

ART in Embassies Program



United States Embassy **Bamako**

West Coast to West Africa

Marlana K. Stoddard-Hayes (born 1957)

"I gradually developed a painting style that uses the accretion method, where the paintings are developed slowly and carefully, not created in a few days or hours. Most of the pieces are resolved after a period of months with indirect glaze applications and other transferred touch methods. The sense of embedding helps to invest each piece with thought, the passage of time acting on each uniquely. It is the process of exploration and excavation that is so absorbing to me, where the imagery is coaxed into being. The physical and emotional decisions that combine to create the painting include pouring, polishing, sanding, brushing, and wiping, which often lead to chance elements. The result of all this engagement results in a tangible thing, a painting, while the making of the work enables me to maintain a sense of personal equilibrium. I engage with the act of painting every day.



The Faraway Road, 2005
Oil on canvas
16 x 16 in. (40,6 x 40,6 cm)
Courtesy of the artist and Beppu Gallery,
Pacific City, Oregon



Willamette River, 2005
Oil on canvas
36 x 36 in. (91,4 x 91,4 cm)
Courtesy of the artist and Beppu Gallery,
Pacific City, Oregon



Crescent Stream, 2005
Oil on canvas
16 x 16 in. (40,6 x 40,6 cm)
Courtesy of the artist and Beppu Gallery,
Pacific City, Oregon

After my M.F.A., I have taught for over twenty years in various settings, working for seven years as an artist-in-residence with the Kansas Arts Commission in western Kansas. I went to Oregon as a Sitka resident in 1990, after completing two summers living in the Drome region of France with reclusive poets, who live quite simply, but beautifully. This experience changed me deeply and affected my decision to follow the path of beauty, or illumination. In architecture this philosophy is embodied in the work of Christopher Alexander, whom I greatly admire, and in the ideas of the mystics. My sense of inquiry into the workings of the world comes through the medium of oil paint, which I find both opaque and transparent." www.sitkacenter.org

Marlana Stoddard-Hayes was born in Ottumwa, Iowa, where she spent her teenage years involved in raising and training Morgan horses. She was accepted into the foundations program at the Kansas City Art Institute in lieu of her senior year in high school. She went on to train in lithography under the tutelage of Bill McKim, a student of Thomas Hart Benton. At the institute (1975-77) she was exposed to the idea of "tonalism in the stone," or waiting for the material to assert itself. Stoddard-Hayes studied art history at the Institute of European Studies, Vienna, Austria (1978), received a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in painting and drawing from Colorado State University (1980), a Master of Fine Arts degree in the same at Wichita State University (1983), a Master of Arts degree in interdisciplinary studies from Marylhurst University (Portland, Oregon, 2001), as well as having studied painting and drawing at Marchutz School, Aix-en-Provence, France (1989). She has been the recipient of numerous awards – grants, distinctions, residencies, and commissions – and her work has been widely exhibited.

Margot Voorhies-Thompson (born 1948)

"My [current] work... has been influenced by recent experiences of public art making, and discoveries I have made about the effects of environment – light, shadow, time of day – on perception, whether of a work of art or an expanse of landscape. I observed through work I made for Doernbecher Children's Hospital [Portland, Oregon], and Multnomah County's Woodstock Library [Portland], that each person's experience of my paintings, etched steel, or fritted glass was unique because of the different times of day and perspectives from which it was seen.

This discovery has had a definite impact on my work. More intimate, more personal and more abstract, these paintings are not about the search for form. They are about form yielding to the forces of change through the movement of light, breath, shadow, sound and spirit, forms themselves being but illusions in a transient world.

Two river trips inspired these paintings, one on the Green River, the other on the San Juan. Each moment on a river represents change. Reflection, echo, light, shadow, natural languages, ancient symbols, and our own words, currents, water and weather. These inform the expressions of our verbal and visual language. When we follow any river in search of the essence of what moves, new ideas and possibilities are presented. Change is demanded. It loosens our grip on what is purely illusory while allowing us to hang onto what is profound. The structures of old language give way to new sounds and different shapes between sounds. Previously unimagined alphabets produce fresh interpretations of events leading to new illuminations."

Margot Voorhies-Thompson was born in Portland, Oregon, and educated at Reed College (Portland), Colorado College (Colorado Springs), and the University of Washington (Seattle), with graduate study at Pacific Northwest College of Art (Portland, 1983-85), while simultaneously attending Reed College as an Eliot Scholar. She subsequently studied at the Hochschule für künstlerische und industrielle Gestaltung, Linz, Austria (1985), and the Northwest Writing Institute, Lewis and Clark College (Portland, 1990-93). She has had numerous one-person exhibitions, has received many commissions, and been regularly included in group shows, especially on the West Coast. Her work is in a number of public and corporate collections, including the Oregon Arts Commission; the Lakeview Museum, Peoria, Illinois; The Printmaking Workshop, New York City; Tacoma Art Museum, Washington; and the Portland Art Museum. Voorhies-Thompson teaches at the Sitka Center for Art and Ecology, Otis, Oregon. www.artistsregister.com and *Beppu Gallery, Pacific City, Oregon*



Feathered River, 2005

Etching

29 ½ x 25 in. (74,9 x 63, cm)

Courtesy of the artist and Beppu Gallery,
Pacific City, Oregon



River I, 2005

Etching

24 x 52 in. (61 x 132 cm)

Courtesy of the artist and Beppu Gallery,
Pacific City, Oregon



Acknowledgments • **Washington** • Anne Johnson, Director; ART in Embassies Program • Sarah Tanguy, Curator • Sally Mansfield, Associate Curator and Publications Project Coordinator • Rebecca Clark, Registrar • Marcia Mayo • Publications Editor • **Vienna** • Clarisse Cmyral & Sigrid Gessler; Graphic Designers • Printed by the Regional Program Office, Vienna • Published by the ART in Embassies Program • U.S. Department of State, Washington, D.C. • July 2006

West Coast to West Africa

We are delighted to welcome you to the American Residence in Bamako, and we invite you to enjoy an exhibition of works by four artists with links to the Pacific Northwest. The majority of the twelve works in *West Coast to West Africa* are largely informed by the reactions of the artists to the natural landscape of our home region, and particularly the mountains, rivers, streams, and coastline of Oregon and Washington State.



These works have particular resonance in Mali, where the Niger River, the “strong brown god,” has exercised such a powerful influence on the country’s economic, political, and cultural development. The Niger courses nearly a thousand miles through Mali, arching in a reverse question mark from the south of the country north, to the verges of the Sahara toward Timbuktu, before turning south on its way to the sea. In the Sahel, the regular threat of drought adds particular importance to the waters of the Niger, which offer lifeblood to the Malians living along the banks of this great river. The verdant irrigated perimeters along the Niger provide grains and other produce to Malians throughout the country, and the river serves as a principal means of transport as well as a central theme in Malian art and popular culture.

The works of Deborah Gillis and Marlana Stoddard-Hayes suggest textured responses to the environment of the Pacific Northwest, using a compelling blend of realism and abstraction to present a vision of the natural features of the region, including one of

Oregon’s own principal waterways, the Willamette River. Margot Voorhies-Thompson was also inspired by water in the West, and the two etchings in the exhibition present her reflections on the changes encountered during separate excursions on rivers in Washington State and New Mexico. As for Michael Schlichting, whose summer gallery lies in sight of our home on the Oregon coast, his acrylics on canvas offer an intuitive exploration of foreign scenes, and of a cottage that may well be a stone’s throw from our own village of Neskowin, Oregon. All told, the paintings in this exhibition demonstrate the vitality and diversity of American artists from the Pacific Northwest, and many of the works bring to a land that is home to one of the world’s great rivers, compelling visions of the centrality of water to life.

Our thanks to the artists – and particularly to our neighbor Michael Schlichting – for the generous loan of their works, and to Stan and Gail Beppu of the Beppu Gallery for their assistance, advice, and counsel. We are grateful for the guidance and support of our curator, Sarah Tanguy, and her colleague at ART in Embassies Program, Rebecca Clark. Finally, thanks to Marcia Mayo and Sally Mansfield, who produced this beautiful catalog. We hope you enjoy the exhibition.

Sincerely,

Ambassador and Mrs. Terence P. McCulley

Bamako, July 2006

The ART in Embassies Program

The ART in Embassies Program (ART) is a unique blend of art, diplomacy, and culture. Regardless of the medium, style, or subject matter, art transcends barriers of language and provides the means for the program to promote dialogue through the international language of art that leads to mutual respect and understanding between diverse cultures.

Modestly conceived in 1964, ART has evolved into a sophisticated program that curates exhibitions, managing and exhibiting more than 3,500 original works of loaned art by U.S. citizens. The work is displayed in the public rooms of some 180 U.S. embassy residences and diplomatic missions worldwide. These exhibitions, with their diverse themes and content, represent one of the most important principles of our democracy: freedom of expression. The art is a great source of pride to the U.S. ambassadors, assisting them in multi-functional outreach to the host country’s educational, cultural, business, and diplomatic communities.

Works of art exhibited through the program encompass a variety of media and styles, ranging from eighteenth century colonial portraiture to contemporary multi-media installations. They are obtained through the generosity of lending sources that include U.S. museums, galleries, artists, institutions, corporations, and private collections. 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 firsthand the international lines of communication known to us all as art.

The ART in Embassies Program is proud to lead this international effort to present the artistic accomplishments of the people of the United States. We invite you to visit the ART web site, <http://aiep.state.gov>, which features on-line versions of all exhibitions worldwide.

Deborah Gillis (born 1953)



Blue Currents II, 2005

Oil on canvas
32 x 38 in. (81,3 x 96,5 cm)
Courtesy of the artist and Beppu Gallery,
Pacific City, Oregon



Mountain River/Fields of Air I, 2005

Oil on canvas
30 x 30 in. (76,2 x 76,2 cm)
Courtesy of the artist and Beppu Gallery,
Pacific City, Oregon

Gillis received a Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Oregon, Eugene, in 1975, and a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from Pacific Northwest College of Art, Portland, in 1995, having attended Yale University's Summer Painting Program (New Haven, Connecticut) in 1994. Since then she has exhibited regularly in group and one-person shows, primarily in the Northwest, and has been an active member of Portland's art community.

Deborah Gillis's unique painting technique is distinctive among contemporary painters. Working on either panel or canvas, Gillis starts her creative process by adhering a top piece of canvas to the surface, on which she then paints in oil. By exaggerating some details and down-playing others, Gillis's compositions occupy a hazy ground between realism and abstraction, ever wavering between what is real and what is not. Her paintings tend to encapsulate the transitory nature of landscape and, metaphorically, life itself. www.rovzargallery.com



Mountain River/Fields of Air II, 2005

Oil on canvas
30 x 30 in. (76,2 x 76,2 cm)
Courtesy of the artist and Beppu Gallery,
Pacific City, Oregon



Mountain River/Fields of Air III, 2005

Oil on canvas
30 x 30 in. (76,2 x 76,2 cm)
Courtesy of the artist and Beppu Gallery,
Pacific City, Oregon

Michael Schlicting (born 1954)

"As an artist, one needs to look deep within yourself to get past the easy answers. Creativity comes from probing the edge of your response to your environment. Actual and metaphorical." -- Michael Schlicting



Pussywillow and Pear, 2003

Acrylic on canvas

34 x 38 in. (86,4 x 96,5 cm)

Courtesy of the artist, Portland, Oregon

Michael Schlicting is keenly aware of the visceral emotion that a scene evokes. Mood, feeling, and universal longing are the subjects of his art rather than literal, physical realism. He incorporates into his paintings personal symbols and his reaction to his environment, be it the Oregon coastline or foreign alleyways. In his images, Schlicting vividly demonstrates that it is not what you see that counts, but what you sense. It is this probing, intuitive exploration that has given Schlicting's art a deeper level of meaning, and in the process, gained him national distinction. Schlicting grew up in Neskowin, Oregon, and has been an award winning painter for over twenty-five years. He has had many one-person exhibitions, and his paintings are in public, corporate, and private collections in the United States and abroad. He makes his home in Portland, Oregon, but still maintains a summer studio and gallery in Neskowin on the Oregon coast.

www.zeekgallery.com



Cottage, 2005

Acrylic on canvas

26 x 32 in. (66 x 81,3 cm)

Courtesy of the artist, Portland, Oregon



Santa Lucia, 2005

Acrylic on canvas

31 x 41 in. (78,7 x 104,1 cm)

Courtesy of the artist, Portland, Oregon