

The ART in Embassies Program



Founded in 1963, the U.S. Department of State's 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>.

Sheila Berger

Using the ancient method of encaustic painting, which dates back to the 5th Century B.C., Sheila Berger combines a rich blend of raw pigment, liquid wax, and damar crystals, which she then burns onto the surface, to create her paintings. Since graduating with a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from New York University in 1989, Berger has traveled extensively throughout the world. Her paintings draw upon her experiences, reflecting those images, colors, and forms that have persisted in her memory over time. After her travels, Berger continued her studies at New York's Art Students League, and the New York Academy of Arts.

Originally from St. Louis, Missouri, Berger has spent the greater part of her life living and traveling abroad, including visits to the Middle East, India, Africa, and Europe. These locations have greatly informed Berger's art. Her painted travel journals from India and the Middle East were exhibited at the Rubin Museum of Art in New York City.

Between Death and Birth, 2006

Encaustic on panel

74 x 54 in. (188 x 137,2 cm)

Courtesy of the artist, and Winston Wächter Fine Art, Inc., New York, New York



Ashley Collins | 1967



Life, undated
Mixed media on canvas
48 x 72 in. (121,9 x 182,9 cm)
Courtesy of the artist, Venice, California

Ashley Collins's mixed media portraits defy convention. Choosing animals as her subjects, she seeks a purity of emotional expression. Each portrait is a silhouetted impression of the animal – a black flash of oil paint, which often resembles a grainy photograph. Every piece is coated with resin, providing both a protective sheath and a resiliency befitting her subjects. Her backgrounds are artfully collaged with antique-hued book pages, scraps of paper, encaustic, and thick paint, suggesting the passage of time and personal history.

Collins's painting process has evolved during her twenty-three years as an artist. The paper aged in her studios, the process of application, the hidden or obscured imagery, and the figurative incorporation of animals, humans, and invocation of text, collectively evoke a sense of calmness. The resin which Collins moves across the work, with fire from an acetylene torch, aids in revealing the depth of layers. Many works have in excess of thirty such layers.

Diana Hajjar Shamounki

“Cityscape is a painting of the city of Jerusalem, with its domes and minarets, its churches and walls. In *The Mosque* one minaret is placed exactly in the center to help serve as the painting's focal point, meant to depict the mosque prayer and connecting the city with God, and with the bright blue sky that you often see in that part of the world. The color scheme is very simple, bright, and yet limited, to show the true colors evoked by the heat during summer days.

The Dam represents the importance of water preservation, especially in lands where available sources of water are far from fulfilling the needs of the people. The red color in the painting is meant to signify the danger

that the lack of water poses to the world, and particularly to the fertile land. But, as in the background of the painting, there is hope to be found within the trees.”

Diana Hajjar Shamounki was born in Jerusalem and has lived most of her life in Amman, Jordan, lately moving between Amman, Jordan and Potomac, Maryland. Shamounki studied art with the Jordanian pioneer artist Muhanna Durra. Shamounki's paintings are held in public and private collections throughout the world, including the Jordan Museum of Fine Arts, Amman, and the World Bank, Washington, D.C.

~ *Courtesy of the artist*

Diana Hajar Shamounki



The Mosque, undated
Oil on canvas, 24 x 48 in. (61 x 121,9 cm)
Courtesy of the artist, North Potomac,
Maryland



Cityscape, undated
Oil on canvas, 37 ½ x 39 ½ in. (95,3 x 100,3 cm)
Courtesy of the artist, North Potomac, Maryland

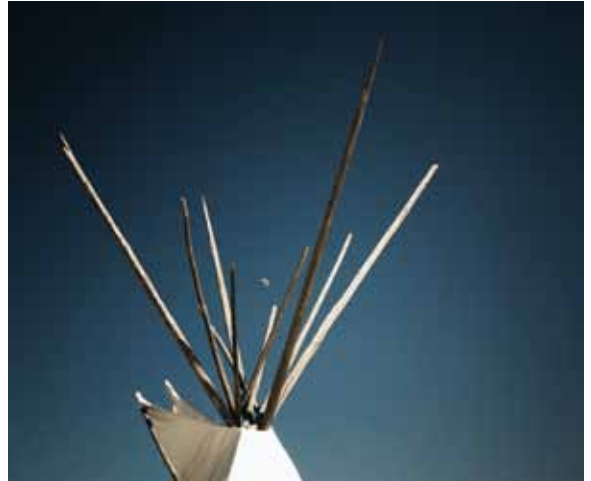


The Dam, undated
Oil on canvas, 48 x 48 in. (121,9 x 121,9 cm)
Courtesy of the artist, North Potomac, Maryland

Steven Rood

Steven Rood graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree in wildlife biology from Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles, California, earning a second Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in advertising from the Art Center College of Design in Pasadena, California. Rood's work has been featured in both solo and group exhibitions in addition to such publications as *Los Angeles Magazine*, *Photo District News*, *Black and White Magazine*, and *Communication Arts*.

At Home Under the Moon, undated
Inkjet on watercolor
27 x 31 in. (68,6 x 78,7 cm)
Courtesy of the artist, Studio City, California



Watching, undated. Inkjet on watercolor, 21 $\frac{7}{8}$ x 42 $\frac{7}{8}$ in. (55,6 x 108,9 cm). Courtesy of the artist, Studio City, California



Under the Spotlight, undated. Inkjet on watercolor, 21 $\frac{7}{8}$ x 42 $\frac{7}{8}$ in. (55,6 x 108,9 cm). Courtesy of the artist, Studio City, California

Betsy Eby | 1967

Betsy Eby works in encaustic, a painting medium that dates back to the 5th Century B.C. Eby's mixed-media material is composed of molten beeswax, pigment, and damar varnish. She manipulates the viscosity and then engages in torching, spattering, dripping, and layering her material. She utilizes broad spreading knives throughout most of the process, and then later uses a brush to draw a line or a specific drip onto the outermost layer on the surface. Not only is Eby addressing the formal structure of composition and color within a translucent medium as unforgiving as watercolor, she must balance this with the dimension of the wax itself, the way wax obfuscates color and buries a gesture, all the while building to a finished surface that glistens

like poured resin. It is a process of constant push and pull. The resulting paintings are uniquely transparent, with lush and active surfaces that are simultaneously sensual and contemplative.

Eby was born in Seaside, Oregon, in 1967. She earned her Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in art history, with an emphasis in Greek, Roman, and Asian antiquities, from the University of Oregon, Eugene. While interning at the University Museum, she was influenced by Asian landscape paintings, as well as by the Northwest master works she catalogued. After graduation, she lived briefly in Tokyo, and was deeply influenced by Japanese history and culture.



Bliss, 2007. Encaustic on panel, 24 x 48 in. (61 x 121,9 cm). Courtesy of the artist, Seattle, Washington

Cover: detail from Betsy Eby **Bliss**, 2007. Encaustic on panel, 24 x 48 in. (61 x 121,9 cm). Courtesy of the artist, Seattle, Washington

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ART in Embassies Exhibition

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