



ART IN EMBASSIES EXHIBITION * UNITED STATES EMBASSY BRUSSELS

Georgia O'Keeffe

From a Day with Juan IV

1977

Oil on canvas

48 x 36 in. (121,9 x 91,4 cm)

Courtesy of the Art Institute of Chicago, Illinois, Alfred Stieglitz Collection;
Bequest of Georgia O'Keeffe

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>

Welcome

Welcome to Whitlock Hall, the Official Residence of the United States Ambassador to the Kingdom of Belgium. We were both fortunate to grow up in families that valued and appreciated art, and that early experience influenced how we view the world around us. We have been active supporters of the arts, particularly in our hometown of Chicago, which is why we are so pleased to partner with the Art Institute of Chicago, one of the United States' oldest and most prestigious art museums, to bring American art to Belgium for display here in Whitlock Hall.

The art displayed in Whitlock Hall reflects not only our personal taste, but also serves as a reflection of the great diversity and creativity that infuses every aspect of American life and is communicated through our art. We wanted to make this historic residence a place that showcases the very best of America, the energy and dynamism of our country, within the context of this grand, historic, and very European residence. The art displayed here reflects both the broader story of America and our personal stories, including our American hometown Chicago. Take *Chicago Harbor* by William Schwartz, which is on display in the grand staircase hallway. This is the view that Chicagoans see when they look at the docks from their apartments. It's a quintessential Chicago scene that we want our visitors to experience.

For completely different reasons, we love the Georgia O’Keeffe piece that hangs in the Ducale Room. O’Keeffe is known around the world for her sublime use of light and color. *From a Day with Juan IV* is simple, yet it draws the viewer’s eyes upward, evoking a response that transcends national boundaries.

Art speaks to us directly in a language that is universal and brings people together. We enjoy sharing this exhibition with the many official visitors and guests to Whitlock Hall. Embassies serve an important role as conveners of people and builders of bridges between countries and cultures. We hope that the art we’ve selected for our residence speaks to our guests, inspiring conversations and interest in life and culture in the United States while bringing Belgians and Americans closer.

We would like to express our gratitude to the Art Institute of Chicago, and particularly to Director James Rondeau, whose dedication made this project possible. We are honored to display these American works as part of the State Department’s Art in Embassies program, and hope that they will make a lasting impression on visitors to Whitlock Hall.

Ambassador Ronald J. Gidwitz and Mrs. Christina Kemper Gidwitz

The image shows two handwritten signatures in blue ink. The first signature is 'R. Gidwitz' and the second is 'Christina Kemper Gidwitz'. Both are written in a cursive, flowing style.

*Brussels, Belgium
April 2020*

Bienvenue

Bienvenue à Whitlock Hall, la résidence officielle de l'ambassadeur des États-Unis auprès du Royaume de Belgique. Nous avons tous les deux eu la chance de grandir dans des familles qui valorisaient et appréciaient l'art, et cette première expérience a influencé notre vision du monde qui nous entoure. Nous avons soutenu activement les arts, en particulier dans notre ville natale de Chicago, et c'est pourquoi nous sommes si heureux de nous associer à l'Art Institute of Chicago, l'un des musées d'art les plus anciens et les plus prestigieux des États-Unis, pour amener l'art américain en Belgique et le présenter ici à Whitlock Hall.

Les œuvres exposées à Whitlock Hall reflètent non seulement notre goût personnel, mais représentent également la grande diversité et la créativité qui imprègnent tous les aspects de la vie américaine et qui sont communiquées au travers de notre art. Nous voulions faire de cette résidence historique un lieu qui mette en valeur le meilleur de l'Amérique, l'énergie et le dynamisme de notre pays, dans le cadre de cette grandiose résidence historique et très européenne. L'art présenté ici reflète à la fois l'histoire plus large de l'Amérique et nos histoires personnelles, y compris celle de notre ville natale américaine de Chicago. Prenez *Chicago Harbor* par William Schwartz, qui est exposé dans le couloir du grand escalier. C'est la vue des habitants de Chicago quand ils regardent les quais depuis leur appartement. C'est un lieu emblématique de Chicago que nous voulions faire découvrir à nos visiteurs. Pour des raisons complètement différentes, nous aimons l'œuvre de Georgia O'Keeffe qui se trouve dans la salle Ducale. O'Keeffe est connue dans le monde entier pour sa sublime utilisation de la lumière et de la couleur. *From a Day with Juan IV* est simple, mais elle attire le regard du spectateur vers le haut, provoquant une réaction qui transcende les frontières nationales.

L'art nous parle directement dans un langage universel et il rapproche les gens. Nous sommes ravis de pouvoir partager cette exposition avec les nombreux visiteurs officiels et invités de Whitlock Hall. Les ambassades jouent un rôle important en tant que rassembleurs de personnes et constructeurs de ponts entre les pays et les cultures. Nous espérons que les œuvres d'art que nous avons sélectionnées pour notre résidence parleront à nos invités, et inspireront des conversations et un intérêt pour la vie et la culture aux États-Unis, tout en rapprochant les Belges et les Américains.

Nous tenons à exprimer notre gratitude à l'Art Institute of Chicago, et en particulier au directeur James Rondeau, dont le dévouement a rendu ce projet possible. Nous sommes honorés d'exposer ces œuvres d'art américaines dans le cadre du programme Art in Embassies du Département d'État, et nous espérons qu'elles feront une impression durable sur les visiteurs de Whitlock Hall.

L'Ambassadeur Ronald J. Gidwitz et Mme Christina Kemper Gidwitz

The image shows two handwritten signatures in blue ink. The first signature on the left is 'R. Gidwitz', written in a cursive style. The second signature on the right is 'Christina Kemper Gidwitz', also in a cursive style.

Bruxelles, Belgique

Avril 2020

Welkom

Welkom in Whitlock Hall, de officiële residentie van de Amerikaanse ambassadeur in België. Mijn echtgenote en ikzelf hadden beiden het geluk om op te groeien in een gezin dat kunst kon waarderen en naar waarde schatten. Dit heeft dan ook een grote invloed gehad op onze kijk op de wereld. We hebben steeds actief de kunsten gesteund, in het bijzonder in onze thuisstad Chicago. Daarom zijn we bijzonder verheugd om, in samenwerking met het Art Institute of Chicago, één van de oudste en meest prestigieuze kunstmusea in de Verenigde Staten, Amerikaanse kunst naar België te brengen en tentoon te stellen in Whitlock Hall.

De kunstwerken in Whitlock Hall sluiten niet alleen goed aan bij onze persoonlijke smaak, ze vormen meer algemeen ook een weerspiegeling van de grote diversiteit en creativiteit van het Amerikaanse leven. Deze grootse en historische Europese residentie is de ideale plek om het beste van Amerika en zijn energie en dynamiek te laten zien. De tentoongestelde kunstwerken weerspiegelen zowel het bredere verhaal van Amerika als onze persoonlijke verhalen, inclusief die van onze geboortestad Chicago. Neem nu *Chicago Harbor* van William Schwartz, dat u kan bewonderen in de grote trappenhal. Dit is het uitzicht dat inwoners van Chicago zien wanneer ze vanuit hun appartementen naar de haven kijken. Het is een typische Chicago-scène die we onze bezoekers niet willen onthouden. Om heel andere redenen houden wij ook van het Georgia O'Keeffe-werk dat in de Ducale Room hangt. O'Keeffe is wereldwijd bekend om haar subliem gebruik van licht en kleur. In al zijn eenvoud zet *From a Day with Juan IV* er de toeschouwer toe aan om omhoog te kijken en verder te zien, waardoor het werk een reactie oproept die de nationale grenzen overstijgt.

Kunst spreekt ons rechtstreeks aan in een taal die universeel is en die mensen samenbrengt. We delen deze tentoonstelling graag met de vele officiële bezoekers en gasten van Whitlock Hall. Ambassades spelen een belangrijke rol in het samenbrengen van mensen en in het bouwen van bruggen tussen landen en culturen. We hopen dat de kunst die we voor onze residentie hebben geselecteerd, onze gasten zal aanspreken en inspireren, interesse zal opwekken voor het leven en de cultuur van de Verenigde Staten en tegelijk Belgen en Amerikanen dichterbij zal brengen.

We willen het Art Institute of Chicago oprecht danken, in het bijzonder directeur James Rondeau, wiens toewijding dit project mogelijk heeft gemaakt. We zijn vereerd om deze Amerikaanse kunstwerken te tonen als onderdeel van het Art in Embassies-programma van het U.S. State Department, en we hopen dat ze een blijvende indruk zullen nalaten bij de bezoekers van Whitlock Hall.

Ambassadeur Ronald J. Gidwitz en Mevrouw Christina Kemper Gidwitz

The image shows two handwritten signatures in blue ink. The first signature on the left is 'R. Gidwitz', written in a cursive, stylized script. The second signature on the right is 'Christina Kemper Gidwitz', written in a more legible, slightly cursive script.

Brussel, België

April 2020

Ivan Albright

1897–1983

Ivan Le Lorraine Albright was born in North Harvey, Illinois, a suburb of Chicago. He began drawing at the age of eight, under guidance from his father, artist Adam Emory Albright, who studied under Thomas Eakins at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts. Albright later studied architecture, first at Northwestern University and then at the University of Illinois.

When the United States entered World War I, Albright served in the army as a medical illustrator at an army hospital in France. There he recorded soldiers' injuries, an experience that shaped his later aesthetic. Upon his return to Chicago, Albright became a painter and developed his highly distinctive style in both painting and printmaking. His most frequent subjects were individual figures and still lifes and sometimes a combination of the two.

Albright attended the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, frequently exhibited at the museum, and worked to place his paintings in the collection, including his greatest achievement, *That Which I Should Have Done I Did Not Do (The Door)*. He established a reputation as one of the most enigmatic of American modernists, a painter eager to defy artistic and societal conventions through his focus on the fragility of the human condition. Albright's meticulous process operated in concert with his chosen subject to emphasize the strangeness of his paintings; they demand close attention even as they thwart easy understanding.

Divided and Divided

1941

Oil on canvas

27 x 42 in. (68,6 x 106,7 cm)

Courtesy of the Art Institute of Chicago, Illinois;
Gift of Ivan Albright



Lyonel Feininger

1871–1956

The son of German immigrants, Lyonel Feininger was born in New York and moved to Germany in 1887, where he became an accomplished cartoonist. Feininger began to paint in 1907 and quickly became associated with the German expressionists. He taught at the famed art school the Bauhaus until the Nazis closed it in 1933 and soon left Berlin to teach at Mills College in Oakland, California, before moving to New York, where he worked on cityscapes. Feininger became increasingly committed to expressing universal and spiritual ideas in the color-saturated meditations on architecture, landscapes, and sea scenes for which he is now best known.

In 1945, a year after his joint retrospective with Marsden Hartley at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, Josef Albers invited him to teach a summer course at Black Mountain College in North Carolina. Other retrospective exhibitions of his work have been held at the Dallas Museum for Contemporary Arts, Texas; Pasadena Art Museum, California; Kunsthaus Zürich, Switzerland; and the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York. The first exhibition of his photographs was organized in 2011 by the J. Paul Getty Museum in Los Angeles.

Manhattan Dawn, 1944

Oil on canvas

35 x 29 7/8 in. (89,3 x 71,5 cm)

Courtesy of the Art Institute of Chicago, Illinois;

Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Andreas Feininger

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Childe Hassam

1859–1935

Childe Hassam, a pioneer of American impressionism, was born in Dorchester, Massachusetts, into a family descended from settlers of the Massachusetts Bay Colony. Equally adept at capturing the excitement of modern cities and the charms of country retreats, Hassam became the foremost chronicler of New York City at the turn of the century. His works manifest his brilliant handling of color and light and reflect his credo that “the man who will go down to posterity is the man who paints his own time and the scenes of every-day life around him.”

This painting portrays fashionable Bailey’s Beach in Newport, Rhode Island, an exclusive seaside town known at the time for its wealth and luxury. Hassam depicted sand dunes rising from behind the beach with the promenade and its costumed bathers at a distance, reinforcing the fact that he, and the viewer, are excluded from this privileged setting. The artist’s impressionist strategies—including the use of scintillating colors, energetic brushwork, and a light palette—capture the vibrant atmosphere of this sunny resort.

Bailey's Beach, Newport, R.I.

1901

Oil on canvas

24 x 26 in. (61 x 66 cm)

Courtesy of the Art Institute of Chicago, Illinois;
Walter H. Schulze Memorial Collection



Rockwell Kent

1882–1971

Rockwell Kent was an American artist best known for his signature, smooth style of landscape painting. Often cited as an early American modernist, Kent's work focuses on the otherworldly beauty of nature, influenced by transcendentalism and the mysticism of writers such as Henry David Thoreau and Ralph Waldo Emerson. His paintings are heavily stylized with organic forms taking on geometric qualities and contrasting color relationships.

Kent earned an undergraduate degree in architecture from Columbia University in New York and later studied composition and design at the Art Students League before dedicating himself to painting. He traveled widely, gravitating to such harsh and snowy locales as Alaska, Greenland, Newfoundland, and New England for his painted landscapes. Although grounded in realism, Kent's landscapes are not straightforward transcriptions of the natural world; rather, they are harmonious compositions featuring simplified forms, vivid colors, sharp contrasts, and astute design.

Alaska

1919-27

Oil on canvas

28 x 34 in. (71,1 x 86,4 cm)

Courtesy of the Art Institute of Chicago, Illinois;
Gift of Madame Felipe Espil



John Frederick Kensett

1818–1872

Among the Hudson River School artists, John Frederick Kensett is the acknowledged master of the mode termed 'luminism' in American landscape painting. Born in Cheshire, Connecticut, he worked in his father's engraving firm, then briefly apprenticed with the engraver Peter Maverick in New York, where he met his lifelong friend and future colleague John W. Casilear. Both Kensett and Casilear gradually moved away from engraving and turned towards landscape painting. Kensett spent years in England and France before returning to the United States where he produced spare compositions of simple terrestrial profiles against expanses of calm open water delicately punctuated with a few sailboats on the horizon.

In *Rocky Coast*, Kensett depicted the shoreline on a hazy day, with calm water and gentle waves. The careful treatment of nature by the Hudson River School artists has been linked to the writings of transcendentalists such as Ralph Waldo Emerson, who wrote in his book *Nature*: "Standing on the bare ground,—my head bathed by the blithe air, and uplifted into infinite space,—all mean egotism vanishes. I become a transparent eye-ball. I am nothing. I see all." The horizon line of *Rocky Coast* illustrates this idea, as the uninterrupted water appears infinite, suggesting that the ocean continues beyond the vision of the viewer.

Rocky Coast

c. 1860

Oil on canvas

14 x 24 in. (35,6 x 61 cm)

Courtesy of the Art Institute of Chicago, Illinois;
Gift of Brooks McCormick



Georgia O'Keeffe

1887–1986

Born the second of seven children, Georgia Totto O'Keeffe grew up on a farm near Sun Prairie, Wisconsin. She studied at the Art Institute of Chicago in Illinois and the Art Students League in New York. First a student of traditional realist painting, the direction of her practice shifted dramatically when she studied the revolutionary ideas of Arthur Wesley Dow.

One of the most influential American artists of the twentieth century, O'Keeffe promoted new ideas of abstraction and helped redefine modern art. She is best known for her paintings of flowers and plants—enlarged beyond life-size and precisely painted with bold colors—and for her spare and dramatic images inspired by the landscape of the Southwest. O'Keeffe incorporated elements from various modernist movements into her work, yet her style was entirely her own. Her ability to connect and infuse natural and abstracted forms with evocative visual and spiritual qualities contributed significantly to the innovations of American modernism.

From a Day with Juan IV

1977

Oil on canvas

48 x 36 in. (121,9 x 91,4 cm)

Courtesy of the Art Institute of Chicago, Illinois,

Alfred Stieglitz Collection;

Bequest of Georgia O'Keeffe



William Schwartz

1896–1977

William S. Schwartz was born into a Jewish family in Smorgon, Russia (now Smarhon', Belarus). He followed his siblings to the United States, living briefly in New York and then in Omaha, Nebraska, where he painted houses and sold newspapers to make ends meet. Intent on further training, Schwartz moved to Chicago to enroll in the Art Institute of Chicago, Illinois. His abilities as a visual artist were recognized early on as one of his paintings was accepted into the Art Institute's annual *Chicago and Vicinity* exhibition while he was a student.

A multi-talented and prolific artist known for watercolor and oil paintings, Schwartz also created prints, sculptures, drawings, and murals in addition to watercolor and oil paintings. He was adept at landscape, still life and figural imagery, portraiture, and abstraction. In his early work, Schwartz often explored mythic themes using fractured forms, eccentric angles, and saturated color. He portrayed locales and people who were recognizably American, especially Midwestern; Jewish themes, and industrial and urban imagery also found a place in his art. Schwartz continued painting into the 1970s, working on the boundary between representation and abstraction.

Chicago Harbor

1931

Oil on canvas

30 3/16 x 35 7/8 in. (76,7 x 91,1 cm)

Courtesy of the Art Institute of Chicago, Illinois;

Anonymous gift



Robert Thompson

1937–1966

Robert (Bob) Thompson was born in Louisville, Kentucky, and came to art to cope with the sudden death of his father at a young age. He enrolled as an art student at the University of Louisville, where he developed a keen interest in Italian Renaissance painting. He began copying works by Masaccio, Fra Angelico, and Piero della Francesca to develop his visual vocabulary. He would later reinvent these images in his own personalized manner.

In his work, Thompson appropriated compositions from old European masters, rearranging and integrating them with his symbolic language and figural style. In his reconfiguration of established themes, he eliminated narrative content and instead created abstract patterns that loosely convey a feeling or an idea. The thick acrylic paint produces a dynamic, textured surface; flat, overlapping fields of color create linear and chromatic rhythms, and planes advance and recede in space. Despite deriving inspiration from canonical works of art, Thompson's improvisational working method demonstrates affinities with the post-bebop jazz of the 1960s.

The Procession

1963-1964

Oil on canvas

48 x 36 in. (121,9 × 91,4 cm)

Courtesy of the Art Institute of Chicago, Illinois;
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Stanley M. Freehling



Grant Wood

1891–1942

Grant Wood was known for his stylized and subtly humorous scenes of rural people, Iowa cornfields, and mythic subjects from American history, such as the Art Institute of Chicago's iconic painting *American Gothic*. Along with other Midwestern regionalist painters like John Steuart Curry and Thomas Hart Benton, Wood advocated for a realistic style and recognizable subjects that showed local places and common people, a different approach from European modernism and its push toward abstraction.

Living most of his life in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, Wood studied metalsmithing with arts and crafts movement designer Ernest A. Batchelder before moving to Chicago. Inspired by the Northern Renaissance art he saw on a trip to Munich, Germany, Wood shifted from the free, impressionistic style evident in *Loch Vale* to the highly detailed, tightly painted forms that characterize *American Gothic*. His later works continued to celebrate, and sometimes satirize, Midwestern values and people. The iconic imagery he created in *American Gothic* and subsequent works has been adapted and parodied regularly, serving as a reflection of changing American values and ways.



Loch Vale

1927

Oil on canvas

20 x 30 in. (50,8 x 76,2 cm)

Courtesy of the Art Institute of Chicago, Illinois;

Gift of George and Marie Marshall Plain

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