

In Portugal, Jill Biden stresses the power of art in diplomacy

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LISBON – During a short visit to Portugal today to attend the 60th anniversary celebration of the ‘Art in Embassies’ program promoted by the U.S. Embassy in Lisbon, First Lady Jill Biden stressed the power of art in diplomacy.

“Art is about connection,” she told those gathered at the event held at the Catholic University of Lisbon. “In a world that asks us to sprint from moment to moment, from meeting to meeting, art stops us in our tracks. It feeds our spirits when we’re hungry for something more. It shows the contours of our sorrows and joys so that we know we’re not alone.”

A U.S. Department of State program, Art in Embassies seeks to create vital cross-cultural dialogue and foster mutual understanding through the visual arts and dynamic artist exchanges.

“Art is the eminence and expression of our humanity,” Biden said. “And even when it’s easy to get caught up in differences, yes art can unite us. Connection is what diplomacy is all about as well.”



US First Lady Jill Biden arrives for the 60th anniversary celebration of the 'Art in the Embassies' program, promoted by the US embassy in Portugal at the Universidade Catolica (Catholic University), in Lisbon, Portugal, June 5, 2023.

JOSE SENA GOULAO, LUSA

The first lady noted that diplomacy isn't only a government-to-government relationship.

"It's people to people as my husband always says. Heart to heart," she said. "And when visitors understand that, so much can grow from our common ground."

The first lady's visit to Lisbon is part of a six-day tour that is also taking her to the Middle East, North Africa and Europe.



US First Lady Jill Biden delivers a speech during the 60th anniversary celebration of the 'Art in the Embassies' program, promoted by the US embassy in Portugal, at Universidade Católica (Catholic University), in Lisbon, Portugal, June 5, 2023.

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The three-day Art in Embassies anniversary celebration will feature the work of American artists Sanford Biggers, Nick Cave, Deborah Kass, Maya Lin, Christopher Myers, Aliza Nisenbaum, Amy Sberald, Deborah Willis and Hank Willis Thomas, and Portuguese artists Leonor Antunes, Vasco Araújo, Ângela Ferreira, Fernanda Fragateiro, Mónica de Miranda, and Diana Policarpo.

Their works will be available for public view at Lisbon's Catholic University in a collection titled "Celebrating Diversity: Democracy and Representation in Contemporary Art."

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