



# Art in Embassies

U.S. DEPARTMENT *of* STATE

## Art in Embassies Exhibition: United States Embassy Addis Ababa

### Art in Embassies

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 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."

[www.art.state.gov](http://www.art.state.gov)

## Welcome

Welcome to the U.S. Embassy's Chief of Mission Residence in Addis Ababa! We are thrilled to host this unique Art in Embassies exhibition, a vibrant showcase of Ethiopian and American art, a curated blend reflecting the rich diversity of thought, expression, and creativity of both countries. This year also marks the 120th anniversary of bilateral ties between our two nations, so this exhibition additionally reflects the multifaceted strength, beauty, and vitality of U.S.-Ethio relations.

The works in the exhibition by Ethiopian artists Ermias Mazengia and Mathias Lulu and U.S. creators Morel Doucet, Minging Mike, Joseph Alef, and Regina Broussard blend solemnity with joy, love with difficulty, and depict challenging realities. The Ethiopian art not only reflects the country's dark times but also a resilient society where people love, court one another, and form lifelong bonds. The U.S. art on display shows intimate moments between friends, some enjoying pleasant evenings and afternoons full of music.

Just as Ethiopia is celebrated for its rich cultural and artistic heritage, we are proud to provide a glimpse of contemporary U.S. art that speaks to the values our nations cherish. We are excited to share this exhibition with our visitors, whether you join us in person at the Ambassador's Residence or virtually. We hope that these works of art spark curiosity, wonder, and pleasure, fostering a deeper understanding and appreciation of the cultural connections between our two countries, as well as the universal human experience. Thank you for joining us in celebrating this artistic exchange!

Ambassador Ervin Jose Massinga  
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

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## Artist Biographies

### Joseph Alef (born 1981)

Radiating with energy, Joseph Alef's paintings convey their own visual language. Alef often begins with a striking blend of colors, then integrates linear and graphic elements that create sculptural effects. He also builds ceramic tablets that are deeply layered with organic abstractions and vibrant colors.

Alef has been affiliated with the Creative Growth Art Center since 2001. He has been featured in notable publications such as *Hyperallergic* and the *San Francisco Chronicle*, and his work has been exhibited at the Outsider Art Fair, New York, and the New Art Dealers Alliance, Miami, among others.

#### Title of Artwork Displayed: Untitled



Year Created: 2021

Format: Acrylic and ink on canvas

Dimensions: 18 x 36 in

Courtesy of Creative Growth Art Center, Oakland, California

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## Regina Broussard

Regina Broussard's pastel and Prismacolor drawings depict the people and places around her. Broussard typically renders a bold graphic line as well as strong, two-dimensional color patterns. As seen in *Untitled*, images of food are a consistent subject.

Broussard was an active member of the Creative Growth Art Center from 1970 to 1998. Her work has been shown widely in California, namely at the Richmond Art Center, San Jose University, and the Oakland Museum of California.

### Title of Artwork Displayed: *Untitled*



Year Created: undated

Format: Acrylic on canvas

Dimensions: 22 x 26 in.

Courtesy of Creative Growth Art Center, Oakland, California

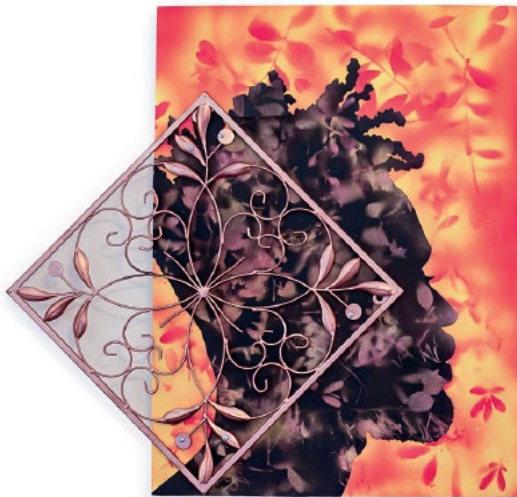
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## Morel Doucet (born 1990)

Multidisciplinary artist and educator Morel Doucet creates ceramics, illustrations, and prints that expose the realities of climate change, gentrification, and displacement affecting African diasporic communities through the lens of his Haitian heritage. In his series *God Told Me Stars Used to Be Audible Through the Window Sills*, Doucet utilizes various mediums—acrylic, Mylar, aerosol paint, and ink—to create wall hangings reminiscent of Miami’s Little Haiti neighborhood and his Afro-Caribbean culture. He transforms recycled steel rails into “protective shields that embrace misty silhouetted figures residing in an indigenous floral backdrop.” The figures in both artworks harmoniously coexist with the landscape amidst environmental decay and force viewers to recognize and appreciate humanity’s connection with nature.

Doucet studied at the New World School of the Arts, Miami, and received a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in ceramics with a minor in creative writing and a concentration in illustration from the Maryland Institute College of Art, Baltimore. The artist has shown his work at the Venice Biennale and Havana Biennial and was featured in *Vogue Mexico*, the *New York Times*, and on PBS. Public collections include the Pérez Art Museum Miami; Tweed Museum of Art at the University of Minnesota Duluth; and the Box Plymouth, England.

### Title of Artwork Displayed: #13 God Told Me Stars Used to Be Audible Through the Window Sills



Year Created: 2023

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Format: Mixed media on wooden panel; Mylar, aerosol paint, metal, and indigenous floral patterns

Dimensions: 24 x 25 in.

Courtesy of Galerie Myrtis, Baltimore, Maryland; photo by Pedro Wazzen

**Title of Artwork Displayed: #5 God Told Me Stars Used to Be Audible Through the Window Sills**



Year Created: 2023

Format: Mixed media on wooden panel; Mylar, aerosol paint, metal, and indigenous floral patterns

Dimensions: 24 x 18 in.

Courtesy of Galerie Myrtis, Baltimore, Maryland; photo by Pedro Wazzen

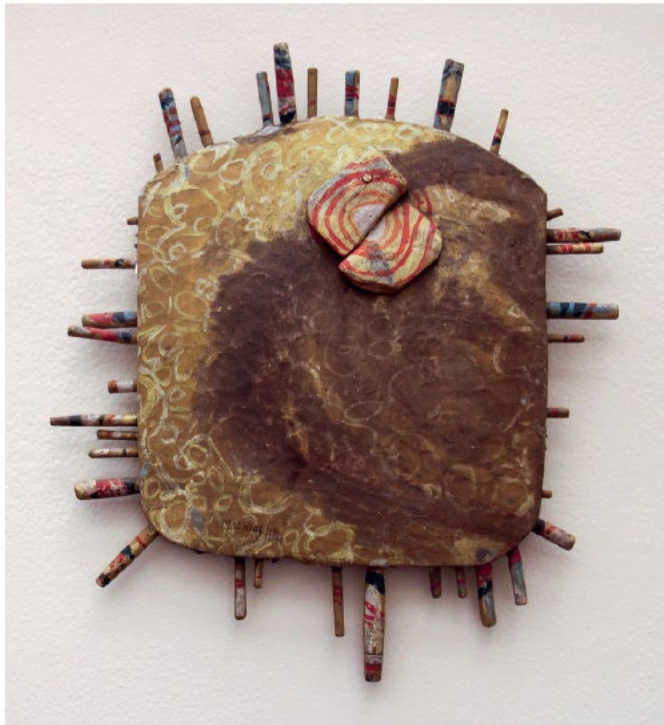
## **Mathias Lulu (1974-2013)**

Mathias Lulu derived artistic inspiration from his attitudes toward humanity and the natural world. In addition to painting, he loved working with wood; his family owns a collection of over 150 of his pieces. “For me, painting is therapeutic. It is a form of meditation. I lose my sense of direction if I don’t paint. Painting transports me to a different world,” Lulu said.

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Born in Harar, Ethiopia, Lulu graduated from the Addis Ababa School of Fine Arts. He was a full-time artist at Habesha Art Studio and collaborated on different art projects with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations Population Fund. His work has been exhibited throughout Addis Ababa, namely at the National Museum of Ethiopia, Alliance Ethio-Française, and the Spanish and French Embassies.

**Title of Artwork Displayed: Untitled**



Year Created: 2007

Format: Wood

Dimensions: 37 x 32 in.

Courtesy of Teyent Mazengia, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

**Ermias Mazengia (1977-2013)**

Ermias Mazengia was born and raised in Addis Ababa with a passion for the arts. His love for painting flourished with each brushstroke, creating narratives that unfolded on his canvases. "A

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painting is not an idea: it's like swimming through the spiritual and the scientific realities of existence," he said.

Mazengia studied at the Goethe Institute's School of Fine Art & Design in Addis Ababa and graduated from the University of Addis Ababa Allé School of Fine Arts and Design. He was a full-time studio artist until his death in 2013; his family holds over 120 of his remaining paintings, safeguarding and preserving his extensive body of artistic work. His works have been exhibited in Addis Ababa, namely the E.C.A.G. Gallery and the Alliance Ethio-Française.

**Title of Artwork Displayed: Transport**



Year Created: 2000

Format: Oil on canvas

Dimensions: 27 9/16 x 39 3/8 in.

Courtesy of Mazengia Kebede and Yalemwork Getahun, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

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**Title of Artwork Displayed: Transport**



Year Created: 2000

Format: Oil on canvas

Dimensions: 40 9/16 x 31 ½ in.

Courtesy of Mazengia Kebede and Yalemwork Getahun, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

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**Title of Artwork Displayed: Transport**



Year Created: 2000

Format: Oil on canvas

Dimensions: 39 3/18 x 31 1/2 in.

Courtesy of Mazengia Kebede and Yalemwork Getahun, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

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**Title of Artwork Displayed: Transport**



Year Created: 2000

Format: Oil on canvas

Dimensions: 40 9/16 x 40 3/16 in.

Courtesy of Mazengia Kebede and Yalemwork Getahun, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

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**Title of Artwork Displayed: Transport**



Year Created: 2000

Format: Oil on canvas

Dimensions: 39 3/8 x 35 1/16 in.

Courtesy of Mazengia Kebede and Yalemwork Getahun, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

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**Title of Artwork Displayed: Untitled**



Year Created: 2005

Format: Oil on canvas

Dimensions: 37 13/16 x 37 13/16 in.

Courtesy of Mazengia Kebede and Yalemwork Getahun, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

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**Title of Artwork Displayed: Wanted**



Year Created: 2007

Format: Oil on canvas

Dimensions: 43 5/16 x 43 5/16 in.

Courtesy of Mazengia Kebede and Yalemwork Getahun, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

## **Mingering Mike (born 1950)**

Mingering Mike was thought to have been a soul musician who managed his own label, played sold-out concerts internationally, and recorded over fifty albums between 1968 and 1977. However, he was later revealed to be an imaginary superstar when a record collector came across his work at a flea market in 2004. Fabricated by D.C.-based artist Mike Stevens as a teenager in the 1960s, the records are made of cardboard on pigment print and covered themes such as heartbreak and love, civil rights protests, and the Vietnam War. Stevens's alter ego created a "soulful, alternate universe" artistically expressed through "albums complete with gatefold interiors, extensive liner notes, and grooves drawn onto fake vinyl."

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A collection of these artworks was first exhibited by HEMPHILL Fine Arts, Washington, D.C. in 2007. Other exhibitions include the Nasher Museum of Art at Duke University, Durham, North Carolina; the Liverpool Biennial, England; and the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Library, Washington, D.C.

**Title of Artwork Displayed: The Mingering Mike Singers & Orchestra: Instrumentals and One Vocal (Ming/War, Aug. 1971)**



Year Created: printed 2008

Format: Archival pigment print

Dimensions: 14 x 14 in.

Courtesy of the artist / Hemphill Artworks, Washington, D.C.

**Title of Artwork Displayed: The Minging Mike Show—Live From The Howard Theater  
(Nations Capitol, June 1969)**



Year Created: printed 2008

Format: Archival pigment print

Dimensions: 14 x 14 in.

Courtesy of the artist / Hemphill Artworks, Washington, D.C.

## Acknowledgements

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