



ART IN EMBASSIES EXHIBITION

United States Embassy
Manama, Bahrain

Cover

Karen Gunderson, **All in a Moment**, 2005
Oil on linen, 50 x 50 in. (127 x 127 cm)
Courtesy of the artist, New York, New York

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the American Ambassador's residence. My wife Marina and I are honored to have you and pleased to share with you the wonderful collection of art so generously provided by the Department of State's ART in Embassies Program.



The paintings on display have been personally chosen by us and loaned to the Department of State by the artists themselves for exhibition in Manama. They are the most important part of the residence. They are designed to make our guests feel welcome and warm and special. Our purpose in selecting these works was to bring life, movement, and beauty to a staid official home. More than the building or grounds or furnishings, the art on display reflects who we are as people and what we represent as a nation.

They are modern and bold, vibrant and free. They are innovative and playful – experimenting with new techniques, mediums, and space. The artists themselves represent the melting pot that is America: each draws inspiration from the foreign lands and cultures that are part of their life experience. Dave Yust's circular diptych *Nazca*, for example, is influenced by the mysterious Nazca lines on the western Peruvian Pampas. The abstract

landscapes of Laura Goddard, *Gershwin on Holiday* and *Dwelling in the Past*, reflect her study of Japanese architecture and calligraphy, as well as her experience of living in Milan.

Art speaks across cultures, and we also sought works that would unite Bahrain and the

United States. The forms, colors, and subjects of these paintings share a common love of desert, sea, and sky. In Karen Gunderson's *All in a Moment*, for example, light reflects on the surface of water, much like the sea that surrounds Bahrain. The brilliant sun and sky in Elizabeth daCosta Ahern's *Sol Africa* and *Luanda Morning* give us a sense of light and space that we feel in this beautiful country.

Marina and I hope you enjoy these works, and appreciate the opportunity to share them with you.

Ambassador Adam Erel and Mrs. Marina Erel

Manama
March 2008

“The ideas for these paintings come from the need to shape the abstracted memory of landscape, and my experiences in nature, culture and life.

I am fascinated by the way time, contemplation and imagination can alter an experience. These paintings are my attempt to reflect that altered memory of color, light, space, time and how one layer of each influences the other.

In the process of painting these images, I layer materials such as graphite, pastels, crayons, acrylic, wax and oil paint on paper or canvas.”

Portuguese-American artist Elizabeth DaCosta Ahearn received her education at Boston University, Massachusetts; The School of The Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; and the Santa Fe Art Institute at Santa Fe College, New Mexico, where she studied with Helen Frankenthaler.



Sol Africa, 2007
Acrylic on canvas, 44 x 45 in. (111,8 x 114,3 cm)
Courtesy of the artist and Carla Massoni Gallery,
Chestertown, Maryland



Ilha Luanda, 2007
Acrylic on canvas, 41 x 45 in. (104,1 x 114,3 cm)
Courtesy of the artist and Carla Massoni Gallery,
Chestertown, Maryland



Luanda Morning, 2007
Acrylic on canvas, 41 x 45 in. (104,1 x 114,3 cm)
Courtesy of the artist and Carla Massoni Gallery,
Chestertown, Maryland

Alice Baber began painting at the age of eight, later formally studying art at Lindenwood College for Women in Missouri, and Indiana University. As an adult she traveled world wide, studying at the École des Beaux-Arts in Fontainebleau, France, and then living in Paris throughout the late 1950s and the 1960s. She was a member of the March Gallery on Tenth Street in New York City, and was art editor of *McCall's* magazine.

Baber was instrumental in organizing exhibitions of women artists at a time when women were still struggling to gain prominence in the international art world. Her legacy is honored at the Baber Midwestern Modern Art Collection of the Greater Lafayette Museum of Art in Indiana, and the Alice Baber Memorial Art Library in the artistic community of East Hampton, Long Island, New York. Her paintings are in major museum collections throughout the world, including the Museum of Modern Art, Metropolitan, Guggenheim, and Whitney Museum of American Art, all in New York City.

Baber's work is recognized for its luminous, abstract shapes, particularly in stained canvases filled with clear, radiant color. Her compositions often consist of multiple round or ovoid shapes.

www.niagra.edu



Blue Turns to Blue, undated
Watercolor, 30 ¼ x 22 ½ in. (76,8 x 57,2 cm)
Courtesy of the ART in Embassies Program,
Washington, D.C., Gift of The Estate of Alice Baber

Lyrical Abstraction

“This body of abstract landscapes comprises reflections of time spent in Italy, Japan and Western Massachusetts as well as distillations of their cultures. My materials are water based paints and varnishes, oxidized semi-precious leaf and charcoal on both hardboard panels and 300 lb. paper. The result can be seen as a cool amalgam of both a moment or a lifetime. This process, the addition and subtraction of color and the manipulation of the leaf through patination, pushes the limits of water based mediums, and forces their compatibility with metals. Through this tension and transformation the work becomes a travelogue of modern and antique imagery. The Asian influence on my work comes from study of Japanese architecture and calligraphy. The Italian influence is from a few wonderful years living in Milan, and subsequent return visits. Western Massachusetts, where I now live, provides inspiration in the form of ever changing beauty and urgency. In my attempt to reveal underlying structures and reconnect eras, I have come to realize that these three references are wonderfully compatible.

I am influenced by the great Modernists and the Abstract Expressionists, as well as recorded music and poetry. Gesture, serenity, memory, elegance and the thrill of the hunt are my main motives for painting.”

www.lauriegoddard.com



Gershwin on Holiday #1, undated
Acrylic on panel, 24 x 36 in. (61 x 91,4 cm)
Courtesy of the artist, Shelburne Falls, Massachusetts



Dwelling in the Past, undated
Acrylic on panel, 24 x 24 in. (61 x 61 cm)
Courtesy of the artist, Shelburne Falls, Massachusetts

“My black paintings use a process which calls upon our sense of the haptic, or our sense of touch. When I paint an image, the brush follows the interior contours of the form. It is as if I am tracing the surface of the volume of the image with my brush... *feeling* it in space. The final effect produced depends upon the angle of light refraction and the position of the viewer; when you move, the picture changes. The paintings of water are successful because the observation process is the same as real water. We see water because of the light reflecting on the surface and we see my paintings of water because of the light reflecting on the surface of the paint. I believe I have made a new way to think about painting and the images of water, hopefully make us conscious of this precious resource.”

Karen Gunderson was born in Racine, Wisconsin. She earned a Bachelor of Science degree from Wisconsin State University, Whitewater, and both a Master of Arts and a Master of Fine Arts degree from the University of Iowa, Iowa City, in painting and intermedia, respectively. She has taught art in a variety of capacities for over thirty-five years, and has been the subject of numerous one-person shows throughout the United States and in Madrid, Spain, and Sophia, Bulgaria. Gunderson has received many honors and awards, most notably a Lorenzo Magnifico Prize in Painting at the 2001 Florence Biennale (Italy), and has been named by noted critic Donald Kuspit as one of the “New Old Masters” (*The End of Art*, Cambridge University Press, 2004, and exhibition: *New Old Masters*, Gdansk, Poland 2006).



After the Storm, 2007
Oil on linen, 40 x 40 in. (101,6 x 101,6 cm)
Courtesy of the artist, New York, New York



All in a Moment, 2005
Oil on linen, 50 x 50 in. (127 x 127 cm)
Courtesy of the artist, New York, New York



Water Streams, 2007
Oil on board, 24 x 24 in. (61 x 61 cm)
Courtesy of the artist, New York, New York

A painter of abstractions that seem to be a mass of shapes and colors, with an intuitive sense of texture, Joseph Haroutunian regards himself as a landscape painter focusing on “calligraphic details, movement and color.” Most of his work is in oil, although he uses some watercolor, and he credits the painting of modernist John Marin as a key influence in his work.

At the age of seven, Haroutunian was introduced to art by his grandfather, a minister, who created stained-glass windows in his spare time. His mother, Helen Halsey Haroutunian, was an artist and art historian who encouraged creativity, but it was a chance encounter with images of the last paintings of Vincent Van Gogh that hooked him on painting. Although he studied with Tom Dietrich at Lawrence University in Wisconsin, and with a former Bauhaus member, Paul Wieghardt at the Evanston Art Center, Haroutunian considers himself mostly self-taught.

Of his work, the artist has said: “My art, though abstract, is very much tied to elements of the landscape. My wife, Gay, and I live in a very special part of the state of Maine. We are surrounded by rugged coastline, small but fascinating mountains, amazing and colorful blueberry barrens, woods, fields, etc. ... I never try to ‘capture’ anything. Yet all my feelings about art, landscape, family, color, and music become synthesized and expressed in my paintings ... I plan the color, a few elements of composition, and the rest is spontaneous.” Haroutunian does not expect a viewer to simply witness his art. He hopes they are as open to revelation as he is during the creative process.

<http://artquest.com>



Ultra and Green, undated
Oil on gessoed paper, 35 x 27 in. (88,9 x 68,6 cm)
Courtesy of the Artist, Steuben, Maine



Sienna and Blue, undated
Oil on gessoed paper, 35 x 27 in. (88,9 x 68,6 cm)
Courtesy of the artist, Steuben, Maine

Dave Yust was born in Wichita, Kansas in 1939. He earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from the University of Kansas in 1963 and a Master of Fine Arts degree from the University of Oregon in 1969. Both degrees are in drawing and painting. Although Yust was educated during the era of abstract expressionism, his paintings, which were once strictly circular images, reacted against the artistic trends of the time by implementing crisp geometric forms that explored angular relationships. In the early 1980s, Yust took a two-year hiatus from painting to set up a new studio. During the transition, he read a book about contemporary architectural theory that emphasized incorporating multiple elements into one. Yust experienced a revelation that would completely change his work; the artist's once simplistic work, which focused on the idea that "less is more," would now incorporate a variety of colors and shapes. His work is in collections throughout the Midwest and West, including the Denver Art Museum, Colorado, and the Indianapolis Museum of Art, Indiana.

The present work, the diptych *Nazca - Inclusion with 5 lines (warm)* and *Nazca - Inclusion with 5 lines (cool)*, is part of Yust's *Inclusion Series*. The sources that inform that series are many, and almost always indirect. One is found in the mysterious Nazca lines on the western Peruvian Pampas. These incredibly long lines and huge geometric shapes from centuries ago have fascinated the artist since the early 1980s, when he first encountered them. The lines, which sometimes extend nearly a mile in length, have yet to be convincingly explained. They intrigue Yust and are often in the back of his mind as he works. Although he chooses not to depict these things directly, the reference is present.

Gwen Chanzit, *Dave Yust: Inclusion Series*, The Wichita Center for the Arts, 1998.



**Nazca - Inclusion with 5 lines (warm)
and Nazca - Inclusion with 5 lines (cool), 1999**
Acrylic on canvas, diptych, 36 in. (91,4 cm) diameter each
Courtesy of the artist, Fort Collins, Colorado

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.

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