



# Art in Embassies

U.S. DEPARTMENT *of* STATE

## Art in Embassies Exhibition: United States Embassy Dili

### 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

It is a joy to welcome these works of art to the U.S. Ambassador's Residence in Dili. They represent a personal connection to nature and landscape, born from friendship and a shared fascination with the world around us. I am fortunate to know these artists and am deeply grateful that they agreed to create new work reflecting my home in the northeastern United States, and for Laura Cannamela's work in presenting a view of my new home here in Timor-Leste. I hope you will feel these connections, too.

Each of the artists deeply examines beauty and time. What is ephemeral? What gets recorded from the botanical or geological past? What hints can we see about our future? How do we count in layers or through repetition? Art can encourage us to contemplate our surroundings and our relationship to the world. Both artists also challenge us to understand how "season" has a truly human, cultural meaning.

I also admire how these pieces converse with the views through the windows of this historic building—engaging with the sunlight, the clouds reflecting off the ocean, and the many flowers and trees in the gardens here. Our embassy is in a conversation, too, with the people of Timor-Leste, and I am honored to represent my country here.

Ambassador Donna Ann Welton

Dili, Timor-Leste

October 2024

## Artist Biographies

### Laura Cannamela (born 1956)

Laura Cannamela's work explores the process of landscape formation. Crafted with layers of handmade paper, her collage sculptures are inspired by her firsthand observations of nature and study of topographical maps. "This series of four small collages [was] created specifically

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for the [Art in Embassies] exhibition at the Residence of the U.S. Ambassador in Timor-Leste. These works were inspired by riparian landscapes in New York State and Timor-Leste. While individually each collage reflects geographical variations in climate, together they are unified by the interconnected relationship of river and land formation. *Winter* and *Autumn* were informed by areas of the Kinderhook Creek, a tributary of the Hudson River, which flows through Columbia County, New York. *Bailoron* and *Tempu-udan*, titled using the Tetum names for the dry season and the wet season in Timor-Leste, focus on sections of the Comoro River, which flows through Dili into the Ombai Strait.”

Born in New Jersey, Cannamela received a Master of Fine Arts degree from Queens College, City University of New York. Her work has been recognized by the Martha Boschen Porter Fund, the Platte Clove Artist-in-Residence Program, the New York Foundation for the Arts, the Freeman Foundation, and the Five College Center for East Asian Studies.

**Title of Artwork Displayed: Autumn**



Year Created: 2024

Format: Cut paper relief collage

Dimensions: 7 3/8 x 7 3/8 in (18,7 x 18,7 cm)

Courtesy of the artist, Valatie, New York

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**Title of Artwork Displayed: Winter**



Year Created: 2024

Format: Cut paper relief collage

Dimensions: 7 3/8 x 7 3/8 in (18,7 x 18,7 cm)

Courtesy of the artist, Valatie, New York

**Title of Artwork Displayed: Bailoron**



Year Created: 2024

Format: Cut paper relief collage

Dimensions: 7 3/8 x 7 3/8 in (18,7 x 18,7 cm)

Courtesy of the artist, Valatie, New York

**Title of Artwork Displayed: Tempu-udan**



Year Created: 2024

Format: Cut paper relief collage

Dimensions: 7 3/8 x 7 3/8 in (18,7 x 18,7 cm)

Courtesy of the artist, Valatie, New York

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**Title of Artwork Displayed: Kaaters**



Year Created: 2023

Format: Cut paper relief collage

Dimensions: 9 ½ x 8 ½ in (24,1 x 21,6 cm)

Courtesy of the artist, Valatie, New York

From the artist: “*Kaaters* suggests the origins of Kaaterskill Creek deep within the elevated landforms of the Catskill Mountains, west of the Hudson River. By emphasizing the formation of propitious environments [that] have sustained and enhanced our human lives, my artwork encourages us to connect with that long-ago time and protect these natural resources for the future.”

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**Title of Artwork Displayed: Moodna**



Year Created: 2023

Format: Cut paper relief collage

Dimensions: 9 ½ x 8 ½ in (24,1 x 21,6 cm)

Courtesy of the artist, Valatie, New York

From the artist: “*Moodna* refers to Moodna Creek, a tributary of the Hudson River in New York. In my artwork, as in nature, the process of layering indicates a state of transformation, becoming a record of change through time.”

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**Title of Artwork Displayed: Stony**



Year Created: 2024

Format: Cut paper relief collage

Dimensions: 9 ½ x 8 ½ in (24,1 x 21,6 cm)

Courtesy of the artist, Valatie, New York

From the artist: "Stony Kill, a fast-flowing creek in Columbia County, New York, erodes through and around Appalachian bedrock, creating rocky gorges and waterfalls as it forms an inviting riparian zone."

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**Title of Artwork Displayed: Binnewater**



Year Created: 2024

Format: Cut paper relief collage

Dimensions: 9 ½ x 8 ½ in (24,1 x 21,6 cm)

Courtesy of the artist, Valatie, New York

From the artist: “*Binnewater* is believed to be a word of Dutch derivation meaning ‘inner water.’ This work reveals alluvial plains and riparian zones which were created in the wake of a receding glacier as it carved a division between the Catskill Mountains and the Shawangunk Ridge.”

## **Robert Kushner (born 1949)**

Robert Kushner’s artwork centers around ornamentation and decoration. His paintings of organic material abstracted and graphically depicted are influenced by European textiles and global artists. “I never get tired of pursuing new ideas in the realm of ornamentation. Decoration, an abjectly pejorative dismissal for many, is a very big, somewhat defiant declaration for me. ... The eye can wander, the mind think unencumbered through visual realms that are expansively and emotionally rich. Decoration has always had its own agenda, the sincere and unabashed offering of pleasure and solace,” he said.

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*Summer Garden I – VII*, a series created specifically for display in Dili, is an example of Kushner's minimalist abstracted floral scenes. "My subject matter included zinnias, daisies, dianthus, gazania, cornflower, petunia, marigold, grass, clover, delphinium. All flowers easily encountered in an American summer garden," he said. "Each flower was drawn by me in the studio while looking directly at the flower or plant itself. Each painting is a different combination of these flowers, drawn with different media. When viewed all together, the different flowers and colors combine and recombine to create individual passages of flowers within the entirety of the whole."

Kushner's works are included in many prominent public collections including the Museum of Modern Art, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and the Whitney Museum of American Art, all in New York; the National Gallery of Art and the Corcoran Gallery of Art, both in Washington, D.C.; Tate Gallery, London; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; the Contemporary Museum, Honolulu; the Denver Art Museum; Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence, Italy; J. Paul Getty Trust, Los Angeles; Museum Ludwig, St. Petersburg, Russia; and the Philadelphia Museum of Art.

**Title of Artwork Displayed: Summer Garden I**



Year Created: 2024

Format: Oil, ink, acrylic, crayon on Japanese paper

Dimensions: 37 × 18 in. (94 × 45,7 cm)

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Courtesy of the artist, New York, New York

**Title of Artwork Displayed: Summer Garden II**



Year Created: 2024

Format: Oil, ink, acrylic, crayon on Japanese paper

Dimensions: 37 × 18 in. (94 × 45,7 cm)

Courtesy of the artist, New York, New York

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**Title of Artwork Displayed: Summer Garden III**



Year Created: 2024

Format: Oil, ink, acrylic, crayon on Japanese paper

Dimensions: 37 × 18 in. (94 × 45,7 cm)

Courtesy of the artist, New York, New York

**Title of Artwork Displayed: Summer Garden IV**



Year Created: 2024

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Format: Oil, ink, acrylic, crayon on Japanese paper

Dimensions: 37 × 18 in. (94 × 45,7 cm)

Courtesy of the artist, New York, New York

**Title of Artwork Displayed: Summer Garden V**



Year Created: 2024

Format: Oil, ink, acrylic, crayon on Japanese paper

Dimensions: 37 × 18 in. (94 × 45,7 cm)

Courtesy of the artist, New York, New York

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**Title of Artwork Displayed: Summer Garden VI**



Year Created: 2024

Format: Oil, ink, acrylic, crayon on Japanese paper

Dimensions: 37 × 18 in. (94 × 45,7 cm)

Courtesy of the artist, New York, New York

**Title of Artwork Displayed: Summer Garden VII**



Year Created: 2024

Format: Oil, ink, acrylic, crayon on Japanese paper

Dimensions: 37 × 18 in. (94 × 45,7 cm)

Courtesy of the artist, New York, New York

## Acknowledgements

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