

## WELCOME

We are very proud to represent the United States in the Czech Republic. From the picturesque landscapes of the countryside to the historic and spectacular buildings of Prague, the Czech Republic is a country of beauty. The American Ambassador's Residence is a unique building with large rooms and an elliptical grand hallway lined with dramatic stone pillars. The public rooms are decorated with silk patterned walls or detailed carved wood paneling. The enclosed glass winter garden overlooks an expansive oval-shaped country garden.



draws attention to itself because of its soft colors but strong statement. Many conversations about cultural norms take place in front of this work.

The final painting hangs in the wood paneled formal library. This room is used for discussions and meetings. In the alcove, we hung a Giclée print of an American flag by Marion Coffey, *Double Stitched Torn Canvas Flag – Original*. To us, the rich, vibrant red, white, and blue that fill the room represent the freedom and democracy of our great country.

After seeing the Residence, we decided to complement the rooms and hallways with large scale paintings from our home state of Wisconsin. As you explore the grand hallway, you can view three realistic landscapes that bring the concept of the gardens inside. The two works by William Nichols and the work by Lee Weiss bring the intense rich colors and textures of the outside garden to the interior of the Residence. The size of the paintings is powerful and brings warmth to the vast walls.

Further down the hallway is a large oil painting by Mark Mulhern, *Pressing Pants*. This painting was chosen to reflect the fine balance between chores and responsibilities in today's society. The painting

We thank our Wisconsin friends Carmen Habermann, Tory Folliard, and Bruce Pepich for their suggestions and assistance conceptualizing the exhibition and assisting with loans, and the ART in Embassies Program for making the exhibition a reality. We also thank our Residence manager Miroslav Cernik and his staff for their wonderful support and assistance. Enjoy!

Ambassador and Mrs. Richard W. Graber

Prague  
July 2007

## 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.

### MARION COFFEY (born 1924)

"My work is both simple and enormously complex. The negative shapes or the shapes that surround my images have as much weight as the subject matter. It's actually a mixture of abstraction and representation. I have spent a lifetime studying and observing the world around me and attempting to recreate different images of that life."

Marion Coffey studied at the American Academy of Art, the Chicago Art Institute, and DePaul University, all in Chicago, Illinois, in addition to Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois, and the Fontainebleau School of Fine Art, France. Her work has been exhibited throughout the United States, and is included in the collections of the National Museum of Women in the Arts and The White House, both in Washington, D.C., among others.



**DOUBLE STITCH TORN CANVAS FLAG – ORIGINAL**, 2004  
Giclée print, 36 x 48 in. (91,4 x 121,9 cm). Courtesy of the artist, Milwaukee, Wisconsin

## MARK MULHERN (born 1951)



**PRESSING PANTS**, 2006

*Oil on canvas, 48 x 62 in. (121,9 x 157,5 cm). Courtesy of Tory Folliard Gallery, Milwaukee, Wisconsin*

"My work deals with the human figure and temporality. The figures are caught in subtle gestures that suggest introspection and unselfconscious states of being. I want the viewer to identify with the figure through an empathetic relationship with the gesture. The isolation of the figure in the field is meant to focus the viewer on the subtle language of the body and limit the visual information to its greatest simplicity. Like the experience of a traveler in a foreign culture whose language skills are not proficient, I want the viewer's sensitivity to body language to heighten for the sake of connection.

The field the figures occupy acts as both a container and a membrane or veil through which the figure emerges or recedes. For the most part, the field is neutral and atmospheric, made up of layer after layer of thinly applied paint. The push/pull process of working the figure into the right location enriches

the surface and creates the emotional tone of the work. I am trying to make very slow paintings that require and reward patient looking."

Mark Mulhern was born in Portage, Wisconsin, in 1951. He received his Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from the Layton School of Art, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, in 1973. From 1976 to 1977 he studied in Paris with Stanley William Hayter, and earned his Master of Fine Arts degree from the University of Wisconsin, Madison, in 1978. His work has been shown in several solo and group exhibitions throughout the United States, and can be found in many public collections, including the Museum of Modern Art, New York City; the Art Institute of Chicago, Illinois; and the Milwaukee Art Museum, Wisconsin.

*Adapted from materials provided by Tory Folliard Gallery.*

## WILLIAM NICHOLS (born 1942)

"I use the landscape for what it is capable of generating: great beauty, sensuality, and a sense of time. I have pursued these qualities through looking at landscape – close up as opposed to a traditional vista or distanced viewpoint. The peculiar sense of intimacy that this achieves, I have tried to heighten through the large scale of work and by handling the paint in a way that imparts sensual and tactile awareness of surface at close range.

The photograph is an important component in constructing the painting. Its ability to lock in quantities of information at a precise moment in time and report candidly about it offers a unique vantage point from which to explore and reflect on things with a new kind of thoroughness. The photograph helps me create a view from a distance that has great pictorial clarity with an attempt to place the spectator in the landscape, that is, trying to create a sense of being surrounded by it rather than approaching it frontally."



**ORANGE DAY LILIES**, 2003  
Oil on linen, 52 x 78 in. (132,1 x 198,1 cm)  
Courtesy of Tory Folliard Gallery,  
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

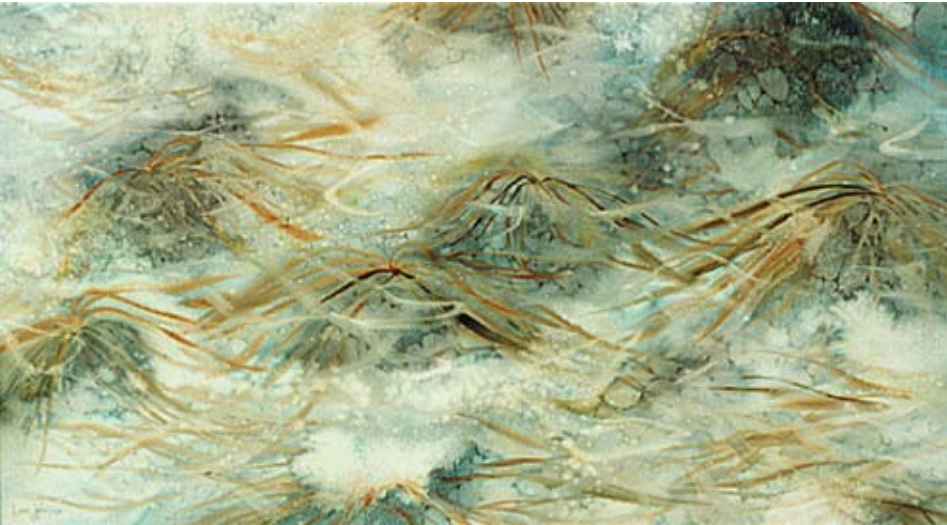
William Nichols was born in Chicago, Illinois, in 1942. He studied at the University of Chicago and the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, where he earned his Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in 1966. In 1968 he received his Master of Fine Arts degree from the University of Illinois, Urbana. He also studied at the Slade School of Art, University College, London. He has had numerous exhibitions throughout the United States and abroad, at such venues as the Milwaukee Museum, Wisconsin; the Butler Institute of American Art, Youngstown, Ohio; and the Kaohsiung Museum of Fine Arts, Kaohsiung, Taiwan. In addition, his work can be found in several private and public collections.

*Adapted from materials provided by Tory Folliard Gallery.*



**LUPINES**, 2002  
Oil on linen, 48 x 60 in. (121,9 x 152,4 cm)  
Courtesy of Tory Folliard Gallery,  
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

## LEE WEISS (born 1928)



### SPRAWLING SEAWeed, 1986

Watercolor on paper  
40 x 72 in. (101,6 x 182,9 cm)  
Courtesy of the Racine Art  
Museum, Racine, Wisconsin;  
Gift of the artist

"I start as an abstraction, to begin with, warm and cool, light and dark, things that happen on the paper are so evocative of memories that I will then be directed by it. There is a point at which I say, 'OK this is an interesting set of textures, now I will turn it into a painting.' That's what I do.

My hope is not to fall into the trap of repetition without growth. And so I'm always experimenting with new papers, with new techniques."

To achieve the specific textural qualities that Lee Weiss felt watercolor lacked, she invented a watercolor technique in which she paints both sides of the paper, turning the paper back and forth while the paint is still wet. That way, the paint from one side transfers to the table and then to the other side of the paper, along with some of the table's texture. This process is continued until an adequate surface has been built up to suggest a subject and composition. In general, she works away from the sub-

ject matter, in the studio without sketches or slides, allowing the process of painting to guide the portrayal. She also works in a more traditional manner, foregoing the surface treatment of the paper, and starting directly with a brush and subject.

Lee Weiss was born in 1928 in Inglewood, California. For a year, she attended the California College of Arts and Crafts, San Francisco and Oakland, but for the most part, she is a self-taught artist. In 1962 she moved to Madison, Wisconsin, where she has remained ever since. Her work can be found in numerous collections, including the Elvehjem Museum of Art, Madison, and the Madison Art Center; the Milwaukee Art Museum, all in Wisconsin; the Smithsonian American Art Museum, the National Air and Space Museum, and the Phillips Collection, all in Washington, D.C.

*Adapted from [www.leeweiss.com](http://www.leeweiss.com) and [www.usbr.gov/museumproperty/art/bioweiss.htm](http://www.usbr.gov/museumproperty/art/bioweiss.htm).*

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UNITED STATES EMBASSY  
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ART IN EMBASSIES EXHIBITION