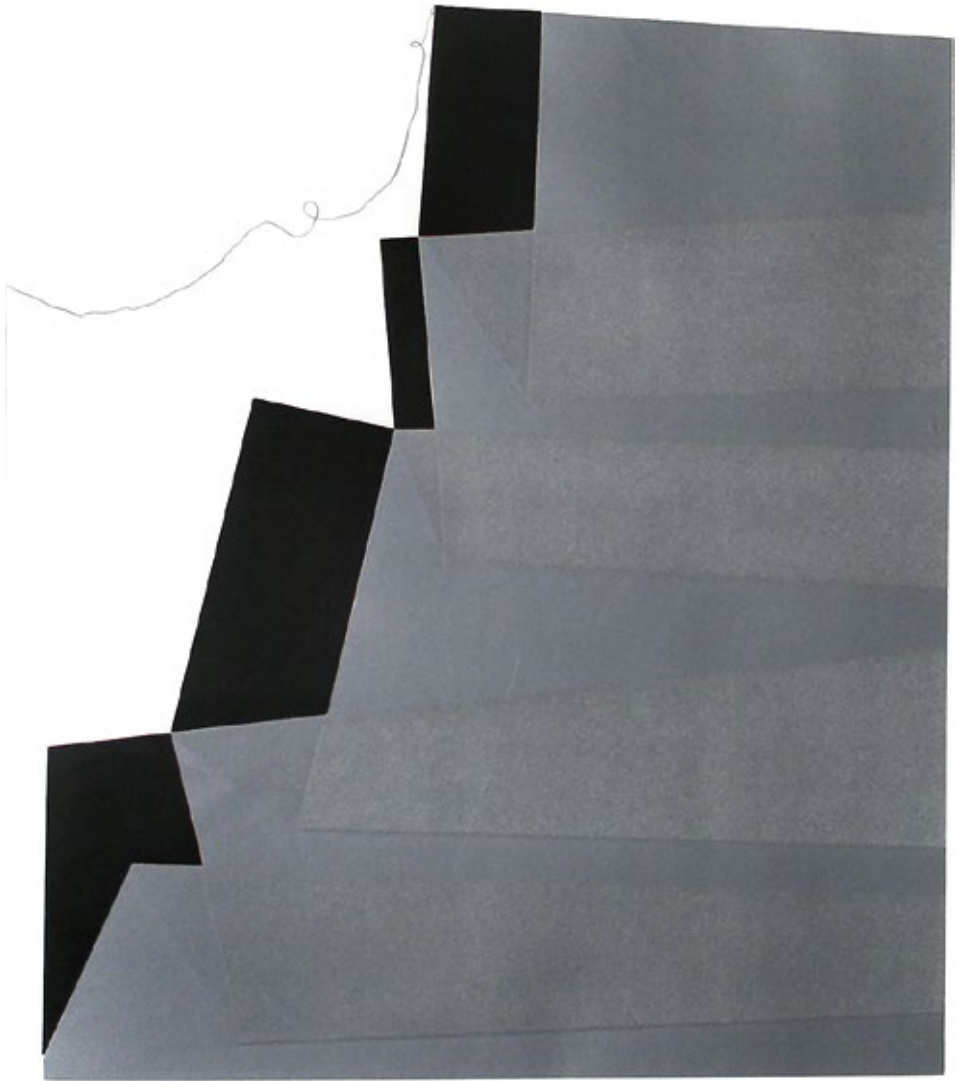
Oil on hand made paper, 40 ½ x 60 ½ in. (102,9 x 153,7 cm)

Courtesy of the Foundation for Art and Preservation in Embassies, Washington, D.C.

Afangar Islandic Series, Hreppholar II, 1991

Oil on hand made paper, 40 x 50 in. (101,6 x 127 cm)

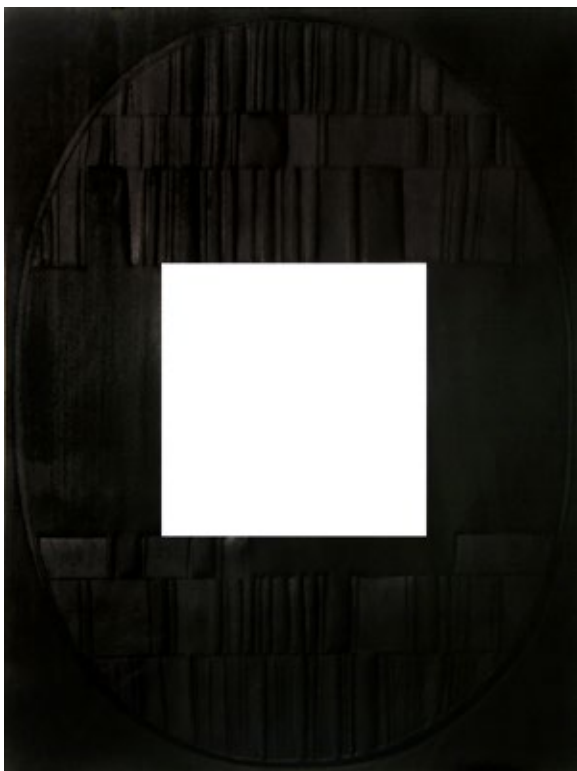
Courtesy of the Foundation for Art and Preservation in Embassies, Washington, D.C.



Dimensions 1970 #4, undated
Graphic, string, 41 x 33 in. (104,1 x 83,8 cm)
Collection of Art in Embassies, Washington, D.C.; Gift of Brooke and Carolyn Alexander

JACK SONENBERG (born 1925)

Born in Canada, Jack Sonenberg studied at the Ontario College of Art in Toronto, New York University, and Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri. He began teaching at the Pratt Institute in New York City in 1973. Sonenberg's works are included in the permanent collections of the Guggenheim Museum (New York) and the National Gallery of Canada (Ottawa), and he has exhibited worldwide.



Oracle #3, undated

Graphic, 31 ½ x 24 ½ in. (80 x 62,2 cm)

Collection of Art in Embassies, Washington, D.C.; Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Philip Berman



The Beach, undated

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

Collection of Art in Embassies, Washington, D.C.; Gift of Newsweek Magazine

JAMES TWITTY (1911-1994)

James Twitty studied painting and drawing at the University of Miami, Florida, and the Art Students League of New York City. He was associate professor of painting at the Corcoran School of Art and a studio lecturer in the fine arts at the George Washington University, both in Washington, D.C.

Hereward Lester Cooke, former curator at National Gallery of Art in Washington D.C. said "James Twitty is neither a realist nor a non-objectivist; rather he has created his own idiom which belongs to our time, but is not directly linked to any of the current styles. He might be termed an evocativist because his pictures are primarily challenges to our imagination and their meaning will vary according to the experience, perception, fantasy, memory and education of those who experience them. Thus some will see in his distant views maelstroms of tempestuous seas, others idyllic landscapes of flowering meadows, lava flows of threatening rocks, apocalyptic storm clouds, or moonlit visions of placid seaways, gateways to infernos, or visions of peace and rest. His paintings are as much investigation into the subconscious yearnings and fears of the viewer as they are of evidence of his talent as a painter. The enigmatic landscapes are made even more effective by the geometric shapes which serve as catalysts to the scenes behind."

<https://www.jamestwittgallery.com>



Vicente Preview, undated

Lithograph, 29 x 22 ½ in. (73,7 x 57,2 cm)

Collection of Art in Embassies, Washington, D.C.; Gift of the Andre Emmerich Gallery

ESTEBAN VICENTE (1903-2001)

Spanish-born painter Esteban Vicente was influenced by his early life in Spain, but spent most of his career in New York. Associated with both major schools of American abstraction – abstract expressionism and color field painting – his diverse works of art provide a window into the heart of twentieth-century abstraction. His paintings show affinities with artists like Mark Rothko, in his canvasses with bold stains of color, as well as with artists like Willem de Kooning, in his more gestural abstractions.

Vicente was not only immersed in the many sides of the art world as a painter, but he was also an engaged and beloved teacher, holding positions at Black Mountain College (North Carolina), as well as Princeton University (New Jersey), New York University (New York City), and Yale University (New Haven, Connecticut), among others. Teaching was a crucial part of Vicente's artistic career. In an interview in 1982, he said, "... Teaching to me is part of my life. I mean it's not a conflict in any way. And then at the same time what I do mostly is not to have classes but to see the students and what they do and have a dialogue about it and find out what they think and how they think, and then I can say whatever I have to say. So that's my work." True to the spirit of his paintings, this quotation hints at his approach to art, which was ever in dialogue with the people, movements, and histories that surrounded him.



Composition 55, 1955
Graphic, 32 x 27 in. (81,3 x 68,6 cm)
Collection of Art in Embassies, Washington, D.C.; Gift of the Allied Products Corporation

SYLVIA WALD (1915-2011)

Born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Sylvia Wald became a pioneer of American Modern art during and after World War II. The socio-political environment of the 1930s and 40s, and Wald's deep-rooted commitment to social engagement, shaped the artist's early output and became a defining characteristic of her work. She is recognized for revolutionizing the silkscreen technique and pioneering its application to fine art, pushing the boundaries of material and process to create textural effects and dimension. In the late 1950s, Wald went through a brief period of gestural abstraction, in print and on canvas, before working almost exclusively in three dimensions until her death in 2011. Wald's works are featured in many national and international collections including the Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York, New York), National Gallery of Art (Washington D.C.), and the Victoria and Albert Museum (London, England), among others.



Flowers (Black and White), 1974

Screenprint on Arches, 48 x 34 ½ in. (121.9 x 87.6 cm)

Collection of Art in Embassies, Washington, D.C.;

Courtesy of the Foundation for Art and Preservation in Embassies, Washington, D.C.

ANDY WARHOL (1930-1987)

Obsessed with celebrity, consumer culture, and mechanical (re) production, pop artist Andy Warhol created some of the most iconic images of the twentieth century. As famous for his quips as for his art—he variously mused that “art is what you can get away with” and “everyone will be famous for fifteen minutes”—Warhol drew widely from popular culture and everyday subject matter, creating works like his *Campbell's Soup Cans*, Brillo pad box sculptures, and portraits of Marilyn Monroe, using the medium of silk-screen printmaking to achieve his characteristic hard edges and flat areas of color. Known for his cultivation of celebrity, Factory studio (a radical social and creative melting pot), and avant-garde films like *Chelsea Girls*, Warhol was also a mentor to artists like Keith Haring and Jean-Michel Basquiat. His pop sensibility is now standard practice, taken up by major contemporary artists Richard Prince, Takashi Murakami, and Jeff Koons, among countless others.

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