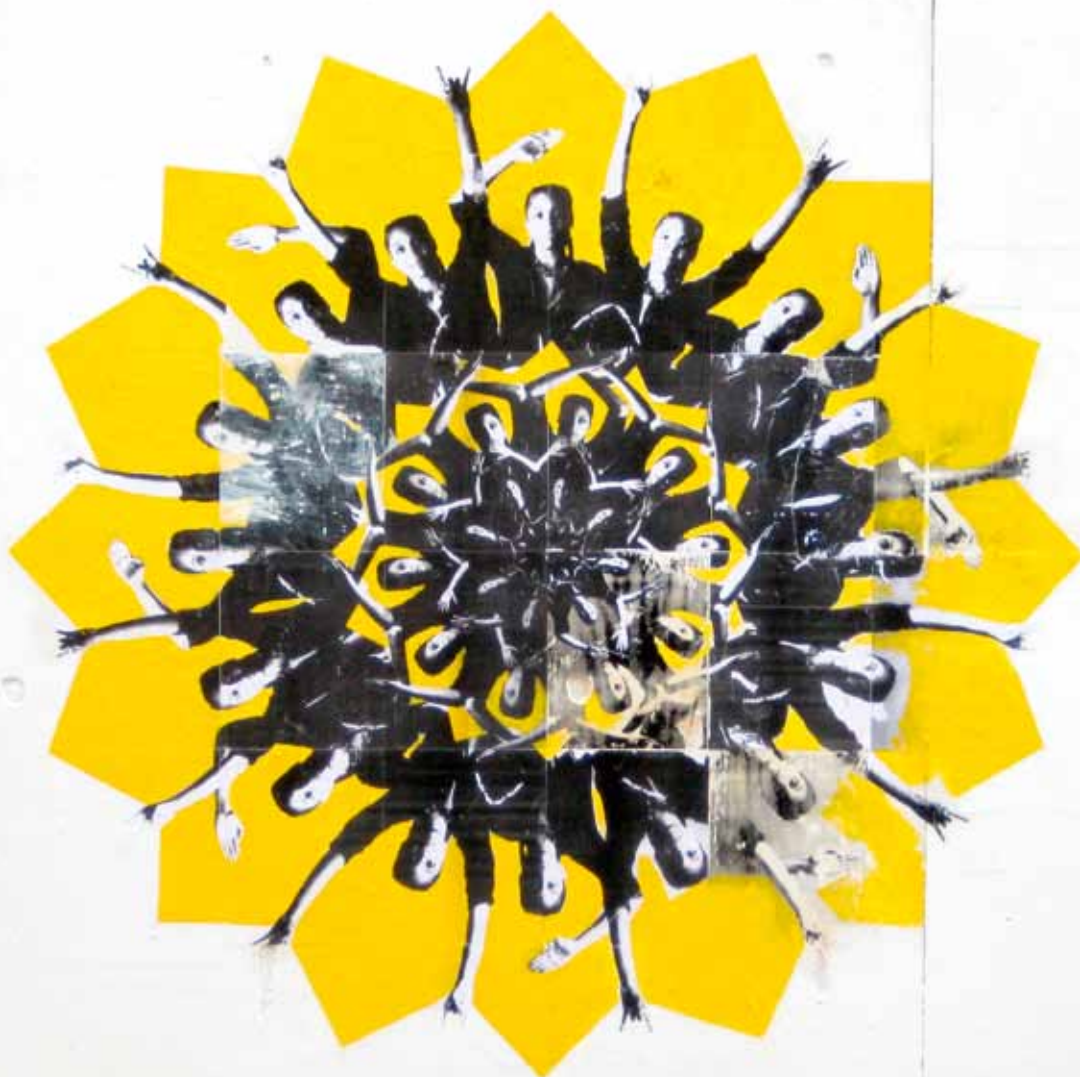


# UNITED STATES MISSION TO INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS IN VIENNA

ART IN EMBASSIES EXHIBITION



JASON DOUGLAS GRIFFIN

**Enlightenment**, 2009

Mixed media on wood, 58 x 58 in. (147,3 x 147,3 cm)

Courtesy of the artist and Leo Kesting Gallery, New York, New York

# ART IN EMBASSIES



ART in Embassies (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.

ART in Embassies is proud to lead this international effort to present the artistic accomplishments of the people of the United States.

# INTRODUCTION

Jackie and I are pleased to welcome you to the Residence of the United States Ambassador to International Organizations in Vienna, and to share with you art we, through the Office of ART in Embassies of the U.S. Department of State, have selected from American artists living in New York and Vienna. New York and Vienna: two great cities so different in history, culture and architecture, yet so alike as vibrant centers of artistic innovation. World cities both, melting pot metropolises, beacons to those who believe art is as vital to life as food or drink. And alike in another important respect: New York City and Vienna share the distinction of hosting the headquarters of key international organizations. New York, of course, is home to the United Nations itself; Vienna to a number of vital U.N.-affiliated authorities – the International Atomic Energy Agency, U.N. Office on Drugs and Crime, and bodies dealing with nuclear testing, outer space, international trade law and more. And as in New York, thousands of international public servants and diplomats from around the world add an extra international flair to Vienna's already worldly *zeitgeist*.

So, to reflect those connections, we sought exciting contemporary works – most were created in 2009, the year we moved to Vienna – from American artists living in the two great cities to present to you here in Sternwarterstrasse. The Residence's bold, angular early 20th Century *art moderne* architecture provides the perfect setting for these striking, colorful pieces.

Two artists represent New York City in this exhibition: Jason Douglas Griffin and Diane Dwyer. Griffin's innovative works focus on the personal: the moods and challenges of modern life. Combining photos, found objects and pigment, he connects us emotionally

# INTRODUCTION

with two young women – “Eighties Babies,” as he calls them – making their way in today’s world. His works have a visceral impact in three dimensions. Diane Dwyer’s haunting, evocative works draw us dramatically into an undersea world of color and contrast. Based on photos of naval vessels sunken during U.S. atomic testing in the Pacific at the dawn of the postwar age, her colorful depictions of battleships made benign by time and tide remind us of President Obama’s charge to all engaged in Vienna’s atomic diplomacy: strive unceasingly to free the world of nuclear weapons.

Expatriate American Lisa Ruyter, who has made Vienna home, draws inspiration from photography in a different way. We were particularly taken with her evocative series based on quintessentially American portraits documenting victims of the Dustbowl and the Great Depression. *Destitute Peapickers*, monumental and moving, dominates our entry hall. It reimagines Dorothea Lange’s famous photograph. Lisa’s unforgettable work based on Walker Evans’ *Laura Minnie Lee Tingle*, reinterpreted in neutral, sepia tones, provides the perfect foil for the otherwise color-dominated pieces in the entry hall. We are proud to know Lisa and are grateful for her generosity in creating her two works especially for this show and for sharing her wonderful work with us and with all who visit our home. Indeed, we would like to thank Curator Sarah Tanguy, the Office of ART in Embassies program, John Powley and the Residence Staff, and all of the artists and galleries who have so generously allowed us to exhibit and enjoy these inspiring works of art.

**Ambassador Glyn Davies  
and Jacqueline Davies**

*Vienna  
August 2010*

## DIANE DWYER 1958

Diane Dwyer has had exhibitions in New York City, San Francisco, Los Angeles, and Miami as well as Lacoste, France, and Barcelona, Spain. She lives and works in New York City.

“This work is about transformation on a few levels. The paintings are based on underwater photos of battleships (sunken by atomic testing in the 40’s) that have been converted into cozy deep sea condos by saltwater, algae, and mollusks. The monochromatic photos I work from are found online, rescued and reconstructed as oil paintings. I’m interested in what happens when a disturbing remembrance, like the skeleton of a warship, is described in rich and vibrant color. These relics of destruction, changed the first time by the sea into something useful, are transformed yet again by the power of color into something else entirely.” Diane Dwyer

*[www.dianedywer.com](http://www.dianedywer.com)*

*[www.leokesting.com](http://www.leokesting.com)*

## DIANE DWYER



**Bow**, 2007

Oil on board, 18 x 26 in. (45,7 x 66 cm)

Courtesy of the artist and Leo Kesting Gallery, New York, New York

## DIANE DWYER



**Staunch**, 2009

Oil on linen, 16 x 22 in. (40,6 x 55,9 cm)

Courtesy of the artist and Leo Kesting Gallery, New York, New York



## DIANE DWYER



**Hull Interior, 2009**

Oil on linen, 16 x 20 in. (40,6 x 50,8 cm)

Courtesy of the artist and Leo Kesting Gallery, New York, New York

## DIANE DWYER



**BTT2**, 2009

Oil on linen, 12 x 16 in. (30,5 x 40,6 cm)

Courtesy of the artist and Leo Kesting Gallery, New York, New York

## JASON DOUGLAS GRIFFIN 1981

Intensely personal, while at the same time unpretentious and accessible, Jason Douglas Griffin's paintings borrow equally from classical artistic traditions, urban aesthetic, and pop culture. In Griffin's paintings, the intersection of cultures and ideologies produces an innovative style that challenges the common perceptions of identity.

Griffin was classically trained as a painter, following the standard arc that began with the representational work required by his teachers, and continued towards the abstract style common in today's art schools. In his search for a more personal style, Griffin returned to an unconventional aesthetic: graffiti and urban design. While growing up outside of Washington, D.C., Griffin had a social circle that reflected a diversity that was absent in his paintings. In fact, the original impetus for his interest in art came from working with graffiti and tattoo artists throughout his adolescence. It became clear that the urban lifestyle he led was becoming increasingly separated from the aesthetic of his artwork. Griffin's breakthrough came when he collaborated with Jason Reynolds, a close friend and poet. Their book, *SELF*, explores a humanistic and brutally honest approach to art, and serves as a platform to display the beauty born from turbulence.

Simultaneously, *SELF* also is an example of what Griffin refers to as, 'hybrid art' – the seamless combination of poetry and painting. Since publishing *SELF*, Jason Douglas Griffin has continued to use art to investigate the collision of culture and native thought.

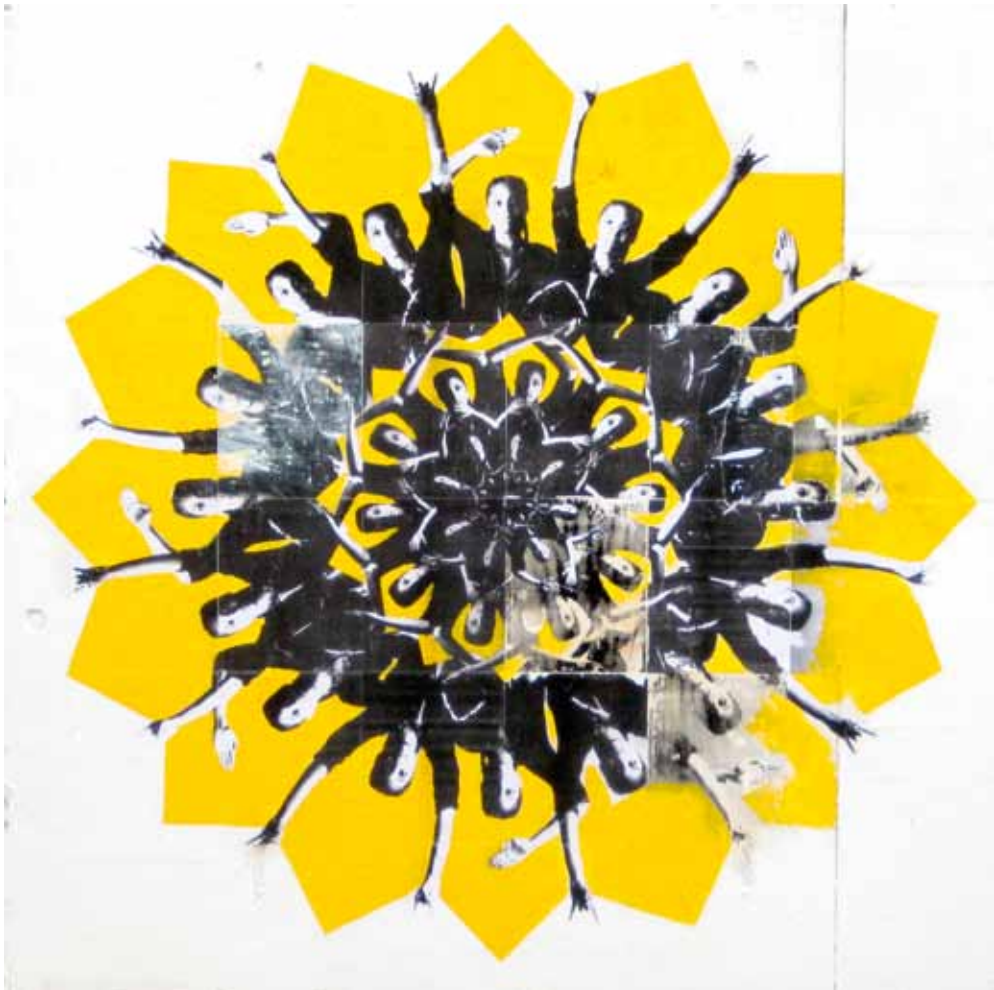
*www.leokesting.com*

## JASON DOUGLAS GRIFFIN



**Away From It All**, 2009  
Mixed media on found door  
61 x 32 x 7 in. (154,9 x 81,3 x 17,8 cm)  
Courtesy of the artist and Leo Kesting  
Gallery, New York, New York

# JASON DOUGLAS GRIFFIN



**Enlightenment.** 2009

Mixed media on wood, 58 x 58 in. (147,3 x 147,3 cm)

Courtesy of the artist and Leo Kesting Gallery, New York, New York

## LISA RUYTER 1968

Since 1996, Lisa Ruyter's paintings have been based on her own photographs, forming a map of her movements as well as her personal development. The works are immediately recognizable by their vivid, specific colors and a structure of strong, fine lines.

Ruyter often works in series to complement or push the possibilities of an image within this framework. On cues taken from Robert Smithson, Ruyter suggests it is possible for a painter to claim territory outside of the picture frame. The work addresses computer space and theatrical space, without losing sight of traditional painting or photographic space. Specific subject matter takes on additional and multiple readings when filtered through the artist as lens.

In this new series, Ruyter steps away from her own camera to mine the world-famous Library of Congress Farm Securities Administration (FSA) photo archive, which documents the Dustbowl era and the effects of the Great Depression on (mostly) rural Americans. This source material allows the artist to combine a number of parallel and seemingly unrelated subtexts. To appropriate such iconic images (already so famously appropriated by Sherrie Levine, for example) restates the question behind such practice in the context of the im-

## LISA RUYTER

age glut of the Internet. In the case of these two particular works by Ruyter, the question becomes “are these portraits of people, or portraits of portraits, or portraits of images?” The history of American art is intrinsically linked with the history of European art. The images in the FSA photos are often of new Americans. Ruyter, a first generation American and a recent transplant to Vienna, has found a way to explore her artistic identity as well as address relevant contemporary issues within a broader context of the development of a very specific American identity.

The artist has shown her work in galleries and museums the world over including, the Museum of Modern Art, New York City; the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, California; the Denver Art Museum, Colorado; the Elgiz Museum of Contemporary Art, Istanbul, Turkey; Collection le Consortium, Dijon, France; La Colección Jumex, México; the Essl Collection, Klosterneuburg/Vienna, Austria; and Valencia Arte Contemporaneo, Spain. Ruyter has had more than twenty-five solo exhibitions.

*[www.lisaruyter.com](http://www.lisaruyter.com)*

## LISA RUYTER



**Walker Evans “Laura Minnie Lee Tenge”, 2009**  
Acrylic on linen, 39 x 31 in. (99,1 x 78,7 cm)  
Courtesy of the artist, Vienna, Austria



## LISA RUYTER



**Dorothea Lange “Destitute peapickers in California;  
a 32-year-old mother of seven children” (reversed), 2010**  
Acrylic on canvas, 71 x 57 in. (180,3 x 144,8 cm)  
Courtesy of the artist, Vienna, Austria

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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