



Art in Embassies Exhibition
United States Embassy Abuja, Nigeria

Gifford Beal

Luigi, undated

Oil on Masonite, 52 x 40 in. (132,1 x 101,6 cm). Collection of Art in Embassies, Washington, D.C.
Gift of the Estate of Gifford Beal, Courtesy of Kraushaar Galleries, New York, New York

Ambassador's Welcome

Welcome to America's House. My wife, Susan, and I hope you enjoy the art you see on these walls on loan through the Art in Embassies program of the United States Department of State. This exhibit reflects the diversity, resilience, energy, warmth, and spirit of the United States of America.

Susan and I chose works by famed American painters Reginald Marsh and Gifford Beal to provide you with windows into the American experience. Their work depicts a rich diversity of geography, economics, and society. From rough open seas to pastoral farmland, a solitary quarry man against the noisy New York City harbor, and wealthy Fifth Avenue shoppers beside those who inhabit the alleyways off the main street, these paintings convey the fertility of the American landscape and the energy of its people.

Nigeria's landscape and people reflect that same energy. A democratic, multi-ethnic, religiously diverse country, Nigeria is home to people who pursue peace and work for prosperity. Every corner of this country overflows with creative potential like that of Gifford Beal's *Saut d'Eau Villa Bonheur*. I have seen that spirit in the leather worker in Sokoto, the tech start-up leader in Kano, the Nollywood director in Lagos, advocates for forests and fauna in Calabar, and the "agricpreneurs" I have met in Ibadan. Nigeria's greatest resource has always been and will remain its people.

Many of Reginald Marsh's watercolor scenes displayed here were studies for his famous murals, like those in the Alexander Hamilton U.S. Custom House in New York City. Both Marsh and Beal painted during one of the

most difficult economic periods in American history, the Great Depression. They were employed by our government as part of the jobs program run by the Works Progress Administration (WPA). They remind us that art and ideas generate income and beauty. As WPA artists, they embodied the idea that talented, motivated people need only “a leg up, not a hand out.” With WPA paintbrushes, both men went on to decorate some of the grandest spaces in New York City and Washington, D.C. Their earlier works in this house remind us that great achievements lie ahead when communities and countries come together in difficult times.

We wish to extend our thanks to our whole Embassy team, not only to those who installed this exhibition, but to all those who help fill this house daily with their friends, family members, and official visitors. We also want to thank you for visiting. You give purpose to this art and meaning to this house. As you look at these paintings, I hope you will find something familiar and something original and exciting. Rooted in our unique traditions and our shared values, in our past ties and the promise of our partnership today, both the United States of America and Nigeria confidently look forward to our future. As many of you know, I think our nations together may well ensure the future of freedom in the world. We do that by growing opportunity faster than need and by empowering independent citizens who truly lead and secure together the democracies they govern.

Ambassador W. Stuart Symington

Abuja, Nigeria

May 2018

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."

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

Gifford Beal
(1879-1956)

Gifford Beal was an American artist born in New York who spent most of his life and career there. A painter and etcher, Beal was an American impressionist who studied with William Merritt Chase. He painted romantic scenes of New York City, the circus, and New England landscapes.

Beal's early work was popular in both subject matter – leisure activities in charming settings – and in method: sparkling color and light carried by quick brushstrokes. Gradually, he moved away from the impressionist style learned from Chase and adopted a broadly realistic style that he used to depict the rugged life that he observed on the New England coast during many summers spent by the sea. Muted tones, thick brushstrokes, and simplified compositions characterize his works of mid-career.

Beal then turned his attention to theater and circus scenes, subjects that had attracted him periodically over the years. For these pieces, he again used the radiant color and light effects that had distinguished his early works.

Later in his career, Beal's style became more forceful and expressive. His subjects were drawn from life in New York, and from his travels, including to West Africa.



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Oil on Masonite, 52 x 40 in. (132,1 x 101,6 cm). Collection of Art in Embassies, Washington, D.C.
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Quarry Man, undated

Oil on canvas, 34 x 32 in. (86,4 x 81,3 cm). Collection of Art in Embassies, Washington, D.C.
Gift of the Estate of Gifford Beal, Courtesy of Kraushaar Galleries, New York, New York



River Landscape with Cows, c. 1940

Oil on board, 20 x 30 in. (50,8 x 76,2 cm). Collection of Art in Embassies, Washington, D.C.
Gift of the Estate of Gifford Beal, Courtesy of Kraushaar Galleries, New York, New York



Sailboat and Sea, 1923

Oil on canvas, 41 x 53 in. (104,1 x 134,6 cm). Collection of Art in Embassies, Washington, D.C.
Gift of the Estate of Gifford Beal, Courtesy of Kraushaar Galleries, New York, New York



Hauling the Nets off Straitsmouth, 1951

Oil on canvas, 26 ¼ x 50 in. (66,7 x 127 cm). Collection of Art in Embassies, Washington, D.C.
Gift of the Estate of Gifford Beal, Courtesy of Kraushaar Galleries, New York, New York



Saut d'Eau Villa Bonheur, undated

Oil on canvas, 36 x 36 in. (91,4 x 91,4 cm). Collection of Art in Embassies, Washington, D.C.
Gift of the Estate of Gifford Beal, Courtesy of Kraushaar Galleries, New York, New York

Reginald Marsh
(1898-1954)

Reginald Marsh was an American painter renowned for his depictions of New York street life throughout the Roaring Twenties and the Great Depression. His works featured energetic scenes of nightlife and entertainment. Marsh painted subways, nightclubs, street scenes, and the hustle and bustle of ships in the harbor. He explained: “I became, the more I worked, engrossed in the great surrounding panorama of New York. Not being a person of great experience or widely traveled, it was difficult to be aware of contemporary New York’s peculiar and tremendous significance, and since our painting showed little of it, I can’t exactly say how I came to paint New York...”

Marsh is regarded as an American Scene painter, one of many American artists who portrayed specific regions of the country in a realistic style. In these efforts, he joined a group of “new” American artists striving to create art that was uniquely American, without reliance on European tradition.

Born in 1898 in Paris, France to American artist parents, Marsh went on to study at Yale University, in New Haven, Connecticut. During the 1920s, he studied at the Art Students League in New York and worked as an illustrator for multiple publications. He was one of the original staff members of the *New Yorker*.



Christmas Shoppers #2, undated
Ink on paper, 26 ½ x 30 ¼ in. (67,3 x 76,8 cm)
Collection of Art in Embassies, Washington, D.C.; Gift of William Benton



Christmas Shoppers #3, undated

Ink on paper with watercolor highlight, 27 x 30 ½ in. (68,6 x 77,5 cm)
Collection of Art in Embassies, Washington, D.C.; Gift of William Benton



People at a Bar, undated

Watercolor, 37 1/8 x 45 3/4 in. (94,3 x 116,2 cm)

Collection of Art in Embassies, Washington, D.C.; Gift of William Benton



Solomon's Island, Maryland, 1937

Watercolor, 36 x 44 in. (91,4 x 111,8 cm)

Collection of Art in Embassies, Washington, D.C.; Gift of William Benton



Ferry Boat, 1927

Watercolor, 23 x 29 in. (58,4 x 73,7 cm)

Collection of Art in Embassies, Washington, D.C.; Gift of William Benton



Queen Mary, 1937

Watercolor, 28 ¼ x 34 ¼ in. (71,8 x 87 cm)

Collection of Art in Embassies, Washington, D.C.; Gift of William Benton



Boat at Dock, undated
Watercolor, 43 x 34 ½ in. (109,2 x 87,6 cm)
Collection of Art in Embassies, Washington, D.C.;
Gift of William Benton



Boat In Harbor – N.Y. Skyline, 1934

Watercolor on paper, 26 x 32 in. (66 x 81,3 cm)

Collection of Art in Embassies, Washington, D.C.; Gift of William Benton



Shipyard, undated

Watercolor, 25 x 31 ¼ in. (63,5 x 79,4 cm)

Collection of Art in Embassies, Washington, D.C.; Gift of William Benton



Railroad Yard, undated

Watercolor, 25 1/8 x 31 in. (63,8 x 78,7 cm)

Collection of Art in Embassies, Washington, D.C.; Gift of William Benton



Farm in the Hills, undated

Watercolor, 25 ½ x 31 ½ in. (64,8 x 80 cm)

Collection of Art in Embassies, Washington, D.C.; Gift of William Benton



Country Landscape, 1929

Watercolor, 26 ½ x 32 ¼ in. (67,3 x 81,9 cm)

Collection of Art in Embassies, Washington, D.C.; Gift of William Benton



Farm Scene, 1927

Watercolor, 25 x 31 1/8 in. (63,5 x 79,1 cm)

Collection of Art in Embassies, Washington, D.C.; Gift of William Benton



Cabins in the Mountains, undated
Watercolor, 27 x 33 1/8 in. (68,6 x 84,1 cm)
Collection of Art in Embassies, Washington, D.C.; Gift of William Benton

Acknowledgments

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