



United States Embassy Dar es Salaam | **Art in Embassies Exhibition**

Jess Jones Weeping Quilt, 2023

Found, gifted, purchased, and artist-made fabric yo-yos; pins, 60 x 120 in. (152,5 x 305 cm)

Courtesy of the artist, Avondale Estates, Georgia

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

Welcome to the Residence of the United States Ambassador to Tanzania. It is an honor and pleasure to share our Art in Embassies exhibition.

My wife, Linda, and I feel privileged to share our home with visitors, and Art in Embassies provides an opportunity for us to share American art both in person and virtually. The selected works from Eliot Elisofon, Catalina Gomez-Beuth, Jim Hill, Jess Jones, Susan Pear Meisel, Chris Pappan, Kenneth Riley, Richard Skoonberg, Andrew Turner, and VSA Tennessee showcase art and artists that represent our nation's democratic values of diversity and equality.

The United States is a nation of unparalleled diversity. Over the past two and a half centuries, we have, like the masterful **Weeping Quilt** by Atlanta-based artist Jess Jones, woven together a rich national tapestry made from a sweeping collection of political perspectives, religions, philosophies, and cultural heritages.

I like to say that democracy starts with open, courageous conversations that are not afraid to engage in challenge, conversations that discuss every aspect of our development as people. In that respect, democracy is also art. While they may share similarities, not all democracies look the same. Tanzanian democracy looks different than American, or Indian, or Australian democracy, and making cross-cultural connections is a craft.

We would like to express our appreciation to Art in Embassies and to the artists who loaned their works. We would also like to thank the members of the Embassy team who helped with the installation and exhibition. We hope you enjoy the selections!

Ambassador Michael A. Battle

Dar es Salaam, Tanzania
December 2023

Eliot Elisofon (1911–1973)

Internationally known photographer and filmmaker Eliot Elisofon documented African life—a visual record that appeared in publications like **National Geographic** and **LIFE Magazine**. Capturing the human condition was central to Elisofon’s work—whether it was his childhood neighborhood in New York, impoverished communities in the American South, or other parts of the world. **Aissa Alimiri playing single-stringed lute, Tombouctou, Mali** was photographed during Elisofon’s assignment for LIFE in 1959. The image depicts a group of women playing music—including Alimiri on the lute—and performing a traditional dance called *barbarba*. Noting that the camera “says too much,” Elisofon sought “to take pictures that are impossible to take.” To him, “Art, to be true art, must grow out of human beings, and, it must help human beings live a better and fuller life. It must extend the field of feeling and vision we are born with.”

After graduating from Fordham University, New York, Elisofon took up commercial photography and established his studio, August and Co., for advertising and fashion. He was a founding member and president of the Photo League in 1936. Making eleven trips to Africa during his career, he donated his archive of 80,000 black and white negatives and photographs to the budding National Museum of African Art, Washington, D.C., in 1973.



Elisofon Aissa Alimiri playing single-stringed lute, Tombouctou, Mali, 1959
Photograph, 27 x 41 in. (68,6 x 104,1 cm). Collection of Art in Embassies, Washington, D.C.;
Courtesy of the Smithsonian Museum of African Art, Washington, D.C.

Catalina Gomez-Beuth (born 1970)

Catalina Gomez-Beuth's multicultural experiences and Latino heritage have shaped her work, which celebrates the beauty of diversity. She depicts her subjects in varying shades of gray surrounded by vibrant colors. This intentional elimination of skin color and ethnicity is done with the hope that viewers can relate and "connect with the raw emotions like innocence, hopelessness, loneliness, happiness, and determination." **The Beginning of the Journey** represents the "common point of departure for all of those who dream and know that with that dream uprooting is imminent."

Initially pursuing fashion and accessory design in Florence, Italy, Gomez-Beuth's passion now lies in fine art. In 2017, she joined the contemporary Latin American artist collective Contrapunto, whose mission is to "present the richness and diversity of Latin American art in the United States and the world." Her work has been exhibited at the Coca-Cola Headquarters and the Marietta/Cobb Museum of Art, both located in Georgia.



Gomez-Beuth

**The Beginning of
the Journey, 2017**

Oil on canvas, 36 x 36 in.

(91,4 x 91,4 cm)

Courtesy of the artist,
Atlanta, Georgia

Jim Hill (born 1947)

Artist, educator, and activist Jim Hill was once referred to as “a one-man community service center.” Growing up in an economically disadvantaged community in New York City, Hill used unconventional art supplies, such as recycled ephemera from print advertisements, magazines, posters, and flyers, to form his own color palette. For his series **Mosaic Master-Pieces**, he meticulously assembled small paper triangles onto cardboard, resulting in complex and poignant images that can take six months to complete. His art fosters a humanitarian and biblical purpose: to care for the marginalized, depict humanity’s perseverance, and instill the fact that we are all equal regardless of race or ethnicity.

Ghana Daycare was made during a trip to Africa years ago; while he was teaching there, a young girl brought her little brother to class. This gesture inspired the artwork, in which the image focuses on the joyful faces of children who were “poor but unashamed.”

Hill earned a Bachelor of Arts degree from Saint Francis College, Brooklyn; a Master of Arts degree in political science from Long Island University; and a Master of Arts degree in administrative supervision from Brooklyn College—all in New York. After teaching at the New York City Department of Education for thirty years, he moved to Atlanta and opened Jim Hill House, a non-profit organization assisting underprivileged children in Marietta, Georgia. His work has been shown at the South Street Seaport Museum, New York, and the Marietta/Cobb Museum of Art, Georgia, among others.



Hill Ghana Daycare, 2010

Paper mosaic

11 x 11 in. (27,9 x 27,9 cm)

Courtesy of the artist,

Marietta, Georgia

Jess Jones (born 1979)

Jess Jones' fabric art investigates the relationship of textiles to the urban environment. **Weeping Quilt** is one of many from a series conceived after her grandmother died: "A few years ago, I received a bag of fabric yo-yos from a family member at the funeral for my grandmother—a gift that I thought was both tender and curious. I began collecting yo-yos, receiving them as gifts, buying them at thrift stores, and making many more. I had no idea at the time why I did this except that I find labor cathartic. I often use it to process grief and I am certain that others do too. For me, this work is simultaneously full of sorrow and joy, darkness and light," she says.

Jones received a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in painting and drawing from the University of Tennessee, Chattanooga, and a Master of Fine Arts degree in fiber art from East Tennessee State University, Johnson City. She is currently an associate professor of textiles at Georgia State University, Atlanta, and is part of their affiliate faculty with the Institute of Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies. Recent exhibitions include the Zuckerman Museum of Art, Kennesaw, Georgia; the Sequim Museum and Arts Center, Washington; and the Appalachian Center for Craft, Smithville, Tennessee.



Jones Weeping Quilt, 2023. Found, gifted, purchased, and artist-made fabric yo-yos; pins
60 x 120 in. (152,5 x 305 cm). Courtesy of the artist, Avondale Estates, Georgia

Susan Pear Meisel (born 1947)

For over fifty years, Susan Pear Meisel has created whimsical scenes of landmarks in New York, Washington, D.C., and other major cities. Her use of ink and lines creates a “playful layering within the composition.” Whether a print or silkscreen, “the inked hues carry their tonalities to the surface of the paper. The layering of multiple colors builds up a ground pattern that engages with one another in a vibrancy of color.”

Meisel studied at the Art Students’ League, the School of Visual Arts, and the Parsons School of Design, all in New York. She helped open the Louis K. Meisel Gallery in New York’s Soho neighborhood, which exhibits original photorealist artists, realist painters, and sculptors. Her works are in the collections of the Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum, Ridgefield, Connecticut; the Erie Art Museum, Pennsylvania; and the Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.



Meisel Cherry Blossoms, undated. Acrylic on canvas, 29 ½ x 33 ½ in. (74,9 x 85,1 cm)
Collection of Art in Embassies, Washington, D.C.; Gift of Aaron J. Miller

Chris Pappan (born 1971)

Based on the Indigenous Plains tradition of ledger art with a twenty-first century twist, Chris Pappan's works "confront the dominant culture's distorted perceptions of Native peoples while proclaiming that 'we are still here!'" **Welcoming the New Dawn** holds many meanings: "First, it refers to one's own daily ritual of giving thanks for the blessings of life. It also seeks to reaffirm the continuum of our cultures and life ways. Lastly, it represents some considerable changes that happened in my life at the time and hopefully can inspire others to be accepting to change within their own lives. The red band is symbolic of our connection to our ancestors which will then extend beyond us to our descendants," Pappan says.

A graduate of the Institute of American Indian Arts, Santa Fe, New Mexico, Pappan is a member of the Kaw Nation and honors his Osage and Lakota heritage. He is a board member of the Illinois State Museum, Springfield, and a co-founder of the Center for Native Futures, Chicago. His work is housed in the National Museum of the American Indian, Washington, D.C., and the Tia Collection, Santa Fe.



Pappan Welcoming the New Dawn, 2023

Digital print with gold leaf embellish, 18 x 36 in. (45,7 x 91,4 cm)

Courtesy of the artist, Chicago, Illinois

Kenneth Riley (1919–2015)

Realist painter and figurative illustrator Kenneth Riley developed a body of work that focused on the American West. He opted for arbitrary hues over a conservative palette and embarked on color studies before creating his large easel paintings. As observed in **Blackfoot Chiefs**, Riley sought to express the beauty of Indigenous peoples without stereotyping or objectifying them, “bestowing a more human face that gives viewers a deeper appreciation for North American history, not treating aboriginal culture exotically as separate from our own experience.”

Along with evening art workshops at the Grand Central School of Art, New York, Riley attended the Art Students League, New York, and the Kansas City Art Institute, Missouri. During World War II, he enlisted as a combat artist for the United States Coast Guard, then illustrated for magazines like the **Saturday Evening Post** and **National Geographic**. After the U.S. Park Service commissioned him in the 1960s to compose several paintings of Yellowstone and Grand Teton National Parks, he dedicated himself to painting Western subjects. His works are in the permanent collections of the Phoenix Art Museum, Arizona; the Eiteljorg Museum of American Indians and Western Art, Indianapolis; and the White House, Washington, D.C.



Riley Blackfoot Chiefs, undated. Lithograph, 25 ½ x 29 in. (64,8 x 73,7 cm). Collection of Art in Embassies, Washington, D.C.

Richard Skoonberg (born 1951)

Richard Skoonberg's landscape photographs portray the reality of nature: chaotic, tangled, and wild yet beautiful. His imagery, considered emotional and intense, compels the viewer to interpret nature in a new way. **Spring Flood** features the lush vegetation of the semi-tropical landscape along the Chattahoochee River in Roswell, Georgia. **Reflections in the Pocket** was taken on the Shirley Miller Wildlife Trail in a small canyon at the base of Pigeon Mountain in northwest Georgia.

Skooberg studied photography at the California College of the Arts, and his images have been displayed at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Mason Fine Art, and Spalding Nix Gallery—all in Atlanta, Georgia.



Skoonberg

Spring Flood (3/5), 2019

Archival pigment print

18 x 18 in. (45,7 x 45,7 cm)

Courtesy of the artist,

Marietta, Georgia



Skoonberg Reflections in the Pocket, 2019

Archival pigment print, 18 x 24 in. (45,7 x 61 cm). Courtesy of the artist, Marietta, Georgia

Andrew Turner (1944–2001)

Andrew Turner chronicled the joys and pathos of ordinary people. Blending the drama of seventeenth-century Dutch painting with impressionist brushwork, Turner derived his subject matter from jazz and his daily experiences within the neighborhoods of Chester and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. “I tend to measure the success of my pieces by how they stand up technically, emotionally, and innovatively to a Coltrane solo or whether I’ve captured the spirit of the occasion, a la Ellington...At the very least, hopefully, these vignettes of experience will help to provide insight into some African American lifestyles and serve as an inspiration to my students and others to continue the legacy of African American participation in the arts,” he said. Rendered in lyrical, fluid brushstrokes with soft vibrating colors, **The Jazz Band** depicts musicians playing in a smoke-filled room.

Turner graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree from the Tyler School of Art at Temple University, Philadelphia. He taught art in correctional centers and the public school system in Chester for many years. An artist-in-residence and curator at the Deshong Museum in Chester, he served as lecturer at Weidner University, Chester, and the Institute of Contemporary Art at the University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia.



Turner

The Jazz Band, undated
Oil on canvas, 30 x 40 in.
(76,2 x 101,6 cm)
Collection of Art in
Embassies, Washington,
D.C.; Courtesy of The
Estate of Robert Emmet
Downey

VSA Tennessee

40 Days Around the World International Quilt was created to mark two milestones: VSA's (formerly Very Special Arts) fortieth anniversary and the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act. Initiated by VSA Tennessee, a state affiliate of the international organization, the work celebrates the creative accomplishments and abilities of all people. The quilt is a patchwork of colorful squares submitted by artists from thirty-six states and thirty-nine countries.

VSA was founded in 1974 by Ambassador Jean Kennedy Smith to provide increased art and education opportunities for all. In 2011, VSA merged with the Kennedy Center's Office on Accessibility to become the Office of Access and VSA at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts.



Tennessee

40 Days Around the World

International Quilt, 2015

Fabric, 120 x 84 in.

(304,8 x 213,4 cm)

Collection of Art in

Embassies, Washington,

D.C.; Donated by VSA

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Tennessee

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