

United States Embassy Accra

Promise at the Crossroads



ART in Embassies Program

The ART in Embassies Program

Founded in 1964, the U.S. Department of State ART in Embassies Program is a unique blend of art and diplomacy. Through exhibitions with diverse themes and content, ART presents more than 3,500 original works of art by U.S. citizens in a variety of media and styles. They are obtained through loan from sources that include museums, galleries, corporations, artists, and private collectors, and displayed in the public rooms of some 180 U.S. Embassy residences and diplomatic missions worldwide.

The ART exhibitions are a source of great pride to U.S. ambassadors, assisting them to reach the host country's educational, cultural, business, and diplomatic communities. 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 American art firsthand. Detailed information about the Program may be obtained by accessing the ART web site, <http://aiep.state.gov>. It functions as an interactive global museum featuring on-line versions of all current exhibitions.

Cover: Hubert Jackson, Guitar Man, 2005

Acrylic/mixed media

41 ¾ x 31 ¾ in. (106 x 80,6 cm)

Courtesy of the artist, Colonial Beach, Virginia

Promise at the Crossroads

It is my great pleasure to welcome you to my residence and to showcase these thirteen wonderful works of art by six celebrated American artists. In choosing a theme for this exhibition, my first thought was to use the medium of visual art to capture the many kinds of cultural and social ties that bind the United States



and Ghana together in a fraternity of shared goals and values. One of the most enduring of these ties is our rich tapestry of common musical history. Pieces like *Jazz Man* by artist and my former teacher Johnny Johnson, and *Guitar Man* by Hubert Jackson, capture this vibrant musical tradition through different artistic styles that deliver the same message: one of joy, celebration, and a communication that bypasses spoken language for something more immediate and profound.

Other works in the exhibition evoke the dynamism of Ghana's young but vibrant democracy as it continues to make exciting progress on a variety of cultural, social, and political fronts. Rhonda Smith's *Promise at the Crossroads* captures this potential in both its title and its presentation. Jackson's *The Matriarch* demonstrates the important role women play in Ghana's traditional society and holds promise for our continuing efforts to expand the role of women in Ghana's political and commercial landscape. Smith's *Mountains of Gold* symbolizes the immense material and human potential in the former "Gold Coast" and Ghana's hard work to harness this energy for the good of all its citizens.

While art is universal in its ability to lift the human spirit, it is also wonderfully specific in the interpretation it lends to each person who enjoys it. I encourage you to enjoy the art exhibited here, while remaining conscious of your own cultural and social lenses and the way they shape your approach to the works created by these wonderful artists. I am proud to feature this unique selection of works as a tribute to our strong relationship with Ghana. It serves as a testament to the enormous potential on both sides of the Atlantic for even more exciting progress in the years to come.

With my warm wishes,

Ambassador Pamela E. Bridgewater

Accra
September, 2006

Hubert Jackson (born 1943)

“The inspiration for my work comes from many sources – nature and its forces, people and their cultures and from my mind’s eye. I don’t try to replicate nature or recreate that which is already created, but explore my emotional involvement with them.

I am intrigued by the interplay of light and dark within areas of color and the tactile quality of the surface on which I work.

My goal is to make images which pique the imagination and evoke the same excitement in the viewer that I feel when I am creating my work.”

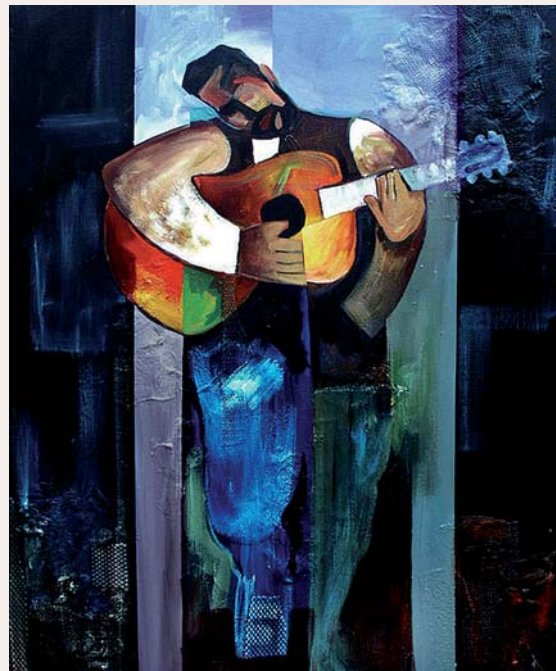


The Matriarch, 2005

Acrylic/mixed media

49 3/4 x 37 3/4 in. (126,4 x 95,9 cm)

Courtesy of the artist, Colonial Beach, Virginia



Guitar Man, 2005

Acrylic/mixed media

41 3/4 x 31 3/4 in. (106 x 80,6 cm)

Courtesy of the artist, Colonial Beach, Virginia

Johnny Johnson (born 1936)

“My art is a response to many different life experiences. I am sensitive to the human condition which compels me to express through painting a particular opinion. I want the viewer to relate to it in his/her own way. Other times the creative process is as important as the work itself.

Most of my inspiration comes from my love for people and our natural environment. Both subject areas are handled in similar ways. Often I use heavily textured surfaces for my paintings. Canvas, Masonite, watercolor paper, and illustration board serve as my supports. They usually are textured with sand, sawdust, modeling paste, gesso, rice paper, and any other interesting materials I can find. I use oils, alkyds, watercolors, and acrylics as my painting media.”



Jazz Man, 2005

Acrylic on paper

29 x 36 in. (73,7 x 91,4 cm)

Courtesy of the artist, Fredericksburg, Virginia

Serinity Knight (born 1968)

“I am curiously fascinated with the mystery of the human condition, sacred connection to the earth and ancestral ties. As well as the beauty of form, enjoying [I enjoy] the interactive qualities of observation, sensuality, reflection, and independence in bringing forth works that both celebrate a sense of woman-ness and the liberation of my spirit. Although, I primarily consider myself to be a mixed-media artist, I am emotionally and physically bound with the process of transforming wet clay into a workable state, fine tuning it in the leather hard stage, caring for it in the drying stage, and praying for it during the fire to reach a finished state. Unlike clay, I am still a wet work in progress not having reached a finished state of being yet. But I am (Great Spirit is) still working on me...”



Helmet of Salvation
(Bust of a Shalin Zulu Creek Knight Warrior Princess), 2004
Terra sigillata over terra cotta
17 x 14 x 12 in. (43,2 x 35,6 x 30,5 cm)
Courtesy of the artist, Washington, D.C.

Rhonda Smith (born 1952)

“Travel and encounters with the art and culture of other peoples can be a powerful motivator in the creation of artwork. During the summer of 2003 a trip to Mali, West Africa, proved to be a great resource of imagery and symbolism. In these recent works I have combined personal symbolic references to Mali with ideas first encountered in 1996 among the Baule and Senufo of Cote d’Ivoire. My work is a melding of the common threads and understandings that are shared through familiar symbols and images of West Africa and her personal and largely western cultural and artistic experience.”



May Wealth and Good Fortune Follow
on all Your Journeys, May 2005

Photo intaglio type

19 x 15 in. (48,3 x 38,1 cm)

Courtesy of the artist, Keedysville, Maryland

Prayers for Prosperous Travelers, 2004
Fabric, string, maps, and plastic bags on paper
7 x 4 ½ in. (17,8 x 11,4 cm)
Courtesy of the artist, Keedysville, Maryland





Mountains of Gold, July 2006

Map, intaglio type print, gold leaf, lace,
thread, cardboard, shellac

19 3/4 x 16 in. (50,2 x 40,6 cm)

Courtesy of the artist, Keedysville, Maryland



Promise at the Crossroads, July 2005

Mixed media

7 x 4 1/2 in. (17,8 x 11,4 cm)

Courtesy of the artist, Keedysville, Maryland



A Spiraling Journey, August 2004

Mixed media on board

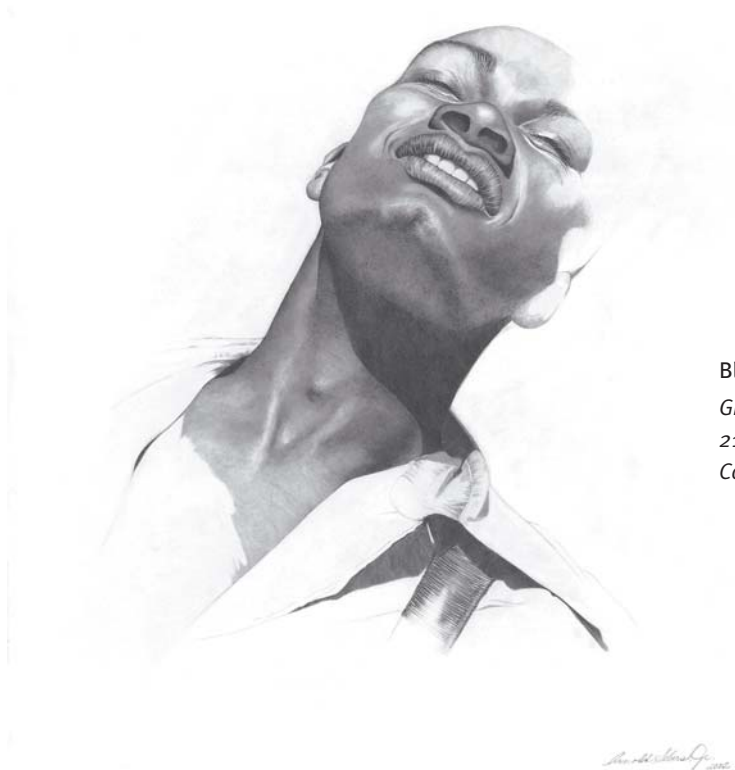
7 x 4 1/2 in. (17,8 x 11,4 cm)

Courtesy of the artist, Keedysville, Maryland

Arnold Sobers (born 1956)

Arnold Sobers was born and raised in New York. After obtaining a Master's degree in business administration, he worked for Citibank and later volunteered with the United States Peace Corps, serving at the Central Bank of the Philippines. Returning from Manila at the end of his tour, Sobers joined the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) in Washington, D.C., where he met his wife. Sobers, his wife and their two daughters, have lived in Pakistan, Côte d'Ivoire, Senegal, Indonesia, and Ghana. Sobers and his family moved to Accra in 2002, where his wife serves as the Director of USAID/Ghana.

In 1991, at the urging of his wife, Sobers started painting and drawing. Since then he has sold and exhibited his works all over the world. His work reflects his love of the diverse people and cultures he has experienced throughout his life. In each piece, Sobers captures the essential uniqueness of the individual as well as his or her emotion. Each piece is an act of love of mankind and of God, the ultimate creator.



Bliss, 2004

Graphite and ink on paper

21 1/4 x 16 9/16 in. (54 x 42 cm)

Courtesy of the artist, Accra, Ghana

Not illustrated

Princess, 2004

Graphite and ink on paper

19 11/16 x 16 15/16 in. (50 x 43 cm)

Courtesy of the artist, Accra, Ghana

Kathleen Walsh (born 1948)

"My art is an invitation to the viewer to 'look again,' to glimpse the fleeting moment, the still point. I work to render the ordinary extraordinary; that is to say, I strive for beauty. I paint in watercolor, capitalizing on its unique qualities of luminosity, simplicity, and surprise. I paint outdoors because I am happiest there."



Amelia Street Bouquet, undated

Watercolor on paper

22 x 22 in. (55,9 x 55,9 cm)

Courtesy of the artist,

Fredericksburg, Virginia

Summer's Song, December 2005

Watercolor on paper

32 x 46 in. (81,3 x 116,8 cm)

Courtesy of the artist,

Fredericksburg, Virginia



Acknowledgments

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