

ART IN
EMBASSIES

*United States
Embassy Banjul*



ROBERT FREEMAN **Golden Light**, undated
Giclee print on archival paper, 40 x 26 in. (101,6 x 66 cm). Courtesy of Zenith Gallery, Washington, D.C.

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."

<http://art.state.gov/>

WELCOME

American art is as diverse as America. It is a window into the soul of America. The exhibition here at the Ambassador's Residence showcases a variety of styles and media – oil paintings, watercolors, collages, handmade paper, original prints, a quilt; abstracts, landscapes, still lifes, and street scenes. The artworks highlight the diversity of the United States – the artists represented are of different ethnicities and ages, some living, some dead. The one thing they all have in common is that they are masters at expressing their visions, telling a story, touching others through their art.

I hope that others will be moved by the works in this exhibition. I find that each work evokes a different sensation, emotion, memory, or fantasy. One can almost hear the vendor hawking her luscious fruits in the soft colors and lines of the *Fruit Seller #2*, and all of my senses come alive as I look at the vibrant colors and sense the movement in Jacob Lawrence's *Supermarket Flora*. The primitive figures in the two *Montauk* abstracts by SICA bring to mind cave drawings and the simple lifestyles of our earliest ancestors. In both the large *Green and Blue* oil abstract by Christine Hayman and the three-dimensional *Peruvian Melody* collage by Bette Alexander, the colors are the message.

My imagination soars at the thought of the music and laughter and dancing at the grand balls depicted in the stunning prints by Robert Freeman. As a native Floridian, the two landscapes by Florida Highwaymen Lem Newton and Sam Newton make me nostalgic for Florida sunsets and Poinciana trees. And finally, the dancers, the drummer, the bright sun, and the costumed figures in the Dr. Myrah Brown Green's *Afro Blue* quilt, which was undoubtedly influenced by the artist's visit to The Gambia many years ago, reminds me daily of the kinship I feel with the Gambian people who

WELCOME

have greeted me so warmly in the many villages I have visited upcountry in The Gambia. I look forward to hearing what sensations, emotions, memories, or fantasies this exhibition evokes in others.

Sharing this special exhibition is a treat for me because I am passionate about art and I love sharing this passion with others. I have been an admirer of art since my teens and my homes have always had more art than furniture! Before joining the Foreign Service, I even owned an art gallery for a few years. For me, being able to select and live with this exhibition is one of the most enjoyable privileges of being a U.S. Ambassador. All of the art is generously loaned to the State Department by the artists for the duration of my tour here and I am extremely grateful to the artists for allowing me to display their work here in The Gambia. I hope that all who see this exhibition and browse this brochure will find as much pleasure as I do looking into this window into America.

Ambassador C. Pat Alsup

*Banjul, The Gambia
May 2017*

BETTE
ALEXANDER
1932

“At present I use oil sticks and oil paints to portray my subjects. I enjoy the vibrant colors and easy directness of these mediums, and the way I can use tools and even fingers to articulate the surfaces. Heavy texture has always fascinated me. I like to dig in and really develop and shape my surfaces. In the past I have also used dirt and mud, materials that connect me physically to the earth.”

Bette Alexander earned a Master of Arts degree in ethnological art, specializing in the art and culture of Papua, New Guinea. Her honors include a Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation Residency Grant to work at Pyramid Atlantic (a center for hand papermaking, printmaking and the art of the book, founded in 1981 by Helen Frederick), a New York State Fellowship, and a New York State Arts Council Grant. Her sculptural works and paintings are represented in public, private, and corporate collections, and she has exhibited internationally and throughout the United States in venues such as the Center on Contemporary Art, Seattle, Washington; Staten Island Institute of Art and Sciences, New York; Art Awareness, Lexington, New York; and the Aldrich Museum of Contemporary Art, Ridgefield, Connecticut.

<http://bettealexander.com/about.html>



Peruvian Melody, 1987

Handmade paper, 36 $\frac{5}{8}$ x 30 $\frac{1}{8}$ in. (93 x 76,5 cm)

Gift of Anne C. McConville to Art in Embassies,
Washington, D.C.

ROBERT
FREEMAN
1946

Robert Freeman has been showing nationally for over twenty years, and has been included in the collections of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Massachusetts; the National Center for African American Artists, Boston Public Library; Brown University, Providence, Rhode Island; and the DeCordova Museum, Lincoln, Massachusetts. His paintings have been featured in exhibitions at Rose Art Museum at Brandeis University, Waltham, and Williams College Museum of Art, Williamstown, both in Massachusetts.

Known for his vivid and powerful figurative paintings, Freeman has traditionally focused in his work on the interactions between people. A skillful, brave use of color and gesture are the trademark of Freeman's work and make his figures nearly abstract. Characterized by overlapping shapes, energized lines and strong gestures, his subjects crowd to the front and edges of his paintings, sometimes taking on an aggressive, in-your-face stance with the viewer.

Born in Brooklyn, New York, Freeman received his Bachelor of Fine Arts and Master of Fine Arts degrees from Boston University, Massachusetts, and he now resides in that area where he is a prominent artist and respected teacher. He was artist-in-residence at Noble and Greenough School in Dedham, Massachusetts, from 1981 until his recent retirement, and a lecturer and instructor at Harvard University in Cambridge from 1988 to 1994.

<http://robertfreemanart.com>

<http://www.zenithgallery.com/calendar/freedom%20collection/Freedom,%20Freeman.htm>

Red Dresses, undated
Giclee print on archival paper
28 x 40 in. (71,1 x 101,6 cm)
Courtesy of Zenith Gallery, Washington, D.C.



Golden Light, undated
Giclee print on archival paper
40 x 26 in. (101,6 x 66 cm)
Courtesy of Zenith Gallery, Washington, D.C.



MYRAH BROWN GREEN

Dr. Myrah Brown Green is an art historian, author, professional quilt maker, lecturer, arts consultant, and independent curator. Raised in Cambridge, Massachusetts, Dr. Green's love for the arts began as a child while spending countless hours creating at the Community Art Center in the housing complex where she lived and included frequent excursions to galleries, art museums, and other culturally rich institutions. She moved to New York to attend the Pratt Institute in Brooklyn. Dr. Green is a professional quilt maker who has been teaching textile arts for over thirty years and all levels of quilt making for more than two decades. Her quilts are in a number of public and private collections including the Smithsonian's Anacostia Museum in Washington, D.C., and Michigan State University.

*[www.cafafair.com/index.php/
participating-artists/participating-artists-2016](http://www.cafafair.com/index.php/participating-artists/participating-artists-2016)*



Afro Blue, undated
Cotton, appliques, machine quilted
54 x 70 in. (137,2 x 177,8 cm)
Courtesy of the artist, Brooklyn, New York

CHRISTINE HAYMAN

"In my current work I am involved with various gestural forms along with a variety of abstract language. I am also using the elements and energy of the landscape in some of the paintings, which seems to enter into the work in an intuitive way . . . Breaking up the space differently in the current paintings than in previous works has created greater energy as well as interest for me with a new type of sensibility evolving with more emphasis on simpler more limited forms.

The negative space has become more important in the energy it conveys and its relation to other areas of the painting. In the last four years I have done a series called *The White Paintings*. In this body of work I am problem solving the opposition of the negative spaces to the areas of limited color while trying to achieve high energy in the paintings with emphasis on the quality of the surfaces."

Christine Hayman lives and works in California. She has been painting for over thirty years and her work is held in many public and private collections across the country. Hayman's abstract paintings are thickly layered with oil and she tends to draw back into the paint to expose the many layers underneath.

www.thomasdeansfineart.com/chris-hayman-artist-biography
www.hidellbrooks.com/artists/chris-hayman/



Green and Blue, undated. Oil on canvas. Diptych: 65 x 75 in. (165,1 x 190,5 cm). Courtesy of Zenith Gallery, Washington, D.C.

JACOB
LAWRENCE
1917-2000

Jacob Lawrence, who lived much of his life in lower Manhattan, was a great American modern painter whose subjects were history and urban life. Born in Atlantic City, New Jersey, Lawrence is best known for his narrative series of tempera paintings based on his own life and that of his peers who migrated from the South to the North. His vivid canvases typically have bold planes of color and symbolic elements of the African-American heritage of struggles, aspirations, and accomplishments. His paintings are a unique blend of sensibilities – part narrative mural painting, part social realism, and part modernist abstraction. In 1946 he began teaching at Black Mountain College in North Carolina at the invitation of Josef Albers. He also taught in New York at the Art Students League, New School for Social Research, Pratt Institute, and in Maine at the Skowhegan School. In 1971 he became a professor of art at the University of Washington in Seattle, where he retired in 1986 as professor emeritus. Throughout the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s, Lawrence continued to paint subjects that referred to racial and social issues of African-Americans and devoted himself to commissions, especially for murals and limited edition prints, to benefit non-profit organizations, including New York's Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, for which *Supermarket Flora* was created. In 1999, the year before Lawrence's death, he and his wife, painter Gwendolyn Knight, established a foundation to create an art center in Harlem named for Lawrence.

Supermarket Flora, 1997
Silkscreen on paper
30 x 22 3/4 in. (76,2 x 57,8 cm)
Courtesy of the Foundation
for Art and Preservation in
Embassies, Washington, D.C.



LEM
NEWTON
1950

In the early 1950s through the 1980s a group of twenty-six African-American artists known as the Florida Highwaymen used vivid and bright colors to display the beautiful untouched Florida landscape. The Florida Highwaymen painted wind-bent palm trees, serene sunsets, churning oceans, and bright red Poinciana trees. They painted from their garages and back yards on inexpensive Upson board and then on the weekends they would travel and sell their Highwaymen paintings to hotels, offices, businesses, and individuals who appreciated the artwork for around \$25 a piece.

Lemuel Newton is the youngest of the three Newton brothers who became known as Highwaymen. He was raised in Tifton, a small town in south Georgia. Nicknamed Lem, he began painting as a teenager in the late 1960s, after moving to Fort Pierce, where his brother Harold was making a good living as a landscape painter. He and Willie Daniels began by working with Alfred Hair, preparing Upson boards. The lure of making money as an artist was strong and Newton began painting. Like his brothers, Lemuel Newton cares about the quality of his paintings. His colors can be bold and striking. Confident with a brush and a palette knife, Newton makes work that looks impressionistic, as if he were capturing a vibrant moment in time.

<http://thehighwaymentrail.com/lemuel-newton/>



Poinciana Tree, undated

Oil on Masonite

24 x 36 in. (61 x 91,4 cm)

Courtesy of Antony Hayton, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada

SAM
NEWTON
1948

From the very beginning of his painting career, Sam Newton concentrated on making quality paintings. He began using professional artist's supplies early in his career. Being recognized as an artist has always been important to Newton. In order to produce paintings he is proud to sign as his, he paints slowly, paying careful attention to composition, color, and details. His works are crisp and clear, with great attention to the way a landscape looks. They are more about reality than an impression.

As an independent person, he has never seen any reason to be constrained by the dictates or identity of the Highwaymen group. Throughout the years, Sam Newton has paid attention to Florida's environment and his work reflects his vast knowledge of the land, skies, and waterways.

Newton is a defiant Highwayman, insisting on being identified as an individual artist. He claims to have had nothing to do with his name being placed in the Florida Artists Hall of Fame, and he distances himself from the group. When people refer to him as a Highwayman, he explains that his brother Harold passed away before there was a group of painters called the Highwaymen, and so thinking of the painters as a collective just doesn't make sense. He simply wants to be known as Sam Newton, or sometimes a "Highwayman Not." He has continuously painted since high school and today he lives and paints in Merritt Island, where he has a gallery.

<http://thehighwaymentrail.com/sam-newton/>



Firesky, undated
Oil on Upson Board
30 x 24 in. (76,2 x 61 cm)
Courtesy of Antony Hayton,
Ottawa, Ontario, Canada

SICA 1932

"I see my work as expressing both male and female elements within a lively tension. Pulling from the opposite [poles]; negative, positive, space and form, inner and outer. Often in my recent works I discern an inner form that contradicts the outer shape. This suggests to me a coming together of new elements that are involved in combustion.

In the past I have been involved in the interplay of figures in their surrounding space and particularly have avoided prima-donnas or center stage soliloquies. Figures in environment, relating to each other or to their atmosphere, the round of daily involvement. Now I see pregnant forms with inner meaning that seem to imply an urgency of delivery. I see now that there is both the outer relationship between the self and the other and the relationship between the inner and the outer self."

Born in 1932 in New York City, SICA began her artistic career in 1950 while studying at the Art Students League of New York, and later at the Pratt Graphics Workshop, New York. She also traveled extensively, eventually settling in Saigon, Vietnam, as Duy Than's apprentice, then in Athens, Greece, with Emanuel Piliidikis. She bolstered her reputation by participating in several international art invitationals and symposiums. In addition to Vietnam and Greece, SICA has lived in England, Spain, and Yugoslavia, and her oeuvre reflects an enlightened perspective of the world, its people, and its cultures.

SICA's work is in the collections of Le Musée Moderne de la Ville de Paris, France; the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, England; the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, Canada; the Los Angeles Museum, California; the Brooklyn Museum, New York; the Miami Museum of Fine Arts, Florida; and New York University, in addition to many other fine arts institutions and private collections.

Montauk F1, undated
Mixed media on paper
21 x 31 in. (53,3 x 78,7 cm)
Courtesy of the artist and
Zenith Gallery, Washington, D.C.



Montauk FE, undated
Mixed media on paper
20 x 26 in. (50,8 x 66 cm)
Courtesy of the artist and
Zenith Gallery, Washington, D.C.



ARTIST UNKNOWN

Fruit Seller #2, undated
Mixed media
76 1/2 x 46 in. (194,3 x 116,8 cm)
Courtesy of the artist and Art in
Embassies, Washington, D.C.



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