

The background features a complex, abstract geometric pattern. It consists of overlapping, stylized shapes that resemble a grid or a series of interlocking lines. The colors are various shades of green, from a deep forest green to a bright lime green, with some yellow-green accents. The pattern is dense and fills the entire frame.

**ART IN  
EMBASSIES  
EXHIBITION  
UNITED  
STATES  
EMBASSY  
LUXEMBOURG**







## 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."

[www.art.state.gov](http://www.art.state.gov)

## Welcome

**Welcome to the Residence of the United States Ambassador to the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg.** We hope you enjoy the art exhibition displayed on these historic walls. My wife Kris chose each work individually, and I am grateful for and proud of what she has accomplished.

Art always tells a story. The story we wanted our art exhibition to tell is about the importance of diversity. The true richness of our country lies in our different strengths as people, in our multiplicity of cultures, and in our distinct heritages. These differences should never tear us apart but unite us, enrich us, and strengthen us as a nation. Each artwork exhibited here was chosen with that belief in mind.

Like in the United States, we've observed that Luxembourgers also believe that diversity enriches their nation. This belief is echoed not only in Luxembourg's multilingualism but in the openness of its society and the richness of its culture. The art exhibition displayed here is also a tribute to the mutual values that underscore the strong partnership between our countries.

We want to extend our gratitude to Art in Embassies, and to the artists themselves for their generosity in loaning us their work. May this exhibition continue to shape discussions and be a source of inspiration to us and to all our guests for the years to come.

Please enjoy,  
**Ambassador Tom Barrett**  
Luxembourg  
June 2023

“Art always tells a story. The story we wanted our art exhibition to tell is about the importance of diversity. **The true richness of our country lies in our different strengths as people**, in our multiplicity of cultures, and in our distinct heritages.”

Front Cover  
**Na'ashch'aa' I**  
Dakota Mace

Inside Cover  
**Zoo**  
Sheila Held

Rear Inside Cover  
**I Love Autumn  
(October in Wisconsin)**  
Cathy Martin

Rear Cover  
**Memory of Little Lake**  
Rodger Bechtold

## Rodger Bechtold

**Born 1945** Rodger Bechtold paints midwestern landscapes full of bright, cheerful color with a painterly view of place and moment.<sup>1</sup> “Like most people, I feel a sense of calm and tranquility in the presence of nature. It often takes me away from a sometimes troubled and worrisome world. Based on direct observation, recollection, and some invention, I seek to describe the grandeur in the commonplace. I create landscape paintings that have a feeling of spaciousness beyond the limits of the canvas, charged with color, expressed with energy and seemingly effortless brushwork. Most of all I’m interested in communicating what it feels like to be in nature. In the end, painting is much like fishing. Even with the best of intentions, it’s always unpredictable, results are never certain, but the time is always well spent,”<sup>2</sup> he says.

Bechtold studied at the American Academy of Art in Chicago, the Art Institute of Chicago, and the Santa Fe Institute of Fine Arts, New Mexico. His paintings have been exhibited widely across the United States and are held in numerous public and private collections, including Northern Trust Bank and the Weidner Center for the Performing Arts at the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay.<sup>3</sup>

### **Memory of Little Lake 2020**

Oil on Linen

26 × 40 in.

*Courtesy of the artist  
and Tory Folliard Gallery*

Milwaukee, Wisconsin



“I create landscape paintings that have a feeling of spaciousness beyond the limits of the canvas, **charged with color, expressed with energy and seemingly effortless brushwork.**”

## Sheila Held

**Born 1946** Tapestry artist Sheila Held started weaving in the early 1970s, beginning with fabric production for garments. A decade later, she transitioned her practice to weaving tapestries and “innovated a technical approach to the floor loom, resulting in a unique and visionary style.”<sup>4</sup> Her current work engages themes of the humanities, magic, science, and nature, both explicitly and implicitly. Held earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in comparative religions and English from Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, and has exhibited widely throughout Michigan and Wisconsin. Her work is held in the permanent collections of Western Oregon State College, Monmouth; the Health Research Center of the Medical College of Wisconsin, Milwaukee; and the Northwestern Mutual Life Insurance Company.

“In my imagery, I attempt to access the point where magic, science, religion, art, and nature intersect, and a conjunction of opposites, a complementarity (both this and that) is achieved in the hope of narrowing the gap between the idea and the practical. Through a density of information, I strive to initiate a dialogue with my audience and to speak to a variety of interpretations with enough resonance to change as the times in which they are viewed change. I am particularly interested in releasing my artworks into the lives of their own in which relationships with their viewers are formed independent of my conscious manipulation, which can only happen if the metaphors transcend the ‘messages.’ This requires that I explore a diversity of themes and iconography rather than closing out avenues of imagination other than my own by exhaustively working out a few central ideas. As Shunryu Roshi writes, ‘in the beginner’s mind there are many possibilities, in the expert’s there are few.’”<sup>5</sup>

**Zoo** 2016 / from the *Homo Ludens* series

Wool, silk and metallic  
weft on cotton warp

29 × 33 in.

*Courtesy of the artist  
and the Green Gallery*

Milwaukee, Wisconsin



Zoo 2016

from the *Homo Ludens* series



“In my imagery, **I attempt to access the point where magic, science, religion, art, and nature intersect**, and a conjunction of opposites, a complementarity (both this and that) is achieved in the hope of narrowing the gap between the idea and the practical.”

## Michael Knapstein

**Born 1956** Michael Knapstein's photographs are nuanced and insightful portrayals of the American Midwest. "There is a certain magic to [the region]," he says. "Honest. Modest. Understated. Sometimes unappreciated. Often overlooked...Even though it continues to change and disappear around me, I think of the Midwest as being classic and timeless in nature... If you pause for a moment, perhaps you'll feel the humid air of an approaching thunderstorm or catch the smell of fresh laundry as it dries in the summer breeze. That is [the Midwest to me]."<sup>6</sup>

A Wisconsin native, Knapstein's talent was recognized at an early age. At seventeen, he was the youngest photographer to have a solo exhibition at the Steenbock Gallery of the Wisconsin Academy of Science, Arts & Letters in Madison, and his photos earned their way into the permanent collections of the George Eastman House International Museum of Photography, Rochester, New York, and Nikon House, New York, while he was still in high school. He earned a degree from the College of Fine Arts and Communication at the University of Wisconsin Stevens Point, while working as a photojournalist. Afterward, Knapstein began a more than thirty-year career in advertising. He later sold his firm and returned to fine art photography, trying to "pick up in a digital age where [he] left off in the analog." His works have been exhibited worldwide, recognized in numerous competitions, and are held in many permanent collections.<sup>7</sup>

### **Sunrise at Cave Point** 2017

Photograph  
29 3/4 × 39 3/4 in.  
*Courtesy of the artist*  
Middleton, Wisconsin

### **Crane Dance** 2014

Photograph  
29 3/4 × 39 3/4 in.  
*Courtesy of the artist*  
Middleton, Wisconsin



Sunrise at Cave Point 2017









**“There is a certain magic to [the American Midwest]...**

Honest. Modest. Understated.  
Sometimes unappreciated.  
Often overlooked...

Even though it continues to  
change and disappear around me,  
I think of the Midwest as being  
classic and timeless in nature.”



## David Lenz

**Born 1962** David Lenz's photorealistic paintings rely heavily on close observations of the world around him. He creates his works by sketching in pencil or oil, photographing the sketches, then refining and changing the images as he references them while painting with small, fine-pointed brushes on a warmly tinted canvas.<sup>8</sup> He earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, and his work has been exhibited widely across Wisconsin and in New York and Chicago. Lenz's *Sam and the Perfect World* won first place in the National Portrait Gallery's inaugural Outwin Boochever Portrait Competition in 2006.<sup>9</sup>

"My wife Rosemarie had just given birth to our son Sam, and although he appeared perfectly healthy, something, nevertheless, didn't seem right. There was an awkward silence in the room, no words of congratulation or comments about how cute he was even though he was cute. Five minutes later the diagnosis was given: Sam has Down syndrome. 'Are you going to keep him?' a nurse asked. Later that evening someone else came by to 'console' us, 'It's every mother's worst nightmare' she said.

Welcome to the world Sam.

In America today, perfection is highly valued. We dump loads of chemicals on our lawns to try and get rid of every weed, every dandelion. Models and supermodels are tall, impossibly fit, their clothes stylish and wrinkle free. Images like this tend to change our perceptions, our ideals, until finally they leave us looking around at the peeling paint on our own houses, and our less than fit bodies, and it leaves us wanting.

Perfection, I would submit, is overrated. And besides, I like dandelions.

In the painting Sam assumes the role of presenter, host, even tutor, of this most revealing examination of the civilization man has made for himself. Sam is not society's accepted definition of perfection. In spite of that, or perhaps because of that, he really does have an important message for everyone to hear."<sup>10</sup>

### **Sam and the Perfect World 2005**

Oil on linen

44 × 46 in.

*Courtesy of the Milwaukee Art Museum*

Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Purchased with funds from the Linda and Daniel Bader Foundation, Suzanne and Richard Pieper, and Barbara Stein, M2010.17







**Sam and the Perfect World** 2005

detail



“In the painting Sam assumes the role of presenter, host, even tutor, of this most revealing examination of the civilization man has made for himself. **Sam is not society’s accepted definition of perfection. In spite of that, or perhaps because of that, he really does have an important message for everyone to hear.**”



## Dakota Mace

**Born 1991** Dakota Mace's interdisciplinary work "draws from the history of her Diné [Navajo] heritage, exploring the themes of family lineage, community, and identity. In addition, her work pushes the viewer's understanding of Diné culture through alternative photography techniques, weaving, beadwork, and papermaking." She has partnered with multiple organizations to spark discourse around cultural appropriation and the significance of Indigenous design work.<sup>11</sup> "We have been stuck in a period of time where our designs are not created for us anymore. They're for an outside audience. That's something I would love to be able to see again."<sup>12</sup>

Mace grew up in New Mexico in a family of traditional artists. She earned Master of Art and Master of Fine Art degrees in photography and textile design at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in photography from the Institute of American Indian Arts, Santa Fe, New Mexico. She is currently a graduate advisor at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and the photographer for the Helen Louise Allen Textile Center at the Center of Design and Material Culture at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Her work has been exhibited worldwide, including at the Textile Society of America; Weave a Real Peace; the Wright Museum of Art, Beloit, Wisconsin; the Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art, Kansas City, Missouri; and the Wallach Art Gallery at Columbia University, New York, among others.

### **Doot'izh (Blue) 2018**

Digital archival print

18 × 24 in.

*Courtesy of the artist*

Madison, Wisconsin

### **Na'ashch'ąą' I-IV 2018**

Digital archival print of scanned cyanotypes

24 × 24 in., each of four

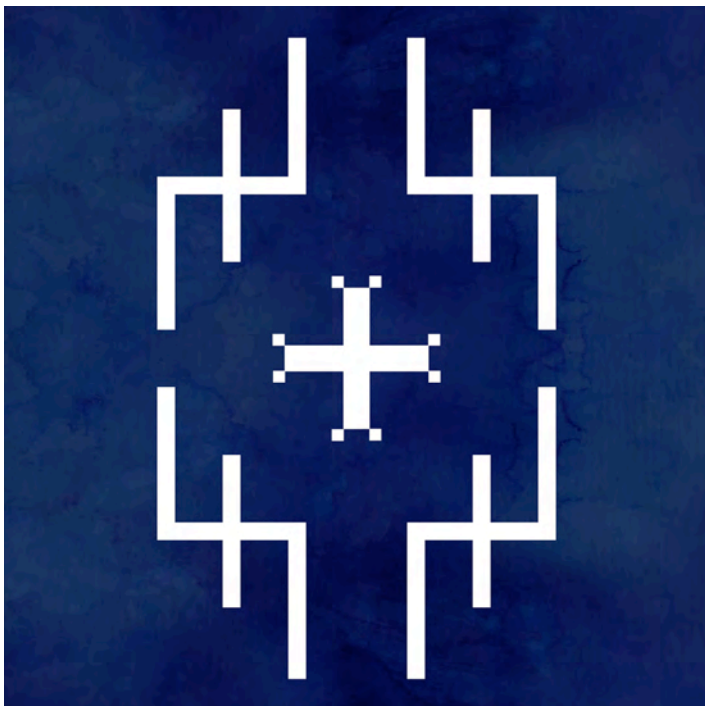
*Courtesy of the artist*

Madison, Wisconsin

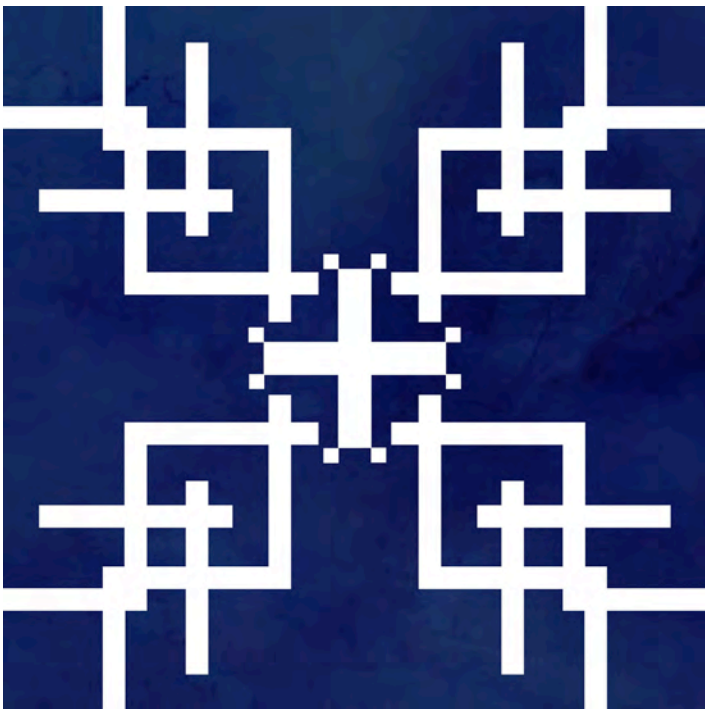
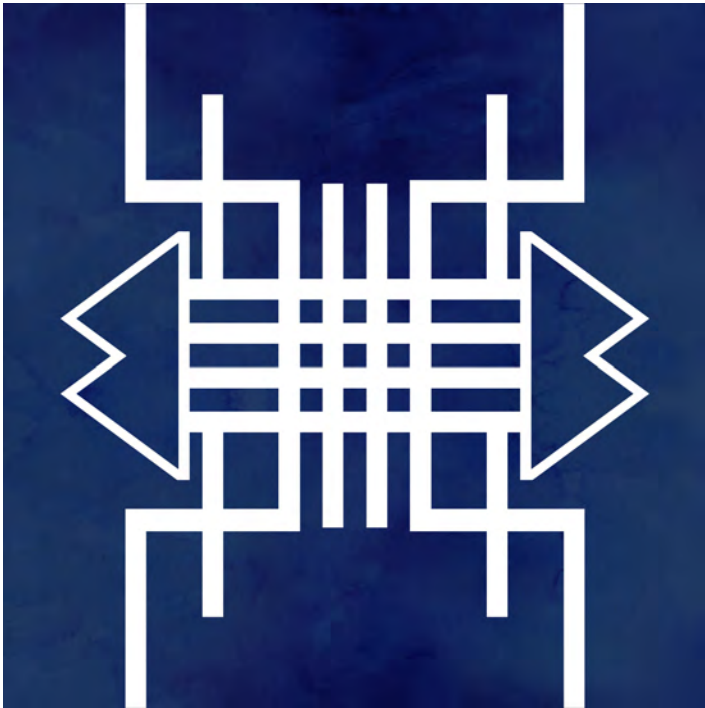




**“We have been stuck in a period of time where our designs are not created for us anymore.** They’re for an outside audience. That’s something I would love to be able to see again.”







## Cathy Martin

**Born 1960** Cathy Martin's photorealistic paintings show a true artist's instinct through complicated fine details and captivating compositional choices. Living and working on a Wisconsin farm has inspired Martin to convey "a subtle longing for life little changed from generation to generation. The artist's pristine paint handling and authority over light and shadow match her unique visions and command of realism."<sup>13</sup>

"Painting and farming have always coexisted in my life. Being a self-taught artist has given me the freedom and ability to give my attention to all those things I consider important, including my family and six grandchildren, working the farm that I own with my husband, Charlie, and painting the exquisitely picturesque landscape that I am surrounded by ... I believe in order to successfully portray the landscape as it is, I need to experience it daily, and do my best to do so. The Wisconsin landscape and the farms that dot our state's countryside are the reason I paint, and I cannot imagine painting anything else."<sup>14</sup>

### **I Love Autumn (October in Wisconsin) 2017**

Oil on Masonite

13 × 23 in.

*Courtesy of the artist  
and Tory Folliard Gallery  
Milwaukee, Wisconsin*



“I believe in order to successfully portray the landscape as it is, **I need to experience it daily, and do my best to do so.**”



## Ariana Vaeth

**Born 1995** Ariana Vaeth primarily paints self-portraits and portraits of those close to her, resulting in an autobiographical collection of works. She starts each painting by completing many drawings, then taking photos of models and photoshopping them all together, “curating what the projected story is.” After that, the “hard work” is done, and she begins painting, which is the most enjoyable part of the process for her.<sup>15</sup>

“It feels like my purpose is to join this kind of historical narrative of painters and people making their own images. I love how images can tell a different story, or someone can come into an image and make up their own narrative, and it’s a telling of the story of what the original painting was. All of those kind of combine and kind of become the big history, the big essay, of the piece. And I’m just going to insert myself and be a part of that.”<sup>16</sup>

Vaeth earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from the Milwaukee Institute of Art and Design and has won a number of awards, including the Gener8tor Art creative entrepreneurial grant and a Wisconsin Visual Art Achievement Award. Her work has been exhibited at the Madison Museum of Contemporary Art, Wisconsin; the Miller Art Museum, Milwaukee; the Haggerty Museum of Art, Marquette University, Milwaukee; the Ayzha Fine Arts Gallery, Milwaukee; and the Lynden Sculpture Garden, River Hills, Wisconsin.<sup>17</sup>

### **Caitlyn Cold Day** 2018

Oil on canvas

48 × 48 in.

*Courtesy of the artist*

Milwaukee, Wisconsin



**Caitlyn Cold Day**

*Caitlyn and I share a seat  
in different planes and opposite directions.  
Ambassadors of the fine arts,  
envisioned in our medium of choice.  
We became friends at a distance  
Modeling for one another,  
Sharing responsibilities and opportunities.  
Caitlyn continues to check in on me  
In kind hearted texts, letters and postcards  
Her thoughtful actions bring me joy  
During unexpected times.<sup>18</sup>*

## Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> “Rodger Bechtold,” Tory Folliard Gallery, accessed August 9, 2022, <https://toryfolliard.com/artists/rodger-bechtold/>.
- <sup>2</sup> “Rodger Bechtold.”
- <sup>3</sup> “Rodger Bechtold.”
- <sup>4</sup> The Green Gallery.
- <sup>5</sup> The Green Gallery, email to the author, July 14, 2022.
- <sup>6</sup> “Midwest Memoir by Michael Knapstein,” *Dodho* magazine, accessed August 10, 2022, <https://www.dodho.com/midwest-memoir-by-michael-knapstein/>.
- <sup>7</sup> “About Michael Knapstein,” Lens Culture, accessed August 10, 2022, <https://www.lensculture.com/michael-knapstein>.
- <sup>8</sup> “Frequently Asked Questions,” David M. Lenz Paintings, accessed August 10, 2022, <http://www.davidmlenz.com/FAQ.htm>.
- <sup>9</sup> “Exhibitions,” David M. Lenz Paintings, accessed August 10, 2022, <http://www.davidmlenz.com/Resume.htm>.
- <sup>10</sup> “Artist Statement,” David M. Lenz Paintings, accessed August 10, 2022, <http://www.davidmlenz.com/Resume.htm>.
- <sup>11</sup> Dakota Mace, email to the artist, May 18, 2022.
- <sup>12</sup> Elissa Koppel, “Dakota Mace,” Madison Essentials, accessed August 11, 2022, <https://madisonessentials.com/Article/2019-07/Dakota-Mace>.
- <sup>13</sup> “Cathy Martin,” Tory Folliard Gallery, accessed August 11, 2022, <https://toryfolliard.com/artists/cathy-martin>.
- <sup>14</sup> “Cathy Martin,” Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts & Letters, accessed August 11, 2022, <https://www.wisconsinacademy.org/contributor/cathy-martin>.
- <sup>15</sup> Catherine Bell.
- <sup>16</sup> Catherine Bell, “Ariana Vaeth,” Vimeo, 2:48, [https://vimeo.com/user63125895embedded=true&source=owner\\_name&owner=63125895](https://vimeo.com/user63125895embedded=true&source=owner_name&owner=63125895).
- <sup>17</sup> Ariana Vaeth, email to the author, July 10, 2022.
- <sup>18</sup> Ariana Vaeth.

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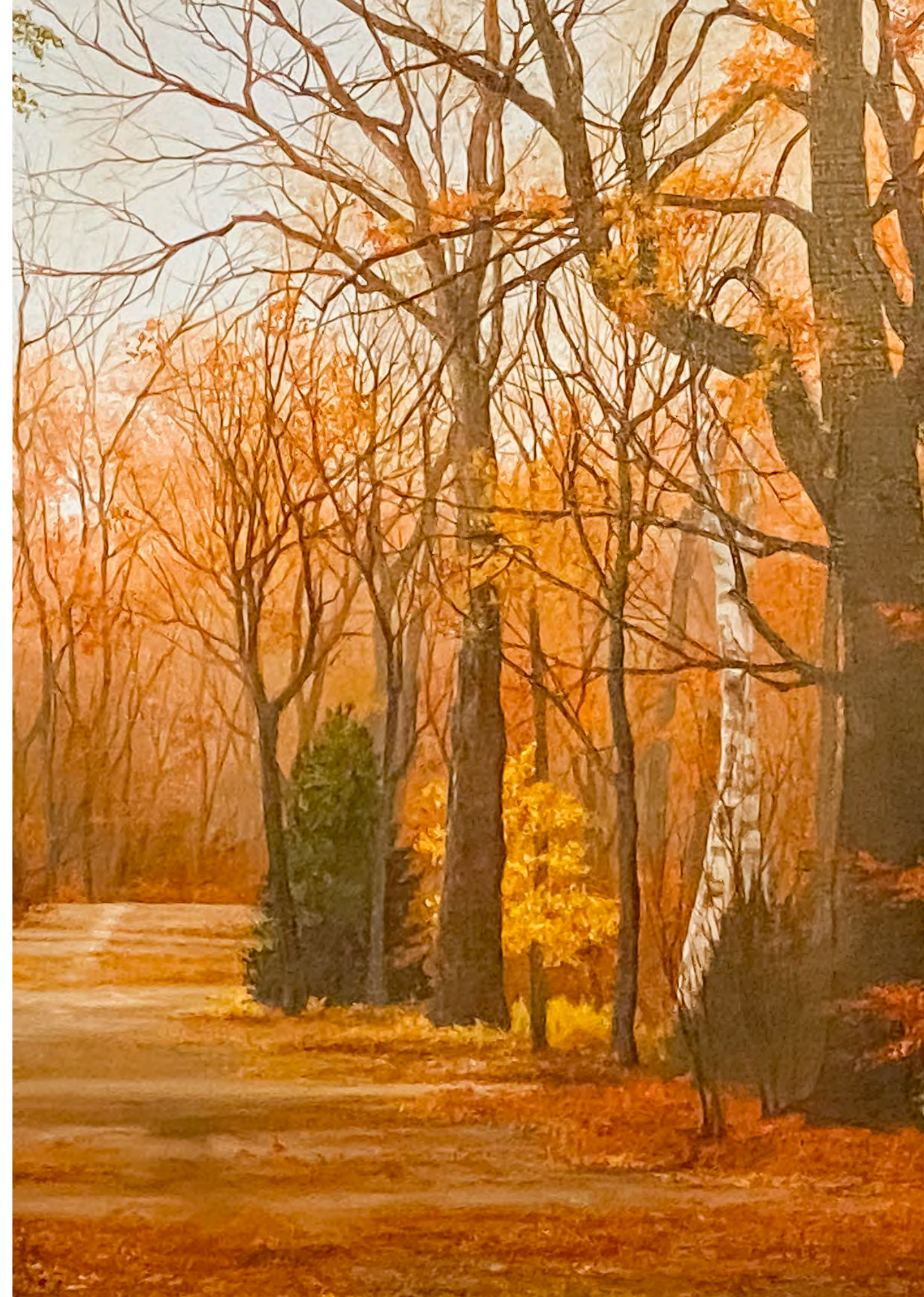
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**“The true richness of our country**  
lies in our different strengths as  
people, in our multiplicity of cultures,  
and in our distinct heritages. ”

**Ambassador Tom Barrett**



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