

United States Embassy Ghana

*Connections
Across Time and Space*



Art in Embassies Program

Welcome to the Residence of the U.S. Ambassador



We are honored to be in Ghana representing the United States of America and to be able to share with you, our visitors, an exhibition of American art that we have entitled *Connections Across Time and Space*.

Even before coming to Ghana, we were well aware of its rich artistic heritage – in music and dance, in weaving and handicrafts. We were intrigued by

Ghana's well-deserved reputation for artwork in cloth and tapestry and beads and in jewelry made of gold and other precious metals. At the same time, we knew that there were numerous American artists doing innovative work in these same media, some influenced and inspired by Africa's traditions. After arriving in Ghana and having the opportunity to view the work of local artists, we have become even more convinced that Ghanaian and American artists are speaking to each other "Across Time and Space" through their imaginative handling of these common, but varied media.

We hope that as you spend time in our home, these artists will also speak to you. Look at the pieces made with beads or fiber, the sculpture and masks, and read what the artists themselves have to say about their works. It is what you, our guests, bring to the appreciation of this art that counts the most. You, perhaps, can expand our sense of the linkages that exist between Ghanaian and American artistic and craft traditions.

We are deeply grateful to the American artists and galleries who so generously loaned their works, and to the State Department's Art in Embassies Program (AIEP), and especially to our curator, Camille Benton, for her advice and assistance in helping us to make selections and assemble the exhibition. We are also grateful to the Society for Contemporary Crafts and to FiberScene.com for facilitating contact with the artists.

Thanks to the generosity of many lenders, we can provide a special American welcome to all who visit this residence.

Mary Carlin Yates
U.S. Ambassador

John M. Yates
(Retired U.S. Ambassador)

Accra
July 2003

Cover:

Kat Tomka

Timeline, 2001

Charcoal, graphite on tape, wax, beads, and capsules

15 in. (38,1 cm) diameter; 72 in. (182,9 cm) chain

Courtesy of the artist, Anchorage, Alaska

The Art in Embassies Program

Founded in 1964, the U.S. Department of State Art in Embassies Program (AIEP) is a unique blend of art and diplomacy, politics and culture. Its mission is to promote dialogue through the international language of art that leads to mutual respect and understanding between diverse cultures. Today, AIEP is a sophisticated program that curates exhibitions, managing and exhibiting more than 3,500 original works of art by U.S. citizens in a variety of media and styles. They are obtained through loan from sources that include U.S. museums, galleries, artists, corporations, and private collectors, and displayed in the public rooms of some 170 U.S. Embassy residences and diplomatic missions.

AIEP exhibitions, with their diverse themes and content, silently yet persuasively represent one of the most important principles of our democracy: freedom of expression. They are a source of great pride to U.S. ambassadors, assisting them in multi-functional outreach to the host country's educational, cultural, business, and diplomatic communities. In viewing the exhibitions, the thousands of guests who visit United States Embassy residences each year have the opportunity to learn about our nation – its history, customs, values, and aspirations – by experiencing American art firsthand. We invite you to visit the AIEP web site, <http://aiep.state.gov>, which features on-line versions of all exhibitions worldwide, and hyperlinks with artists and lenders.

American Artists Abroad Program

Initiated in 2002, the American Artists Abroad program was created to extend Art in Embassies' exhibitions beyond the walls of U.S. diplomatic residences into local communities. Participating American artists travel to countries where their work is exhibited and engage in a series of public cultural programs such as lectures, workshops, and studio visits. Victoria Rivers is the Accra visiting artist.

The Society for Contemporary Craft

Located in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, the Society for Contemporary Craft (SCC) was founded in 1971 by Elizabeth Rockwell Raphael (1920-1998). An active patron of the arts, Raphael believed that contemporary craft artists had new things to say with traditional materials, and that they needed wider opportunities to exhibit and sell their work. To that end, SCC works to increase public awareness of craft art and promote contemporary craft art and artists. Since 1986 it has organized more than 150 exhibitions featuring the work of over 1,200 national and internationally recognized artists working in a variety of media, including clay, fiber, glass, metal, wood and found materials. Focusing on multi-cultural diversity and non-mainstream art, SCC has grown to become an important center in the world of American and international craft. And it is one of the few organizations in the United States dedicated to building widespread appreciation of contemporary craft through exhibitions, education, and outreach.

Martina Johnson-Allen

"My work celebrates the universal symbols of life giving forces. The work titled *The Passionate Butterfly* expresses the joy that is derived from viewing a colorful butterfly in rhythmic flight. I preserved, in the midst of objects made by humans, the butterfly found in my friend's garden to symbolize truth, beauty and change. My work attempts to keep the butterfly alive in our view and in our hearts. *The Passionate Butterfly* is also a recognition of the harmonious relationship between manmade objects and natural creations."



Martina Johnson-Allen
The Passionate Butterfly, 1994
Mixed media, 22 x 17 x 5 in. (55,9 x 43,2 x 12,7 cm)
Courtesy of the artist, Laverock, Pennsylvania

Martina Johnson-Allen

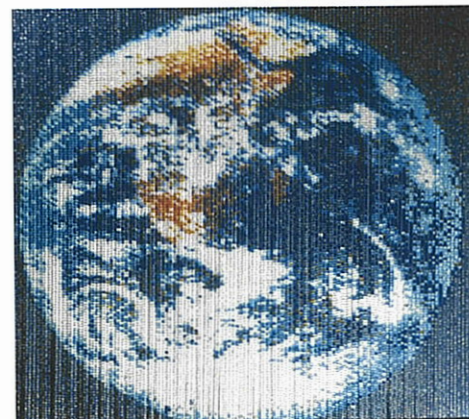
"I was sadly aware that Jacqueline Kennedy and Corretta Scott King would one day have to don the veil, which is donned by all women throughout the world as long as there is disregard for human life. *The Ceremonial Veil* pays homage to all women. We replenish and strengthen the earth. We must wear the veil and go forward in order to save all living things."



Martina Johnson-Allen
Ceremonial Veil, 1996
Mixed media, 12 x 24 x 4 in. (30,5 x 61 x 10,2 cm)
Courtesy of the artist, Laverock, Pennsylvania

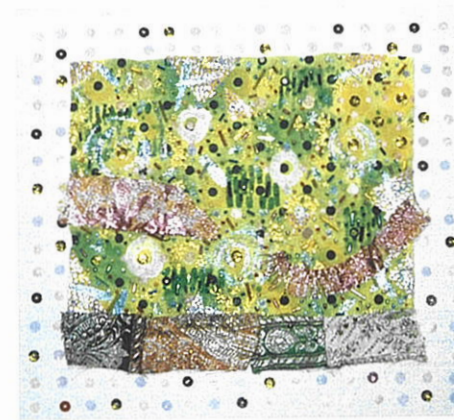
**Gerard Menendez
Byron Lyburn**

Gerard Menendez and Byron Lyburn are Seattle, Washington based artists who have been collaborating on various art projects since 1994. Their large-scale work with beaded mosaics has been well received by viewers and the press alike. Regional venues in which it has been shown include Seattle's Center for Contemporary Art (COCA), Art/Not Terminal Gallery, Phinney Center Gallery, Bumbershoot, and ArtsEdge as well as the Bellevue Art Museum in Bellevue, Washington. Nationally, work by Menendez and Lyburn has been exhibited at the American Craft Museum in New York City and at the 15th Annual Smithsonian Craft Show in Washington, D.C.

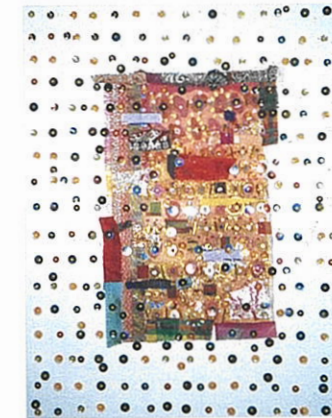


Gerard Menendez and Byron Lyburn
Earth, February 1995
Acrylic rods with pony beads, 41 x 41 in. (104,1 x 104,1 cm)
Courtesy of the artists, Seattle, Washington

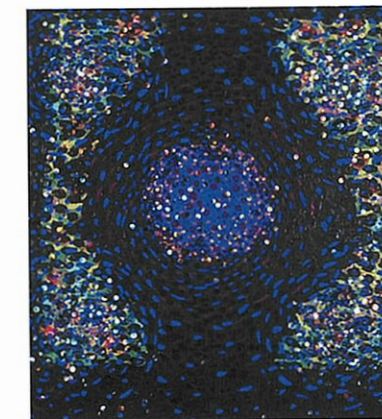
ARCHIVE – DO NOT REMOVE



Victoria Rivers
Johari Bazaar I, undated
Dyes, pigments, appliqué, sequins, and beads on cloth
15 x 14 in. (38,1 x 35,6 cm)
Courtesy of the artist, Sacramento, California



Victoria Rivers
Johari Bazaar II, undated
Dyes, pigments, appliqué, sequins, and beads on cloth
16 x 13 in. (40,6 x 33 cm)
Courtesy of the artist, Sacramento, California



Victoria Rivers
Magnetism, undated
Dyes, pigment, surface additives, sequins, and beetle elytra on cloth
32 1/2 x 35 in. (82,6 x 88,9 cm)
Courtesy of the artist, Sacramento, California

Victoria Rivers

"My creative activities consist of both studio work and research-based writing focused on endangered and disappearing textile traditions of Asia. There is a synergy between the two, as each activity enriches and informs the other. As a Professor in Textile Arts in the Design Program at the University of California-Davis, I am fortunate to be able to follow my passion for non-western textiles through learning, teaching, making, and collecting.

I am continually moved by the innovation and skill of those who create beautiful objects, and by the ways embellished fabrics express the makers' souls and mirror larger social values. Qualities of spontaneity and exuberance seen in embellished ethnographic textiles further fill me with delight. This life-long love culminated in the publication of my book entitled *The Shining Cloth: Dress and Adornment that Glitters* (Thames and Hudson, New York, 1999). This work explores the visual culture, social and ritual contexts of glimmering textiles from around the world."

Kat Tomka

"My recent work in tape evolved out of a NEA [National Endowment for the Arts] fellowship I received through the Ragdale Foundation in Chicago. While there, I began to explore conceptual metaphors relating to body image and cultural body ideals. My work makes reference to concealed and at times, not so concealed cultural definitions of beauty and the associative expectations and presumptions of women (i.e., the cultural ideal colliding with the complexities of the physical, emotional reality). Emphasis is on the contrast between interior and the exterior. In this series of investigations, the weightless material of tape underscores my concept."

Acknowledgments

Washington

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Accra

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Vienna

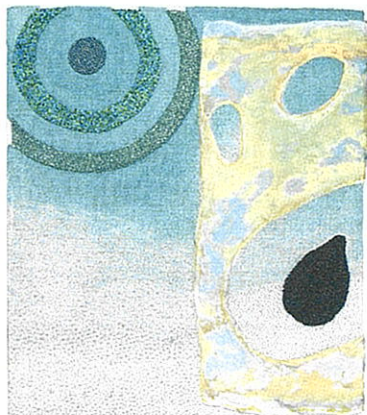
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Karin Birch

"Hand embroidery and hand stitched beadwork, in the fine art context, are engaging to me, as the maker; in several ways. First, the meditative process of being outside of time, quietly, repetitively, filling in space. Second, the challenge of making aesthetically demanding and ultimately meaningful work using simple materials and processes in a very low tech, labor intensive way. And third, the pure beauty and sensuousness of the materials including the tactile surfaces, color and the effect of light and movement."



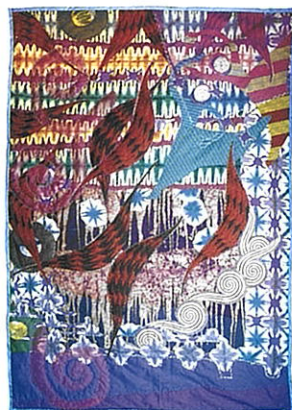
Karin Birch
View, 2000
Hand stitched beadwork and appliquéd, acrylic-painted silk organza on acrylic-painted linen, 13 x 15 in. (33 x 38,1 cm)
Courtesy of the artist, Brunswick, Maryland

Tina Williams Brewer

"Take my hand and lead me on* – Once these words were felt in the deepest part of my soul, the work began to flow, as a triumph for those who walked this way before. The exploration of others' lives became the vehicle for self-discovery and an essential step for acceptance of [the] power that one has within one's self.

When the hand and mind are able to see and feel the world regardless of the circumstances in which we live, one understands the value of the individual, the joy of sharing the vision and giving praise to the Creator while acknowledging the ancestors. Only then can we have the balance of self and peace."

*Take My Hand and Lead Me On is the title of a well-known Christian hymn whose lyrics were written in 1933 by African-American composer Thomas A. Dorsey (1899-1993).



Tina Williams Brewer
If You Don't Hear the Tap Then You Will Hear the Bang, 1998
Fiber, 72 x 50 in. (182,9 x 127 cm)
Courtesy of the artist, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Ann Citron

"I have been working with beads for the last five years. They can be sewn to a piece of material, strung on thread and wrapped around an armature, or sewn in such a way that they can function as sculpture without any other support. Seed beads are very small and time-consuming to work with, but their luminosity, depth of color and sparkle makes them attractive to handle and to look at. It is a tactile and visual pleasure to use beads, as well as shells, buttons, sequins and found objects in my work, and to combine textiles and beads in unexpected ways. It is my hope that viewers will enjoy seeing the combinations as much as I enjoy creating them."



Ann Citron
METATRON - Soul on Fire, 2000
Wrapped wire armature and beads
26 x 18 x 11 in. (66 x 45,7 x 27,9 cm)
Courtesy of the artist, Alexandria, Virginia



Willis "Bing" Davis
Community Revitalization Mask #10, undated
Mixed media, 38 x 16 x 8 in. (96,5 x 40,6 x 20,3 cm)
Courtesy of the artist, Dayton, Ohio

Willis "Bing" Davis

"In my works I am concerned with taking a given medium and making a personal statement based on my perception, observations, and response to my environment. I feel that my art should be a natural extension of my existence, bringing to fruition images, symbols, and forms that most accurately express my perception of life.

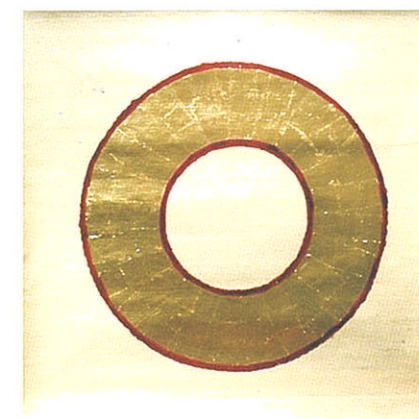
In terms of subject matter, I address myself to the unlimited resource of possibilities of my existence. The conscious inclusion of social commentary in my works is the first step toward speaking to a universal condition. The rich artistic heritage of African art with its religious, social, and magical substance is what I select as an aesthetic and historical link."



Dian Gabriel
Unifying Colors, 2003
Collage and watercolor, 22 x 30 in. (55,9 x 76,2 cm)
Courtesy of the artist, Racine, Wisconsin

Dian Gabriel

"It has been said that my creations are complex and elegant examples of what is traditionally defined as 'collage.' I think of myself as 'painting with scissors.' Although I have mostly discarded the traditional methods of painting with watercolors, I still incorporate them into my work to keep the creative edge that [the] water medium gives me. Watercolors are always a challenge, and I like the duality of disciplines."



Martin Cary Horowitz
Scroll 2, undated
Gold and acrylic on silk, 58 x 54 in. (147,3 x 137,2 cm)
Courtesy of the artist and Peyton Wright Gallery, Santa Fe, New Mexico

Martin Cary Horowitz

Santa Fe artist Martin Horowitz uses gold, the Earth's most precious metal, as his medium and also the palette for his stunning relief sculpture and gold "paintings." Traditionally trained in the Renaissance water gilding process, Horowitz has translated this age old artistic medium into the contemporary minimalist language of form, creating beautiful golden wall pieces vibrant with their own internal energy, that subtly reflect external movement and color:

Martin Cary Horowitz: Master Gilder and Fine Artist, Peyton Wright Gallery, Santa Fe, New Mexico