



# Art in Embassies

U.S. DEPARTMENT *of* STATE

## Art in Embassies Exhibition: United States Embassy Baku

### 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)

## Ambassador's Statement

Danusia and I are honored to welcome you to the U.S. Ambassador's Residence and to present this exhibition of American art that reminds us of home. During our travels around this beautiful country, we have greatly admired the hospitality of Azerbaijan's people and the diversity of its natural beauty.

Although separated by vast distances, Azerbaijan and my native region of New England, the six northeastern-most states in the United States, share surprising similarities in their landscapes. The rolling hills, lush forests, bustling cities, mountain peaks, and picturesque coastlines not only reflect a harmonious kaleidoscope of colors but also terrain that has borne witness to history. Each brushstroke in our exhibition echoes the essence of these vistas, capturing the ever-changing hues of the seasons and the echoes of generations past.

Kate Hanlon's *Marblehead* evokes maritime Massachusetts, a place dear to my heart and is a reminder of my dream to return one day to seaside New England, where my family has lived for almost three centuries. *Down the Garden Path* reminds me of my days as a small child toddling after my grandparents as they worked in their fragrant Connecticut garden.

Michael Graves's *Acadia*, with its blue and emerald tones, captures the stark natural beauty of Maine—and reminds me of the tough, resilient spirit of the Native and immigrant New Englanders who live there. The dual perspective of *Boston Study* juxtaposes the architectural wonders of the birthplace of the American Revolution. Boston is both the cradle of American liberty, where patriots dared to defy tyranny and forge a nation founded on the principles of liberty, and a modern, multi-ethnic hub of world-class universities, passionate sports fans, innovators, and Nobel Prize-winners.

Striking works by New England artists Christiane Corcelle, Sky Hoyt, Steve Imrich, and Sherrie York round out the exhibition with their interpretations of landscapes in a variety of media.

We are grateful to the talented artists, curators, and Art in Embassies staff for providing this exhibition and for their dedication to upholding the role of art as a universal language that

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brings our people together. We hope these works prompt you to reflect on the beauty of the landscapes that surround us and on our responsibility to preserve them for future generations.

Ambassador Mark Libby and Danusia Bagniuk-Libby

Baku, Azerbaijan

September 2024

## **Artist Biographies**

### **Christiane Corcelle (born 1957)**

Christiane Corcelle's oeuvre encourages viewers to appreciate the inherent beauty found in daily life. Each artwork she creates is a "testament to the boundless potential of artistic expression" and a "celebration of the transformative power of creativity." Not Only Circles exemplifies her artistic vision, born out of found objects. Part of her A Better Cup of Tea project, Corcelle transforms the mundane into something extraordinary in this work by using recycled materials to relief print a collection of used tea bags that she then assembled.

Corcelle held artist residencies at the Vermont Studio Center, Johnson, and Château d'Orquevaux, France. Public collections of her work can be found in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; the Danang Fine Arts Museum, Vietnam; and Casa de las Américas, La Habana, Cuba.

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**Title of Artwork Displayed: Not Only Circles**



Year Created: 2015

Format: Relief print on used tea bags glued on canvas

Dimensions: 36 x 60 x 2 in (91,4 x 152,4 x 5,1 cm)

Courtesy of the artist, Arlington, Massachusetts

## **Michael Graves (born 1952)**

Michael Graves is a *plein-air*, or outdoor, painter of New England coasts, mountains, and contemporary genre scenes. With his canvases rendered in a fluid, painterly style, Graves demonstrates his vibrant and colorful approach to painting outdoors. In a time of continuous change, his paintings capture all that is constant, enduring, and timeless in the American landscape.

Graves trained under Cape Ann landscape artist Bernard Corey for thirty years. A member of the Guild of Boston Artists, American Artists Professional League, and Allied Artists of America, Graves's work has appeared in the *New York Times* and *American Artist*. He was selected for the

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top 100 United States paintings from the National Park Academy of the Arts and won numerous awards, including the Grumbacher Gold Medal and the Lee M. Loeb Memorial Award from the Salmagundi Club, New York.

**Title of Artwork Displayed: Sailboats**



Year Created: 2018

Format: Oil on canvas

Dimensions: 16 x 20 in. (40,6 x 50,8 cm)

Courtesy of the artist, Millbury, Massachusetts

**Title of Artwork Displayed: Acadia**



Year Created: 2019

Format: Oil on canvas

Dimensions: 16 x 20 in. (40,6 x 50,8 cm)

Courtesy of the artist, Millbury, Massachusetts

**Title of Artwork Displayed: Flags**



Year Created: 2019

Format: Oil on canvas

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

Courtesy of the artist, Millbury, Massachusetts

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**Title of Artwork Displayed: Gardens**



Year Created: 2022

Format: Oil on canvas

Dimensions: 18 x 24 in. (45,7 x 61 cm)

Courtesy of the artist, Millbury, Massachusetts

**Title of Artwork Displayed: Boston Study**



Year Created: 2023

Format: Oil on canvas

Dimensions: 16 x 12 in. (40,6 x 30,5 cm)

Courtesy of the artist, Millbury, Massachusetts

## **Kate Hanlon (born 1957)**

Inspired by her experiences on Boston's North Shore and throughout New England, Kate Hanlon seeks to revive and continue the tradition of white line woodcut in the twenty-first century. First developed in Provincetown, Massachusetts, the medium allows luminous, multicolored images to be made from a single block of wood. Marblehead—which depicts a picturesque seaside community—and Down the Garden Path—made at a garden center in Salisbury, Massachusetts—were created at the same general location on the same day and then exhibited together. “The woodblock had a full life of its own as a tree before lending itself to my own creative impulses, and the history of its life is captured in the grain patterns that become a part of my print. It’s a sort of collaboration; in my response to the woodgrain, I enjoy allowing the tree to live again through my prints,” Hanlon says of her work.

Hanlon first taught herself the woodcut medium as a printmaking student. She is a member of the Boston Printmakers and the Society of American Graphic Artists, and her work is featured in the collections of the Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.; the Indianapolis Museum of Art; and the Boston Public Library.

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**Title of Artwork Displayed: Marblehead**



Year Created: 2012, printed 2024

Format: Print; white line woodcut

Dimensions: 24 x 17 ½ in. (61 x 44,5 cm)

Courtesy of the artist, Newburyport, Massachusetts

**Title of Artwork Displayed: Down the Garden Path**



Year Created: 2016, printed 2024

Format: Print; white line woodcut

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

Courtesy of the artist, Newburyport, Massachusetts

## Sky Hoyt (born 1968)

Informed by the continual variety of images and arrangement of everyday objects, Sky Hoyt crafts an imaginative world in her artwork and blurs the lines between digital, found, and traditional media. Her materials largely include acrylic on canvas with collaged media—specifically textiles, Okawara rice paper, and gold leaf. In *Lotus Chair*, the combination of those elements creates depth and allows for a tactile experience. “Drawing inspiration from the abundant visual tapestry of our world, my artistic journey is fueled by a quest to craft compositions that delve into interconnectedness, order, narrative depth, symbolism, and visual poetry,” Hoyt says.

After earning a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in visual arts from Bennington College, Vermont, Hoyt studied at Colorado State University, Fort Collins; the Ox-Bow School of Art, Saugatuck, Michigan; and the Art Students League and National Academy of Design, both in New York.

### Title of Artwork Displayed: Lotus Chair



Year Created: 2019

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Format: Acrylic, textile, and rice paper on canvas

Dimensions: 60 x 56 in. (152,4 x 142,2 cm)

Courtesy of the artist and Anne Irwin Fine Art, Atlanta, Georgia

## **Steve Imrich (born 1952)**

Steve Imrich is a painter with a multifaceted background in aviation, architecture, and studio arts. He explores interactions between weather and landscape, specifically how the time of day, land patterns, and seasons can alter viewers' perceptions of place. *LANDABLE FIELDS* was inspired by "memories of aerial perspectives and images of regional agricultural interventions" and demonstrates the scale of patterns and illusion of endless runways introduced into the American landscape.

Imrich received a Bachelor of Arts degree with a concentration in studio arts and history from Goddard College, Plainfield, Vermont, and a Master of Architecture degree from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge. His work has been exhibited throughout New England, namely at the New Britain Museum of Art, Connecticut, and the Danforth Art Museum, Framingham, Massachusetts.

### **Title of Artwork Displayed: LANDABLE FIELDS**



Year Created: 2002

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Format: Oil on linen

Dimensions: 42 x 36 in. (106,7 x 91,4 cm)

Courtesy of the artist, Somerville, Massachusetts

## **Sherrie York (born 1962)**

Self-taught printmaker and “compulsive wanderer of landscapes” Sherrie York’s career encompasses environmental education, natural history illustration, and birding. Motivated by the scientists, biologists, and birders who taught her to pay attention to the interactions of living things, she portrays these interactions as “moments in time” and “stories of the wider experience of life on earth” in her linocuts—a form of relief print in which an image is carved from a linoleum block. York uses a technique called reduction printing: she draws the composition onto the block, carves away areas that do not need printing, and rolls the ink onto the paper surface. “When an image I create sparks a memory or reflects an experience familiar to the viewer, it provides common ground for sharing our stories and understanding each other’s perspective. And shared stories can help us not only to celebrate the beauty found in nature, but also to tackle larger issues of wildlife, water, and land conservation,” she says.

York began pursuing art after a college field trip to draw backyard chickens. She has been an invited artist and board member of the International Artists for Nature Foundation, as well as coordinator of the Audubon Artist Residency.

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**Title of Artwork Displayed: Trunk Show**



Year Created: 2016

Format: Linocut

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

Courtesy of the artist, Bristol, Maine

**Title of Artwork Displayed: Chasing Daylight**



Year Created: 2019

Format: Linocut

Dimensions: 12 x 18 in. (30,5 x 45,7 cm)

Courtesy of the artist, Bristol, Maine

**Title of Artwork Displayed: Come Along, Dear**



Year Created: 2020

Format: Linocut

Dimensions: 12 x 18 in. (30,5 x 45,7 cm)

Courtesy of the artist, Bristol, Maine

**Title of Artwork Displayed: Confluent**



Year Created: 2020

Format: Linocut

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Dimensions: 8 x 24 in. (20,3 x 61 cm)

Courtesy of the artist, Bristol, Maine

**Title of Artwork Displayed: Low T'eiders**



Year Created: 2020

Format: Linocut

Dimensions: 12 x 12 in. (30,5 x 30,5 cm)

Courtesy of the artist, Bristol, Maine

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