



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

**Erik Asla Playa Del Rey, 5:39 pm, 2021**

Archival pigment print mounted on aluminum, 42 x 62 in. (106,7 x 157,5 cm)

Courtesy of the artist, Santa Monica, California

# 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 United States 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

I'm excited to welcome you into the Ambassador's Residence in Belize!

It's an honor for me to display this selection of contemporary American art. As you can see, I've chosen seven pieces that are colorful, engaging, fun—and that remind me that I'm never too far from home. While some might say that I grew up on the ice, I consider the California coast my home. You can see that reflected most whimsically in Katherine Grossfeld's **Lizard Parade**, but also in Frederick Hurd's **North Through Palms**, with its glimpse of a glorious California evening sky. If you've ever watched the sunset from a California shore, you'll find a shared memory in Erik Asla's meditative **Playa Del Rey**.

Nature is the theme that runs through all of these works. Katherine Grossfeld's **Blooms in Pairs** and Peter Veys' **Springs in the Americas** create floral spaces where we want to sit and connect. And it's no coincidence that I chose Frederick Hurd's **Water Lilies**, **Evening Effect** and Frank DePietro's **Water Lilies #62 [Multitudes]**. Those lush greens and deep blue pools reflect my love of water, and you'll find that colorscape both in Belize and California.

The more time I spend here, the better I understand why Belizeans call their country “The Jewel.” Belize is a country of hidden beauty, from the rainforests to the mangroves, from centuries of Mayan architectural wonders to the stunning beaches and coral reefs. Yes, the art reminds me of home. But I experience home each time I step out beneath the endless Belizean skies or dive below the waves.

I would like to thank the artists for generously loaning these works, and I would also like to express my gratitude to Art in Embassies for working with me to enhance the Residence through this beautiful exhibition.

I hope this art inspires you to reflect on the deep and enduring relationship between Belize and the United States, and the vast potential that lies ahead for us.

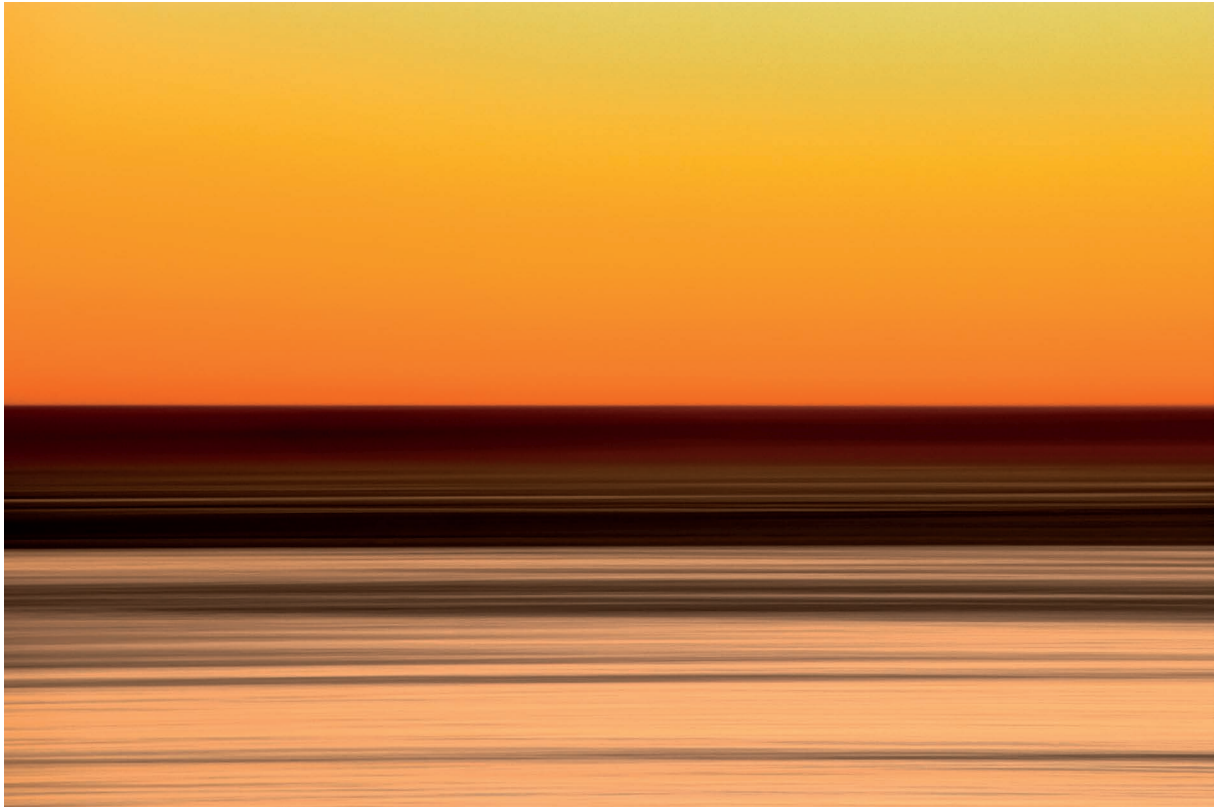
Ambassador Michelle Kwan

Belmopan, Belize  
December 2023

## Erik Asla (born 1964)

Playa Del Rey, 5:39 pm is part of Erik Asla's **The Stillness of Motion** series, which presents the ocean in its contradictory states of frenzy, contemplation, and tranquility. Having done advertising work for major corporations like Saks Fifth Avenue, Audi, and Calvin Klein, and for notable magazines such as **Vanity Fair**, **German Vogue**, the **New York Times Magazine**, and **Tatler**, Asla now devotes more time to fine art photography and remains drawn to the artistic freedom and solitary endeavors it offers. Influenced by Robert Rauschenberg and Roy Lichtenstein, his images capture the serenity and movement of the sea, sky, and beach.

Born in Drammen, Norway, Asla lives and works in California. He was a photographic assistant to renowned fashion and celebrity photographer Herb Ritts early in his career. His first solo exhibition occurred in Palm Springs, California, around June 2017, and his first major show at a European gallery was at Gallen Semmingsen in Oslo, Norway, in 2018.



**Erik Asla** Playa Del Rey, 5:39 pm, 2021

Archival pigment print mounted on aluminum, 42 x 62 in. (106,7 x 157,5 cm)

Courtesy of the artist, Santa Monica, California

## Frank DePietro (born 1975)

Frank DePietro specializes in traditional landscapes; he creates most of his artwork in the controlled environment of his studio, collecting and selecting photographs before he begins painting. “My intention is to capture a moment of existence within the cyclical element of life, blending colors into one another with paint, replicating the natural process of pigment moving in plants and trees from formation through decay. I want to give permanence to these moments, turning them into tangible objects,” he says.

DePietro earned a Bachelor of Arts degree from Bloomsburg University, Pennsylvania, and a post-baccalaureate degree in art education from Moore College of Art and Design, Philadelphia. The artist teaches classes and workshops at Longwood Gardens, Kennett Square, Pennsylvania, and the Delaware Art Museum, Wilmington.





**Frank DePietro** **Water Lilies #62 (Multitudes)**, 2022

Oil on canvas, 42 x 84 in. (106,7 x 213,4 cm)

Courtesy of the artist, Landenberg, Pennsylvania

## Katherine Grossfeld (born 1957)

Katherine Grossfeld seeks to capture light and color in each painting she composes, with ordinary objects serving as her main subject. **Lizard Parade** depicts a parade of toy lizards and a colorful beach ball, “glowing with the promise of childhood play.” **Blooms in Pairs** features a pair of cloisonne ginger jars with blooms and pears, “a special memento” of Grossfeld’s trip to China and Hong Kong in 1988. “When I paint, the world slows down a bit, and I experience a sense of peace, joy, and escape from the hubbub of life. This is what I hope viewers experience as well,” she says.

Grossfeld received a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from the University of Denver and a Master of Fine Arts degree from the Art Institute of Chicago. A member of the Salmagundi Club, the Oil Painters of America, and American Women Artists, her work was published in **Fine Art Connoisseur**, **Southwest Art Magazine**, and the **American Art Collector**.



**Katherine Grossfeld Lizard Parade, 2021**

Oil on panel, 24 x 24 in. (61 x 61 cm). Courtesy of the artist, Durham, North Carolina



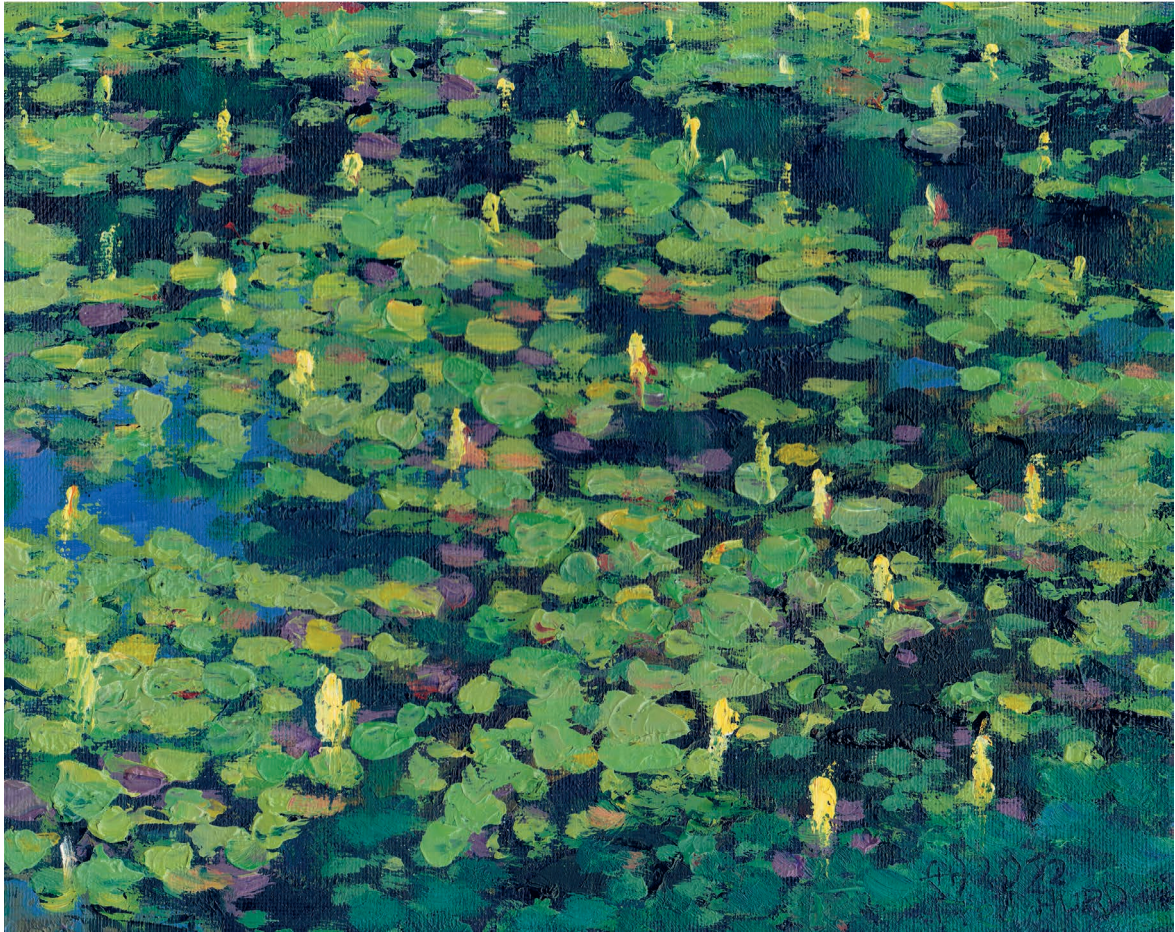
**Katherine Grossfeld Blooms in Pairs, 2022**

Oil on panel, 24 x 24 in. (61 x 61 cm). Courtesy of the artist, Durham, North Carolina

## Frederick Hurd (born 1954)

Using a palette knife and paintbrushes, Frederick Hurd creates oil paintings similar in style to California impressionism—a twentieth-century art movement modeled after French impressionism that “showcased the atmosphere and emotion of scenery.” While both depict lush tropical gardens cultivated in Southern California, **Water Lilies**, **Evening Effect** portrays a water lily pond at the Norton Simon Museum in Pasadena, and **North Through Palms** contains a forest of palm trees at the Huntington Botanical Gardens in San Marino.

A Mansfield University of Pennsylvania graduate, Hurd enrolled in fine art classes at Pasadena City College; the University of California, Los Angeles; and the ArtCenter College of Design Extension, Pasadena. He is an associate artist with the California Art Club, Pasadena.



**Frederick Hurd Water Lilies, Evening Effect, 2022**

Oil on canvas, 8 x 10 in. (20,3 x 25,4 cm). Courtesy of the artist, Pasadena, California



**Frederick Hurd North Through Palms, 2022**

Oil on canvas, 9 x 12 in. (22,9 x 30,5 cm). Courtesy of the artist, Pasadena, California

## **Peter Vey** (born 1957)

Peter Vey captures the relaxed elegance, historic Victorian architecture, and rural places of the Florida Keys. Vey first produces a sketch, then paints with oil on linen to build the picture area by area. With a palette knife in hand, “he sculpts in a painterly manner rather than decorating with the thick lush colors of the southern latitudes.” His art career represents “a compelling body of work of the varying cultural influences that [form] an island of postcard tropical seductions,” as evidenced in **Spring in the Americas**

After studying art and art history at Duke University, Durham, North Carolina, Vey moved to Florida in 1996, establishing himself in the Key West art scene. His works have been exhibited at the Newseum, Washington, D.C.





**Peter Vey Spring in the Americas, 2023**

Oil on linen, 28 x 32 in. (71,1 x 81,3 cm). Courtesy of Gallery on Greene, Key West, Florida

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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