



U.S. DEPARTMENT *of* STATE

Democracy Collection Launches Traveling Exhibition: “A More Perfect Union: American Artists and the Currents of our Time”

MEDIA NOTE

OFFICE OF THE SPOKESPERSON

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The U.S. Department of State Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations’ Office of Art in Embassies is launching a traveling exhibition as part of a year-long initiative for its 60th Anniversary called the Democracy Collection. The exhibition, “A More Perfect Union: American Artists and the Currents of Our Time,” opens to the public on May 25th at the Acropolis Museum in Athens, Greece, moves to Lisbon, Portugal, in June, and arrives in Geneva, Switzerland, during the United Nations (UN) Human Rights Council Session on June 29.

At each location, U.S. embassies will host art-filled public diplomacy events on democracy. U.S. Ambassador to Greece George Tsunis will host Partners in Democracy, a symposium featuring emerging voices and thought leaders—among them documentary photographer Platon whose portraits of world leaders grace the covers of Time and other magazines—who will discuss the current challenges democracies face.

U.S. Embassy Lisbon, led by Ambassador Randi Charno Levine, will host a three-day program, starting with the Democracy Collection exhibition, reception, and discussion at the Catholic University of Portugal. The exhibition will be followed by a series of workshops, panel discussions, and public events hosted by its partners at the Central Tejo at Museu da Electricidade and the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation. Iconic American artists from both Ambassador Levine’s Art in Embassies exhibition, “Celebrating Diversity: Democracy and Representation in Contemporary Art,” and the Democracy Collection (Sanford Biggers, Nick Cave; Deborah Kass; Maya Lin; Christopher Myers; Aliza Nisenbaum; Amy Sherald; Dr. Deborah Willis; Hank Willis Thomas) will join Portuguese artists for in-depth discussions on various DEIA topics, which are central to democracy and diplomacy. The program will culminate in a celebration at Ambassador Levine’s official residence showcasing the Celebrating Diversity exhibition.

In Geneva, United States Ambassador to the United Nations Human Rights Council Michèle Taylor will host civil rights singer turned painter Joan Baez for a salon-style dialogue on the ideals of democracy and the intersection of art and activism. The evening will also feature a musical performance by alumni of the U.S. Fulbright program. Ambassador Taylor and the Xippas Gallery will then host an opening reception for the exhibition, with guest speakers to include environmental artist Alexis Rockman and former White House Arts Advisor and actor Kal Penn. The exhibition will be on display at the Xippas Gallery and open to the public from June 29 to July 24. The Office of Art in Embassies' Democracy Collection initiative puts artists at the forefront of defending democracy. The initiative includes a traveling exhibition, scores of artist visits to U.S. embassies in every hemisphere, and a democracy-themed art contest for middle and high school students.

The Office is raising funds to store, care for, and ship art to posts worldwide, with support from partners such as The Boeing Company, Ford Foundation, Doris Duke Foundation, United Airlines, Microsoft, AT&T, Salamander Hotels and Resorts, Xippas Gallery, and scores of individual philanthropists and collectors who have donated time, funds, and artworks to this effort.

The U.S. Department of State established the Office of Art in Embassies in 1963, adapting a program started ten years earlier at the Museum of Modern Art. The exhibitions and collections created by the office play a vital role in our nation's public diplomacy. The works are carefully selected to reflect the pride and innovation of America's cultural sector and to make cross-cultural connections in the regions and states in which they are displayed. Art in Embassies curates permanent and temporary exhibitions for over 200 U.S. embassies and official residences across the globe.

For more information about Art in Embassies visit art.state.gov.

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