



United States Embassy Stockholm  
ART in Embassies Exhibition



COVER PICTURE

Joyce Owens **Life Support** (detail), 2010

Acrylic and collage on canvas

40 x 30 in. (101.6 x 76.2 cm) overall

Courtesy of the artist, Chicago, Illinois

# ART in Embassies



Established in 1963, the U.S. Department of State's office of ART in Embassies (ART) 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, ART 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 ART's presence in more countries than any other U.S. foundation or arts organization.

ART'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 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*

# Chicago Art and Multiculturalism

Art is a language without borders that brings humanity together around expression. Through art, we are not only an individual identity but also a fluid amalgamation of many around an appreciation of expression.

The U.S. State Department does something progressive and generous through its ART in Embassies program. It's an initiative that is essential in today's globalized world. By giving our embassies a platform to express American artistry, it creates the basis for dialogue and connection.

This is the context of art that we hoped to evoke through our exhibition currently showing at the U.S. Ambassadorial residence in Sweden. We want to convey narratives of hope, and a message of tolerance and diversity.

To best capture these themes, I traveled home to the roots of this exhibition, to Chicago. Mark and I knew intrinsically that by showcasing Chicago art we are celebrating multiculturalism, and highlighting the home town of President Barack Obama and First Lady Michelle Obama.

The story of Chicago personifies the American dream. Like many Chicagoans, both Mark and I are children of immigrants. As first generation Americans, Mark and I know how fortunate we are to have been born in a country replete with opportunities and liberty.

To develop an art show that conveys the message "we are all in this life together," I was given great guidance by Mayor Emmanuel's office, especially Michelle Boone, Commissioner of the City of Chicago's Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events. Upon their suggestions, I cold-called artists, visited countless galleries, and even the homes of some artists. The result was a magical journey that connected me to

inspiring new mentors, such as the amazing Joyce Owens whose work adorns the cover of this catalog.

The nine artists we celebrate are amazingly talented, but more importantly, they are socially responsible people. They range in age from their 20s to 80s, and hail originally from Puerto Rico to Poland, though they are all Americans. Each plays on varying themes of identity and openness, and uses his or her work to enact positive change in their respective communities, focusing on a message of openness, compassion, and social justice.

Having a greater purpose beyond one's self and a strong engagement in one's community is something we've found to be central in Swedish culture too. There's a strong historical relationship between Sweden and Chicago: the Chicago area's first Swedish settlement was founded in 1846 and the population boomed thereafter with Swedes establishing universities, hospitals, and cultural institutes all over Illinois, and especially concentrated in Chicago's North side. Today that area is called "Andersonville" and includes a Swedish-American Museum and North Park University. You can stroll down Raoul Wallenberg Honorary Place Street in downtown Chicago, or get a mouth-watering plate of Swedish meatballs on Clark Street.

Mark and I are proud to celebrate this connectivity between Chicago and Sweden. We're honored to have the opportunity to bring Chicago art to Stockholm, and to celebrate all we have in common as Chicagoans, Americans, Swedes, and engaged citizens of this world.

**Ambassador Mark Brzezinski  
and Mrs. Natalia Brzezinski**

Stockholm  
September 2013

# Hebru Brantley 1981

<http://hebrubrantley.com>

Hebru Brantley's style derives from graffiti-worn buildings and sneaker-hung telephone poles honoring memories of local legends. Saturday morning cartoons and comic books celebrating the triumphs of mythological heroes inspired him to tell stories. Brushes and aerosol cans replaced his original medium of words and incantations. The paintings are a peek into his mind, represented by codified synapses and coagulated liquid pigments.

Eyes wide open, Brantley watched the co-modification and debasement of ancient precepts as the commercialization of the sacred replaced magic and incantation. Brantley is a master visual technician with innumerable stories to tell.

Growing up, black exploitation and science fiction depicted in cinema urged Brantley to express himself visually. Artists such as Romare Bearden, Keith Haring, Jean-Michel Basquiat, and Black folk art also influenced his work. With an affinity for mythological comic heroes and Japanese anime, he began including the two worlds in his work.

Brantley earned his Bachelor of Arts degree in film in Atlanta and went on to design and illustrate for media production and clothing companies. His former work in graffiti art influenced the transition to canvas, the medium in which he began to make a name for himself in the contemporary art scene of Atlanta. He now lives and works in Chicago.



# Hebru Brantley



Evolution of the Contemporaries, undated  
Mixed media on canvas, 54 x 54 in. (137.2 x 137.2 cm)  
Courtesy of Ahmet Keyman, Switzerland

# Hebru Brantley



**Untitled #2**, undated  
Mixed media on canvas, 52 x 45 in. (132.1 x 114.3 cm)  
Courtesy of the artist, Chicago, Illinois



# Emilie Brzezinski 1932

[www.emiliebrzezinski.com](http://www.emiliebrzezinski.com)



**Cherry Pantomime**, undated  
Wood, Overall: 118 x 36 x 24 in. (299.7 x 91.4 x 61 cm)  
Courtesy of an anonymous lender

Born in 1932 in Geneva, Switzerland, Emilie Brzezinski immigrated to the United States and grew up in California. She attended Wellesley College in Massachusetts, where she majored in the history of art.

Brzezinski began a serious art career in the 1970s with a series of solo shows in Washington, D.C. and in New York City. Working in a variety of media, including resin, latex, wood fiber, and wood, she chose expressive themes that were always related to nature. Eventually, she focused entirely on monumental wood sculpture, using a chain saw and an axe to carve forms that took inspiration from the wood she found at mills, gardens, and development sites. Very important to Brzezinski's formation as a sculptor was her involvement in site-specific installations, alternative spaces, and her participation in residencies and symposia around the world, in which she was freed from the constraints of the commercial landscape.

During the last two decades, the artist has had gallery and museum installations in the United States and abroad. Her traveling shows, *Forest*, *Titans*, and *Family Trees*, have been to various capital cities of Europe. It was during these trips that she realized that her cultural roots were not in America, but in the heart of Europe, and that her art contained a clear and strong European flavor. Brzezinski is currently living in Northern Virginia and continues her work with monumental wood sculpture.



# Sergio Gomez 1971

[www.sergiogomezonline.com](http://www.sergiogomezonline.com)

Sergio Gomez was born in Puebla, Mexico in 1971. When he was sixteen years old, he and his family moved from Mexico City to the Chicago, Illinois, area where he has lived for over fifteen years. He attended Joliet Junior College, The School of the Art Institute of Chicago, Governors State University, and Northern Illinois University, from which he received a Master of Fine Arts degree. In 1995, while at Governors State University, Gomez received the Lincoln Laureate Medallion Award given by the Lincoln Academy and former Governor of Illinois, Jim Edgar.

The art of Sergio Gomez has been included in numerous solo and group exhibitions in venues such as The National Museum of Mexican Art, Brauer Museum of Art, and the Museum of Science and Industry. Additional venues include the Northern Indiana Arts Association, Fassbender Gallery, Aldo Castillo Gallery, Arte de Mexico Gallery, 33 Contemporary Gallery, Quincy Art Center, Beverly Art Center, Billy Graham Center Museum, Aurora Public Art Commission, and many colleges and universities.

Gomez is owner and director of 33 Contemporary Gallery in Chicago's Bridgeport neighborhood. In January 2009, he founded [VisualArtToday.com](http://VisualArtToday.com), a curated online exhibition space for international contemporary art. In addition, Gomez is an accomplished graphic designer, web designer, illustrator, art and design professor at South Suburban College, and independent curator at the Zhou B. Art Center in Chicago.

## Sergio Gomez

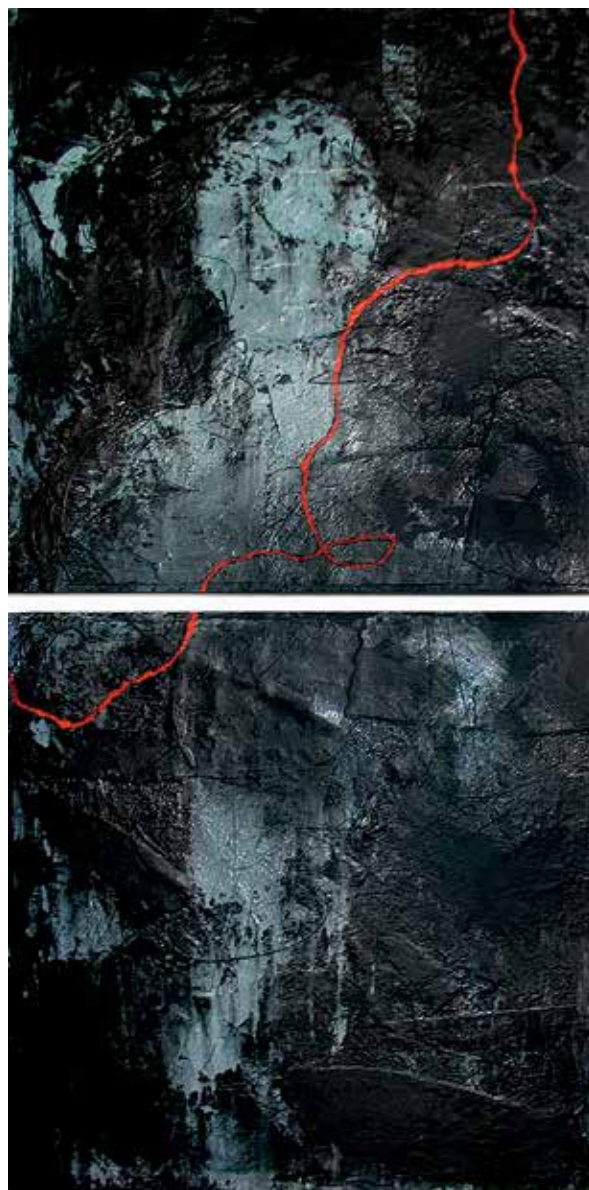


Figure I, 2007. Mixed media on wood, 48 x 24 in. (121.9 x 61 cm) two panels. Courtesy of the artist, Chicago, Illinois

## Sergio Gomez

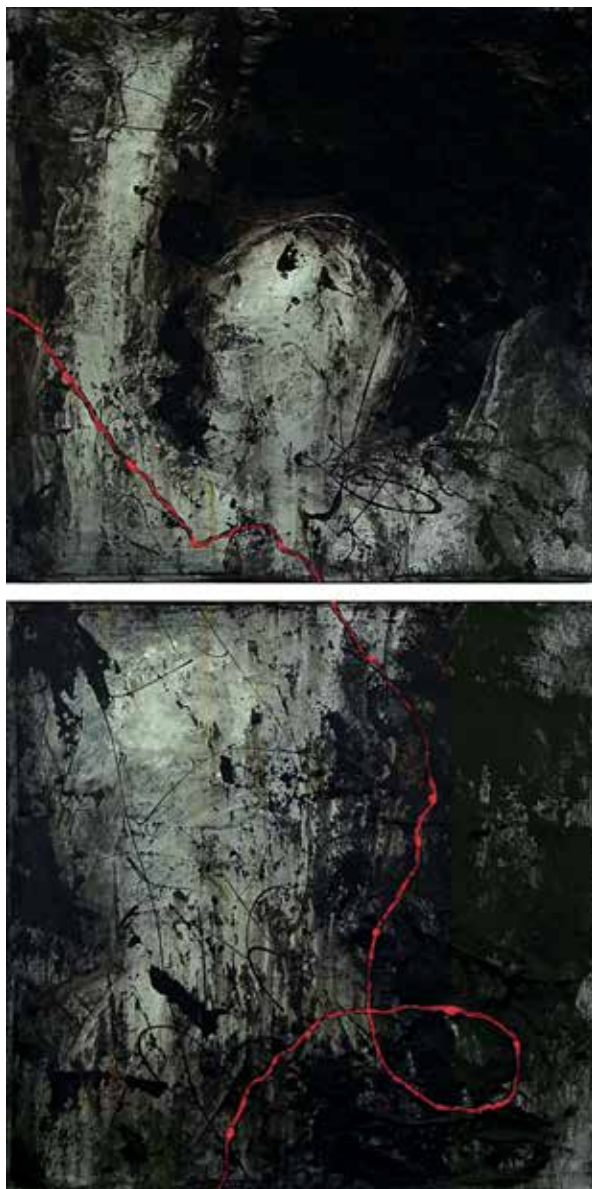


Figure II, 2007. Mixed media on wood, 48 x 24 in. (121.9 x 61 cm) two panels. Courtesy of the artist, Chicago, Illinois



# Richard H Hunt 1935

[www.wikipedia.com](http://www.wikipedia.com)

Richard Hunt was born in 1935 on Chicago, Illinois' South Side. His mother was an artist, and from an early age he was interested in the arts. As a young boy, Hunt began to show enthusiasm and talent in artistic disciplines such as drawing and painting, and also sculpture, an interest that increased as he got older. He developed his skills at the Junior School of the Art Institute and later at the Art Institute of Chicago. Hunt also acquired business sense and an awareness of social issues from working for his father in a barbershop.

Hunt began to experiment with materials and sculpting techniques, influenced heavily by progressive twentieth century artists. This experimentation garnered critically positive response from the art community, such that Hunt's work was exhibited at the *Artists of Chicago and Vicinity* show and the *American* show, from which the Museum of Modern Art (New York City) purchased a piece for its collection. He was the youngest artist to exhibit at the 1962 Seattle World's Fair (Washington), a major international survey exhibition of modern art.

Hunt's signature pieces include *Jacob's Ladder* at the Carter G. Woodson Library in Chicago and *Flintlock Fantasy* in Detroit (Michigan). He was appointed by President Lyndon Johnson as one of the first artists to serve on the governing board of the National Endowment for the Arts and he also served on boards of the Smithsonian Institution (Washington, D.C.). He is the recipient of numerous awards and honorary degrees.

Hunt has continued to experiment throughout his successful career, employing a wide range of sculptural techniques. Through his work, he often makes comments on contemporary social and political issues.



Richard H Hunt

**Model for Flight Forms, 2003**  
Cast bronze, 17 x 15 x 12 in. (43.2 x 38.1 x 30.5 cm)  
Courtesy of the artist, Chicago, Illinois

## Richard H Hunt

**Model for the Fort Des Moines Commemorative, 1999**

Cast bronze, 20 ½ x 14 x 12 in. (52.1 x 35.6 x 30.5 cm)

Courtesy of the artist, Chicago, Illinois





# Wesley Kimler 1953

[www.wikipedia.com](http://www.wikipedia.com)



**Swede at the Point: Operation Stalemate**, undated  
108 x 108 in. (274.3 x 274.3 cm). Courtesy of the artist, Chicago, Illinois

Wesley Kimler is an American artist based in Chicago, Illinois. He is known for his colossal paintings, up to fifteen feet high and twenty-seven feet wide. According to critic Kevin Nance, these are “expressive, gestural, hybrid paintings that combine abstract and figurative elements in a way that’s theatrical and beautiful, sometimes grotesque and surreal, and always powerfully evocative.”

Kimler first began to paint at the age of twenty-one, studying one year at the Laguna Gloria School of Art in Austin, Texas, and two years at the Minneapolis College of Art and Design in Minnesota. Lisa Wainwright, a professor of art history and dean of graduate studies at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, has said of Kimler’s art: “It’s heroic, moral painting. He lives and breathes his art in the way the great painters did.”

# Vera Klement 1929

[www.luc.edu/luma/flash/35\\_klement.html](http://www.luc.edu/luma/flash/35_klement.html)



**Hexentanzplatz (diptych), 2009**

Oil and wax on canvas

Right: 88 x 30 in. (223.5 x 76.2 cm)

Left: 48 x 24 in. (121.9 x 61 cm)

Courtesy of the artist, Chicago, Illinois

Vera Klement is a highly regarded, influential Chicago (Illinois) artist who has worked for over forty years in the city. She was born in Danzig, Poland (now Gdansk) and immigrated to New York City, where she trained at the Cooper Union School of Art at the height of abstract expressionism. In 1964 she moved to Chicago to work as an artist; she taught at the University of Chicago from 1969 to 1995.

Klement has shown in numerous museums and has had major retrospective exhibitions at the Renaissance Society at the University of Chicago and the Chicago Cultural Center. Her work is also featured in many major collections, including the Art Institute of Chicago, the Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago, the Museum of Modern Art (New York City), the Philadelphia Museum of Art (Pennsylvania), and the Smart Museum at the University of Chicago. She has received distinguished awards, including a Guggenheim fellowship, National Endowment for the Arts grant, Pollock-Krasner Foundation Award, and has been named a Lifetime Distinguished Artist Member of the Union League Club.

Through years of work, Klement has created an intensely personal lexicon of archetypal images that are enduring and universal: the torso, tree, landscape, boat, bell, tub, and fish. Her mixture of figuration and abstraction recalls the strong emotional and romantic content of humankind communing with nature, the language of poetry, and the rich gestural vocabulary of abstract expressionism.

## Vera Klement



**But I Must Warn You – Homage to Anna Akhmatova (diptych), 2010**

Oil and gesso on canvas

Right: 54 x 42 in. (137.2 x 106.7 cm)

Left: 54 x 12 in. (137.2 x 30.5 cm)

Courtesy of the artist, Chicago, Illinois



# Joyce Owens 1947

[www.joyceowens.com](http://www.joyceowens.com)

Joyce Owens is a painter and she also creates sculptural works and masks. Owens earned a Master of Fine Arts degree from Yale University in New Haven, Connecticut. Her main influences there were Lester Johnson and Bernard Chaet. Others who guided her at Yale were Willie Ruff, musician, and artists William Bailey and Al Held. Owens earned her undergraduate degree from Howard University in Washington, D.C., where she studied with preeminent African American artists and scholars, including David Driskell, the historian and curator of the Bill and Camille Cosby Collection; the late Lois Mailou Jones, internationally known painter; Ed Love, sculptor and Owens' mentor until his premature death; historian and painter Dr. James Porter; and printmaker and painter James L. Wells.

California artist Leo Robinson was an important guide during Owens' undergraduate years, as was Lloyd McNeill. She has been sought out to jury fine art exhibitions and art fairs at the Museum of Science and Industry, The DuSable Museum, Woman Made Gallery, Women's Caucus for Art, and The New East Side Art Fair, to name a few. She has been a curator for many successful shows and an arts facilitator/consultant, putting together artists with events. Owens is a knowledgeable arts panelist who has also developed discussion topics for galleries at Columbia College in Chicago, The Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs, The School of the Art Institute, The Carver Museum in Austin, Texas, and more. She has taught studio painting and drawing classes at Chicago State University since 1996, while also maintaining an active exhibition career. Owens has served on the Advisory Committee for the Department of Cultural Affairs Chicago Artists Month since 2002.

She consults with the Chicago Artists Coalition, and is on the Advisory Board of Woman Made Gallery in Chicago. Owens is an associate editor for *The Journal of African American History*.

## Joyce Owens



**Life Support**, 2010. Acrylic and collage on canvas, 40 x 30 in. (101.6 x 76.2 cm). Courtesy of the artist, Chicago, Illinois

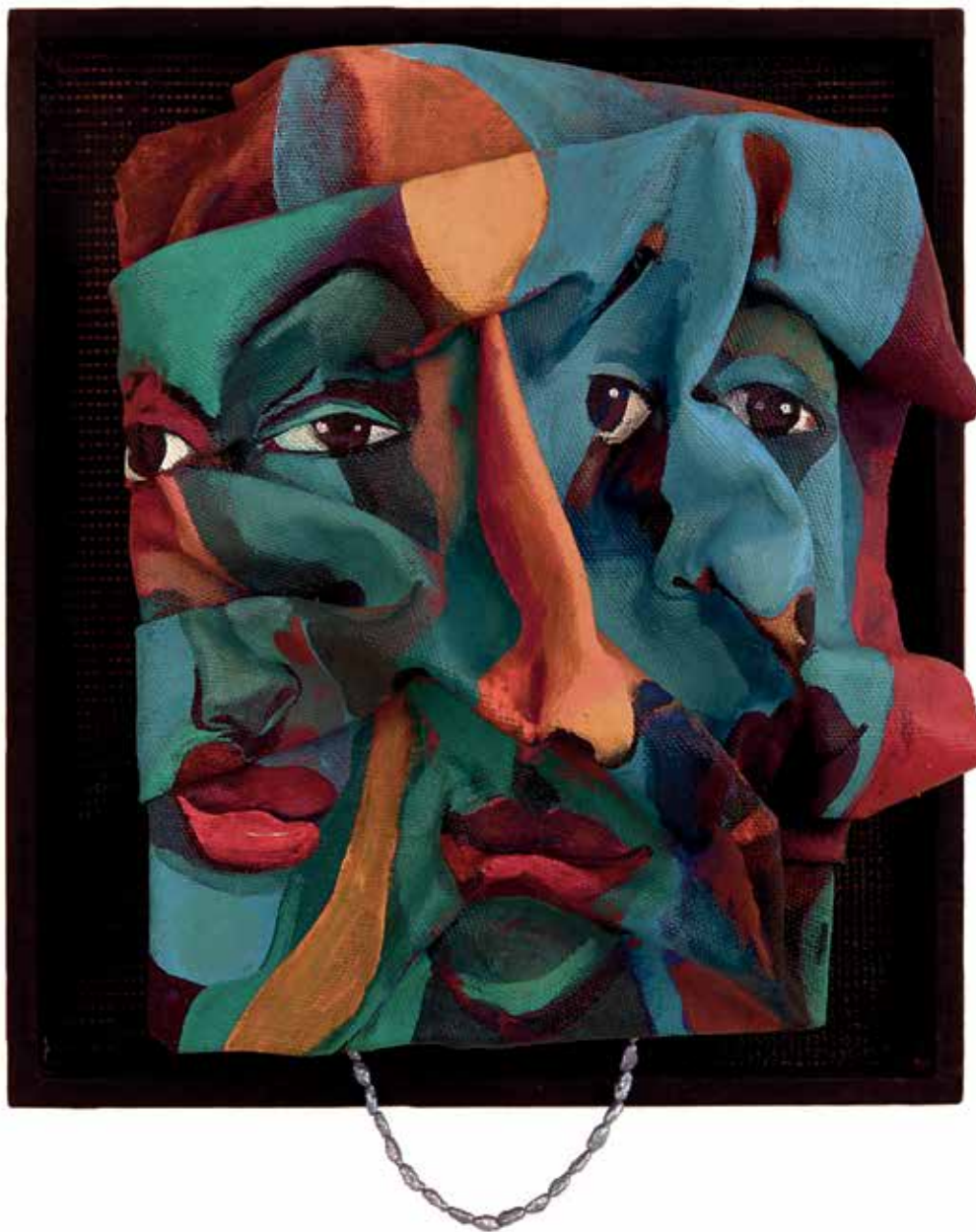
# Joyce Owens



**More than Skin Deep #7, 2012**  
Acrylic on canvas on board on wood block,  
with surface additions  
8 ½ x 7 ½ in. (21.6 x 19.1 cm)  
Courtesy of the artist, Chicago, Illinois



**More than Skin Deep #9, 2012**  
Acrylic on canvas on board on wood block,  
with surface additions  
8 ½ x 7 ½ in. (21.6 x 19.1 cm)  
Courtesy of the artist, Chicago, Illinois



**More than Skin Deep #6, 2012**  
Acrylic on canvas on board on wood block, with surface additions, 8 ½ x 7 ½ in. (21.6 x 19.1 cm)  
Courtesy of the artist, Chicago, Illinois



## Suellen Rocca 1943



**The Cradle Rocker, 1984**

Oil on canvas, 36 x 34 in. (91.4 x 86.4 cm)  
Courtesy of the artist, Romeoville, Illinois

Suellen Rocca is an artist and educator with deep roots in the Chicago, Illinois area. She graduated from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago in 1964, and two years later began exhibiting her paintings at the city's Hyde Park Art Center, with a group of artists who became known as the Chicago imagists. This group of painters shared a similar irreverent style and approach to creating art that often involved detailed making processes, clearly delineated forms, bright colors, and humor.

Rocca, like many imagists, often uses shapes and imagery taken from advertisements and comics, as well as other materials culled from pop culture. She is also an art educator who has directed an organization that sends professional artists to teach in Chicago public schools, and currently she teaches painting, drawing, and design studio classes at Elmhurst College (Elmhurst, Illinois), in addition to curating the college's art collection.

# Suellen Rocca



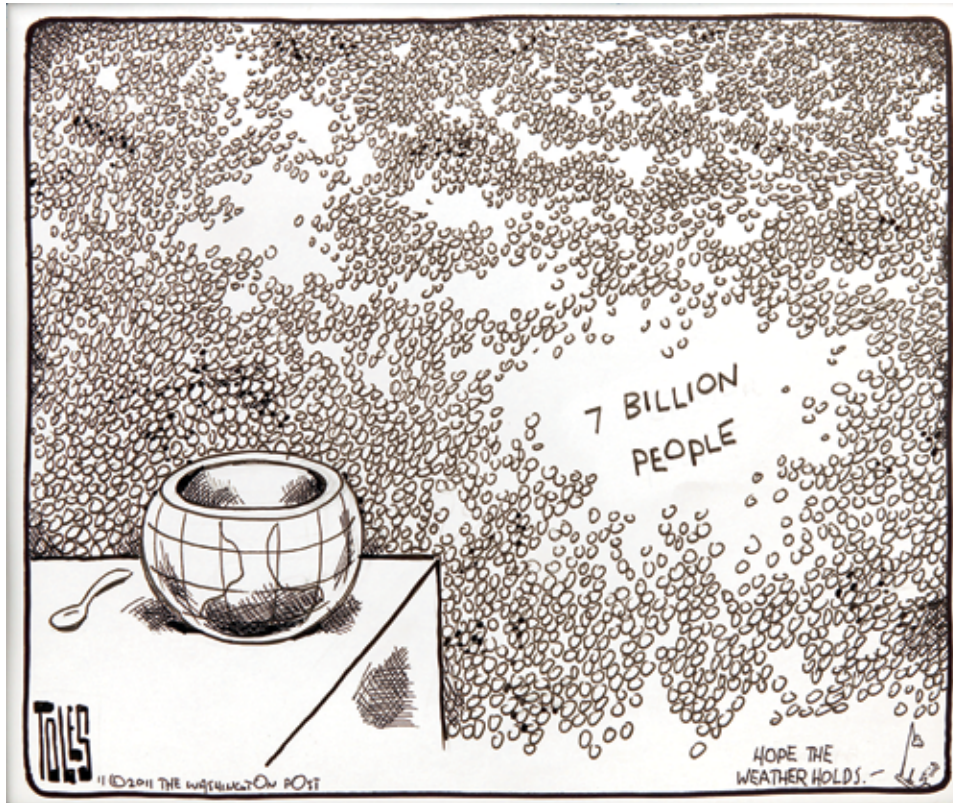
**Family**, 1989

Oil on canvas, 36 x 48 in. (91.4 x 121.9 cm). Courtesy of the artist, Romeoville, Illinois



# Tom Toles 1951

<http://voices.washingtonpost.com/>



## Editorial Cartoon #1, 2011

Ink on paper  
8 x 10 in. (20.3 x 25.4 cm)  
Courtesy of the artist,  
Washington, D.C.

Tom Toles, who was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for editorial cartooning in 1990, is the editorial cartoonist for *The Washington Post*. His cartoons appear in the newspaper and on its web site every day except Saturday, and are syndicated in nearly 200 publications nationwide.

Toles began his career at *The Buffalo Courier-Express*, and has also been the editorial cartoonist for *The Buffalo News*, *The New York Daily News*, *U.S. News and World Report*, and *The New Republic*. In

addition to the Pulitzer Prize, Toles has received the National Headliners Award, the Overseas Press Club Thomas Nast Award, the John Fischetti Award, and the H.L. Mencken Free Press Award. He has been named Cartoonist of the Year by *Editor & Publisher* magazine, The National Cartoonists Society, and *The Week* magazine. Toles has also produced a syndicated comic strip, *Curious Avenue*, and a syndicated panel, *Randolph Itch, 2 a.m.* His cartoons are collected in six books, and he is the author of a children's book entitled *My School Is Worse Than Yours*.

## Tom Toles

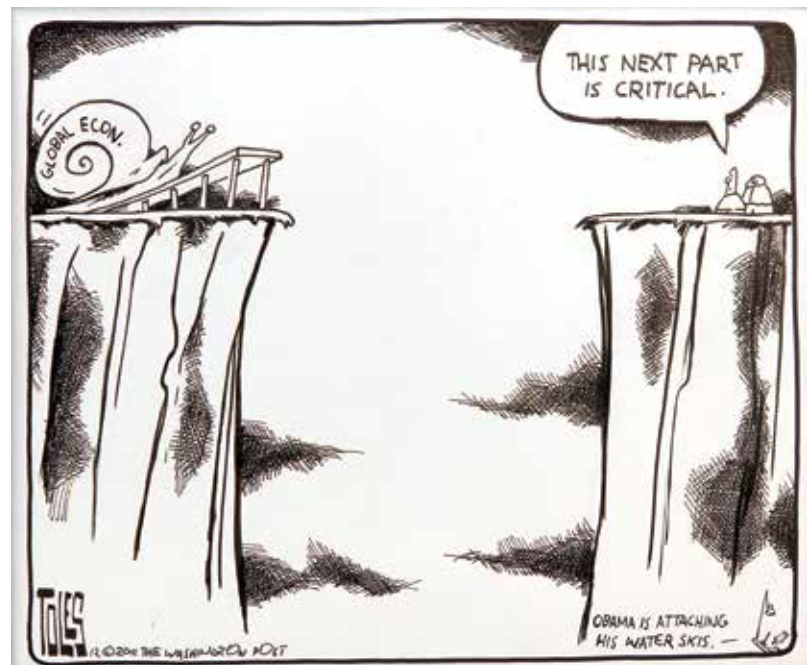


**Editorial Cartoon #2, 2011**

Ink on paper

8 x 10 in. (20.3 x 25.4 cm)

Courtesy of the artist, Washington, D.C.



**Editorial Cartoon #3, 2011**

Ink on paper

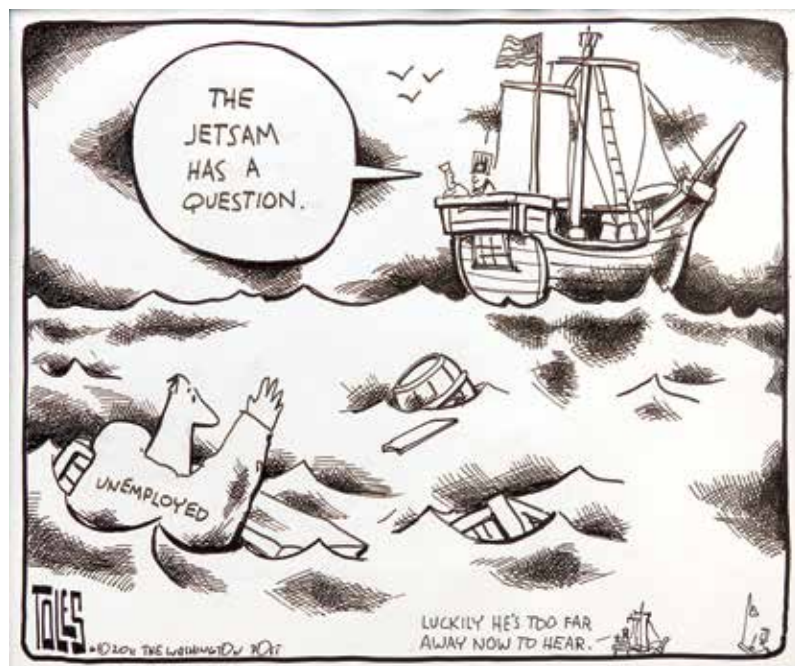
8 x 10 in. (20.3 x 25.4 cm)

Courtesy of the artist, Washington, D.C.



# Tom Toles

Editorial Cartoon #4, 2011  
Ink on paper  
8 x 10 in. (20.3 x 25.4 cm)  
Courtesy of the artist, Washington, D.C.



Editorial Cartoon #5, 2011  
Ink on paper  
8 x 10 in. (20.3 x 25.4 cm)  
Courtesy of the artist, Washington, D.C.

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