



**Art in Embassies Exhibition**  
United States Embassy Mbabane

[Brenda Kingery] **Sunlight**, undated  
Acrylic on Arches paper, 12 x 24 in. (30,5 x 61 cm)  
Courtesy of the artist, San Antonio, Texas

## 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/>

## Welcome

It should be a simple question, but asking a Foreign Service family where home is can be surprisingly difficult to answer. Since joining the State Department, my family has lived on four continents, and for our children, home was most likely our current posting. However, for my husband and me, home is Oklahoma, where we met and married. The state is known for cattle, agriculture, and broad vistas. It is also home to many Indigenous American tribes, providing a rich diversity of tradition and culture.

The artwork we chose to display in the Residence reminds us of home and features some of the natural landscapes also common in Eswatini. Heather Foster's *Tall Grass* and *Waldo Canyon Textures* celebrate familiar scenes of pastureland and cattle, which are also highly valued and ever-present here. Gary Robert Bowling's *Sunday Hay Diptych* features iconic hay bales dotting the summer fields across the United States— and parts of Eswatini. Similarly, Kathryn Stedham's *Last Light Rio Grande*, showcasing the natural beauty of the American Southwest, has similarities to vistas one finds in this small, mountainous country. The depictions of the lovely garden in Sylvia Johnson's photographs encapsulate the view from my adopted home in Falls Church, Virginia. Brenda Kingery's vibrant works illustrate the colors and textures of Indigenous American traditional dress and resonate with Swazi audiences who cherish their own cultural traditions.

I am grateful to the artists who created these beautiful works and to Art in Embassies for their support and dedication in helping me choose works that reflect the similarities between the United States and Eswatini. I hope you enjoy the exhibition!

**Ambassador Jeanne Maloney**

*Mbabane, Eswatini*

*December 2022*

## Gary Robert Bowling

Gary Robert Bowling focuses his oil paintings on the landscapes around his Missouri and Kentucky studios, the idea of the landscapes as a “place where we might escape, but where we also discover we don’t quite belong.” Works like *Sunday Hay Diptych* explore the light and atmosphere around his Midwest home, giving the viewer a window into his world. Painting the landscape at a remove lends it, in his words, “some almost imperceptible strangeness that subconsciously keeps us alert.”

Bowling initially intended to pursue a career in architectural engineering, but while in college he found himself drawn to the visual arts and went on to earn a Master of Fine Arts degree from the University of Arkansas in Fayetteville. Afterward, he taught art at Westmar College in Le Mars, Iowa, where his time in a basement office inspired him to explore the landscape, especially as seen from the highway. Bowling’s work has since been displayed in museums and galleries across the United States.



**Figure 1: Sunday Hay Diptych, 2017**  
Oil on canvas, 38 x 34 in. (96,5 x 86,4 cm), each of 2 panels  
Courtesy of the artist, Lamar, Missouri

## Heather Foster

“I have been working on a cattle series for almost ten years. In order to create this series, I have been visiting ranches and dairy farms, where I thoroughly enjoy meeting the animals. I hope that each painting conveys this affection and tells a different story, perhaps even making the viewer wonder exactly what may be going on in the cattle’s heads... I take tons and tons of photos on these excursions. Back in my studio, I attempt to weave together my memories with the portraits of the animals.”

Heather Foster started taking art classes at a local community center at a young age, always interested in drawing and painting. She attended extracurricular classes at several institutions across Philadelphia in high school and later earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from the Maryland Institute College of Art in Baltimore. Today she paints from her home studio in Santa Fe, New Mexico, referencing the thousands of photos she has taken during her travels across the American Southwest.





**Figure 2: Tall Grass**, undated  
Acrylic on canvas, 48 x 30 in. (121,9 x 76,2 cm)  
Courtesy of the artist and Ann Korologos Gallery,  
Basalt, Colorado



**Figure 3: Waldo Canyon Textures**, undated

Acrylic on canvas, 12 x 24 in. (30,5 x 61 cm)

Courtesy of the artist and Ann Korlogos Gallery, Basalt, Colorado

## **Sylvia Johnson**

“I grew up in the country on a New Jersey dairy farm. My love of the outdoors has always been an essential part of me... Even now, I still love to photograph flowers. Their diversity, charm, and beauty can still be captured in new and exciting ways.”

Sylvia Johnson is a metro Washington, D.C.-based photographer specializing in portraits and events, including meetings and conferences in the U.S. Capitol building. She is also a gardener, which continues to inspire her nature photography. These three images were taken in her garden in Virginia, a garden Ambassador Maloney has visited many times. They serve as a reminder of home and the natural beauty that surrounds us wherever we are.



**Figure 4: Sunflower**, 2013

Photo print, 13  $\frac{3}{8}$  x 20 in. (33,9 x 50,8 cm)

Courtesy of the artist, Falls Church, Virginia





**Figure 5: Bodacious, 2005**  
Photo print, 9 ¼ x 14 in. (23,5 x 35,6 cm)  
Courtesy of the artist, Falls Church, Virginia



**Figure 6: Bodacious, 2011**

Photo print, 9 ¼ x 14 in. (23,5 x 35,6 cm)

Courtesy of the artist, Falls Church, Virginia

## Brenda Kingery

“My paintings have been described as Narrative Symbolism, beginning with thin acrylic washes. The next stage in the process may be as many as 25 layers of thin, handpainted lines and more layers of washes that define the composition. The lines are almost like tapestries that are telling stories visually. Textile and dance are major components in my paintings. The paintings begin abstractly and move as in dance, becoming a visual record of cultures. Art becomes the embodiment of culture, recording visually a cultural identity.”

Born into the Chickasaw Nation, painter Brenda Kingery combines her rural Oklahoma background with her time spent living in the Ryukyuan Islands in Japan. She studied with a series of artists and artisans, and her works on paper incorporate the sumi-e style of Japanese ink painting in single, sweeping strokes. Kingery’s world travels continue to influence her work—the dancers she depicts are Chickasaw pow-wow dancers, classical Japanese Orodi dancers, and the peoples of Central Africa, all telling their stories.





**Figure 7: 8 Dot with Green**, undated  
Acrylic on Arches paper, 24 x 18 in. (61 x 45,7 cm)  
Courtesy of the artist, San Antonio, Texas



**Figure 8: Sunlight**, undated  
Acrylic on Arches paper, 12 x 24 in. (30,5 x 61 cm)  
Courtesy of the artist, San Antonio, Texas



## Kathryn Stedham

*Last Light Rio Grande* was painted by New Mexico artist Kathryn Stedham specifically for this exhibition, representing the landscapes of the American Southwest. Part of a series featuring vistas across the Rio Grande Valley, *Last Light Rio Grande* captures its “raw elegance in the rapidly changing light, vast distances, rugged escarpments, colorful mesas, and hidden arroyos.” Forever fascinated by the American West and stories of western expansion, Stedham feels an urgency to portray these quickly vanishing landscapes.

Though she was originally trained as an academic realist, Stedham now paints in a gestural *alla prima*—or wet-on-wet—style in which she applies all of the paint to the canvas in essentially one sitting. In her words, “[t]his approach combines representational landscape forms with an expressionistic modernist sensibility.” Over the last thirty-five years, her work has been exhibited in public and private collections across the United States, Canada, Europe, and Japan.



**Figure 9: Last Light Rio Grande, 2021**  
Oil on canvas, 24 x 30 in. (61 x 76,2 cm)  
Courtesy of the artist, Santa Fe, New Mexico

## **Minnie Wabanimkee**

Minnie Wabanimkee, a member of the Odawa, an indigenous American ethnic group of the Eastern Woodlands region, is a freelance photojournalist specializing in images of Native culture, life, and dance. Born in northern Michigan, she has received numerous awards, including the Robert F. Kennedy Journalism Award for Excellence in Photojournalism. She has worked for the Associated Press, the Michigan State University Museum, the Nokomis Learning Center, and several tribes within the state.

Photographs and text are from *Contemporary Great Lakes Pow Wow Regalia: “Nda Maamawigaami (Together We Dance)”* edited by Marsha MacDowell with photographs by Minnie Wabanimkee.



**Figure 10: Women's Traditional Dancer  
Robin Martell, 1996**

Color photograph, 23 x 14 7/8 in. (58,4 x 37,8 cm)  
Courtesy of Michigan State University Museum,  
Michigan Traditional Arts Program, Lansing

This photograph was taken for Wabanimkee's book *Contemporary Great Lakes Pow Wow: "Nda Maamawigaami (Together We Dance),"* which showcases the work of Native American artists who make and wear pow wow dance regalia in the Great Lakes region.



**Figure 11: Fancy Shawl Dancer**, 1996

Color photograph,

23 x 14  $\frac{7}{8}$  in. (58.4 x 37.8 cm)

Courtesy of Michigan State  
University Museum, Michigan

Traditional Arts Program, Lansing





**Figure 12: Fancy Shawl Dancer**, 1996  
Color photograph, 14 <sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub> x 23 in. (37.8 x 58.4 cm)  
Courtesy of Michigan State University Museum,  
Michigan Traditional Arts Program, Lansing

The Fancy Shawl Dance represents the butterfly, the wings of a butterfly. And when that shawl dancer is dancing, it's like they're rejoicing for a warrior or a loved one that is on his or her way to the spirit world. So it is like we are happy for that person. We're sad we're mourning but then we open our wings and we are happy that that person is going to the spirit world.

—Netawn Alice Kiogima (Odawa/Ojibwa/Blackfoot)



**Figure 13: Lisa Ojibway**, 1996  
Color photograph, 14 <sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub> x 23 in. (37.8 x 58.4 cm)  
Courtesy of Michigan State University Museum,  
Michigan Traditional Arts Program, Lansing

It would be awkward for me not going to a powwow or not going to a Native function where there's art and music and meeting other people and family members. I thank the Creator every day for making me an Anishaaabe que (Native American woman). I couldn't ask to be anything more.

—Netawn Alice Kiogima (Odawa/Ojibwa/Blackfoot)



**Figure 14: Grass Dancer**

**Dennis Shananaquet, 1995**

Color photograph, 23 x 14  $\frac{7}{8}$  in. (58.4 x 37.8 cm)

Courtesy of Michigan State University Museum,  
Michigan Traditional Arts Program, Lansing

Both the steps and the regalia of the Grass Dance reinforce a symbolic association with the prairie. Today the grass is represented by long strips of cloth, yarn, leather, or ribbon fringes that trim or sometimes completely cover the outfit. When the dancer moves, the fringes [sway], mimicking the flowing grasses of the Great Plains.





**Figure 14: Men's Fancy Dancer**

**Frank Buswa, 1996**

Color photograph, 23 x 14 <sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub> in. (58.4 x 37.8 cm)

Courtesy of Michigan State University Museum,  
Michigan Traditional Arts Program

No other style of American Indian dance has such widespread popularity among native peoples across the country than the Fancy dance. Its regalia has become the pervasive outfit of the PanIndian dance.

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