



ART IN EMBASSIES EXHIBITION

Embassy of the United States of America | Accra, Ghana

JUD HARTMANN

Garakontie, 1999

Bronze, wood

33 x 17 x 18 in.

(83,8 x 43,2 x 45,7 cm)

Courtesy of the artist,

Grafton, Vermont

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As my wife, Babs, and I began to identify art to display at the American Ambassador’s Residence in Accra, we looked for cheerful, colorful paintings that would underscore links between the United States and the Republic of Ghana. We also wanted to combine this art with our private collection, to reflect the range of ways in which artists create work and the increasing cultural diversity of society.

When we were vacationing in Maine a few years ago, friends took us to see the work of sculptor Jud Hartmann. We were immediately taken with his skilled rendering of Native Americans from the Northeastern Woodlands. The powerful presence of *Garakontie*, an Iroquois Indian chief, combined with the fact that he was known as a diplomat, convinced us that we wanted him at the heart of the exhibition. The 17th-century Garakontie influenced Benjamin Franklin and is responsible for many of today’s diplomatic practices. He reminds us of the importance of practicing diplomacy in every age.

Many of the other works are geometric and are evocative of Ghana’s kente cloth. The exuberant use of color and pattern captures the chiefs’ and queen mothers’ resplendent appearance in their mantles. Loretta Bennett’s *Yellow Jack* looks like a quilt. Her home in Gee’s Bend, Alabama—famous for quilts made from repurposed fabric—made her a natural connection between the American South and West Africa. A work by an artist from the Washington color school, Gene Davis’s *Black Watch Series I* brings to mind the woven fabric, robes, and smocks of West Africa. In the Torpedo Factory in Old Town Alexandria, Virginia, we discovered Gwendolyn Graine and her use of vibrant shades of paper—cut, folded, and assembled to produce patterns that delight the senses—and added *Mirror Image* to the exhibition.

When we saw Synthia Saint James’s *Stilt Dancers*, we remembered marveling at their skill from a previous posting in West Africa. Their talent and proficiency delight viewers. The artist continued her energy with *Legacy* as a family experiences joy and pride in accomplishment through several generations. Starting in the village, and transitioning to higher education with a university degree in hand, the road to the future is brighter and offers more options.

In 1973 the United States Postal Service issued the first *Love* stamp designed by Robert Indiana. Babs framed a block of nine stamps to decorate her apartment. She kept these little framed stamps over the years and now they sit under a pop art *LOVE* poster by Robert Indiana. While the colors are different, the concept is the same as this iconic configuration of *Love* welcomes one home.

In our previous Art in Embassies exhibition in Cameroon, we selected Petra Haas's humorous *The Great American Diet* to go in our dining room. In Accra, her luscious rendering of fruit in *Watermelon in Canton* and *Comparison in Canton* enhances our formal dining area.

In our private collection, we have a poster by Southwestern artist Amado Maurilio Peña, Jr. He created a series called *From the Valle* and this print from that series seemed to be a natural inclusion in the exhibition. The shapes, colors, and patterns envelop one in the warmth, calm, and happiness of home. In the Foreign Service, families move frequently, so elements of peace and security go well with our caravan. In Fred Garbers's *Physarae*, *The Judgement*, we loved the arrangement of the people, the colors, and the imagined conversations. We continue to enjoy discussions and exchanges in different cultures as we travel the globe. In sum, this exhibition is intended to celebrate small pleasures and important values that both Americans and Ghanaians can appreciate. We hope you will enjoy these works of art.

It is thanks to the Art in Embassies program that friends and guests at U.S. Ambassadors' Residences around the world become familiar with the amazing artistic talent of the United States. We thank Art in Embassies for making this possible and thank the lending artists for their generosity in making American art available to a worldwide public through these venues.

Ambassador Robert P. Jackson and Babette P. Jackson

*Accra
September 2016*

LORETTA BENNETT 1960

Loretta Bennett, daughter of acclaimed quilter Quennie Pettway, has been described as a “new generation” quilter. Bennett’s practice is part of a quilting tradition that has continued uninterrupted for five generations. She is a descendant of Dinah Miller, who—according to folklore and family history—was one of the first slaves to have arrived in Gee’s Bend, Alabama. Gee’s Bend first gained national attention in the 1960s for the quality of the quilts being produced there. Hailing these works as modern masterpieces, the Museum of Fine Arts Houston organized a traveling exhibition in September 2002, titled *The Quilts of Gee’s Bend*. Like many of the quilters in the Gee’s Bend community, Bennett makes quilts that are strikingly improvisational. Her large-scale, bold designs, made up of brilliantly colored geometric blocks, are often paired with semi-descriptive titles such as *Unfinished House* (2008), *Broken Housetop* (2008), and *House Top Out* (2009). She is pushing the tradition of quilting one step further with the introduction of etchings produced through a collaboration with master printers at Paulson Bott Press in Berkeley, California.

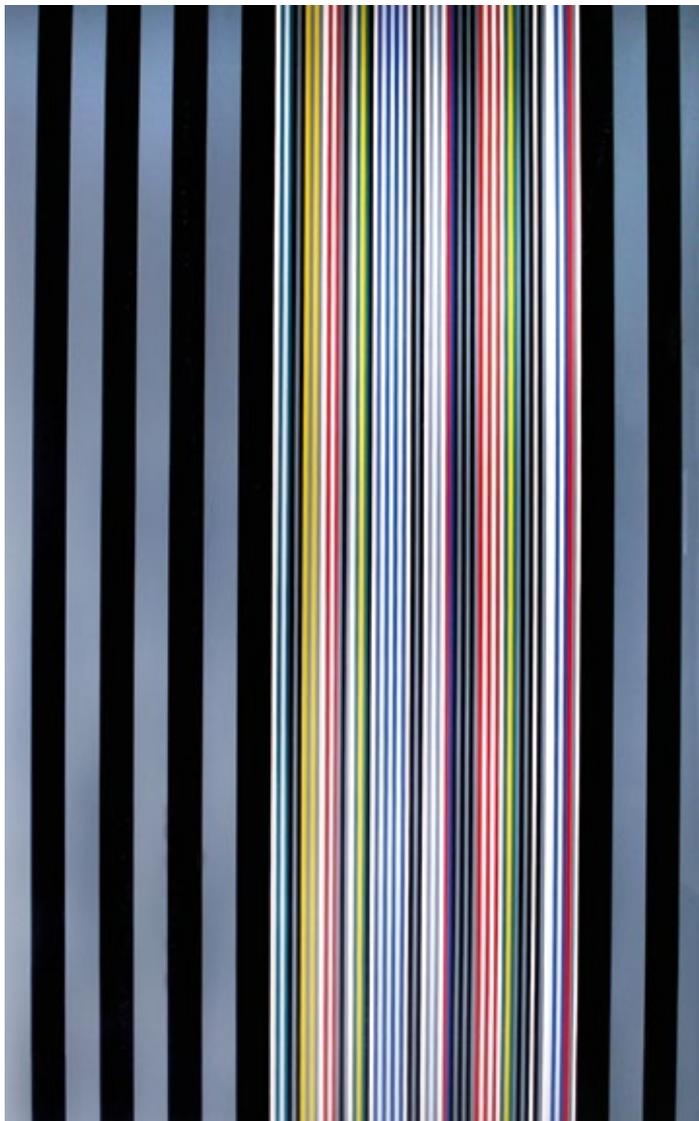
LORETTA BENNETT **Yellow Jack**, 2006
Aquatint and softground etching, 26 ½ x 26 ½ in. (67,3 x 67,3 cm)
Courtesy of Art in Embassies, Washington, D.C.
Gift of the Foundation for Art and Preservation in Embassies



GENE DAVIS 1920-1985

Gene Davis, a self-taught artist associated with the Washington color school, was born in Washington, D.C., in 1920 and spent most of his adult life there. Davis is best known for his paintings of vertical stripes, which he first began to produce in 1958. The first stripe painting, considered at the time a maverick work, was approximately 12 by 8 inches in size, with yellow, pink, and violet stripes of uneven width, alternating with regularity. From this prototype, Davis continued to paint variations of different sizes. In the larger paintings, such as those in the *Black Watch* series, Davis used the placement and pattern of stripes to create complex rhythms and sequences of colors.

Of the stripes, Davis wrote, “There is no simpler way to divide a canvas than with straight lines at equal intervals. This enables the viewer to forget the structure and see the color itself.”



GENE DAVIS *Black Watch Series I*, 1974
Silkscreen, 79 x 52 ½ in. (200,7 x 133,4 cm). Courtesy of Art in Embassies, Washington, D.C.

FRED GARBERS

Fred Garbers was born and raised in New York City. He studied at the Art Students League and, after military service, enrolled at Cooper Union where he studied with Robert Gwathmey (1903-1988), Morris Kantor (1896-1974), and Nicolas Carone (1917-2010). He graduated from Cooper Union in 1958.

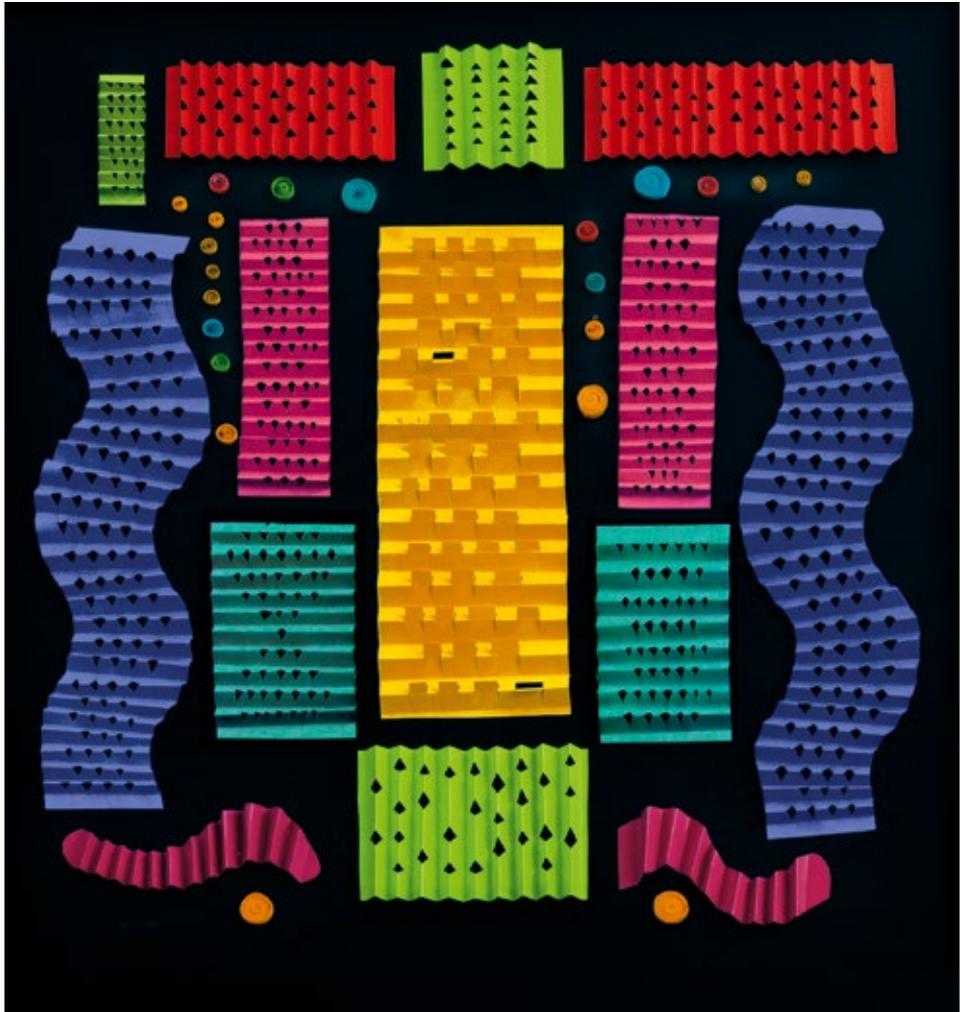
He is a 2006 recipient of a Pollock-Krasner Foundation Grant for painting. His work is in the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden Collection (Washington, D.C.), the Addison Gallery of American Art (Andover, Massachusetts), the Butler Museum of American Art (Youngstown, Ohio), the Provincetown Art Association Museum (Massachusetts), and numerous private collections.



FRED GARBERS *Physarae, The Judgement*, 2003
Acrylic on canvas, 45 ¼ x 51 in. (114,9 x 129,5 cm)
Courtesy of Art in Embassies, Washington, D.C.; Gift of the artist

GWENDOLYN GRAINE 1935

“My medium is paper assemblage. I have always loved paper and find it the most versatile, immediate and forgiving medium I know. It also demands proper respect—I use only archival papers, and paint each paper I work with using artist’s acrylics before I begin the piece. On most occasions the assemblage begins with just a vague notion of what it might become. The ideas emerge as the work progresses although there are times when I have a very specific notion of what I want to happen and I work from a master sketch. Either way, the most important aspect of my work is that the finished piece be a thoughtful innovative collaboration of color and design.”

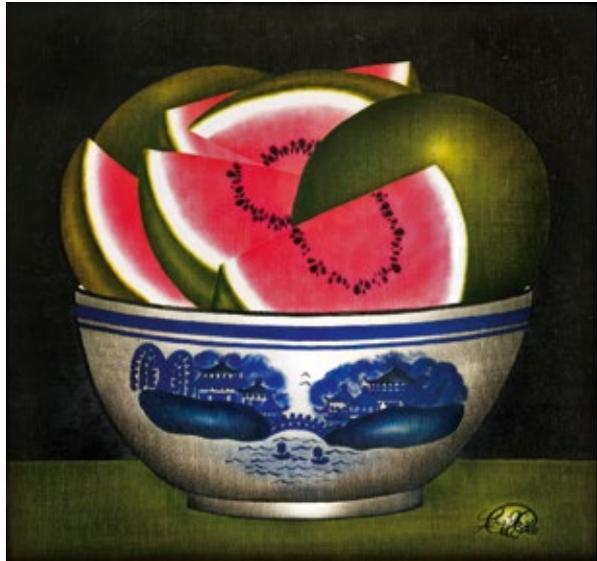


GWENDOLYN GRAINE *Mirror Image*, 2012
Acrylic painted paper, 40 x 32 in. (101,6 x 81,3 cm)
Courtesy of the artist, Alexandria, Virginia

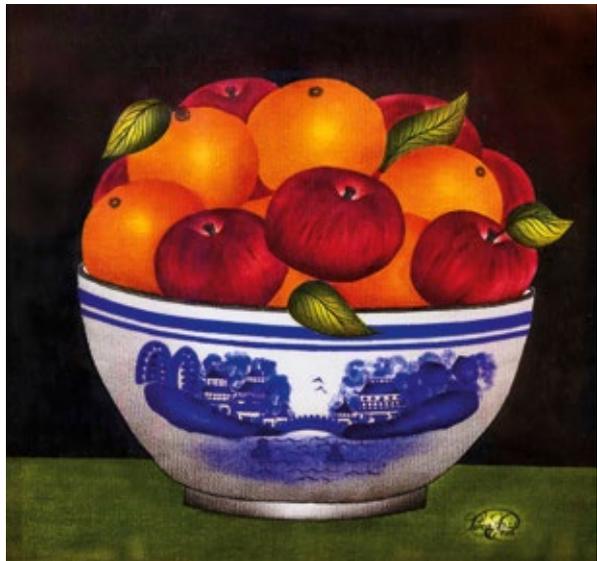
PETRA HAAS 1947

Petra Haas, who lives in Berks County, Pennsylvania, has spent her career utilizing stencils to perfect an early 19th-century technique known as theorem painting. A cross-over artist, uniting the old and the new, she explains: “I haven’t left the art form. I’ve taken it and brought it into the modern day...It’s like taking both ends of the spectrum and joining them together. It’s like being able to mix oil and water.” Theorem painting is an early American decorative technique that dates back to the first half of the 19th century.

PETRA HAAS
Watermelon in Canton
*Pigment on velveteen,
21 3/8 x 22 3/8 in. (54,3 x 56,8 cm)*
*Courtesy of Art in Embassies,
Washington, D.C.; Gift of
the Foundation for Art and
Preservation in Embassies*



PETRA HAAS
Comparison in Canton
*Pigment on velveteen,
21 1/8 x 22 1/8 in. (53,7 x 56,2 cm)*
*Courtesy of Art in Embassies,
Washington, D.C.; Gift of
the Foundation for Art and
Preservation in Embassies*



JUD HARTMANN 1948

Jud Hartmann's primary artistic focus since 1983 has been a series of limited edition bronze sculptures of Native Americans called *The Woodland Tribes of the Northeast: The Iroquoians and the Algonkians*. The work is the first attempt by an artist to depict in bronze the indigenous people who settled in the Northeast and Midwest United States and southeastern Canada.

Hartmann was born in Cleveland, Ohio, in 1948. He was raised in Bedford, New York, and received his Bachelor of Arts degree in American history from Hobart College in Geneva, New York, in 1970. It was years later he began sculpting, with studios and galleries currently in Blue Hill and Grafton, Vermont.



JUD HARTMANN
Garakontie, 1999

Bronze, wood
33 x 17 x 18 in.

(83,8 x 43,2 x 45,7 cm)

Courtesy of the artist,
Grafton, Vermont

ROBERT INDIANA 1928

Robert Indiana was born in New Castle, Indiana, and changed his name from Robert Clark before moving in 1954 to New York City, where he joined the pop art movement. Drawing on commercial art approaches blended with existentialism, his distinctive imagery gradually moved toward what the artist calls “sculptural poems.” Indiana’s work often consists of bold, simple, iconic images, especially numbers and short words like “EAT,” “HUG,” and “LOVE.”

Since 1978, Indiana has been a resident of the island town of Vinalhaven, Maine. His best known image is the word “LOVE” in upper-case letters, arranged in a square with a tilted letter O. This image, first created for a Christmas card for the Museum of Modern Art in 1964, was included on an eight-cent United States Postal Service postage stamp in 1973, the first of their regular series of love stamps.



ROBERT INDIANA *Love*

Print, 37 x 32 in. (94 x 81,3 cm). Courtesy of Art in Embassies, Washington, D.C.

AMADO MAURILIO PEÑA, JR. 1943

Amado Maurilio Peña, Jr.'s art focuses on Hispanic and Native American figures and has been described as capturing the essence of the Southwest. Peña, a mestizo of Mexican and Yaqui Indian descent, was born in 1943 and raised in Laredo, Texas. He earned Bachelor of Arts and Master of Arts degrees at Texas A&M University (formerly known as Texas A&I University) in Kingsville and was an art teacher in the Texas public school system for 16 years.



AMADO MAURILIO PEÑA, JR. *From the Valle series*
Silkscreen, 33 x 26 ¼ in. (83,8 x 66,7 cm). Courtesy of a private collection

SYNTHIA SAINT JAMES 1949

Internationally recognized self-taught artist and author Synthia Saint James was born in Los Angeles, California. Her professional career began in New York City in 1969, and her work has been used on the covers of more than 50 books, including those by Alice Walker, Terry McMillan, Iyanla Vanzant, and Julia Boyd. Since 1990, Saint James has completed commissions for major organizations, corporations, and individual collectors, including the House of Seagram, the Los Angeles Women's Foundation, UNICEF, and the Girl Scouts of America's 85th Anniversary commemoration. The United States Postal Service commissioned the artist to create the first Kwanzaa stamp, released in 1997.



SYNTHIA SAINT JAMES *Stilt Dancers*, 1988
Serigraph, 31 1/2 x 25 1/2 in. (80 x 64,8 cm)
Courtesy of Art in Embassies, Washington, D.C.; Gift of the artist



SYNTHIA SAINT JAMES *Legacy*, 1988
Serigraph, 32 3/4 x 26 in. (82,2 x 66 cm)
Courtesy of Art in Embassies, Washington, D.C.; Gift of the artist

ART IN EMBASSIES

<http://art.state.gov/>



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 foreign 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.”

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