

ART IN EMBASSIES EXHIBITION
UNITED STATES EMBASSY KUWAIT

KAREN SCHULZ

Out the In Door, 2013

Hand-dyed cotton fabric, machine pieced and quilted, couching
58 x 66 in. (147,3 x 167,6 cm)

Courtesy of the artist, Silver Spring, Maryland

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 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/>

CELEBRATING INSPIRING WOMEN IN ART

Since my arrival in Kuwait, I have been privileged to meet many promising Kuwaiti female artists. They work as architects, digital artists, visual artists, filmmakers, and glassblowers, but the one thing they have in common is the gift of storytelling through art. I have appreciated learning the stories of the artists I have met here in Kuwait. I am delighted to share the stories of contemporary female artists from across the United States through this exhibition of mixed media art pieces.

Curated from primarily women-owned galleries from across the United States, this exhibition celebrates a cross-section of the talents and diversity of contemporary female American artists. Through the artists' innovative reimagining of various materials, including used books, scraps of lace and fabric, canvas, and fiberglass, among other items, viewers are drawn into an exhibition that demonstrates the power of women's creativity, inspiration, and strength. The viewer will find pieces from artists with a range of personal and professional backgrounds – immigrants, Native Americans, emerging artistic voices, and established artists.

Most works in this exhibition are multidimensional, with distinct tones and color accents, varying from dynamic and bold to peaceful and calm. The beautiful pieces reflect the breadth and diversity of experiences of the artists themselves. From handcrafted pieces to smaller landscapes to textile works in a Native American tradition; we follow a journey of illustration and identity from Kuwait to the United States and beyond. While we explore the meaning of community, this exhibition transports us from coast to coast, from San Francisco to Alabama, and from New Mexico to Washington, D.C. The sophisticated shapes, engaging themes, and innovative techniques allow each artist to express their sense of self and achievement. The diverse media and textures featured throughout the exhibition, often in unexpected ways, speak to the rich sources of inspiration for these women and their great potential.

I am grateful to Art in Embassies, an office within the Department of State, for allowing us to share the beauty and vision of this exhibition. These works invite us to reflect on the importance of art in expressing women's resilience, creativity, and self-actualization.

As a former potter and glassblower, I believe in the power of art. I know that both Kuwaiti and American women artists share wonderful artistic values, and I hope you enjoy this impressive exhibition. We celebrate our deep cultural connections and the long-standing United States – Kuwaiti partnership.

Ambassador Alina L. Romanowski

*Kuwait City, Kuwait
November 2021*

وتعد أغلب المعروضات في هذه المجموعة لوحات فنية متعددة الأبعاد بمختلف العناصر اللونية المتميزة التي تنوعت بين الديناميكية والجرأة والهدوء والسكون. وتعكس اللوحات الخبرة الكبيرة لهؤلاء الفنانين وتنوعها، حيث تشير الإيحاءات الفنية المستخدمة إلى تراثهم ومصادر إلهامهم ومسيرتهم العملية. ومن خلال معروضات تضم مشغولات يدوية ولوحات صغيرة ومنسوجات تعكس عادات السكان الأصليين وتراثهم، سننطلق في رحلة تأخذنا من الكويت إلى الولايات المتحدة وما أبعد من ذلك. وبينما ندرك في تلك الرحلة معنى الانتماء، سننتقل من ساحل إلى ساحل، من سان فرانسيسكو إلى ألاباما، ومن نيو مكسيكو إلى واشنطن العاصمة. لقد استطاعت كل فنانة أن تعبر عن ذاتها وإنجازاتها عبر أشكال مركبة وأفكار تفاعلية وتقنيات مبتكرة، حيث تحاكي تلك الوسائط المختلفة في هذه المجموعة - بما صاحبها من أساليب فنية غير متوقعة في أغلب الأحيان - المصادر الغنية التي ألهمت هؤلاء الفنانين وصقلت قدراتهم الإبداعية المذهلة.

أتوجه بخالص الشكر والتقدير لبرنامج «الفن في السفارات» - وهو أحد البرامج التابعة لوزارة الخارجية الأمريكية - لدوره الجوهري في تمكيننا من مشاركة هذه المجموعة الجميلة وما تعكسه من رؤية فنية، فهذه اللوحات تدعونا جميعاً للتأمل في أهمية الفن وضرورته في التعبير عن صمود المرأة وإبداعها ورحلتها نحو تحقيق الذات.

وكفنانة عملت سابقاً في حرفة نفخ الزجاج وفن الخزف، أؤمن بشدة بقوة الفن، كما أؤمن بأن الفنانين الكويتيين والأمريكيين تتقاسم القيم الفنية الرائعة ذاتها. أتمنى أن تستمتعوا جميعاً بهذه المجموعة المذهلة التي نحتفي من خلالها بروابطنا الثقافية العميقة والشراكة القوية بين بلدينا.

سعادة السفارة ألينا رومانوسكي

مدينة الكويت، الكويت
أكتوبر 2021

نساء ملهمات في الفن

منذ وصولي إلى الكويت، تشرفت بلقاء العديد من الفنانات الكويتيات الواعدات اللواتي عملن في مجالات متعددة، شملت العمارة والفن الرقمي وصناعة الأفلام وحرفة نفخ الزجاج. جمعت هؤلاء السيدات موهبة واحدة، فقد برعن كلهن في سرد القصص عبر ألوان مختلفة من الفنون، وأشعر بغاية الامتنان لمعرفتي بخص هؤلاء الفنانات اللواتي التقيت بهن في الكويت. ويسرنني هنا مشاركتكم قصص فنانات معاصرات من الولايات المتحدة الأمريكية عبر هذه المجموعة الفنية التي تحتضن لوحات من فن الوسائط المختلطة “mixed media”.

وتحتفي هذه المجموعة الفنية - والتي تقتنيها في الأساس صاحبات معارض فنية من كافة أنحاء الولايات المتحدة - مجموعة من فن الوسائط المختلطة، والتي تعكس موهبة وتنوع عدد من الفنانات الأمريكيات المعاصرات. وعبر التخيل المبتكر الذي تقدمه لنا هؤلاء الفنانات باستخدام وسائط متنوعة كمقتطفات من الكتب المعدلة والأشرطة والخيوط والأنسجة والألياف الزجاجية وغيرها من المواد المختلفة، ندخل عالماً ينبض بعزيمة المرأة وإلهامها وإبداعها. سجد في هذه المجموعة لوحات فنية تحمل في ثناياها جزءاً من كل فنانة وما ارتبط بها من تجربة شخصية ومهنية. وسنلتقي في هذا العالم بفنانات من المهاجرين ومن السكان الأصليين، وكذلك فنانات صاعدات بجانب فنانات مخضرمات.

MONICA J. BEASLEY

| born 1969 |

Evoking her Southern roots, mixed-media artist Monica J. Beasley brings concepts of feminism, marriage, family, and race together in her work.ⁱ *Tiffany Blue with Gold* contains traditional designs and components with a contemporary twist. Tiffany blue and stark white paint—colors reminiscent of the luxury jewelry retailer Tiffany & Co.—drip downward on the canvas. Scraps of needle lace, silver and gold sequined embroidery, and tiny pearl beads are applied to the work, and Alabama clay and dirt are whitewashed to create a stuccoed appearance. At first glance, the viewer is attracted to these tactile materials and bright colors, but a deeper consideration reveals the juxtaposition of Southern femininity and grit.ⁱⁱ

Beasley received a Master of Fine Arts degree from Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois, in 2002; she was one of the first African American women accepted into their art program.ⁱⁱⁱ Throughout her artistic career, Beasley specialized in several mediums, ranging from photography and conceptual work to painting and collage.^{iv} Her work has been exhibited at the Mobile Museum of Art, Alabama, and the Alabama School of Math and Science in Mobile.

Tiffany Blue with Gold, 2019
Mixed media, 30 x 30 in. (76,2 x 76,2 cm)
Courtesy of Sophiella Gallery, Mobile, Alabama





Tree and Cloud Dance, 2020
Watercolor, 51 ½ x 39 ½ in. (130,8 x 100,3 cm)
Courtesy of the artist and Winterowd Fine Art Gallery,
Sante Fe, New Mexico

SARAH BIENVENU

| born 1955 |

Sophisticated and vibrant, Sarah Bienvenu's watercolor paintings simplify nature into an undulating medley of beauty.^v In *Tree and Cloud Dance*, the landscape seems to dance and sway along the foreground. With thickly applied paint, clouds in the bright blue sky recall pebbles in water, while some trees rendered in acidic, bold colors are slanted towards the right. Like the first painting, landscape dominates in *Morning by the Pecos River*. The trees, grass, river, mountains, and sky all reflect the artist's fascination with natural phenomena; "Nature creates the landscape... a successful painting is not color brushed on a surface, but a simple depiction of what land, sky, and all of nature are expressing at a particular place and time,"^{vi} she says.

Bienvenu graduated from the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia, and the Philadelphia College of Art. Her works are held in the collections of the Harwood Foundation

Museum in Taos, New Mexico, and the New Mexico State Capitol in Santa Fe, and she is the author of *Taking Time: Thirty Years of Painting New Mexico*.^{vii} She lives and works in Santa Fe.



Morning by the Pecos River, 2020
Watercolor,
41 x 51 ½ in.
(104,1 x 130,8 cm)
Courtesy of the artist
and Winterowd Fine
Art Gallery, Santa Fe,
New Mexico

AMY KAUFMAN

| born 1956 |

Using pastel, oil paint, conté crayon, charcoal, or silverpoint, Amy Kaufman achieves a meditative rather than momentary period of looking and sensing.^{viii} Colors and geometric sequences are widely prevalent in *Knock-kneed*. Pairs of white, orange, gray, and orange-gray striped squares are balanced along two distinct sides of the composition, which is divided by a single line. This work exemplifies Kaufman's visual language of gathering patterns, rhythms, and textures—"by repeating striped, curved, and knotted motifs, she generates singularities, differences of touch, color, and composition that materialize her perceptions."^{ix}

Kaufman has extensively shown her paintings and drawings since receiving a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in drawing from the California College of Arts and Crafts, Oakland, in 1990. She also earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in art history from Barnard College in New York. Her work is included in various collections, namely the Hammer Museum in Los Angeles and the Yale University Art Gallery in New Haven, Connecticut.^x She lives and works in Oakland.

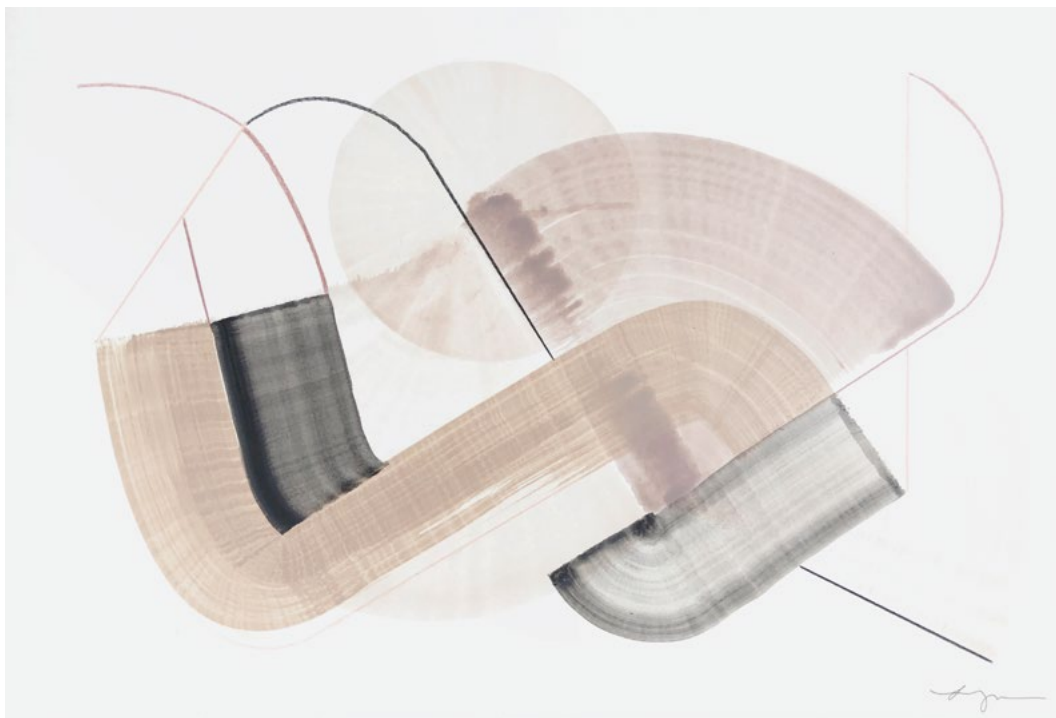


Knock-kneed, 2014. Pastel on paper, 49 x 65 in. (124,5 x 165,1 cm). Courtesy of Traywick Contemporary, Berkeley, California

ZAHRA MARWAN

| born 1989 |

A delicate combination of random thoughts and memories, Zahra Marwan's watercolor illustrations resonate with whimsy and nostalgia. After immigrating to the United States from Kuwait in the late 1990s, Marwan sought to reclaim through her works her language, community, and sense of family.^{xi} Created with thin, delicate brushstrokes with muted primary color washes, the imaginative vignettes painted in *Albuquerque's Able Sky* include hot air balloons and cranes soaring above the vast New Mexico landscape while an angel sits on a dark cloud. The viewer is first drawn to a woman pushing a rowboat, then follows the winding river to observe figures performing various activities—one woman reclines on top of a bridge, a man plays the tuba, and another woman reads the *New York Times*. Marwan conveys a sense of beauty and melancholy in this watercolor; despite the hardships surrounding her transition to an unfamiliar part of the world, she believes it is possible to find ease and comfort within adversity.^{xii}



Lemarch II, 2020
Acrylic and colored pencil on paper
16 ½ x 22 ½ in. (41,9 x 57,2 cm)
Courtesy of Uprise Art, New York

Linto VI, 2020
Acrylic on paper
19 x 15 in. (48,3 x 38,1 cm)
Courtesy of Uprise Art, New York,



LAURA NAPLES

| born 1979 |

Laura Naples is an abstract painter whose textured work is at once dynamic and peaceful.^{xiii} Taking inspiration from dance and interiors, Naples paints her fluid, delicate forms in gestural lines to express playful harmony in an orderly fashion. When painting, Naples presses and drags the acrylic paint onto a wet paper surface before diluting it with water, causing the pigments to swirl and evolve into their forms against the folds of the paper.^{xiv} Featuring monochromatic tones of gray, black, and beige—along with blush pink and light purple accents and colored pencil to create fine lines—*Lemarch II* and *Linto VI* provide a sense of controlled movement and calm energy.

Based in Cleveland, Naples studied graphic design with a minor in fine arts. She first worked in advertising and sold her brand of stationery through the global online marketplace Etsy. She began collecting abstract art in 2013 and started painting as a creative outlet.^{xv} Naples and her sister Kristen Giorgi comprise the collaborative artist studio NG Collective.

EMILY PAYNE

| born 1966 |

Painter and sculptor Emily Payne investigates the numerous embodiments of a single object through diverse media: wire sculptures, gouache paintings, line drawings, and collages from used books.^{xvi} Inspired by nature—seeds, tree branches, bird nests, and spider webs—Payne’s serene and elemental works explore themes of dimensionality, motion, and dynamics in space. *Flush* and *Pentimento 1* are painted collages representing the artist’s two wire sculptures of cast shadows, both taken from natural forms and done with a minimalist sensibility.^{xvii}

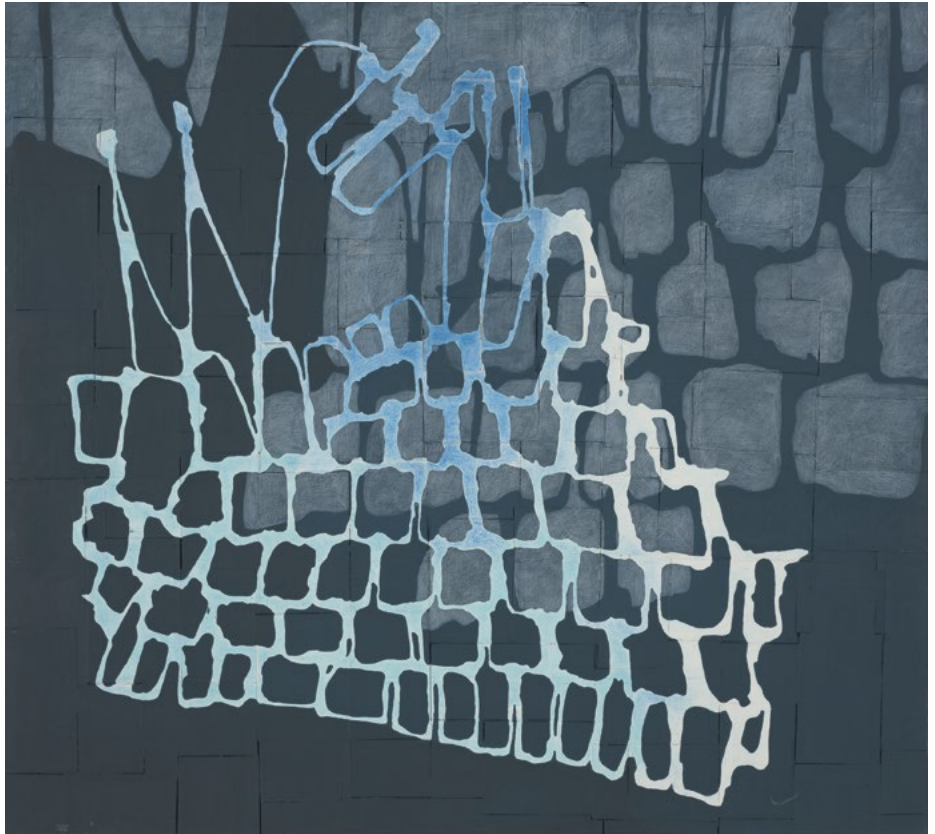
Born in San Francisco, Payne received a Bachelor of Arts degree from Oberlin College in Ohio and a Master of Fine Arts degree in book arts and printmaking from San Francisco State University. She acquired fellowships at the San Francisco Foundation and the Vermont Studio Center in Johnson, as well as a residency at the Association of Icelandic Visual Artists (SÍM) in Reykjavík.^{xviii} Payne has exhibited throughout California, namely at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art Artists Gallery at Fort Mason and the Kala Art Institute in Berkeley.



Pentimento 1, 2018

Acrylic paint, colored pencil, graphite on canvas made of book boards, 55 x 60 in. (139,7 x 152,4 cm)

Courtesy of Seager Gray Gallery, Mill Valley, California



Page 16

Flush, 2020

Graphite, cloth book covers, book boards, end sheet papers from used books, 60 x 30 in. (152,4 x 76,2 cm)

Courtesy of Seager Gray Gallery, Mill Valley, California

RAMONA SAKIESTEWA

| born 1948 |

Ramona Sakiestewa incorporates abstract, ritual imagery and postmodern artistic methods in her dimensionally constructed tapestries and works on paper. Adapted from ancient Pueblo techniques, Sakiestewa's watercolors serve as starting points for her highly regarded architectural and site work.^{xix} Inspired by pottery shards, *Sherd 2* and *Sherd 4* consist of dark squares overlaid with silver leaf stripes and placed on top of a dark red matte background to create a striking visual contrast.^{xx} *Light Echo A* forces the viewer to analyze and decipher the swirling red-orange designs hidden beneath twenty-five gold leaf squares.

Born of Hopi ancestry and raised in the American Southwest, Sakiestewa attended the School of Visual Arts in New York. She was the design consultant for the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian in Washington, D.C., and received numerous accolades such as the Governor's Outstanding New Mexico Woman Award. Having exercised an important influence on state and federal arts policy, Sakiestewa was the first Native American director of the Southwestern Association on Indian Affairs, and a founding member and former director of Atlatl, a national Native American arts and cultural services organization.



Light Echo A, 2017

Acrylic, graphite, 23k gold leaf on panel, 24 x 24 x 3 in. (61 x 61 x 7,6 cm)

Courtesy of TAI Modern, Sante Fe, New Mexico



Sherd 2, 2017

Paper collage, ink watercolor, silver leaf (unique), 14 $\frac{3}{16}$ x 14 $\frac{3}{16}$ in. (36 x 36 cm)

Courtesy of TAI Modern, Sante Fe, New Mexico



Sherd 4, 2017

Paper collage, ink watercolor, silver leaf (unique), 14 $\frac{3}{16}$ x 14 $\frac{3}{16}$ in. (36 x 36 cm)

Courtesy of TAI Modern, Sante Fe, New Mexico

ALICIA SCARDETTA

| born 1989 |

Inspired by her childhood and her family's Mexican heritage, Alicia Scardetta's experimental woven tapestries and fiber wall hangings feature bold color palettes, playful themes, and innovative practices honed over ten years.^{xxii} *Secret Code* is one of her many textiles crafted on a frame loom. Ropelike, twisted cords fill open spaces and contain jumbled bands of kaleidoscopic colors. The work challenges the viewer to decode its complex wrapping technique.

Scardetta learned to operate a treadle loom and weave tapestry during an internship at the Textile Arts Center.^{xxiii} After earning a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from Pratt Institute in New York, she developed her skills in tapestry at the Haystack Mountain School of Crafts in Deer Isle, Maine, and the Penland School of Craft in Spruce Pine, North Carolina. Scardetta is based in Brooklyn, New York.



Secret Code, 2020
Fiber
21 x 14 ½ in. (53,3 x 36,8 cm)
Courtesy of the artist,
Brooklyn, New York

KAREN SCHULZ

| born 1954 |

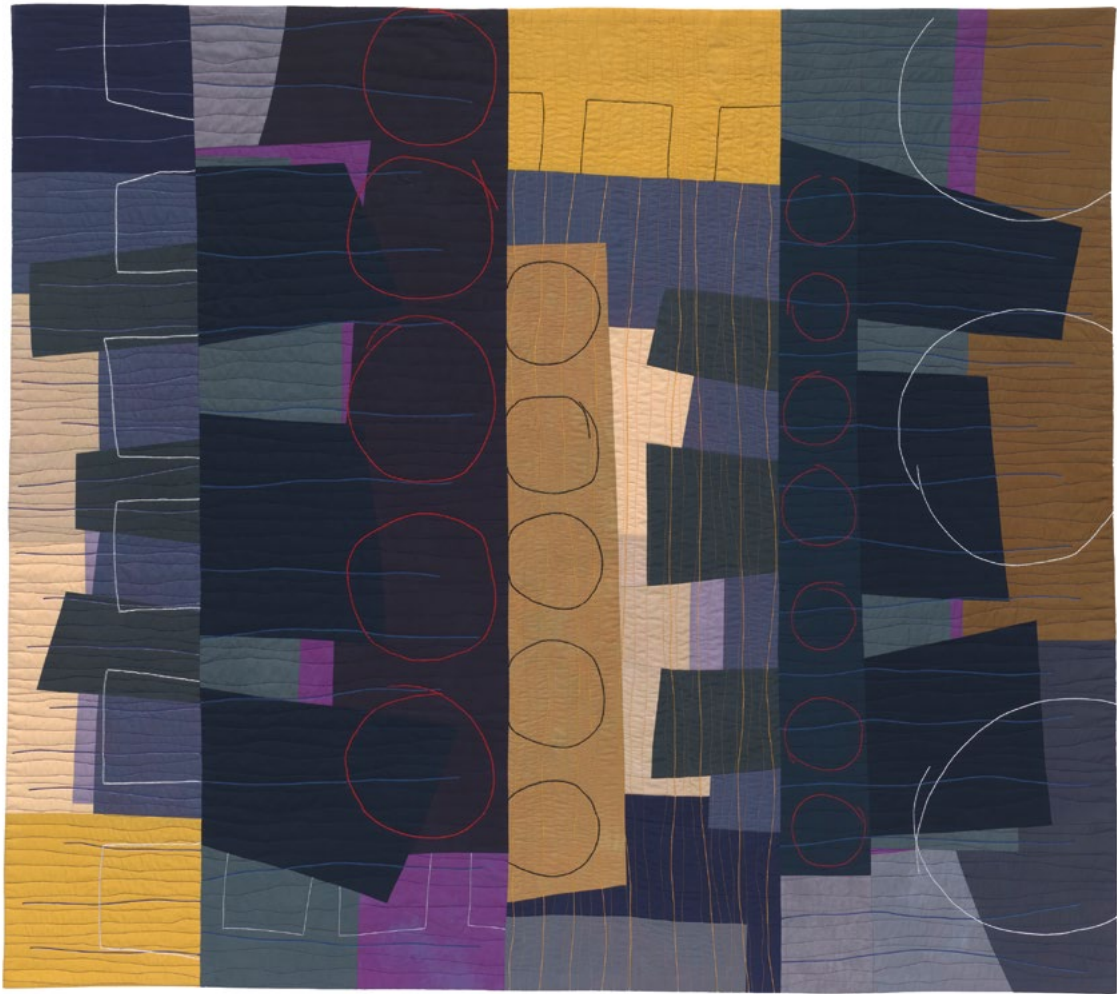
Karen Schulz references line, shape, color, and texture in her sophisticated fiber compositions—images that tantalize and intrigue the viewer.^{xxiv} *Out the In Door* is inspired by a smaller work of acrylic on paper, a medium that allows Schulz to “delve into expressive mark making.”^{xxv} It features squares and circles of varying sizes that are sewn together and lined up vertically. Scraps of yellow, purple, blue, and gray fabric pile on top of each other, giving the piece a refined and textured quality. In *Out the In Door*, content arises out of form, with the work driven by the shapes and lines themselves.^{xxvi}

Schulz has resided in the Washington, D.C., area for the last forty-five years. Having first used a sewing machine at age nine, she embarked on an artistic career in textiles later in life after taking classes at the Quilt & Surface Design Symposium in Lewis Center, Ohio.^{xxvii} Schulz has won many awards, including Best in Show at Quilt National 2019 and Best in Fiber at the Creative Crafts Council Exhibition in 2015.

Out the In Door, 2013

Hand-dyed cotton fabric, machine pieced and quilted, couching
58 x 66 in. (147,3 x 167,6 cm)

Courtesy of the artist, Silver Spring, Maryland



JD WELLBORN

| born 1943 |

JD Wellborn's work incorporates elements of various painting methods to design paper panels of texture, pattern, and color.^{xxviii} Her series *Mystical Tablets* is influenced by both the American Southwest and Latin American cultures. Ancient motifs taken from mandalas, petroglyphs, and other artifacts found during her trips to Guatemala and Peru serve as direct inspirations for her contemporary paintings.^{xxix} Each piece starts with a grid of paper and cloth to achieve a three-dimensional surface.^{xxx} The delicate papers are then layered with canvas and fiberglass material, thus creating a shiny and durable surface evocative of tin tiles or leather.^{xxxi} Wellborn earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque and has been painting for over fifty years.



Mystical Tablet 1618, 2020
Mixed media and acrylic on
paper and canvas
16 x 14 in. (40,6 x 35,6 cm)
Courtesy of the artist and
Winterowd Fine Art Gallery,
Sante Fe, New Mexico



Mystical Tablet 1509, 2019

Mixed media and acrylic
on paper and canvas
16 x 14 in. (40,6 x 35,6 cm)
Courtesy of the artist and
Winterowd Fine Art Gallery,
Sante Fe, New Mexico



Mystical Tablet 1611, 2020
Mixed media and acrylic
on paper and canvas
16 x 14 in. (40,6 x 35,6 cm)
Courtesy of the artist and
Winterowd Fine Art Gallery,
Sante Fe, New Mexico

REFERENCES

- i Sophiella Gallery, email to the author, March 2, 2021.
- ii Sophiella Gallery.
- iii Maggie Lacey, "Unveiling Monica," Mobile Bay Magazine, September 3, 2020, <https://mobilebaymag.com/unveiling-monica/>.
- iv Sophiella Gallery.
- v "Sarah Bienvenu," Winterowd Fine Art Gallery, accessed March 31, 2021, <https://fineartsantafe.com/sarah-bienvenu-contemporary-watercolors/>.
- vi Sarah Bienvenu, email to the author, March 22, 2021.
- vii Sarah Bienvenu.
- viii Traywick Contemporary, email to the author, January 15, 2021.
- ix Traywick Contemporary.
- xi "CV," Amy Kaufman, accessed January 16, 2021, <http://www.amykaufman.net/cv/index.html>.
- xii Zahra Marwan, email to the author, January 27, 2021
- xiii Zahra Marwan, email to the author, April 26, 2021.
- xiv Uprise Art, email to the author, October 5, 2020.
- xv "An Artist's Journey: Laura Naples," Cadette, April 25, 2020, <https://cadettejewelry.com/blogs/cadette-women/laura-naples>.
- xvi "An Artist's Journey: Laura Naples."
- xvii Seager Gray Gallery, email to the author, March 19, 2021.
- xviii Seager Gray Gallery.
- xviii "Emily Payne: Resume," Emily Payne, accessed March 31, 2021, <http://www.emilypayneart.com/resume>.

- xix TAI Modern, email to the author, March 23, 2021.
- xx Iris McLister, "Touching the sky: Artist Ramona Sakiestewa," Sante Fe New Mexican, September 8, 2017, https://www.santafenewmexican.com/pasatiempo/art/gallery_openings/touching-the-sky-artist-ramona-sakiestewa/article_bc651dcd-bc90-5da2-acb3-155e279d0ded.html.
- xxi "Alicia Scardetta," American Craft Council, October 28, 2016, <https://www.craftcouncil.org/magazine/article/alicia-scardetta>.
- xxii Alicia Scardetta, email to the author, March 3, 2021.
- xxiii "Alicia Scardetta," Textile Curator, accessed March 31, 2021, <https://www.textilecurator.com/home-default/home-2-2/alicia-scardetta/>.
- xxiv Karen Schulz, email to the author, October 30, 2020.
- xxv Karen Schulz.
- xxvi Karen Schulz.
- xxvii Maria Rosaria Roseo, "The content arises following the form: 'The great abstract works of Karen Schulz,'" ArteMorbida Textile Arts, accessed March 31, 2021, <https://www.artemorbida.com/the-content-arises-following-the-form-the-great-abstract-works-of-karen-schulz/?lang=en>.
- xxviii JD Wellborn, email to author, March 17, 2021.
- xxix "JD Wellborn," Winterowd Fine Art Gallery, accessed March 31, 2021, <https://fineartsantafe.com/jd-wellborn-mystical-tablets/>.
- xxx JD Wellborn.
- xxxi "JD Wellborn," Winterowd Fine Art Gallery.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Washington, D.C.

Welmoed Laanstra, Curator
Morgan Fox, Curatorial Assistant
Jamie Arbolino, Registrar
Tabitha Brackens, Managing Editor
Tori See, Editor
Megan Pannone, Editor
Amanda Brooks, Imaging Manager and Photographer

Kuwait

Stephen Kochuba, Public Affairs Officer
Katherine Garry, Cultural Attaché
Alia Khadra, Public Engagement Assistant
Shymaa Ebrahim, Public Engagement Specialist/Translator
Elmar Casilao, Danilo Pasaylo, Donald Tanedo, Richard Soares – Warehouse
Hamza H. Yahya, Sameh H. AbuKhazneh – Shipping
Hermie Villanueva, Antonio Banal – Facilities Management

Vienna

Nathalie Mayer, Graphic Designer

Manila

Global Publishing Solutions, Printing



Art in Embassies

U.S. DEPARTMENT *of* STATE

Published by Art in Embassies | U.S. Department of State, Washington, D.C. | November 2021

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