

United States Embassy
Antananarivo, Madagascar



Celebrating Americans at Work

Art in Embassies Program



Celebrating Americans at Work

By coincidence more than by design, I've done almost all of my overseas postings in the third world, and I have consistently been surprised at the unrealistic image that many people still hold of life in the United States. In the countries where I've served, most people earn less than \$500.00 a year. In comparison, Americans all seem to be incredibly rich – and, of course, it is assumed that "rich" people don't work hard. In fact, one of the funniest and most enlightening moments I recall was when I was invited to talk about daily life in America to a group of young Rwandans who had formed an English club. In the course of the conversation, I mentioned that I had worked as a waitress to help pay my college expenses, and everyone gasped. They were shocked to learn that an American diplomat would have ever done such menial work! As the conversation went on, I was the one who was surprised to realize that most of the youngsters in this group didn't know that Americans do just about every job one can imagine.

The pieces I chose for this exhibition, which I call *Celebrating Americans at Work*, range from photographs to watercolors but all depict people performing some kind of task. It is my hope that these works will give people who may harbor too idyllic a view of America a different perspective. I truly believe that what makes Americans special is the fact we **do** value hard work, because ultimately, that's what makes it possible for every kid in America to believe that he and/or she can be whatever they choose. I hope viewers will enjoy these pieces and their meaning as much as I do.

Ambassador Wanda Nesbitt
Antananarivo
April 2003

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

U.S. 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.

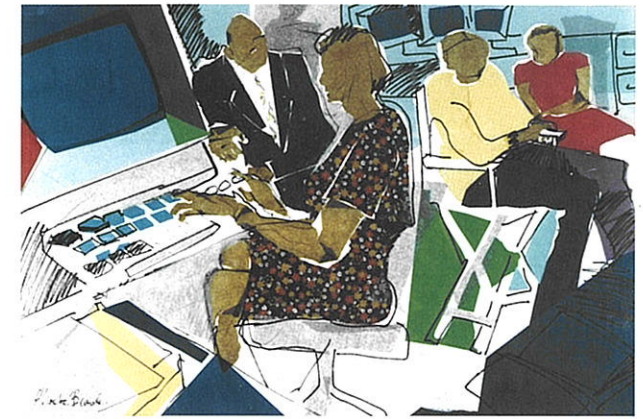
American Artists Abroad Program

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.

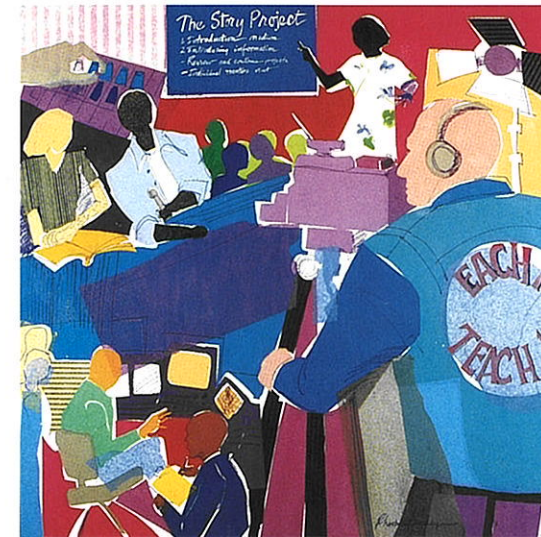
Phoebe Beasley (b. 1943)

Phoebe Beasley has had several one-woman art exhibitions both in the United States and abroad. Beasley was commissioned to do the artwork for the Presidential Seal and the "official poster" for the inaugurations of President George H. Bush, and of President Bill Clinton. Beasley was selected to design the International Tennis Trophy and Medal for the 1984 Summer Olympic games and she was named the official artist for the 1987 Los Angeles Marathon. She received her Master of Arts degree from Kent State University, Ohio, and her Bachelor of Fine Arts from Ohio University in Athens, Ohio.

Courtesy of the artist



Phoebe Beasley
User Friendly Beyond Belief, 1995
Collage, 26 x 38 in. (66 x 96,5 cm)
Courtesy of the artist, Woodland Hills, California



Phoebe Beasley
Each One, Teach One, 1997
Collage, 36 x 36 in. (91,4 x 91,4 cm)
Courtesy of the artist, Woodland Hills, California

Marc Castelli (b. 1951)

"I've immersed myself in the culture of Maryland's Eastern Shore watermen. My artist's eye sees the negative spaces created by their arms, boats, gear, and tools. I can see the abstraction of the monolithic silhouettes scratched against skies that bear all manner of weather. My eye sees the decoy tucked beneath the washboards and between the frames. My eyes will see the compositions unique to their work. My heart sees men in need of protection and explanation. The balance lies in the hours of painting."

Castelli's paintings have received numerous awards over the years including the Philadelphia Water Color Club Award for Excellence and the Mystic Maritime Gallery Yachting Award (1999, 2000). Quantuck Lane Press is publishing a book featuring Castelli's drawings.

Courtesy of the artist



Marc Castelli
Skinny Water/Hard Bottom Bush Whacker, 2002
Watercolor, 22 x 30 in. (55,9 x 76,2 cm)
Courtesy of the artist and Carla Massoni Gallery, Chestertown, Maryland



Marc Castelli
Rinse Job, 2001
Watercolor, 23 1/2 x 30 in. (59,7 x 76,2 cm)
Courtesy of the artist, and Carla Massoni Gallery, Chestertown, Maryland

Gregory Frux (b. 1958)

Brownstone Renewal is from Brooklyn's historic district in the Park Slope neighborhood. Gregory Frux's background in architecture lends itself well to his paintings of churches, brownstones, and the urban landscape of New York City, particularly to his hometown of Brooklyn. Frux received his Bachelor of Architecture degree from City College, and a Master of Fine Arts degree in painting from Brooklyn College, he also studied at the Art Students' League, all in New York City. His paintings are a part of the collections of the New York Metropolitan Transit Authority, and the New York Board of Education. He is currently an arts administrator and curator for the Public Schools of New York, where he manages the art collection for the Board of Education's Public Art for Public Schools program.

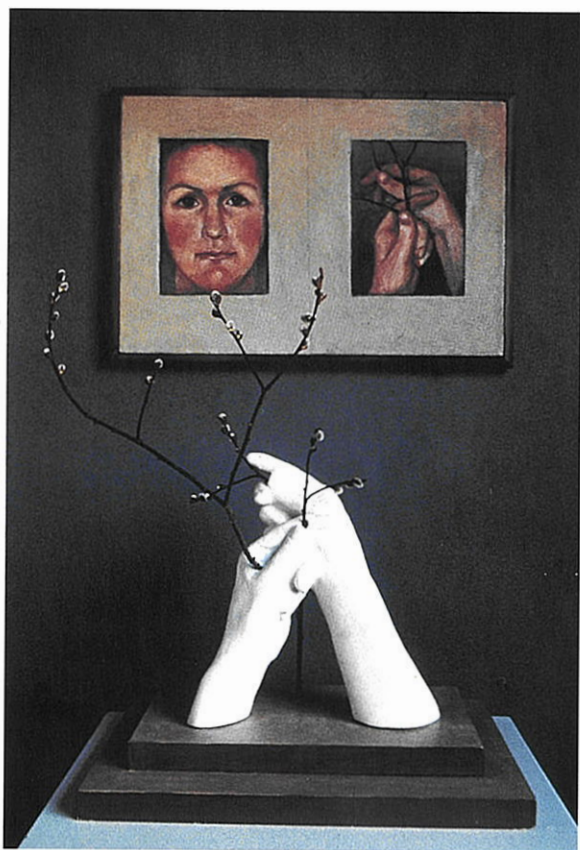


Gregory Frux

Brownstone Renewal, 1994

Oil on board, 24 x 36 in. (61 x 91,4 cm)

Courtesy of the artist, New York, New York



Margaret Lanterman and Nancy Plotkin

Hands And Heads – People Who Work With Their Hands

“What we hope to represent in these sculptural and painted portraits is the dignity of the individual worker. Locating subjects was sometimes serendipitous and sometimes achieved through research and inquiry. Before we made sketches and took sculptural patterns of our models hands, we discussed with them how they wanted to be presented as individuals and as workers. We worked independently in our respective mediums, but conferred often about the evolution of each piece in order to correlate development of the two pieces together. It is our hope that this collaboration will act as a testimonial, leaving a formal, lasting impression of the dignified spirit that directs these strong arms and hands.”

Margaret Lanterman received her Bachelor of Fine Arts from Quincy College and a Master of Fine Arts from the University of Illinois, Chicago. Nancy Plotkin received a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in English Literature from the University of Illinois, Urbana, as well as a Bachelor of Fine Arts and a Master of Fine Arts degree from the Art Institute of Chicago.

Courtesy of the artists

Margaret Lanterman and Nancy Plotkin

Laurie-Florist, 2001

Mixed media, hydrocal, oil on canvas,

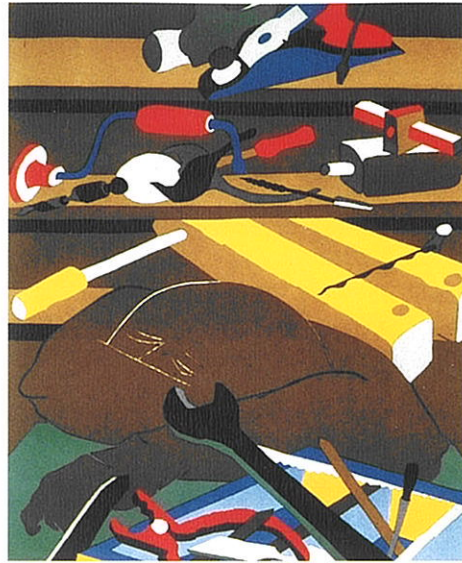
10 x 9 ½ x 6 in. (25,4 x 24,1 x 15,2 cm) (sculpture),

12 x 20 in. (30,5 x 50,8 cm) (painting)

Courtesy of the artists, Chicago, Illinois

Jacob Lawrence (1917–2000)

Jacob Lawrence was born in Atlantic City, New Jersey. He is best known for his narrative series of tempera paintings based on his own life and that of his peers who migrated from the South to the North. His vivid canvases typically have bold planes of color and symbolic elements of the African-American heritage of struggles, aspirations, and accomplishments. In 1946 Lawrence began teaching at Black Mountain College in North Carolina at the invitation of Josef Albers. He also taught in New York at the Art Students League, New School for Social Research, Pratt Institute, and in Maine at the Skowhegan School. In 1971 Lawrence became a professor of art at the University of Washington in Seattle, where he retired in 1986 as professor emeritus. Lawrence continued to paint subjects that referred to racial and social issues of African-Americans, and devoted himself to commissions to benefit non-profit organizations, including New York's Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts.



Jacob Lawrence

Tools, 1977

Lithograph, 30 ¼ x 25 ¾ in. (76,8 x 65,4 cm)
 Courtesy of the Francine Seders Gallery,
 Seattle, Washington



Jacob Lawrence

Carpenters, 1977

Lithograph, 26 ½ x 30 ¼ in. (67,3 x 76,5 cm)
 Courtesy of the Francine Seders Gallery, Seattle, Washington

Gordon Parks (b. 1912)

Gordon Parks was born in Fort Scott, Kansas in 1912. Parks's first big break in professional photography came when he convinced Frank Murphy's women's clothing store in Saint Paul, Minnesota, to let him try his hand at fashion photographs. By 1941 Parks became the first photographer to receive a fellowship from the Julius Rosenwald Fund. In 1942 he chose to work at the Farm Services Administration (FSA), a government agency designed to call attention to the plight of the needy during the Depression. In 1944 Parks photographed fashion for *Vogue* magazine and in 1948, he became the first black photographer at *Life* magazine. In 1950 he moved to Paris as a European correspondent, photographing for several years in France, Italy, Spain, and Portugal. By the 1960s, Parks enjoyed status as one of the country's most influential photojournalists. Along with many other projects, such as directing films and publishing, he continued his work documenting the civil rights movement in the United States.

Excerpted from the exhibit brochure: A Retrospective – Half Past Autumn: The Art of Gordon Parks, The Museum of the City of New York, July 1 – November 1, 1998



Gordon Parks

Daytona Beach, Florida; Bethune-Cookman College; Girl Welder, January, 1943

Silver gelatin print, 20 x 24 in. (50,8 x 61 cm)

From the Farm Security Administration/Office of War Information [FSA/OWI],

Collection of the Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Faith Ringgold (b. 1934)

(b. 1934)

Faith Ringgold currently teaches at the University of California in San Diego. She is a painter, mixed media sculptor, teacher, lecturer, and author of numerous award-winning children's books. Born in Harlem, New York, Ringgold became conscious of racial and gender prejudice at an early age. Her evolving artistry has taken many forms from social realism, performance art, soft sculpture, and children's books to her well-known story quilts. Faith Ringgold is the recipient of more than sixty awards and honors. She has received eleven honorary Doctor of Fine Arts degrees and her work is in the permanent collections of numerous museums in the United States and abroad.

Courtesy of ACA Galleries, New York, New York



Faith Ringgold

The Sunflower's Quilting Bee at Arles, 1997

Silkscreen, 29 x 31 ½ in. (73,7 x 80 cm)

Courtesy of the artist and ACA Galleries, New York, New York



Unknown artist

Untitled [White male worker in hardhat with pickax]

Silver gelatin print, 20 x 24 in. (50,8 x 61 cm)

Courtesy of the Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Unknown artist

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