



United States Embassy Port Moresby

ART in Embassies Exhibition



Established in 1963, the U.S. Department of State's office of ART in Embassies (ART) plays a vital role in our nation's public diplomacy through a culturally expansive mission, creating temporary and permanent exhibitions, artist programming, and documentation. 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, ART curates temporary and permanent exhibitions for the representational spaces of all U.S. chanceries, consulates, and chief-of-mission 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 ART's presence in more countries than any other U.S. foundation or arts organization.

ART'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."

"The ART in Embassies program reveals the rich history and cultural heritage of the United States and the communal experiences that we share with peoples of different countries, backgrounds and faiths, binding us closer together. Through its temporary exhibitions and permanent collections, the ART in Embassies program intrigues, educates, and connects – playing an ambassadorial role as important as that served by traditional diplomacy."

– Hillary Rodham Clinton
Secretary of State

Welcome to the official residence of the United States Ambassador to Papua New Guinea, Solomon Island, and the Republic of Vanuatu. The residence is affectionately called the “Eagle’s Nest” due to the magnificent view and the ever present official seal with the American eagle displayed at the entrance.

It is our honor and privilege to present, through the Department of State’s office of ART in Embassies, an exhibition of works by American artists. We believe our selection of works by a diverse group of talented African American artists is an integral part of our mission here in Papua New Guinea. The exhibition includes works by Phoebe Beasley, Hubert Jackson, Jacob Lawrence, Gordon Parks, Romare Bearden, and an up and coming young artist, Donte Player, and provides a window into the African American experience at various stages in U.S. history, including the pivotal role of women in the African American community. As perhaps one of the few exhibitions of African American art to come to Papua New Guinea, this show will stimulate a great deal of interest in all segments of local society, providing opportunities to engage the Papua New Guinean art community, and serving as a means to further connect our nations.

We wish to extend our sincere appreciation to our generous lenders: the Jerald Melberg Gallery, the Library of Congress, Phoebe Beasley, Hubert Jackson, and Donte Player. We would like to thank the ART in Embassies program and the Embassy staff for their logistical assistance.

Enjoy the Exhibition!

Ambassador Teddy B. Taylor
Antoinette Corbin-Taylor

Papua New Guinea
March 2011

Romare Bearden

(1912-1988)

Born in Charlotte, North Carolina, Romare Bearden achieved a stature known by few artists during their lifetimes. He was, and is, considered America's greatest collagist and was honored by receiving the National Medal of Arts in 1987. The artist's works are in the permanent collections of many prestigious American Museums, including the Museum of Modern Art and the Metropolitan Museum of Art, both in New York City. Retrospectives of Bearden's art have been organized by the Museum of Modern Art; the Mint Museum of Art, Charlotte, North Carolina; the Studio Museum in Harlem, New York City; and the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.

Throughout his life, Bearden depicted many of the rituals and social customs of twentieth century rural Black America. The images of spiritual ceremonies, baptisms and burials, industrial hardships, musical arrangements, and daily life have become the themes that critics and collectors most frequently associate with his work. Visually and emotionally stimulating, Bearden's collages and prints are beautiful to behold and fascinating to contemplate.

www.jeraldmelberg.com



Romare Bearden

Louisiana Serenade, 1979

Lithograph, 24 $\frac{3}{8}$ x 33 $\frac{3}{4}$ in. (61,9 x 85,7 cm)

Courtesy of Jerald Melberg Gallery, Charlotte, North Carolina

Art © Romare Bearden Foundation/Licensed by VAGA, New York, NY

Phoebe Beasley

(born 1943)

When President Bill Clinton presented the Ambassadors of the Diplomatic Corps with one of Phoebe Beasley's monoprints entitled *Clinton Inaugural* in 1993, it was the second time she received the coveted Presidential Seal on her artwork. The first time was in 1989 when she was commissioned to do the official artwork for the inauguration of President George H.W. Bush – thus making her the only artist to twice receive the honor.

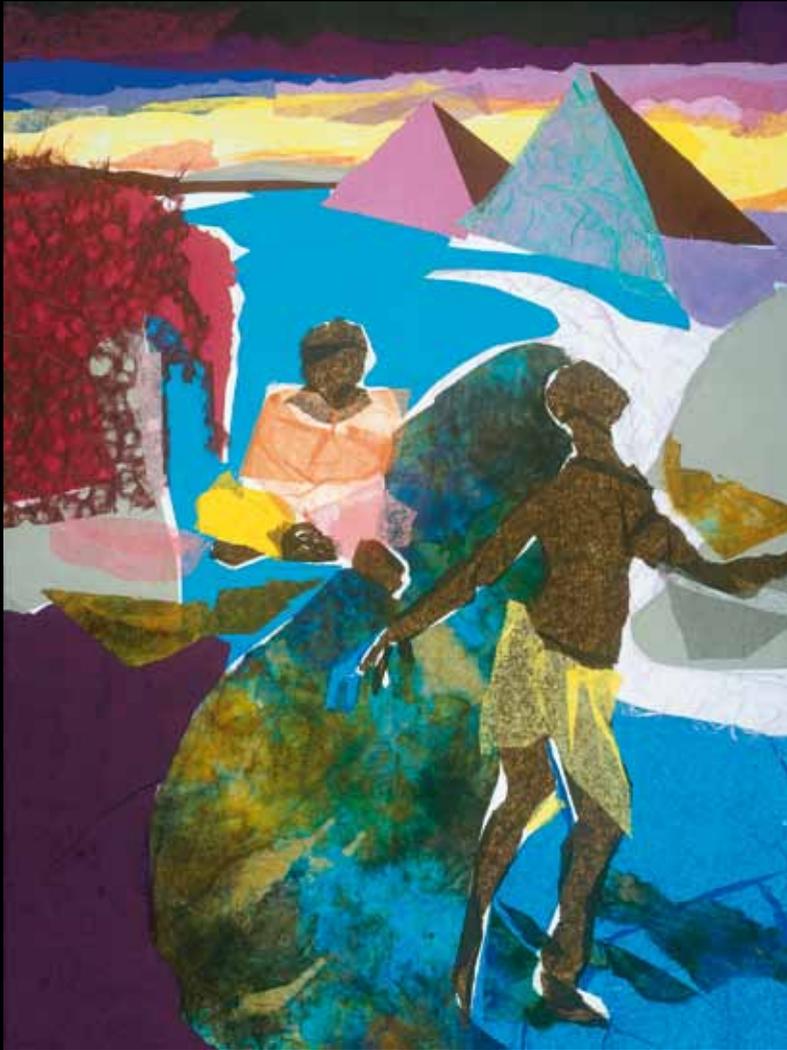
Beasley has had numerous solo and group exhibitions in the United States and abroad, and has been honored by the State Department for her participation in the ART in Embassies Program. Beasley's collages were part of two museum exhibitions, including a group show mounted by the Smithsonian Institution entitled *In The Spirit of Martin*, honoring the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and a touring exhibition, *Something All Our Own: The Grant Hill Collection*. A four month long exhibition at the Kansas African American Museum, and a solo exhibition at the M. Hanks Gallery, accompanied by a comprehensive catalogue, capped the artist's 2005 season.

www.phoebebesley.com



Phoebe Beasley **Mother to Son**, 1998

*Serigraph AP V/V, 21 x 17 in (55,3 x 43,2 cm)
Courtesy of the artist, Woodland Hills, California*



Phoebe Beasley *The Negro Speaks of Rivers*, 1998
Serigraph AP IV/V, 21 x 17 in. (55,3 x 43,2 cm)
Courtesy of the artist, Woodland Hills, California

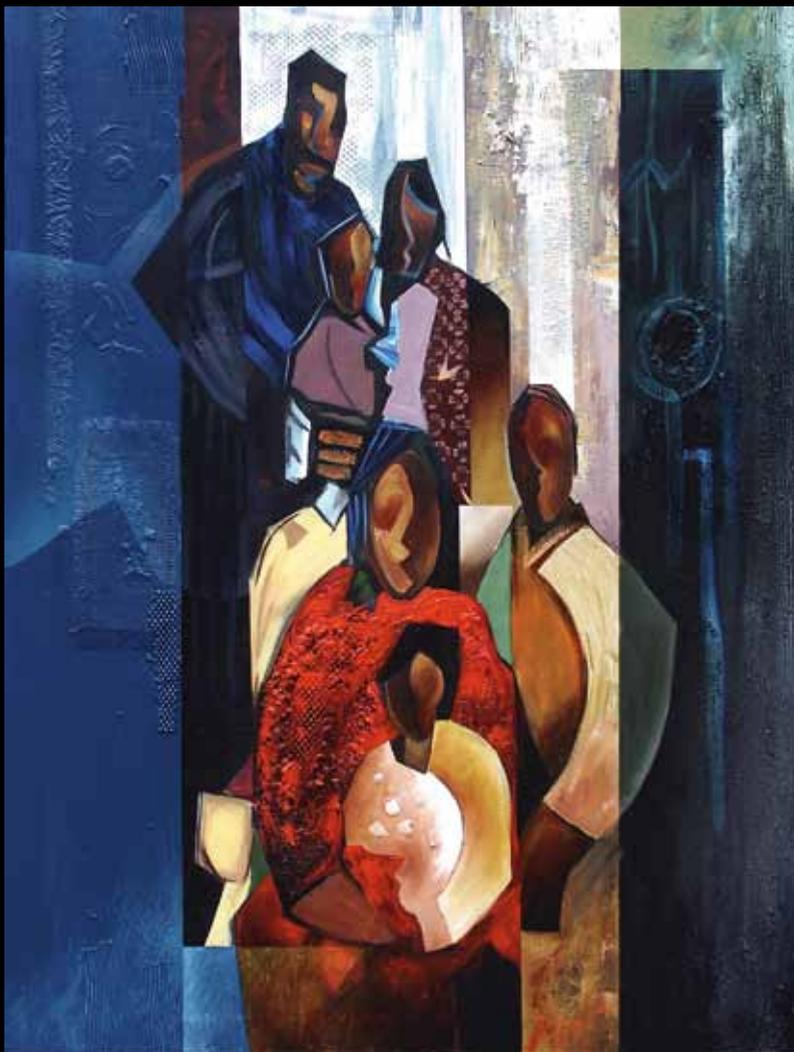
Hubert Jackson

(born 1943)

"Color, shape, and texture are the driving features of my paintings. I begin with disparate objects and materials and, by incorporating planes of shape and color, allow them to work in much the same way elements are transformed in nature – through endless variations of light and perspective. Sand, dried paint, tree bark, crushed eggshells, or fabric may become rock formations, water, trees, leaves, feathers, or clouds. The subject matter becomes less important as the piece evolves. My compositions are heavily textured with distinct divisions of graded values, invented symbols and patterns, and an awareness of vertical and horizontal planes. I allow my intuition to direct relationships of colors and shapes, whether edges are hard or soft – and when to stop painting.

My goal is to create an image that will attract attention, pique the imagination, and leave a lasting, positive impression. In addition to forces of nature surrounding me, I have been influenced by artists of various cultures who have reacted to the wonders of the universe in creating works of beauty and energy. Joan Mitchell, Richard Diebenkorn, Sam Gilliam, Romare Bearden, and a number of contemporary artists have inspired my work."

www.hubertjackson.com



Hubert Jackson *Matriarch #2*, undated
Acrylic and mixed media on canvas, 60 x 48 in. (152,4 x 121,9 cm)
Courtesy of the artist, Colonial Beach, Virginia



Hubert Jackson *Rapture*, undated
Hand-embellished digital print, 36 x 30 in. (91,4 x 76,2 cm)
Courtesy of the artist, Colonial Beach, Virginia

Jacob Lawrence

(1917-2000)

Jacob Lawrence, who lived much of his life in lower Manhattan, was a great American modern painter whose subjects were history and urban life. Born in Atlantic City, New Jersey, Lawrence 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. His paintings are a unique blend of sensibilities – part narrative mural painting, part social realism, and part modernist abstraction.

In 1946 he began teaching at Black Mountain College in North Carolina, at the invitation of Josef Albers. He also taught in New York City at the Art Students League, New School for Social Research, Pratt Institute, and in Maine at the Skowhegan School. In 1971 he became a professor of art at the University of Washington in Seattle, where he retired in 1986 as professor emeritus. Throughout the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s, Lawrence continued to paint subjects that referred to racial and social issues of African-Americans and devoted himself to commissions, especially for murals and limited edition prints to benefit non-profit organizations, including New York's Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, for which *Supermarket Flora* was created. In 1999, the year before Lawrence's death, he and his wife, painter Gwendolyn Knight, established a foundation to create an art center in Harlem (New York City) named for Lawrence.



Jacob Lawrence **Supermarket Flora**, 1997

Silkscreen on paper, 38 x 30 in. (96,5 x 76,2 cm)

Courtesy of ART in Embassies, Washington, D.C.;

Gift of the Foundation for Art and Preservation in Embassies

Gordon Parks

(1912-2006)

Born near Fort Scott, Kansas, Gordon Parks was the youngest of fifteen children. He left behind his youth and his home when he was still a teenager and moved to St. Paul, Minnesota. Forced to quit school to earn a living, Parks held a variety of jobs during the 1930s. While working as a railroad porter in 1937, he saw a magazine spread of the Farm Security Administration photography project that sparked his interest. He purchased a cheap camera from a pawnshop and within a month presented his first exhibition at an Eastman Kodak store. Thereafter, with amazing swiftness, he went on to become a successful fashion and portrait photographer.

In 1948 Parks sold a free-lance article to *Life* magazine that quickly led to a full-time position with the weekly periodical. During the next two decades, he brilliantly recorded the images of post-war America, most notably, he depicted emerging black America, from the strife of the civil rights movement to the desperation of the ghettos.

In 1963 Parks' writing talent became apparent with the publishing of the acclaimed novel, *The Learning Tree*, which he later adapted to the screen. His movie-making career continued with the highly successful films *Shaft* and its sequels *Shaft's Big Score* and *Super Cops*. His ballet, *Martin*, was based on the life of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Gordon Parks died at the age of 93, having led an incredible life as a master of many media and recipient of numerous awards.

www.kshs.org/portraits/parks_gordon.htm



Gordon Parks **Mrs. Ella Watson, a Government Charwoman, 1942**

Digital print from black and white photograph, 26 x 22 in. (66 x 55,9 cm)

Courtesy of ART in Embassies, Washington, D.C. Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, Farm Security Administration, Office of War Information. Photograph Collection, LC-DIG-fsa-8b14845

Donte Player

(born 1991)

"I was born on March 16th, 1991 in Dayton, Ohio. I have been fascinated with art and its glorious colors since I was a young child. I remember going to a lot of art museums with my mother, aunt, and grandma. In high school I participated in an after school organization for youth artists called Visual and Performing Arts. This after-school organization helped me improve my art-making abilities. One of the paintings done in that class was called *Peaceful Place*. This artwork depicted a lonely yet peaceful farm house among tall grass and trees with a bright, cool sky. I used watered down, oil-based paint for this artwork. The mixture of warm and cool colors creates a calm atmosphere in the depicted space."



Donte Player **A Peaceful Place**, 2009

Oil on paper, 23 x 29 in. (58,4 x 73,7 cm)

Courtesy of the artist, Upper Marlboro, Maryland

Alfred R. Waud

(1828-1891)

In 1860 Alfred Waud became an illustrator or “special artist” (a full time paid staff artist) for the *New York Illustrated News*. In April 1861 the newspaper assigned Waud to cover the Army of the Potomac, (Virginia’s) main Union Army in the American Civil War. He first depicted General Winfield Scott in Washington, D.C., and then entered the field to render scenes of the First Battle of Bull Run in July. Waud followed a Union expedition to Cape Hatteras, North Carolina the next month. That autumn, he sketched army activity in the Tidewater region of Virginia. Waud joined *Harper’s Weekly* toward the end of 1861, continuing to cover the war. In 1864 his brother, William (who up to that time had been working with *Frank Leslie’s Illustrated Newspaper*), joined Alfred on the staff of *Harper’s*, and they worked together during the Richmond-Petersburg (Virginia) Campaign.

Alfred Waud was present at every battle of the Army of the Potomac between the First Battle of Bull Run in 1861, through the Siege of Petersburg, which ended in late March of 1865. He was one of only two artists present at the Battle of Gettysburg; his depiction of Pickett’s Charge is thought to be the only visual account by an eyewitness. Alfred Waud died in 1891 in Marietta, Georgia, while touring former Civil War battlefields of the South.

www.wikipedia.com



Alfred R. Waud **African-American Civil War Soldier, 1860s**

Digital print from drawing, 26 x 20 in. (66 x 50,8 cm)

Courtesy of ART in Embassies, Washington, D.C.

Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division LC-DIG-ppmsca-20020

Acknowledgments

Washington

Robert Soppelsa, Curator
Jamie Arbolino, Registrar
Marcia Mayo, Senior Editor
Sally Mansfield, Editor
Amanda Brooks, Imaging Manager

Port Moresby

General Services Office staff

Vienna

Nathalie Mayer, Graphic Designer



Published by ART in Embassies
U.S. Department of State, Washington, D.C.
March 2011