



United States Embassy | Brazzaville
Republic of Congo
ART in Embassies Exhibition

Cover
Benjamin Abramowitz

Seascape, 1961

Oil on canvas

30 x 40 in. (76,2 x 101,6 cm)

Courtesy Benjamin Abramowitz Trust, Rosenbaum & Associates,
and Hemphill Fine Arts, Washington, D.C.

From Maryland to the Republic of Congo

My wife Nergish and I are pleased to welcome you to the U.S. Ambassador's Residence in Brazzaville, Republic of Congo. And we are also delighted to share the paintings of several artists from the State of Maryland, where I was born. Although it has been some years since I lived in Maryland, my roots remain in Hagerstown, located in the western part of the state, and thus I wanted to bring a bit of my background to Congo.



We selected works by Philip Koch for their vivid colors and also because Nergish and I have always loved spending time near the sea, which made *Wednesday Morning* an easy choice. The paintings by Ellen Sinel and George Peterson balance the exhibition thanks to their strong imagery. Finally, it is a pleasure to include *The Band Played Waltzing Matilda* by Seth Rosenberg, who, like me, studied at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

One of the original thirteen states, Maryland has always boasted diversity in its landscape and coast line, as well as among its citizens. The paintings in the exhibition were chosen to reflect both the natural beauty of the state and also the wide spectrum of talent distinguishing the artists who call Maryland home.

The selection of works by Benjamin Abramowitz has special resonance for me as my mother grew up across the street from the Brooklyn Museum in New York, where the artist studied and began his career. Some of my earliest memories are of visiting this marvelous museum. Who knows, I may have gone to one of Mr. Abramowitz's exhibitions!

We are grateful to the ART in Embassies Program of the U.S. Department of State, and particularly to Ms. Sarah Tanguy for her tireless efforts in arranging for this exhibition to come to Congo. Finally, we would also like to thank the artists themselves for the loan of their wonderful works, allowing us and all visitors to the residence to enjoy these paintings and to catch a glimpse of Maryland in Brazzaville.

Robert Weisberg Nergish Weisberg

*Ambassador Robert Weisberg and Nergish Weisberg
Brazzaville
April 2007*

Benjamin Abramowitz

(born 1917)

"I don't know all the answers...I am much more interested in the questions." *Benjamin Abramowitz*

The prolific and richly complex achievements of Benjamin Abramowitz in painting, sculpture, watercolor, and drawing span almost seven decades. The artist was born in Brooklyn, New York, in 1917 to Russian immigrants. At age sixteen he walked for hours in order to study life drawing at the Brooklyn Museum School; later it was the Brooklyn Museum that honored him with his first solo exhibition. He later attended the National Academy of Design, New York City, and in 1936, joined the Works Projects Administration (WPA). Created in 1935 during the Great Depression by Presidential order, the WPA employed millions of people, who built many public buildings and roads, as well undertook large arts project. In 1941 he moved to Washington, D.C, and started a family.

From the time that Abramowitz was in his early thirties, he had received increasingly enthusiastic critical reviews. His work can be found in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City; the Baltimore Museum of Art, Maryland; and the

Phillips Collection and the Corcoran Gallery of Art, both in Washington, D.C., among other institutions. Over the years, he has participated in numerous exhibitions throughout the United States, and received several prestigious awards.

Abramowitz's ferocious appetite for visual statement drew him initially to the social and political chaos of the Depression, the tragedies of the poor, and legends from the Old Testament. Tender portraits of his family, in a variety of media, continued to be created throughout his life. Fascinated by calligraphy, he also filled dozens of sketchbooks and designed four books illustrating the basic principles of the creative experience. His style is marked by bold, rhythmic gestures that are rich in emotions and associations.

Information courtesy of the Benjamin Abramowitz Trust, Rosenbaum & Associates, and Hemphill Fine Arts, Washington, D.C.



Seascape, 1961

Oil on canvas

30 x 40 in. (76,2 x 101,6 cm)

Courtesy Benjamin Abramowitz Trust, Rosenbaum & Associates,
and Hemphill Fine Arts, Washington, D.C.

Philip Koch

(born 1948)

"My paintings are a contemporary re-imagining of the romantic panoramas of the great 19th century American landscape painters. These early artists found the New England mountains and coast a sufficient springboard to forge a powerful art from their deep and emotional response to nature. The land they painted seemed to them a new Eden.

In our time with its ecological degradation, the symbolic value of this Eden seems at once more remote and yet more urgently needed. Making a painting of the fruitful primordial wilderness freshens the winds of my own energy and optimism. Its song calls me back again painting after painting. Wilderness and the meeting of the land and the seas are among the most deeply buried chapters of our common origins. They are portraits of an often forgotten part of ourselves. I feel these paintings are a tool, a bit of practical magic to help the viewers reconnect with their own natures and their deeper resources."

Philip Koch received his Bachelor of Arts degree from Oberlin College, Ohio in 1970, where he studied both studio art and art history, and his Master of Fine Arts degree from Indiana University in Bloomington, in 1972. He was especially influenced by seventeenth century Dutch landscape art and British painter John Constable's cloud studies. During this period, he started to paint en plein air. In 1973 he settled in Baltimore, Maryland, where he continues to reside, and takes regular trips to the Northeast coastal areas. His solo exhibitions have been held at such venues as the Butler Institute of American Art, Salem, Ohio; the Cedar Rapids Museum of Art, Iowa; and the University of Maryland University College, College Park. His work can be found in several private and corporate collections.

A Vision of Nature: The Landscapes of Philip Koch; University of Maryland University College, 2004.

<http://www.artline.com/galleries/haslem/koch/statement.html>



Sunset at Eagle Ridge, 1999
Oil on canvas
13 x 19 ½ in. (33 x 49,5 cm)
Courtesy of the artist, Baltimore, Maryland

Philip Koch



Primavera, 2004

Oil on canvas

13 1/2 x 18 in. (34,3 x 45,7 cm)

Courtesy of the artist, Baltimore, Maryland

Philip Koch



***Wednesday Morning*, 1987**

Oil on canvas

48 x 60 in. (121,9 x 152,4 cm)

Courtesy of the artist, Baltimore, Maryland

George A. Peterson

(born 1943)

"Although the focus of my painting is color and texture, I consider myself an 'objective' painter. I love moving paint across canvas. I generally paint with large brushes and my paintings require many sessions. The surfaces are progressively built up. Colors and forms are altered and move with each new layer. As paint layers overlap, older layers of dried paint interact with strokes of fresh, wet paint. Energizing textures and color juxtapositions are created at the same time as forms emerge and evolve.

I believe that paint is capable of creating form and simultaneously expressing its own essence. I also believe that a painter's aim is to produce a perfectly harmonious and unified result—to make a small world in which order reigns; albeit one in which there is some mystery, but its meaning remains elusive."

George A. Peterson was born in 1943. He earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in politics from Princeton University in 1965, and a Masters degree from Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism in 1970. He later studied anatomy and drawing at Georgetown University from 1975 to 1978, and figure painting and drawing with Hayes Friedman at the Corcoran School of Art, Washington, D.C., from 1992 to 1996. The sources for his recent imagery are varied - ranging from reflections on his childhood on a dairy farm to investigations of masterworks of art history.



Pond, 2004
Oil on canvas
36 x 72 in. (91,4 x 182,9 cm)
Courtesy of the artist, Washington, D.C.

Seth Rosenberg

(born 1951)

"I use simple, common shapes to construct my paintings, shapes that we are familiar with. Squares, circles, ovals, bars can represent so many things. At once, they are full of associative qualities yet, they also exist as ideas unto themselves, free and unencumbered; pure form.

Ultimately, my paintings are not about geometry or the purity of form at all. The language of geometry is simply a vehicle in which to arrive at a personal poetic aesthetic.

I like to make paintings that require the viewer to enter its landscape; one must negotiate its corridors, enter its chambers, perambulate within its confines, change directions, experience its weather, breathe its air. My works function as stylized dramas, abstract narrations, fractured fabrications, chromic constructs, color conspiracies, and transitory events manufactured from a matrix of hues and tones suspended in a film of paint."

Seth Rosenberg was born in Stamford, Connecticut. He earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from Kent State University, Ohio (1975), and a Master of Fine Arts degree from the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill (1979). He has participated in numerous solo and group exhibitions, and his work can be found in public and private collections throughout the mid-Atlantic states, as well as in Cambodia, Columbia, Sierra Leone, and Turkmenistan.

www.rosenbergstudio.com



Color School I, 2005

Oil on canvas

38 x 38 in. (96,5 x 96,5 cm)

Courtesy of the artist, Pepper Pike, Ohio

Seth Rosenberg



The Band Played Waltzing Matilda, 2006

Oil on canvas

45 x 45 in. (114,3 x 114,3 cm)

Courtesy of the artist, Pepper Pike, Ohio

Ellen Sinel

(born 1942)

"My paintings are of real or imagined places in which I seek to develop an atmosphere of quiet and peace. Nature, always changing, is simultaneously still. As I observe a scene, a juxtaposition of shape and color, a flower bending in the grass, a place where sky meets sea, I am struck with an instant response, a feeling. One instant later, everything observed changes. I want to capture the tension of these life-continuing changes, and to convey the feeling of an unseen presence, capturing a moment in time.

I am currently working on a series of paintings inspired by the Virginia countryside and Cape Cod, places where I spend much time. In such beauty and quiet, I am drawn from the inside out, both physically and visually. As light changes constantly, so do colors, shadows, senses, and feelings. These settings, pregnant with expectant mystery, inspire my thoughts and work."

Ellen Sinel majored in art at Skidmore College, Poukeepsie, New York, in the 1960s. She received her Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from San Jose State University, California, in 1965, and went on to graduate work in painting at American University in Washington, D.C. She has had numerous solo shows at Zenith Gallery, Washington D.C., and the former Robyn Watson Gallery, Provincetown, Massachusetts, as well as having completed several public art projects in the Washington, D.C. area. Her work has also been juried into many gallery and museum exhibitions, and can be found in corporate and private collections throughout the country.

www.ellensinel.com

Ellen Sinel



Myriad of Grasses VII, Reeds, 2006

Oil on canvas

30 x 30 in. (76,2 x 76,2 cm)

Courtesy of the artist and Zenith Gallery, Washington, D.C.

The ART in Embassies Program

The ART in Embassies Program (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 1964, 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 180 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.

The ART in Embassies Program is proud to lead this international effort to present the artistic accomplishments of the people of the United States. We invite you to visit the ART web site, <http://aiep.state.gov>, which features on-line versions of all exhibitions worldwide.

Acknowledgments

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