

ART IN EMBASSIES EXHIBITION
UNITED STATES EMBASSY SUVA

TIMOTHY ALLAN SHAFTO

Mauka Sunset, 2014. Resin with metallic pigments with koa veneer and an integral koa frame, 36 x 60 in. (91.4 x 152.4 cm). Courtesy of the artist, Hilo, Hawaii

ART IN EMBASSIES EXHIBITION UNITED STATES EMBASSY SUVA

ART IN EMBASSIES



Established in 1963, the U.S. Department of State's office of Art in Embassies (AIE) plays a vital role in our nation's public diplomacy through a culturally expansive mission, creating temporary and permanent exhibitions, artist programming, and publications. The Museum of Modern Art first envisioned this global visual arts program a decade earlier. In the early 1960s, President John F. Kennedy formalized it, naming the program's first director. Now with over 200 venues, AIE curates temporary and permanent exhibitions for the representational spaces of all U.S. chanceries, consulates, and embassy residences worldwide, selecting and commissioning contemporary art from the U.S. and the host countries. These exhibitions provide international audiences with a sense of the quality, scope, and diversity of both countries' art and culture, establishing AIE's presence in more countries than any other U.S. foundation or arts organization.

AIE's exhibitions allow foreign citizens, many of whom might never travel to the United States, to personally experience the depth and breadth of our artistic heritage and values, making what has been called a: "footprint that can be left where people have no opportunity to see American art."

"For over fifty years, Art in Embassies has played an active diplomatic role by creating meaningful cultural exchange through the visual arts. The exhibitions, permanent collections and artist exchanges connect people from the farthest corners of an international community. Extending our reach, amplifying our voice, and demonstrating our inclusiveness are strategic imperatives for America. Art in Embassies cultivates relationships that transcend boundaries, building trust, mutual respect and understanding among peoples. It is a fulcrum of America's global leadership as we continue to work for freedom, human rights and peace around the world."

—John Forbes Kerry, U.S. Secretary of State

<http://art.state.gov>

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Somerset House, the official Residence of the Ambassador of the United States of America to Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, Kingdom of Tonga, and Tuvalu. I am delighted to have the opportunity to display a number of original works of art by a group of talented American artists working with a variety of media ranging from ceramics to traditional painting and photography. I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to the artists, private collectors, and galleries that so graciously loaned these extraordinary pieces, specifically Ernesto Mayans Gallery in Santa Fe, New Mexico; Douglas Keats; Ramon Camarillo; Brenda Hendrix; Shelley Hull; Susan Middleton; Gwendolyn O'Connor; Phil Epp; and Timothy Allan Shafto.

Support of the arts means a lot to me, both personally and in my diplomatic role. Art has an amazing ability to build bridges of trust and understanding between people, transcending national, cultural, and political boundaries. This is why showcasing art is an integral part of our embassy's mission. The original American artworks displayed at my residence are brought here through Art in Embassies, the Department of State's global visual arts program that for more than fifty years has played a leading role in U.S. public diplomacy by creating meaningful arts and artist exchanges.

As the U.S. Embassy in Suva, Fiji, reaches out to a broad range of cultures, traditions, and nationalities throughout the South Pacific Region, the art that I have selected for this exhibition reflects the vibrant nature and cultural diversity of the United States of America. These artworks celebrate the United States' Pacific connections with art from the state of Hawaii, and introduces you to the Great Plains, and western regions of the United States, including scenes from my home state of Colorado, and my husband Paul's home state of New Mexico. I have intentionally included artworks featuring landscapes and ocean scenes to continue to draw attention to the immense beauty of the nature that surrounds us, and our common responsibility to protect it against the effects of global climate change. I hope that you enjoy the original artworks as much as I enjoy sharing them with you.

Ambassador Judith B. Cefkin

Suva, March 2016

RAMON CAMARILLO 1960

Ramon Camarillo utilizes a unique working method; he throws a twenty five pound bag of clay, in a single wheel session, into a pot that defies the typical limitations of clay in size and thickness. These forms can reach as high as thirty two inches, and the walls can be as thin as one eighth of an inch. Camarillo expresses his imagination through the glazing process, using a variety of slips and glazes. The pots are fired at low temperatures (1600°-1800° F) in a raku kiln until red hot, and then transferred to a bin or ground pit with combustible material, such as paper, leaves, wood, or sawdust. The fire and smoke produce unexpected results such as luster, crackled, smoky, and swirling finishes in a variety of textures and colors. Depending on how the fire and smoke interact with the glazes, the spontaneous and unanticipated results create surfaces and textures that are unique and irreproducible.

Originally from Hawaii, Camarillo has been honing his skills in the art of raku pottery for over thirty years. He moved to the Washington, D.C. area in 1996, gaining local and national recognition as a ceramic artist and juried member of the prestigious Torpedo Factory in Alexandria, Virginia, as well as resident artist at Lee Arts Center in Falls Church, Virginia.



***Hawaiian Sunset*, 2013**

Ceramic (raku fired), 18 ½ x 14 x 14 in. (47 x 35.6 x 35.6 cm)

Courtesy of Art in Embassies, Washington, D.C. Gift of the artist, Pearl City, Hawaii

PHIL EPP 1946

“It isn’t a lonely view, but a reverent one” (Phil Epp). Early in the pursuit of his art, Phil Epp was influenced by contemporary minimalist artists and color field painters such as Mark Rothko. Their distillation of visual structures, balancing of spaces and colors, and analysis of light in color and color within light attracted him. Even today he admires and feels an affinity for the work of minimalist sculptor Richard Serra, and environmental works like James Turrell’s Roden Crater project. For someone born in Nebraska, and living most of his life in Kansas, with the prairie and open spaces at his aesthetic center, there is a visual logic to this. Epp has said “I always had the plains.”

Beginning in college, Epp was also interested in earlier Kansas artists, doing research on John Rogers Cox in an art history class. That interest and respect grew, and later blossomed, not only into a collection of works by artists from his area of the country, but also into an influence on Epp’s own approach to painting. Noted regionalist realist painters such as Thomas Hart Benton and John Stuart Curry, the Wichita based prairie printmakers, and other area artists who were important presences in the late 1920s, 1930s, and in the Works Progress Administration, became important for him. Epp eschews artistic labels, and does not like art, or himself, to be classified by locality, ethnicity, culture, faith, or other tag. His work may be characterized by a certain clarity, a lack – but suggestive ordering mark – of human presence, and often a low horizon line that allows for a dominant, active, and expressive sky. He simply states: “I’m a rural artist.” For him, the true question for any art remains: Is it any good?

PHIL EPP



Horse on the Open Prairie, undated. Acrylic on canvas, 22 x 44 in. (55.9 x 111.8 cm). Courtesy of the artist, Newton, Kansas



Buffalo, 2014. Acrylic on board, 22 x 43 in. (55.9 x 109.2 cm). Courtesy of the artist, Newton, Kansas



BRENDA HENDRIX 1956

During frequent expeditions Brenda Hendrix seeks out moments in which the simple beauty of the world and people captures her eye and her imagination and demands to be preserved in one of her oil paintings. As an artist and as a teacher, Hendrix is engaged in an ongoing exploration of artistic ideas, materials, techniques, and subject matter. She is a colorist who paints representational paintings as an avenue for exploring how color interacts with subject to create a sense of both mood and moment. With loose, fresh, and certain brushwork, and with her complex and subtle use of color, Hendrix captures the essence of her subjects through nuance rather than detail. She has painted full time since 1992. Her work has been juried into national exhibitions in Taos, New Mexico; Chicago, Illinois; Missoula, Montana; and San Antonio, Texas; and has also been shown in galleries in Colorado, Montana, Florida, and Alabama. In the last three years she was featured in two very successful solo exhibitions, one of which sold out. Hendrix teaches oil painting classes at her studio in Denver, Colorado, and has taught individual and group workshops in the United States and Mexico.

Rustling Autumn

Oil on linen, undated

42 x 22 in. (106.7 x 55.9 cm)

Courtesy of the artist, Denver, Colorado



Colorado Blues, undated. Oil on linen mounted on panel, 27 ½ x 30 ½ in. (69.9 x 77.5 cm). Courtesy of the artist, Denver, Colorado



Steamboat Morning, 2015. Acrylic on canvas, 18 x 24 in. (45.7 x 61 cm) . Courtesy of the artist, Denver, Colorado

SHELLEY HULL 1955

"I have been painting for over thirty years and have made a variety of artworks throughout the years – constructions with objects from nature combined with painted imagery, evoking shrines; collaborations of collage and painted images of ghostlike figures and drapery; and images inspired by mystical Judaism . . . I studied painting at Yale University and earned my MFA [Master of Fine Arts degree] from the Maryland Institute [College of Art, Baltimore]. I moved to the midwest and my East Coast sensibility was enhanced by the Chicago [Illinois] imagists and appreciation of Outsider Artists. I absorbed all the looking and painted through my visual passions within my art through the years.

The last few years I have focused on making paintings and drawings of the western landscape where I live. I have come to the Southwest since the 1970s, spending time in New Mexico and Indian Country. Moving to Denver [Colorado] in the late 90s, I have returned to painting the western landscape – painting Moab, the San Rafael Swell of Utah, Hovenweep, Plaza Banca, Ojo Caliente, and Joshua Tree. I love the color and light in the Southwest. I am inspired by the vistas, the canyons, the smell of pine and pinyon, and the desert silence. I am endlessly fascinated by the mountains west of Denver as they change throughout the day. It is a landscape that renews and refreshes and inspires me. The treks I make to various places in the Southwest nourish my studio time and sustain my painting as I explore light, form, vastness and color – green-greys, russets, sienna, cerulean, and cobalt. I love to hike and carry my sketchpad, a small portable watercolor kit, and my camera. I jot down what I see, and as I draw and pause and walk some more, I notice different aspects of the landscape. As I sketch a scene it further alters how I see the landscape, and I continue to hike and draw, each iteration changing how I see. Thus the process of being out there and walking through the ‘place’ is part of rendering it in an iterative way. Once in the studio the paintings are responses to nature as well as conversations with other painters like Elmer Bishoff, David Park, Fairfield Porter, or David Hockney. I begin to see the landscape through a lens by looking at paintings by these other artists. And the dialog begins. Painting is both discovering the landscape and discovering other painters too.”

—Shelley Hull

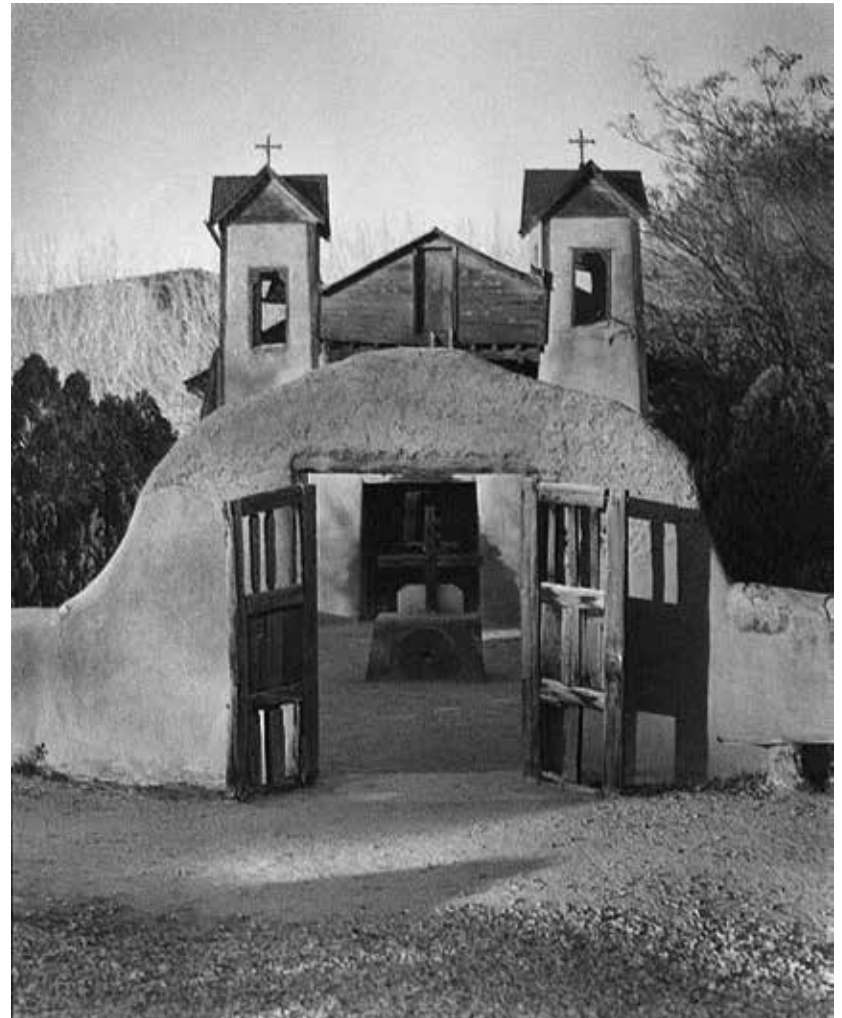


Chasing Rain (Pike's Peak), 2014
Acrylic on canvas, 16 x 20 in. (40.6 x 50.8 cm)
Courtesy of the artist, Denver, Colorado

DOUGLAS KEATS 1948

“These New Mexico churches are the spiritual center of every village; they serve to unite the ancestral past of all its people. Here, removed from mainstream America, is a view of this country that is unique to New Mexico. There exists a sense of place that only these handmade adobe walls, so delightfully irregular and yet gracefully correct, can inspire. This is a serenity that has not been returned to; rather, it is one that has never been left.”

—Douglas Keats



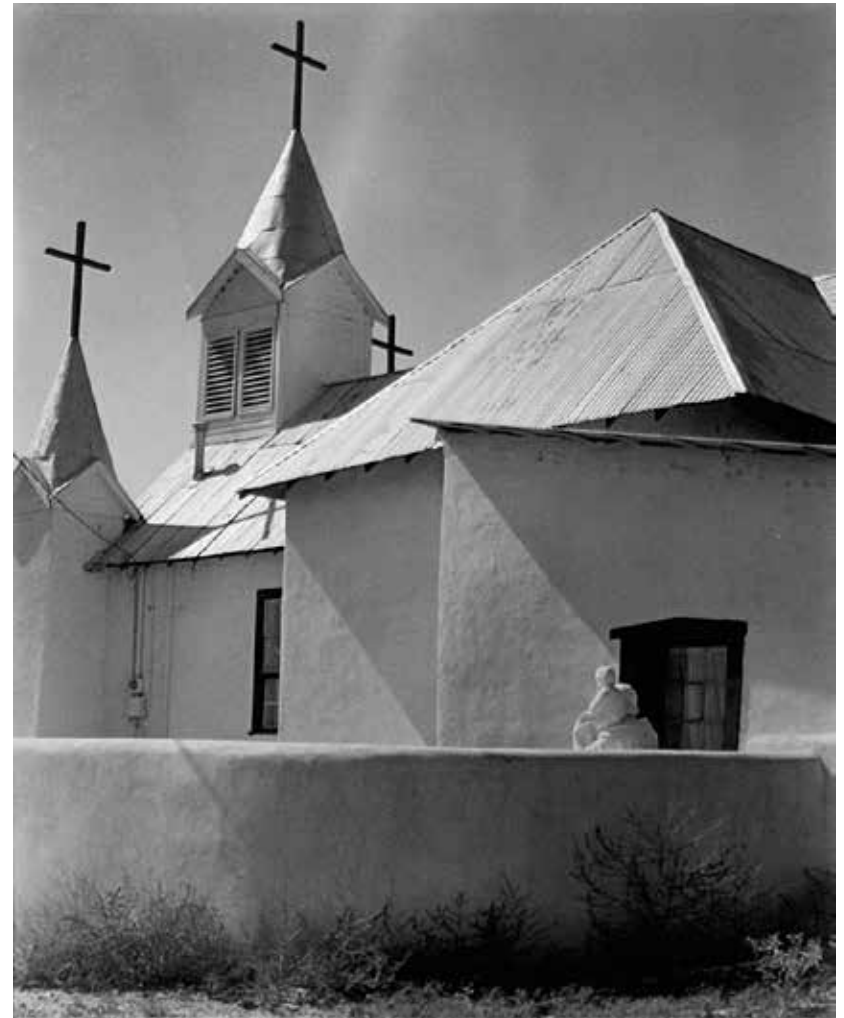
Chimayo, New Mexico, 1984

Photograph, 15 x 12 in. (38.1 x 30.5 cm)

Courtesy of the artist and Ernesto Mayans Gallery, Santa Fe, New Mexico



Los Palomas, New Mexico, 1984
Photograph, 15 x 12 in. (38.1 x 30.5 cm)
Courtesy of the artist and Ernesto Mayans Gallery, Santa Fe, New Mexico



Los Lentos, New Mexico, 1984
Photograph, 15 x 12 in. (38.1 x 30.5 cm)
Courtesy of the artist and Ernesto Mayans Gallery, Santa Fe, New Mexico

SUSAN MIDDLETON

1948

Susan Middleton has been dedicated to the documentation and portraiture of rare and endangered animals, plants, sites, and cultures for the past thirty years, inspired by the Earth's biological and cultural diversity and motivated by the need to protect it. She is a photographer, author, producer, curator, lecturer, and educator. A graduate of the University of Santa Clara, she chaired the California Academy of Sciences department of photography from 1982 to 1995, where she currently serves as a research associate. Middleton has worked extensively in Hawaii and West Africa. In 1985 she worked for a year with photographer Richard Avedon in New York City.

Archipelago, undated (c. 2010)
Color photograph, 30 x 30 in. (76.2 x 76.2 cm)
Courtesy of the artist, San Francisco, California



GWENDOLYN O'CONNOR 1960

Gwendolyn O'Connor's award-winning original watercolors on silk have an international reputation for excellence. Her works can be found in public and private collections in thirty-two states within the U.S. and in over fifteen countries worldwide. Using no wax or resist, O'Connor produces paintings that glow with a unique luminosity. Her highly detailed Hawaiian birds seem to come to life. Her glowing landscapes seem to emanate a warm, tropical fragrance. Exacting to the last detail, O'Connor's works retain a stunning vibrancy rare in precision painting. Raised in Hawaii, she has devoted her twenty-year career to recording the special beauty of these jewels of the Pacific. O'Connor's paintings have been displayed at the U.S. Embassies in Laos and Singapore.



Hawaiian Sea Arch, 1997

Giclée, 43 x 51 in. (109.2 x 129.5 cm)

Courtesy of the artist, Mountain View, Hawaii

TIMOTHY ALLAN SHAFTO 1962



Mauka Sunset, 2014. Resin with metallic pigments with koa veneer and an integral koa frame, 36 x 60 in. (91.4 x 152.4 cm). Courtesy of the artist, Hilo, Hawaii

“Driving home from Kona one evening, there was a swirling, fiery orange and red sunset that looked completely surreal – unlike any other I’ve ever witnessed. That moment, and my love of Hawaii’s beautiful mountains that create this amazing endemic koa wood, are the inspiration for this piece. Look close and you’ll see the swirls of red and orange and the way they interlace with the depths of the blue sky. Stand back and you’ll see the full sunset spring to life.”

—Timothy Allan Shafto

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Washington, D.C.

Robert Soppelsa, Curator

Jamie Arbolino, Registrar

Marcia Mayo, Senior Editor

Sally Mansfield, Editor

Tabitha Brackens, Publication Projects Coordinator

Amanda Brooks, Imaging Manager and Photographer

Suva

Jane Denham, General Services Officer

James Alden, Facility Manager

Vienna

Nathalie Mayer, Graphic Design



<http://art.state.gov>

Published by Art in Embassies • U.S. Department of State, Washington, D.C. • May 2016