

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE
Office of the Spokesperson

For Immediate Release
2012/1729

November 2, 2012

MEDIA NOTE

The U.S. Department of State Commemorates Art in Embassies 50th Anniversary

The Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations' Office of Art in Embassies (AIE) proudly celebrates 50 years of facilitating the Department of State's public diplomacy through the power of the visual arts.

The AIE 50th anniversary features programming, events, and performances, including celebrations on November 30th, when U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton will honor five artists -- Jeff Koons, Cai Guo-Qiang, Shahzia Sikander, Kiki Smith, and Carrie Mae Weems -- with the first *U.S. Department of State - Medal of Arts* for their outstanding commitment to the AIE program and international cultural exchange. The evening's finale, hosted by the Department, will be an invitation-only event at the Smithsonian American Art Museum.

A landmark partnership between the U.S. Department of State and the U.S. Department of Defense resulted in a photographic exhibit entitled *Serving Abroad...Through Their Eyes*. This exhibit features photographs taken by active military, Foreign Service, and Civil Service personnel while serving abroad. Those images will be displayed at the Pentagon, the Verizon Center, and the Department of State in November.

On November 28th, AIE's Artist Exchange, with performance artist Nick Cave, engages students at THEARC's community open house in southeast D.C. from 5:30 p.m.-7:30 p.m., highlighting THEARC's partnerships with the Corcoran School of Art, the Levine School of Music, The Washington Ballet, and THEARC Theater.

On November 29th, Dr. Glenn Lowry, director of the Museum of Modern Art of New York, will moderate a discussion with AIE's 50th anniversary artist honorees, presented by AIE, the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, the Aspen Institute, and the Ronald Reagan Building and International Trade Center.

About Art in Embassies

For five decades, the AIE program has played a leading role in U.S. public diplomacy by promoting cross-cultural dialogue and understanding through the visual arts, and by sponsoring dynamic artist exchanges. The Museum of Modern Art of New York first envisioned this global visual arts program in 1953, and President John F. Kennedy formalized it at the U.S. Department of State in 1963. Today, AIE is a public-private partnership that engages 20,000 participants (artists, museums, galleries, universities and private collectors) in over 200 venues located in 189 countries. Professional curators and registrars create and ship approximately 60 loan exhibitions per year to our embassies and consulates. In addition, since 2003, over 58 permanent collections have been installed in the Department's diplomatic facilities throughout the world.

For further information, please visit art.state.gov, or contact Dabney Kerr at KerrD@state.gov (703) 875-4209, or Abigail Gardner at Agardner@skdknick.com (202) 464-6603.

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