

THE ART OF DIPLOMACY

**AN EXHIBITION BY
SPOUSES OF WARSAW-
BASED AMBASSADORS**

8 - 29 OCTOBER 2021
Royal Łazienki Museum - Old Orangery
Warsaw

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THE ART OF DIPLOMACY



The Art of Diplomacy is an exhibition by artists from fourteen countries, who are based in Warsaw. Through art they expose their very personal view, shaped by their home countries but also by their lives as diplomats, moving from posting to posting.

Each of the fifteen contributors draw on diverse media, including painting, photography, craftwork, literature, textile and collage. Their works tell a story that is unique to them, their backgrounds, and their experiences of Warsaw.



Anne Blontrock
Belgium



Lilia Atannassova Milenova
Columbia



Dalia Abdel Rassoul
Egypt



Olivia Nickel
Germany



Nausheen Ilahi
IMF



Nadine Schmit-Konsbruck
Luxembourg



Alaa Jadallah
Palestine



Aseel Khalefa
Palestine



Katarzyna Braiter
Poland



Sally Al-Midhadi
Qatar



David Boroje
Slovenia



Embassy of Sri Lanka artists
Sri Lanka



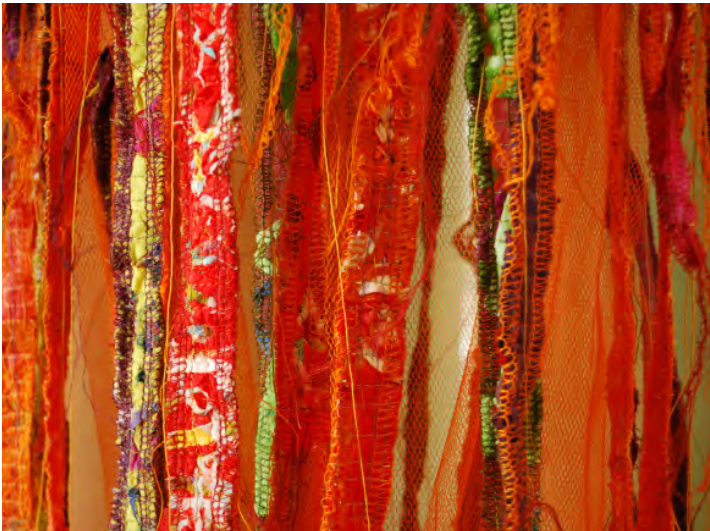
Alla Logova Gullgren
Sweden



Abeer Al Assad
Syria



Vasiliki Firat
Turkey



Anne Blontrock / AnneBee

Belgium

Since my childhood I have been curious about creative working with fabrics, textile and sewing machines. I am addicted to recycling, reusing, restyling, repurposing.

During our stay in different countries (Ireland, Canada, Czech Republic, Belgium, Morocco, Ukraine, Poland) I always had my sewing machines accompanying me for one textile project or another: making children's clothes (I have 5 children), teaching other expat mums to sew for their children, creating scarves and accessories for my business called AnneBee, taking textile art classes in the Academy of my home town Mechelen in Belgium, and little by little adventuring in the world of Art.

I love colors, texture, the feel of the fabrics and working with sewing machine gives me calm and pleasure. Even more so if the result is nice and pleases the eye.



Lilia Atannassova Milenova

Columbia

I am an industrial engineer with a working experience in the European Commission and the United Nations. I joined the diplomatic community in Poland in September 2018 when my husband was assigned to represent Colombia. I am Bulgarian by birth, however, since more than 20 years I have been accompanying my husband in Colombia, the Netherlands and Belgium.

I was introduced to painting about a year and a half ago by another SHOM Member. However, social distancing lead my passion through a self – learning process and I would define myself as a lock down artist. During the last year, painting has been to me a relaxing technique, a self-discovery process and a new dimension trip.



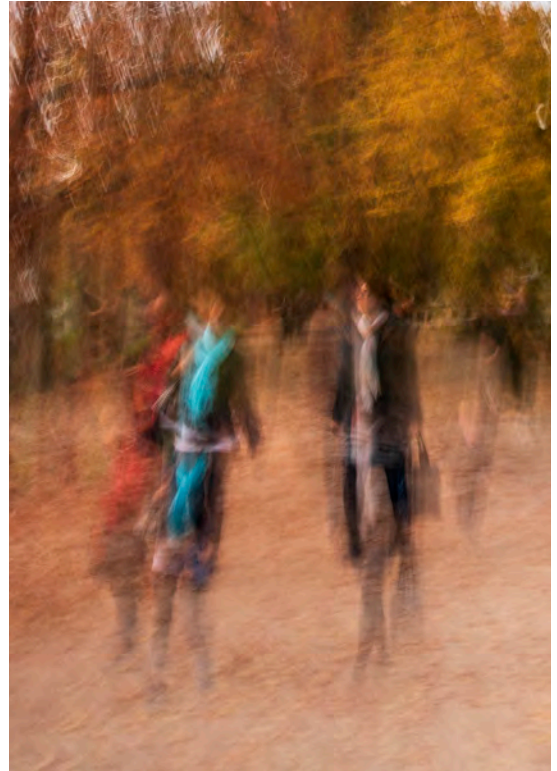
Dalia Abdel Rassoul

Egypt

Wife of the Ambassador of Egypt in Warsaw. Born and raised in Cairo, Egypt, I graduated from the Faculty of Commerce at Ain Shams University in 1986. Eventually also obtaining an Interior Design certificate from Bergen Community College in New Jersey in 2011. I worked as an accountant at the Shell Oil Company in Egypt and later as an art teacher at international schools in Cairo, as well as the Helen O'Grady Drama Academy.

As the wife of a diplomat, I've lived in Sudan, Norway, Spain, USA, India and now Poland. In each country, I try to learn and expand my skills and techniques to improve my art. I love painting portraits and landscapes using Gouache and Acrylic colors. I've learned to sketch and paint on porcelain while in India, and love making flower and fruits arrangements as well. In the beginning, my paintings were inspired by famous Egyptian and International artists with some changes to give them my own vision and style. Now however, I've started to do my own.

A few years ago, I lost all my paintings and artwork in a fire, but decided that I'll start from scratch and work even better than before. I believe that life is a learning process and am always trying to improve my skills.



Olivia Nickel

Germany

During my husband's posting as Ambassador in Poland, I was finally able to fulfill my life long dream and study photography at the Warsaw School of Photography and Graphic Design. I was a student of the late Marian Schmidt and was later instructed by Tomasz Tomaszewski in his workshops. Of course, Warsaw, the city I lived in, became the main object of my interest. For a long time I was satisfied portraying the Polish Capital through street photography. But after a while, I felt my work did not carry the feeling I sensed when I walked through the parks and gardens, the roads and squares and alongside the banks of the Vistula. I felt Warsaw was a very poetic place and so I started to test out a more poetic, impressionist form of photography. I was happy to self-publish a book named "Warsaw – My View of the City" combining my interest as a photographer and a former journalist.

Since my husband has retired from his diplomatic career last year, we have moved back to Berlin, I have decided to include pictures of my new/old home into my portfolio as well. In Berlin I am looking to develop my photography skills further in a studio for portrait photography and under the instructions by the artistic photographer Göran Gnaudschun. I am also working on a book about the life of my great grandfather combining my interest in photography and writing.

As a former member of SHOM I am very happy to be back in Warsaw showing my work among so many talented artists at the beautiful Old Orangery in Lazienki Park, a place in which I spent so many happy inspired hours with my camera.



Nausheen Ilahi

IMF

I moved to Warsaw three years ago but have spent half of the time in the US due to the Covid lockdown.

I'm originally from Pakistan but have lived most of my life in the USA. I went for college there and have found myself for the past 22 years in Washington D.C., which I now call home. When I first arrived in Warsaw I took up painting in a bid to embrace a new life, meditate and create a bridge between different cultures. I loved exploring different techniques on the canvas but then Covid brought life to a halt.

Like everyone else, I'm slowly beginning to piece together life as it was and what it means to be comfortable in an environment. I have learnt to understand the unpredictability or the fragility of life, of time and what we call contentment. The disconnection and isolation has also made me value my loved ones and friendships. As life normalizes in these challenging times it inspires me to paint. The lockdowns and isolation had left us all craving for joie de vivre. It's been great to not only learn the art forms but the art itself has become a conversation with my new friends here in Warsaw and the new place that I call home (albeit, a transient one).

In my recently painted pieces I have explored nature and portraiture. Enjoy!



Nadine Schmit-Konsbruck

Luxembourg

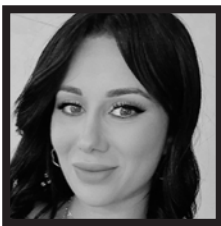
Born in Luxembourg, I graduated as a pharmacist.

I moved with my husband to Warsaw in September 2020 and it is our fourth posting abroad (after Brussels, Washington DC and Portugal). In Portugal, we discovered a beautiful country known among a lot of other things for its beautiful Azulejos. They are an integral part of the Portuguese landscape. You just have to stroll through the streets to see them. The whole country is an open-air Azulejos museum. The term azulejo comes from the Arabic "al-zuleij" which means, "small polished stone".

These glazed hand-painted ceramic tiles are deeply embedded in Portugal's history and culture since the 16th century. They decorate the winding streets of the capital, Lisbon. They cover the walls of train stations, restaurants, bars, public murals, and fountains, churches, and altar fronts. Azulejos can be seen on park benches and paved sidewalks or adorning the facades of buildings and houses and palaces in towns and municipalities all over the country.

I was immediately struck by this omnipresent art and wanted to learn more about this tradition, the technique, the pigments and the different steps in the process of fabrication. I am happy to present some of my artwork realised/accomplished in the atelier of my teacher Marie-Hélène Carnet in Caxias, during my stay in Portugal from 2010 to 2016. I tried mainly to do smaller objects that I could easily move from one country to the other.

Enjoy the exhibition!



Alaa Jadallah

Palestine

I am a Palestinian diplomat from Jaffa who loves literature and languages. For this reason, I pursued a bachelor's degree on English literature and translation and later on, majored at European affairs and Diplomacy at College of Europe and Birzeit University respectively.

The forceful displacement of Palestinians led my family to Jordan where I was raised up, hoping that one day I'll go back to my motherland. Till the moment of return, my father used to show me distant fading lights from the top of the mountain in Amman followed by a melancholic "this is Palestine, one day we will go back".

This day came in 1993 but we were deprived of seeing, walking and living in our own cities, villages and houses. The warmth of return inspired me to capture every unique moment in this sacred land. Since my early childhood, I was filming and recording moments which I treasure and cherish up until today.

I chose to share this film of mine, because it brings back memories, scents, and flavours of the old city of Nablus. Walk with me around the narrow corridors of this ancient city and sense, feel and virtually taste "Knafah Nabulsia". One of the most famous Palestinian cheesy-stretchy cakes, gloriously encased with crispy browned shredded filo pastry and drizzled with sugar syrup.

Served while piping hot from the oven, it reminisces a gathering from the past, a story-telling by my father, a hug from a friend and the sweet promise of return.



Aseel Khalefa

Palestine

Born in Kuwait. Since 1948 my family moved from country to country looking for stability. So from Kuwait to Syria where I got my BA degree in English Literature, and finally, back to Palestine, where I got my Master degree in Administration. Now I have been in Poland since 2018 as the Spouse of the Ambassador of the State of Palestine.

From generation to generation, Palestinian embroidery is considered to be an essential component of our identity and heritage, it is not only a village craft but it is also a combination that visualises the tight relations between creative women, needle, colourful silk strings, delicate textile and the life they belong to, socially and naturally.

Throughout history, Palestinian embroidery stands as part of our resistance against the occupation's attempts that proclaim that it is their own heritage, so from these aspects, I found myself passionate about Palestinian Embroidery, which encouraged me to learn how to do it and collect it. I made some simple pieces, but unfortunately, I couldn't bring my own creations here to Poland, but I'm proud to say that I have here some Palestinian pieces, handmade by women from different parts of Palestine, and I am honoured to share it with you.



Katarzyna Braiter

Poland

Honorary member of SHOM. Charity Coordinator. Economist, lecturer, diplomat. Spouse of Polish ambassador. I worked with my husband in Africa and Latin America. At our last post I worked as a consul in Brazil. I am specialist and lecturer of diplomatic protocol, lectured at different universities, including University of Warsaw, European Academy of Diplomacy. I am also election observer on behalf of the European Union and OSCE. I am an advisor to the Foreign Affairs and European Union committee in the Senate.

Regarding my art activity in my works I use techniques such as painting on silk, stencils, decoupage and cross-stich.



Sally Al-Midhadi

Qatar

Sally SH Ryu Al-Midhadi, originally from South Korea, spouse of the former Ambassador of Qatar to Poland.

In the beginning of my working life, I was a construction developer.

A couple of years ago I was a visitor of an exhibition. At that time, I was greatly inspired by the artistic soul of our colleague, an artist and diplomat. It was one of the turning points in my life.

With the suggestion of Alla Logova (Spouse of the Ambassador of Sweden to Poland), an artist whom I greatly admire, I was introduced to watercolors and oil paintings. She is my muse and object of inspiration. My humble works have been created in her atelier for one year. Currently I continue my painting journey in Seoul.



David Boroje

Slovenia

From the early years cameras were the medium to document life around me. It was people, landscapes, nature, architecture or other things at certain moment in time, making photography the medium to reflect the reality seen through my own eyes (lense). Even more when traveling the world either on our previous diplomatic posting to Australia or Turkey or many private travels resulting in some articles and travel reportage in Slovenian media. Since mid 2018 Warsaw and Poland is our new diplomatic home. Living here for the past three years, it gave me plenty of opportunities to explore the city and its many hidden parts which never stop to amaze me.

The displayed photos which I named Echoes of Silence are related to the very sensitive period we were all going through in beginning of the year 2020 - the outbreak of COVID virus. They are part of the series of photos taken on the morning April 13th, a month into the restrictions introduced to fight the virus. Those included also strict limitations on outdoor movement, which resulted in city going almost to a standstill for few weeks. Uncomfortable silent but at the same time beautiful, streets, squares and parks were quiet and empty. Photos are the witness of the atmosphere of the moment and times we hope will never repeat again.



Embassy of Sri Lanka artists

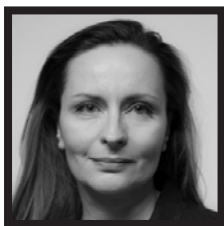
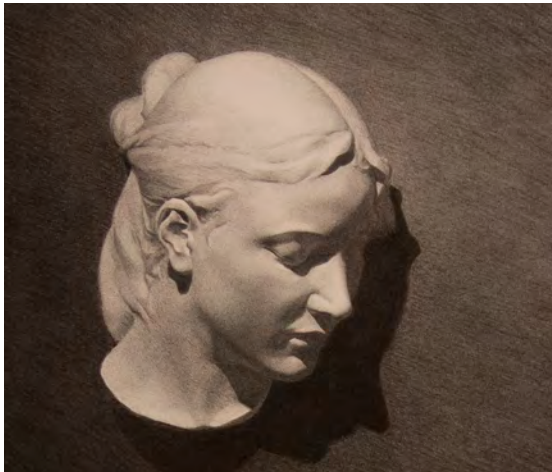
Sri Lanka

The traditional 'Atapattama' or the octagonal lantern, is an ubiquitous decorative craft item that comes alive on every full moon day in the month of May in Sri Lanka. It acquires a life and a beauty of its own, in many forms and colours.

Made with bamboo and draped in white tissue paper, with long white tresses cascading from the edges of the lantern, and lit with either a candle or an electric bulb, it has a serene, therapeutic and a meditative impact on the viewer. Usually hung on the branches of a tree or on a beam in the porch of a house, it catches the attention of passersby as it sways with the breeze to a gentle rhythm. It is a craft that in its making, brings the young and old, friends and families together for the common purpose of creating simple beauty.

The materials that are used to make the octagonal lantern are generally biodegradable. Usually, families save these lanterns for the next season or it becomes one with nature, when left on the branch of a tree in the Sri Lankan tropical environment.

The Team at the Embassy of Sri Lanka in Warsaw was delighted to pool its talent to make the lantern 'Family' and share its enchanting presence with the viewers attending this exhibition.



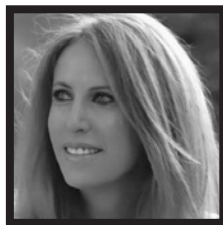
Alla Logova Gullgren

Sweden

I was born in Moscow but for the last twenty years have lived in Sweden and abroad with my husband.

After working for many years with corporate finance I made a shift towards art. I studied at Stockholm Academy of Realist Art, at Art Studio of Farigh Ghadery, with V.Kikinev (Ukrainian impressionist), V.Borovik (professor at Repin Academy in St.Peterburg) and Joe Paquet (landscape artist from the US). I participated in exhibitions in Stockholm and in Moscow.

Drawing and painting during pandemic helped me to remember the beauty of the world and stay hopeful.



Abeer Al Assad

Syria

When I was in primary school, I loved to attend art classes especially painting in argillic, I used to draw wall paintings at school, I was always interested in art, doing everything related to art, I always like to see beautiful nature and keep the sights in mind and try to draw this image on the canvas.

When I finished high school, I followed up with specialized courses in drawing and color to complete my academic studies in fine arts. I usually use oil and watercolors on canvas and draw in an impressionist and abstract way.

After all art courses I decided to study economics and deplomacy based on the family's desire. The talent of drawing accompanied me during the study stages and burdened it with following special training courses by famous artists in Syria. And when I travelled to Geneva in 2007 as my first mission after joining the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Syria, I have painted twelve paintings about the Syrian folklore, and they were displayed in London, and most of them were acquired by the Arab British Bank in 2008, I did another solo exhibition in Damascus in 2018, entitled "Harmony of Life", and a solo exhibition in Warsaw in 2020 entitled "Amber - The Warmth of Nature", I have numerous of participations in exhibitions in different cities like Geneva, Prague, Kiev, Latakia and Damascus . I also participated in an exhibition at the Opera House with a group of Syrian and Arab artists in 2019. My artworks were acquired by the Syrian National Museum, the Ministry of Culture in Syria and some governmental companies in Syria and abroad, embassies, and different persons, lately I have completed five murals paintings that simulate life during wars, which will be displayed in the United States of America as well as in other countries. Finally I have to mentioned that I have received a set of certificates and a shield in recognition of my artistic participation in different places.



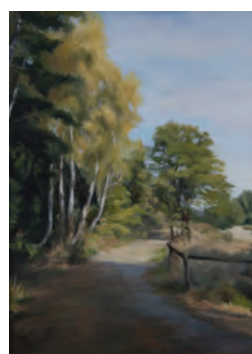
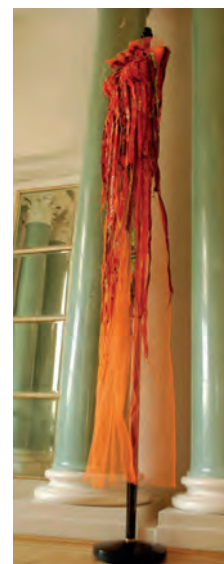
Vasiliki Firat

Turkey

Born in 1976 in Athens/Greece where I also studied Economic & Regional Development and later on I took a turn towards personal and business taxation.

Despite my choices in studies and work, creating any piece of Art has always been more rewarding and nourishing to my mind and my soul. In that respect, I always grab the opportunity to learn a new Art especially when posted abroad with my family. During our latest posting in Kyrgyzstan I learned various felting techniques creating jewellery, silk scarves, paintings, ornaments etc.

My paintings included in the "Art of Diplomacy" exhibition are inspired by antique Swedish fabric patterns, Kyrgyz scenery and last but not least Turkish motives.



FURTHER INFORMATION:

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