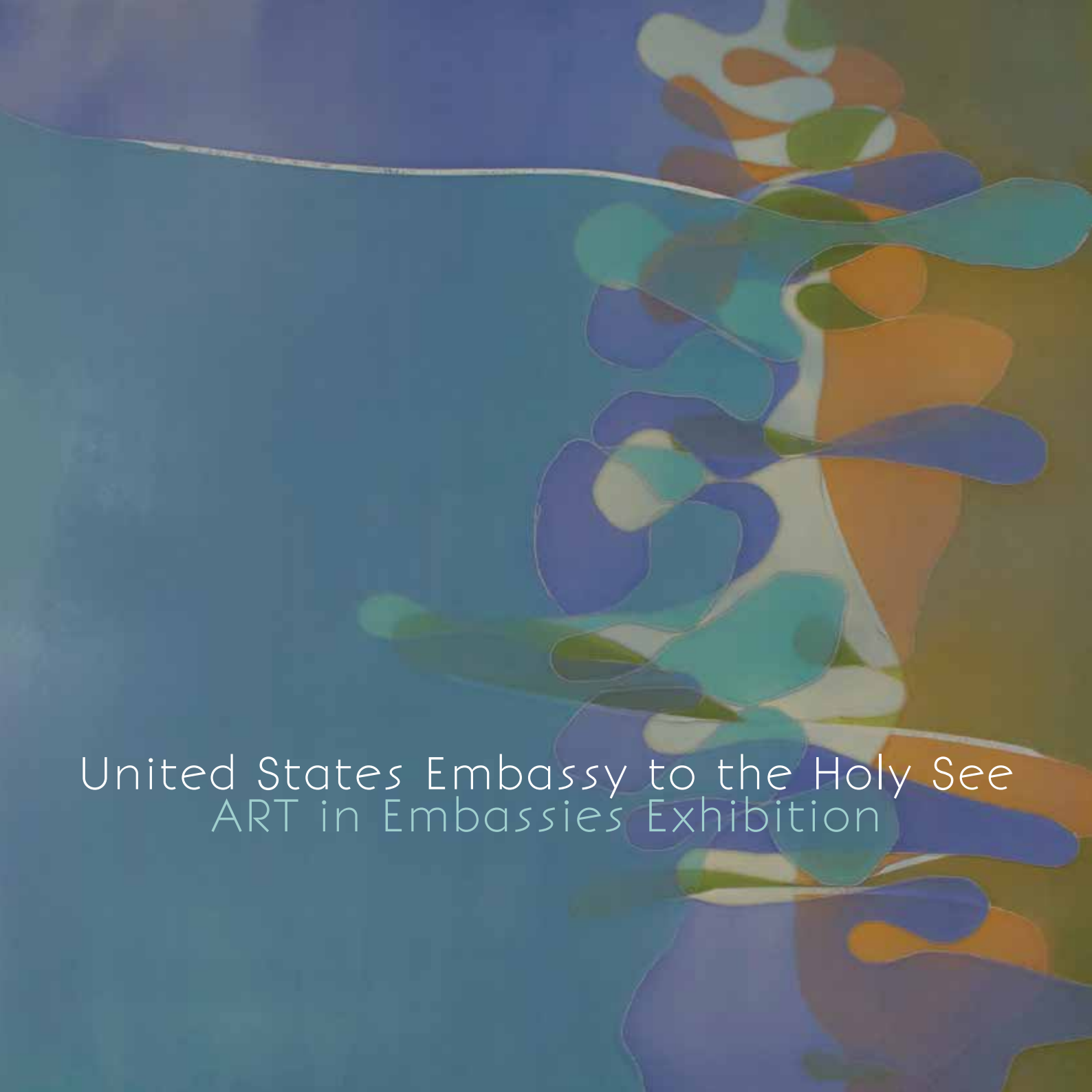


United States Embassy to the Holy See
ART in Embassies Exhibition

Johnson **Can't Go Home**, 2013
Oil on canvas, 48 x 48 in. (121.9 x 121.9 cm)
Courtesy of the artist, Richmond, Virginia

ART IN EMBASSIES

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 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, ART 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 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.''

For fifty years, ART in Embassies has played an active diplomatic role by creating meaningful cultural exchange through the visual arts. The exhibitions, permanent collections and artist exchanges connect people from the farthest corners of an international community. Extending our reach, amplifying our voice, and demonstrating our inclusiveness are strategic imperatives for America. ART in Embassies cultivates relationships that transcend boundaries, building trust, mutual respect and understanding among peoples. It is a fulcrum of America's global leadership as we continue to work for freedom, human rights and peace around the world.

John Forbes Kerry
U.S. Secretary of State

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the ART in Embassies exhibition in the residence of the American Ambassador to the Holy See. In these artworks you will notice three unifying elements: place, people, and philosophy.

Place, the first of the three elements, is Richmond, Virginia and Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU), the major locale for many of the artists in this exhibition. Our son Michael was a third year interior design student there when I first arrived to take on the position as U.S. Ambassador to the Holy See. In fact one of the artists, Matt King, was Michael's freshman sculpture teacher and a fellow at the American Academy in Rome, our neighbor.

The second major element is the people behind the art. It was especially meaningful to have our friends David and Natalie Piraino with us for the presentation of my credentials to Pope Francis. Their daughter Valerie, whom I have known from the time she was born, is the artist who has created four pieces in the collection. Valerie's mother lost many members of her family in the Rwandan genocide of 1994. In Valerie's works one finds a special search where, as she writes, "Narratives and identity are continuously reinterpreted."

The third element is more philosophical. We were searching for works that represented hope, a bridge to the future and the expectation that a new Pontiff brings a positive energy to the Holy See and the Church. That hope and wish for something positive to come is captured in many of the pieces.

We are proud and pleased to display such wonderful work from American artists in our residence. We hope you enjoy the exhibition.

Ambassador Ken Hackett
and Mrs. Joan Hackett

RUTH BOLDUAN

1947

Ruth Bolduan grew up in Germany and the United States. She earned a Master of Fine Arts degree in painting from American University in Washington, D.C., in 1980, and she is currently an associate professor of painting and drawing at the Virginia Commonwealth University School of the Arts in Richmond. Of her work, Bolduan says, "The eighteenth century fascinates me as a woman and as an artist. Rich color and intricate patterns, a mingling of the sensual and the coy, of female fecundity and agency, of the political and the fabricated intellectual; all resonate in my work. I find a correspondence between the Rococo and the art world's resurrection of desire and beauty, the pretty, the cute, the decorative, and the fashionable. Like the eighteenth century, however, a sense of political and global unease underlies this light-hearted facade, layering a twenty-first century feeling of malaise over the imagery and content of my work."

www.antongallery.com/bolduan_biography.htm

Bolduan **Mlle. Julie**, 2008. Oil on canvas, 24 x 24 in. (61 x 61 cm). Courtesy of the artist, Richmond, Virginia

MAJA LISA ENGELHARDT

1956

Maja Lisa Engelhardt was born in Frederiksberg, Denmark, in 1956. She currently lives in France, Denmark, and Ireland. Her painting, *The Third Day*, is part of a series of paintings inspired by the creation narrative in the book of Genesis. The text relating the creation of the third day is as follows:

"The land produced vegetation: plants bearing seed according to their kinds and trees bearing fruit with seed in it according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good. And there was evening, and there was morning—the third day." (*Genesis* 1:12-13, New International Version)

www.eharrisgallery.com

ENGELHARDT

The Third Day (23), 2008
Acrylic on canvas, 76 ¾ x 44 ⅞ in. (194.9 x 114 cm)
Courtesy of the artist and Elizabeth Harris Gallery, New York, New York

RENI GOWER

1953

Reni Gower is a professor in the painting and printmaking department at Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond. Her art is a blend of painting and sculpture. It has evolved from flat collages to three-dimensional constructions. Paint is applied to a variety of materials – canvas, cheesecloth, nylon and aluminum screens, plastic, rug-hold, wood – that are suspended in layers from wooden structures.

Gower blends a fluid improvisational painting approach with a repetitively structured and analytical one to create complex images … . She incorporates the circle as a repetitive decorative motif, as a metaphor for binary code, and as a cultural symbol of infinite continuity. Through intricate patterning, she combines these references to link the passive precision of technology with the active nuance of handicraft. Her intent is to induce a contemplative state of mind creating a visual respite that mirrors, but also transcends, our accelerated tech-saturated culture. While also addressing issues of beauty, she hopes her art becomes an intimate vehicle for reflection or reprieve.

www.renigower.com

GOWER

Glimmer, 2005

Layers of painted materials (canvas, acrylic, cheesecloth, plastic, aluminum screen, rug hold) suspended from wooden frames, 92 x 86 in. (233.7 x 218.4 cm)

Courtesy of the artist, Richmond, Virginia

SUSAN IVERSON

1951

Susan Iverson lives and works in rural Hanover County, Virginia, near the small village of Montpelier. She is a professor in the School of the Arts, Department of Craft/Material Studies at Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond. Her work has been exhibited throughout the United States and is in the permanent collection of the Renwick Gallery at the Smithsonian American Art Museum in Washington, D.C., among other venues. Iverson earned a Master of Fine Arts degree from Tyler School of Art, Temple University in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from Colorado State University in Ft. Collins.

"A move from the city to the country has altered the way I look at and interact with the natural world. I have become an obsessive observer of this world. Life on a secluded, woodland pond provides countless opportunities to observe both major and minor events. These tapestries are reflections of my observations and ruminations. The sense of place and my attachment to the environment are major aspects of this work. I am influenced by both the physical landscape around me and the remembered landscapes that haunt me."

http://susaniversonart.com
http://arts.vcu.edu/craft/bio/susan-iverson

IVERSON

Winter Walk, 2010
Wool on linen warp, glass
63 x 31 x 6 in. (160 x 78.7 x 15.2 cm)
Courtesy of the artist, Richmond, Virginia

RON JOHNSON

1968

Ron Johnson received a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in painting and drawing from the Ohio State University in Columbus in 1999, and a Master of Fine Arts degree in painting and printmaking from Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) in Richmond in 2003. He is currently an associate professor of painting at VCU. Johnson has exhibited widely both nationally and internationally.

Johnson's paintings are exquisitely rendered abstractions in which light, color, and shape dance rhythmically, creating a transcendental and ephemeral experience for the viewer. The surface of the paintings appears wax-like, an appropriate effect in relation to the molten pools of color, which spread and flow across the panels, as if made of hot lava. The paintings are vibrant, forceful, and masterfully controlled.

http://arts.vcu.edu/paintingprintmaking/portfolio/ron-johnson

www.minusspace.com/2009/02/ron-johnson-new-work-reynolds-gallery-richmond-va

Johnson **Can't Go Home**, 2013. Oil on canvas, 48 x 48 in. (121.9 x 121.9 cm). Courtesy of the artist, Richmond, Virginia

MATT KING

1973

Matt King lives and works in Richmond, Virginia, where he is an associate professor in both the Art Foundation program and the Department of Sculpture and Extended Media, at Virginia Commonwealth University School of the Arts. "I've been thinking about the fleeting and often incongruous emotions that I experience while casually attending to the details of my life. These are moments of reflection that disrupt the seamlessness of my journey through the commercial corridors that make up so much of my concept of America. For example, a chance juxtaposition of objects might transform a dollar store into a repository of latent emotion, full of gifts and cleaning products. A pet store becomes a vast arena that promises nourishment and responsibility, a collision of biology and love. These boxy outlets are intoxicating. I find myself seduced by their offerings, queasy under their fluorescent lights, and thrilled when their unintended poetics stops me in my tracks."

www.mattkingstudio.com

King **Wall Ball**, 2010
Chrome plated copper, steel, maple, Crazy Straw, graphite
6 x 8 x 24 in. (15.2 x 20.3 x 61 cm)
Courtesy of the artist, Richmond, Virginia

King **Mylicon**, 2011
Inkjet print on vinyl, glass mirror, 22 in. (55.9 cm) in diameter
Courtesy of the artist, Richmond, Virginia

ANTONIO P. MARTINO

1901-1988

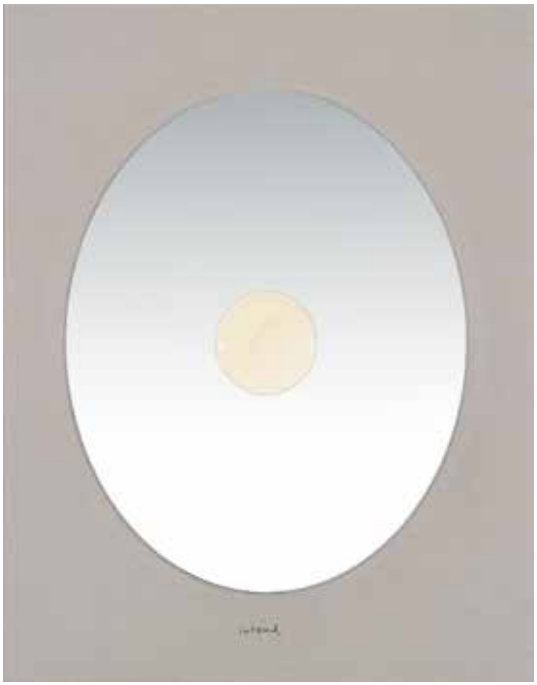
Born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, in 1901, Antonio Martino studied at the Philadelphia Museum School of Industrial Art. He was a member of the National Academy of Design (elected in 1938), the American Watercolor Society, the Philadelphia Watercolor Society, the Philadelphia Sketch Club, and the DaVinci Art Alliance. His work has also been shown at the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Whitney Museum of American Art, both in New York City; the Corcoran Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C.; the Reading Museum and the Philadelphia Art Club, both in Pennsylvania, among many other venues. In his lifetime, Martino amassed more than eighty awards for his oils and watercolors, and had ten solo exhibitions.

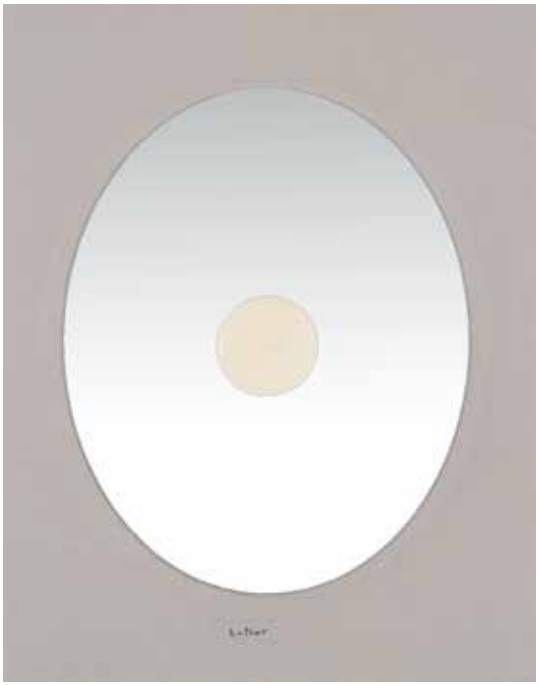
Martino's work is a prominent example of the long tradition of realistic painting and instruction in Philadelphia. He also absorbed the light, color, and atmosphere of impressionism and the geometric form of cubism. Early in his career he concentrated on landscapes, and painted with his brother Giovanni along the Darby Creek and on the Delaware River above New Hope. These landscapes were painted out of doors with the direct impressionistic brushwork of Edward W. Redfield and Walter Elmer Schofield. By the 1930s, he was painting richly colored, darkly atmospheric views of Manayunk, a neighborhood in the northwestern section of the city of Philadelphia, for which he is best known.

Martino lived in Newtown Square, a picturesque township west of Philadelphia, until 1971, when he moved to Thousand Oaks, California. There he painted west coast landscapes and seascapes in the Santa Barbara and Westlake Village areas. He painted until a few months before his death in 1988.

www.gratzgallery.com

Martino **Under the Bridge**, undated
Oil on canvas, 31 ½ x 37 ½ in. (80 x 95.3 cm)
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Philip Berman to ART inEmbassies, Washington, D.C.



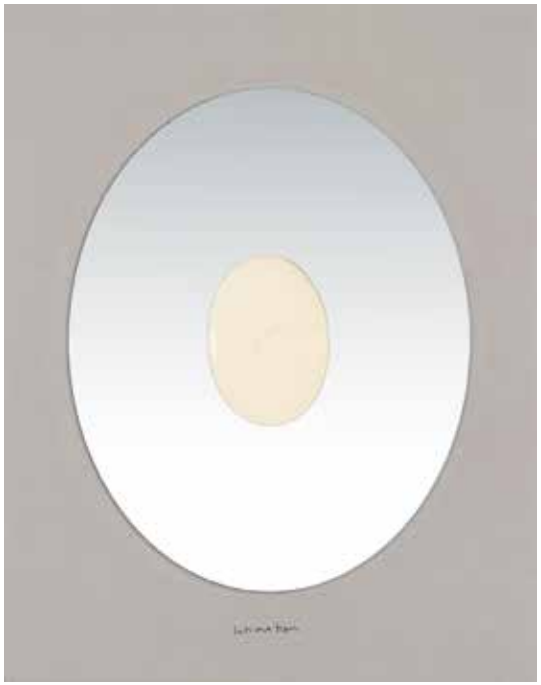


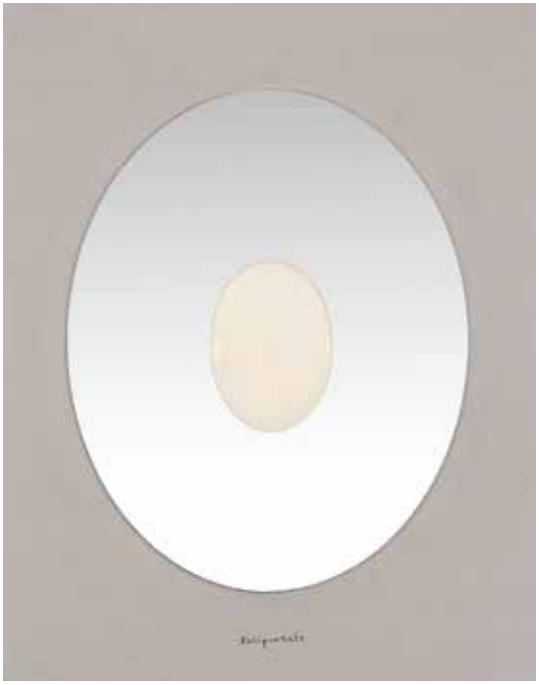
VALERIE PIRAINO

1981

Valerie Piraino was born in 1981 in Kigali, Rwanda. She received her Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from the Maryland Institute College of Art in Baltimore in 2004, and her Master of Fine Arts degree from Columbia University in New York City in 2009. She was artist-in-residence at the Studio Museum in Harlem in 2009-2010, and was nominated for the Rema Hort Mann Foundation Grant in 2011 and 2012.

"Working in installation, photography, and works on paper my work explores how images can be re-contextualized. I consider homes and domestic spaces to be sites that are integral to shaping subjectivity.





PIRAINO

Flush (Intend), **Flush (Author)**, **Flush (Intimation)**, **Flush (Reciprocate)**, 2011
Porcelain clay inscribed with shorthand, mirrored Plexiglas, frames, Each, of four: 17 ⅝ x 14 ⅝ in. (44.8 x 37.1 cm)
Courtesy of the artist, Brooklyn, New York

Working from an archive of slides, I create immersive tableaux that critique nostalgia. Drawing from theater, cinema and literature, I create dramatic and disorienting settings that house projected slides. My photographs are a more literal take on malleability, where slides are projected on to fabric and manipulated. I work to create a psychological backdrop where narratives and identity are continuously re-interpreted."

www.valeriepiraino.com

RICHARD ROTH

1946

Richard Roth was born in Brooklyn, New York, in 1946. He received a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from Cooper Union in New York City and a Master of Fine Arts degree from Tyler School of Art at Temple University in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. He is the former chair and current faculty member of the Department of Painting and Printmaking at Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond. His three-dimensional works are inspired by a variety of sources.

"I am interested in and draw ideas from a wide range of artifacts and disciplines such as product and package design, visual perception, nature, architecture, popular culture, custom cars, and fashion. As these influences interact with specific formal concerns, as well as my riffing on the three-dimensional structure of the support, it is hoped that a certain power/depth is achieved in the fusion."

http://richardrothstudio.com

ROTH

Batteries Not Included II, 2011
Acrylic on birch plywood panel, 11 ⅜ x 8 x 4 in. (28.9 x 20.3 x 10.2 cm)
Courtesy of the artist, Richmond, Virginia

Moonlight Savings Time, 2013
Acrylic on birch plywood panel, 12 x 8 x 4 in. (30.5 x 20.3 x 10.2 cm)
Courtesy of the artist, Richmond, Virginia

PAULA SCHER

1948

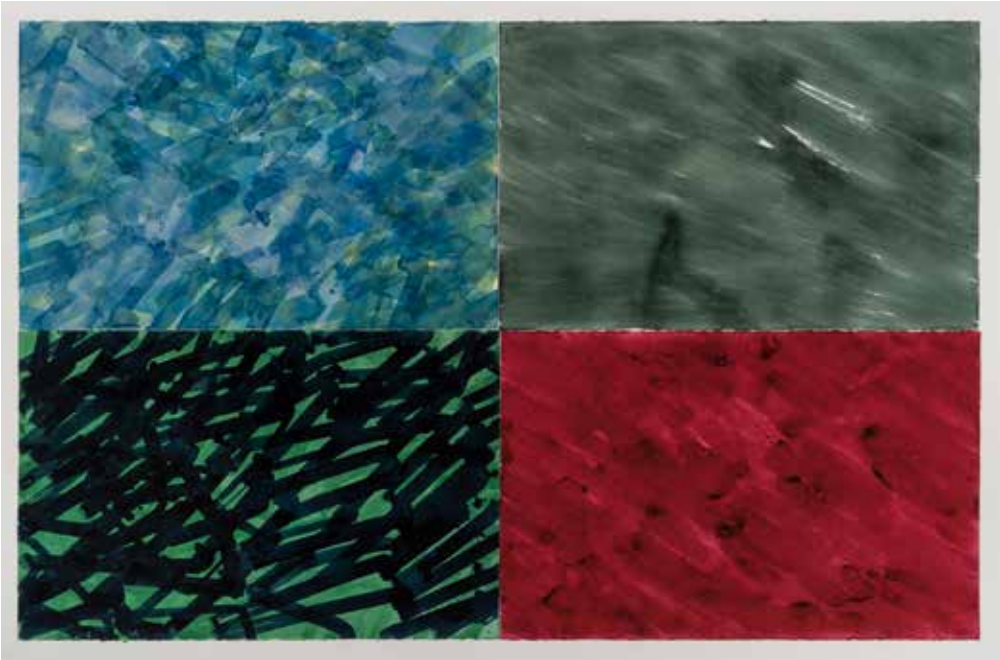
Paula Scher has been a partner in the New York office of Pentagram, a multi-disciplinary design firm, since 1991. She holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from the Tyler School of Art in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and honorary doctorates from the Corcoran College of Art + Design in Washington, D.C., the Maryland Institute College of Art in Baltimore, and Moore College of Art & Design in Philadelphia. Her teaching career includes over two decades at the School of Visual Arts in New York City, along with positions at the Cooper Union in New York City, Yale University in New Haven, Connecticut, and the Tyler School of Art. She is the author of *Make It Bigger* (2002) and *MAPS* (2011), both published by Princeton Architectural Press. She has lectured and exhibited all over the world.

In the 1990s, Scher began painting colorful typographic maps of the world, its continents, countries, islands, oceans, cities, streets and neighborhoods. Obsessive, opinionated and more than a little personal, the paintings were a reaction against information overload and the constant stream of news, which, like the paintings, presents skewed versions of reality in a deceptively authoritative way.

www.pentagram.com/partners/#/19/

http://new.pentagram.com/2011/10/new-work-paula-scher-maps/

SCHER **Africa**, 2007
Hand pulled silkscreen, 53 x 60 in. (134.6 x 152.4 cm)
Courtesy of the artist, New York, New York



TAPIA
Untitled, undated
Watercolor on paper
66 x 88 in. (167.6 x 223.5 cm)
Courtesy of the artist and
Reynolds Gallery,
Richmond, Virginia

JAVIER TAPIA

1957

Javier Tapia was born in Lima, Peru, in 1957. After pursuing studies in industrial engineering and communications at the University of Lima during the 1970s, he changed course and became a painter, first studying fine arts (painting) at Santa Monica College in Los Angeles, California, and later earning both a Bachelor of Arts degree and a Master of Arts degree at the University of Texas at Austin, where he graduated with highest honors. Tapia has been awarded several grants and scholarships, and has participated in numerous international and national exhibitions. His work can be found in the collections of the National Museum of Peru in Lima, the Ogden Museum of Southern Art in New Orleans, Louisiana, and the Museum Pedro de Osma in Lima. He is currently an associate professor of painting and drawing in the Department of Painting and Printmaking at Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond, where he has been teaching for the past nineteen years.

http://arts.vcu.edu/paintingprintmaking/portfolio/javier-tapia/

JACK WAX

1954

Jack Wax was born in 1954 and was raised in the Hudson River Valley region of New York State. … After a semi-standard, white, middle class, suburban, 1960s childhood, he struck off on his own. The journey began first with his attending the experimental, progressive institution, Goddard College, in up-state Vermont. His initial impulse while there was to develop and explore a self-directed inquiry into art history that focused primarily on the grey areas between what was traditionally considered primitive (pre-cultural) and early cultural art and artifacts. This examination led to a lifelong concern with what he calls "the resonant object." It also marked the major shifting of his focus from studying the works of others, to the making of the work himself. He transferred from Goddard College to Temple University's Tyler School of Art in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, where after three more years of matriculation he graduated in 1978 with his Bachelor of Fine Arts degree. After an interim time successfully running a business in Berkeley, California, he returned to the East Coast and attended the Rhode Island School of Design in Providence. He graduated with honors in 1983 with his Master of Fine Arts degree in sculpture.

Since 1983, Wax has taught at Temple University's Tyler School of Art and The University of the Arts, both in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Ohio State University in Columbus; The Cleveland Institute of Art, Illinois State University in Normal; and Rhode Island School of Design. From 1991 through 1996 he taught at the Toyama Institute in Japan, and at present he is a full professor at Virginia Commonwealth University's School of the Arts in Richmond.

http://arts.vcu.edu/craft/bio/jack-wax

WAX

Sediment, 2012
Ink and pigment on Duralar
36 x 28 in. (91.4 x 71.1 cm)
Courtesy of the artist,
Richmond, Virginia

HILARY WILDER

1973

Hilary Wilder works in painting, installation, and video. She received both a Master of Arts degree and a Master of Fine Arts degree from the University of Wisconsin in Madison. She is the recipient of numerous honors, including a Guggenheim Fellowship, a grant from the Pollock-Krasner Foundation, and a Virginia Museum of Fine Arts Professional Fellowship. She has recently participated in artist residencies at the Ucross Foundation in Sheridan, Wyoming; the Jentel Foundation in Banner, Wyoming; and at the Association of Icelandic Visual Artists (SIM) in Reykjavik. In 2004, she completed a two-year fellowship as both a visual artist resident and a critical studies resident in the Core Program at the Museum of Fine Arts Houston (Texas). She serves on the faculty of Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond.

"I've always had a strange relationship to nineteenth century Romantic landscape painting, because while I'm really captivated by the paintings of Albert Bierstadt, Thomas Cole, Asher B. Durand, and the like, I also feel a bit skeptical, as if I have to remind myself that they're using certain tricks of color, light, and atmosphere. … So maybe I'm especially sensitive to the notion that much of the history of landscape painting, and by extension paintings about catastrophic events in the landscape, has to do with hyperbolizing a sense of place and inviting drama, whether good or bad, into our everyday lives."

http://arts.vcu.edu/paintingprintmaking/portfolio/hilary-wilder/

www.devinborden.com/2012/06/12/hilary-wilder/

WILDER

Commemorative Tabletop, 2012
Oil on canvas, 36 x 48 in. (91.4 x 121.9 cm)
Courtesy of the artist, Richmond, Virginia and Devin Borden Gallery, Houston, Texas

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