



# Art in Embassies

U.S. DEPARTMENT *of* STATE

## Art in Embassies Exhibition: United States Embassy Zagreb

### 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 this curated Art in Embassies exhibition: *Made in America—An Immigrant Story*. Each work echoes the rich narrative of immigration in the United States, a theme intricately woven into the fabric of our nation. This publication serves not only as an art catalog but also as a storytelling canvas, reflecting the diverse experiences that shape the American identity. As you turn these pages, you will encounter prints of artworks selected from across the country, each one a testament to the myriad ways in which immigration has influenced the artists and their creations.

This exhibition is a celebration of the artistic spirit and the immigrant journey, highlighting the enduring impact of diverse cultures on American art and society. It is a tribute to the resilience, creativity, and enduring spirit of those who have left their homelands to become part of the United States narrative. As you explore this exhibition, I hope you find a deeper appreciation for how these artworks reflect the complex tapestry of lives that have shaped—and continue to shape—the American landscape.

The United States is often described as a land of immigrants, where diverse cultures blend and contribute to the evolving story of the nation. The artworks in this exhibition originate from various regions—from bustling metropolises to tranquil rural landscapes—each offering a unique perspective on the American experience. These artists, representing different backgrounds and viewpoints, delve into themes of movement, belonging, and transformation, capturing the essence of what it means to be American. I, too, was made in America, a reflection of the dreams and hope in our country.

Hosting this exhibition in my home, the Chief of Mission Residence, allows me to share a very personal reflection on these themes. As an immigrant from Venezuela who now represents the United States abroad, I find that each piece of art resonates with aspects of my own journey as well as the broader immigrant experience. The artworks showcased here are not merely aesthetic endeavors; they are profound narratives encapsulated in visual form, each telling a story of hope, adversity, and change. And although I was not born in America, America was born inside of me.

---

I invite you to immerse yourself in this visual journey, where art and story converge to paint a vivid picture of the United States. May the American dream live on; and may the endless possibility of the America we love and cherish live in all of us.

Ambassador Nathalie Reyes

Zagreb, Croatia

June 2024

---

## Artist Biographies

### Anneli Arms (born 1935)

Title of Artwork Displayed: Liberty Reflection



Year Created: 1987

Format: Monoprint

Dimensions: 18 x 20 1/4 in. (45,7 x 51,4 cm)

Collection of Art in Embassies, Washington, D.C.

## Bryan Fernández (born 2000)

*“Baila Conmigo* was [inspired by] the nightlife of Washington Heights...on the popular Dyckman Street in Upper Manhattan and captures one of the most prominent features of Dominican culture, dancing. Accompanied by [musical] genres such as Bachata and Merengue, dancing is a fundamental part of the community tradition of the working class that we carry from the island. The imagery of the painting is meant to reflect the energy of the club, using materials also tied to *dominicanidad* such as tobacco, one of the Dominican Republic’s most prominent industries.”

In his large-scale, multimedia assemblages, Bryan Fernández explores issues surrounding his Afro-Dominican identity, the Caribbean diaspora, and his community in the Washington Heights neighborhood of New York City, an area affectionately known as the Little Dominican Republic.

Fernández constructs vibrant scenes of everyday life, incorporating not only fine arts media such as photography, painting, and prints, but also found materials including dominos, clothes, and cookware. In this way, he not only amplifies these culturally resonant details but also pays homage to texturally rich Dominican folk art.

---

Title of Artwork Displayed: *Baila Conmigo Love*



Year Created: 2021

Format: Mixed media assemblage painting on canvas

Dimensions: 48 x 36 in. (121,9 x 91,4 cm)

Courtesy of the artist, New York, New York

## Malayka Gormally (born 1960)

“With my portraits, I aim to highlight immigrants’ individuality, community connections, and presence in our society to help increase sensitivity to immigrants. As an immigrant’s daughter, I grew up on stories of suffering during the Nazi occupation of my father’s country, the Netherlands, and witnessed his difficulties navigating American culture. My mom spoke of her family coming through Ellis Island around 1900 to escape the pogroms and how they grew up in poverty in Brooklyn tenements and built lives and careers in the U.S. And yet, I never thought to focus my artwork on immigration until I participated in a march against the first travel ban in 2017. During the march, walking with groups of women immigrants from African countries, I understood that my family’s immigration story was central to my identity and that I had commonalities with the women around me.”

In her portraits of women immigrants in the Seattle region, Malayka Gormally showcases her subjects in unembellished yet powerful scenes of everyday life, from embracing their loved ones to applying for U.S. citizenship. *Reunion of Members of the Ethiopian Community in Seattle* focuses on the warmth and connection of friends and family at a local nonprofit’s monthly community-cooked breakfast. The organization provides assistance with employment, housing, health care, and legal services for recent Ethiopian immigrants.

---

**Title of Artwork Displayed: Reunion of Members of the Ethiopian Community in Seattle**



Year Created: 2020

Format: Ink, watercolor, gouache on handmade paper made in India from recycled clothes

Dimensions: 25 x 37 ½ in. (63,5 x 95,3 cm)

Courtesy of the artist, Seattle, Washington



**Title of Artwork Displayed: Mother and Children and Ellis Island, early 1900s**



Year Created: 2022

Format: Gouache, watercolor, and India ink on paper

Dimensions: 30 x 22 in. (76,2 x 55,9 cm)

Courtesy of the artist, Seattle, Washington

**Jeanne Jalandoni (born 1993)**

*“Family Reunion (Ring Around the Rosie) captures my cousin, my sister, and I playing together. Most of my maternal family resides in Seattle, and my family would fly from New York City to spend our summers with them. There is a reminder of my family roots with the framed portrait of my mother, her siblings, and my lolo and lola (grandparents), who were farmers. My mother’s generation were the first to receive college degrees, and then come to America. The*

stripes of the woven room reference the stripe[d] pages of my mother's scrapbooks from the 1970's. This inclusion ultimately signifies that this playful moment has passed and is now a preserved memory."

In her paintings and mixed media installations, Jeanne Jalandoni navigates her Filipino American identity through the excavation of personal archives, historical documents, childhood memories, and ancestral stories. In depicting seemingly mundane moments between her and her family members, she constructs intimate narratives that explore intergenerational bonds and the Filipino diaspora. To craft these scenes, she weaves and pieces together a rich textural array of handmade textiles, photographs, found fabrics, and painting, creating a hybrid artform that also reflects the multiple realities of her bicultural identity.

**Title of Artwork Displayed: Family Reunion (Ring Around the Rosie)**



Year Created: 2023

Format: Oil on canvas, cotton t-shirts, iron-on print, cotton and wool weaving, various fabric, machine knits, charcoal, fabric dye

Dimensions: 41 x 42 in. (104,1 x 106,7 cm)

Courtesy of the artist, New York, New York

## Leeah Joo (born 1971)

“The art historian Irving Lavin wrote that the luxurious drapery depicted in Baroque art separates the fictive from the real world, connecting the past with the present, like a curtain at a theater. The baroque drapery was often used near the edge of the painting, suggesting the viewer is granted access to something precious. My *pojagi* paintings of traditional Korean wrapping cloths explore these connotations of the drapery as veiled still life, filtered through the lens of a Korean American immigrant. Beautiful, ornate cloths conjure memories of my childhood in Seoul on New Year or special occasions when my mother brought out the carefully wrapped bundle of *hanbok*, a Korean dress. As she unknotted the silken covering, I anxiously waited for the reveal of the dress I knew well. When my daughter’s *hanbok* arrived from Koreatown in Queens, New York, the box revealed a carefully wrapped silk *pojagi* bundle. Untying the familiar knot, I know the tradition I am sharing with my daughter isn’t only the pretty dress, but the bundle itself and the anticipation of unveiling a connection to something precious.”

Leeah Joo is a Korean American artist who explores themes of cross-cultural experiences by combining Eastern and Western painting traditions. Born to a sculptor father and an illustrator mother in Seoul, Joo moved to the United States with her family at age ten. Joo’s body of complex, hyperrealist paintings explore different connotations of drapery as a still-life subject, filtered through the lens of her experience as Asian American immigrant and her interest in Korean mythology, history, and decorative textiles.

---

**Title of Artwork Displayed: Pojagi Baroque**



Year Created: 2017

Format: Oil on panel on canvas

Dimensions: 46 x 46 in. (116,8 x 116,8 cm)

Courtesy of the artist, Middleburg, Connecticut

**Antonio Masi (born 1940)**

“With *Future Americans*, I tried to depict the tumultuous journey of arriving in America, encapsulating a mix of fear and excitement. As we crossed the treacherous North Atlantic in December, fear pervaded our emotions. The unfamiliarity of the food aboard the ship, combined with seasickness, added to the apprehension. The cramped living conditions, sleeping

---

in one room with other immigrants, heightened the sense of vulnerability. Despite the challenges, there was an underlying excitement about the new beginning awaiting us in America...Overall, the painting evokes the complex emotions of embarking on a new chapter in a foreign land.”

In his large-scale watercolor paintings, Antonio Masi seeks to capture the sensation of wonder and promise he experienced upon arriving at Ellis Island at age seven with his family after traveling for a week by freighter from Italy. His subjects range from New York City’s soaring bridges and landmarks to family portraits and historical figures, all executed in bold brushstrokes and multiple layers of thick glazes to enhance his carefully rendered descriptive details.

---

Title of Artwork Displayed: Future Americans



Year Created: 2019

Format: Charcoal sticks on watercolor paper

Dimensions: 40 × 26 in. (101,6 × 66 cm)

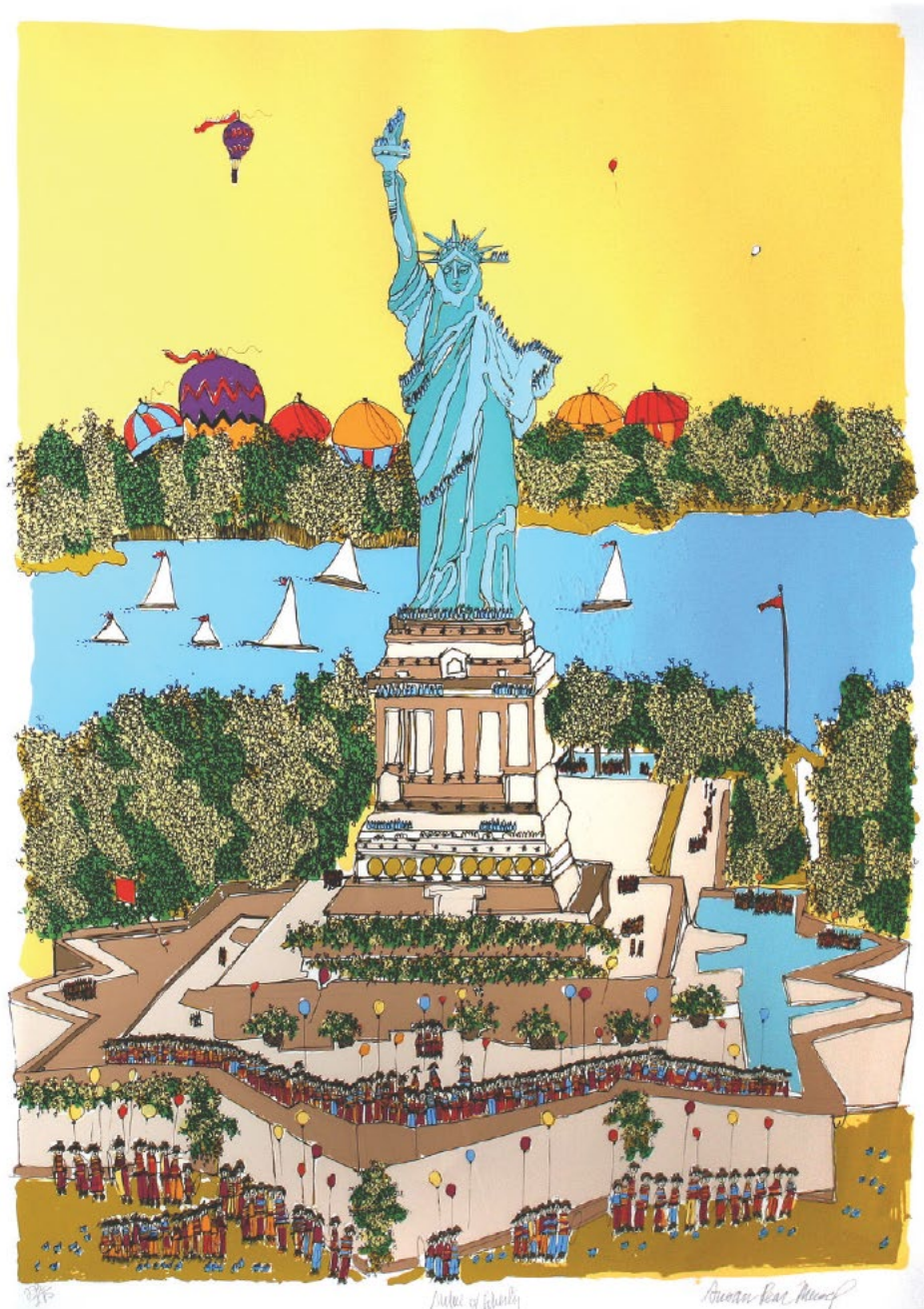
Courtesy of the artist, Smithtown, New York

## **Susan Pear Meisel (born 1947)**

Known by many monikers including Lady of the Harbor, Mother of Exiles, and the Grand Dame, the Statue of Liberty came to embody freedom, hope, and opportunity for countless immigrants and refugees who passed under its gaze. However, Liberty's status as a veritable cultural icon began even before its unveiling in 1886, when its French sculptor, Frédéric Auguste Bartholdi, began selling postcards, stamps, and other items bearing the statue's image to fund its completion. Since then, artists from Norman Rockwell to Keith Haring have appropriated and re-imagined its likeness as a vehicle for creative expression, inspired by the statue's visual dynamism and symbolic power. Here, Susan Pear Meisel employs the flat planes of cheery color typical of her practice, situating the landmark at the print's center surrounded by balloons, sailboats, and throngs of eager visitors.

---

Title of Artwork Displayed: Statue of Liberty



Format: Lithograph

Dimensions: 50 ½ x 38 ¾ in. (128,3 x 98,4 cm)

Collection of Art in Embassies, Washington, D.C.; Gift of Allen Brill



## **Rick Rocamora (born 1947)**

For eighteen years, Filipino American photographer Rick Rocamora documented the lives of Filipino World War II veterans as they fought to gain the rights and recognition that often eluded them as immigrants. The historic origins of this project can be traced to the Rescission Act of 1947, which revoked the promised U.S. citizenship status and veteran compensation of more than 200,000 Filipinos who fought alongside U.S. armed forces in World War II. It was not until 1990, after decades of legal battles and activism, that 26,000 Filipino nationals were granted citizenship in recognition of their service. Rocamora, who fled the Philippines after the declaration of martial law in 1972, forged a deep connection with these veterans, often bringing them food, overseeing their welfare, and even acting as a pallbearer at their funerals. While recording their lives, he illuminated their struggles and the discrimination they faced in the United States while maintaining hope for equity. *God Bless America* thus poignantly presents a naturalization ceremony for these aging veterans that, while celebratory, was markedly overdue.

---

**Title of Artwork Displayed: God Bless America**



Year Made: 1993

Format: Silver gelatin print

Dimensions: 19 ½ x 24 ½ in. (49,5 x 62,2 cm)

Collection of Art in Embassies, Washington, D.C., and the artist, Oakland, California

## Photographer Unknown

Title of Artwork Displayed: Arriving at Ellis Island



Year Created: Published by Bain News Service, reprinted 2014

Format: Digital reproduction of a black and white photograph, mounted on Dibond

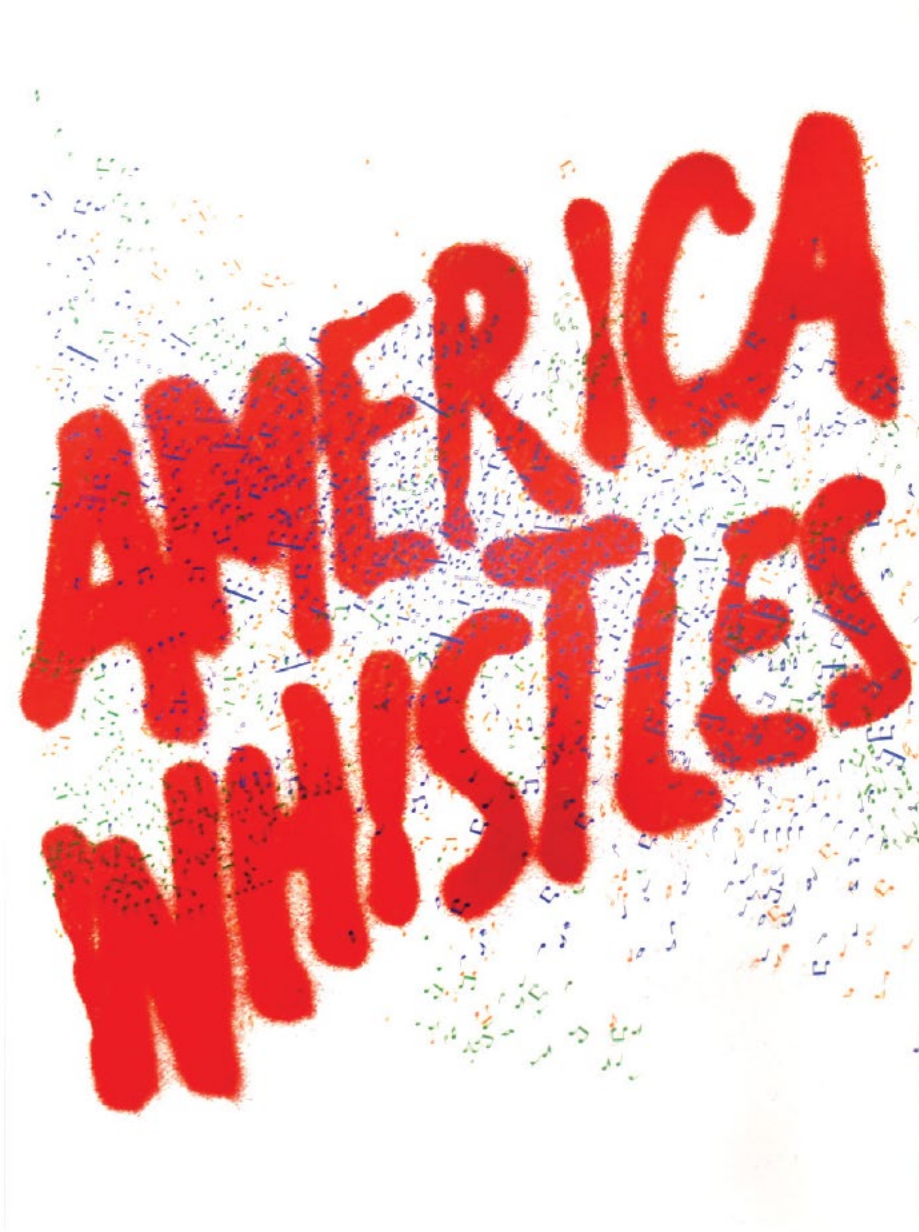
Dimensions: 20 x 24 in. (50,8 x 61 cm)

Collection of Art in Embassies, Washington, D.C.; Bain Collection, Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division Washington, D.C.

## Edward Ruscha (born 1937)

The print on the following page was commissioned as part of a limited-edition portfolio entitled *America: The Third Century* in honor of the nation's bicentennial. Although the text, as in most of Edward Ruscha's works, offers few narrative clues, the cascade of musical notes and lively graffiti-style script together create a visually exuberant composition.

**Title of Artwork Displayed: America Whistles**



Year Created: 1975

Format: Lithograph

Dimensions: 40 x 31 ½ in. (101,6 x 80 cm)

Collection of Art in Embassies, Washington, D.C.; Gift of The Mobil Corporation

---

## Photographer Unknown

“A Cuban refugee kissed a dock in Miami in 1966 after he and seven others were picked up by the United States Coast Guard while trying to reach the Florida coast in a homemade boat. The men had run out of food and water when they were spotted.”

### Title of Artwork Displayed: Cuban Refugees



Format: Photographic print

Dimensions: 16 1/4 x 19 in. (41,3 x 48,3 cm)

Collection of Art in Embassies, Washington, D.C., and the netHistorical Museum of Southern Florida, Miami, Florida

---

## Photographer Unknown

**Title of Artwork Displayed: Inspection Room, Ellis Island, New York, N.Y.**



Year Created: published by Detroit Publishing Company 1900-1915, reprinted 2014

Format: Digital reproduction of a black and white photograph, mounted on Dibond

Dimensions: 20 x 24 in. (50,8 x 61 cm)

Collection of Art in Embassies, Washington, D.C.; Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, Washington, D.C.

## Acknowledgements

### Washington, D.C.

Carolyn Yates, Curator

Danielle Giampietro, Registrar

Tabitha Brackens, Editor

Megan Pannone, Editor

Tori See, Editor

---

Amanda Brooks, Imaging Manager and Photographer  
Sara Herbst, Graphic Designer

## **San Salvador, El Salvador**

Mario Bicanic

Damjan Bijelic

Rebecca Eggert

Danielle Harms

Denis Ivaskovic

Zvonko Kolic

Christian Lynch

Nina Vranesevic Marinic

Nikolina Paic

Anja Picelj-Kosak

Josip Skaro

---