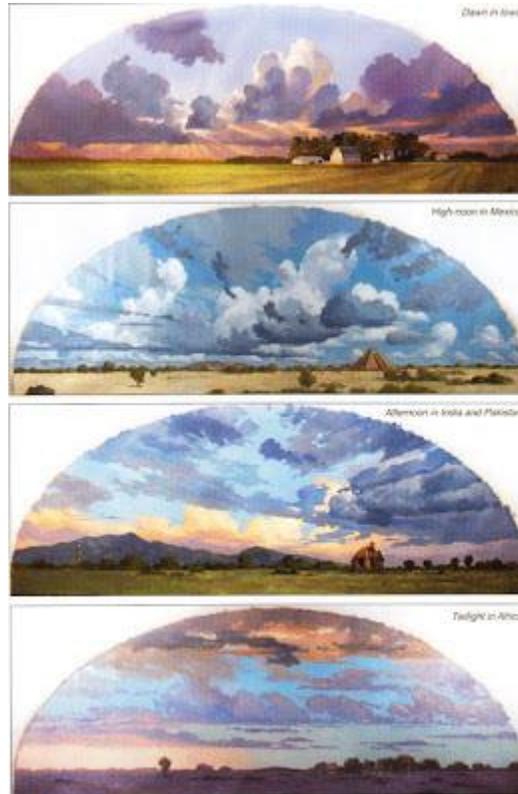


October 25, 2011

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## My Trip to Iowa for the Opening of the World Food Prize

Hello friends and colleagues! The weekend of October 8-9th, I had the pleasure to attend the “soft” opening of the [World Food Prize](#) in Des Moines, Iowa. The opening was for all the contractors who participated in the multi-year restoration of the landmark library in downtown Des Moines.





The [World Food Prize](#) is dedicated to the elimination of world hunger. As such, it awards a prize each year to the person(s) who makes the most difference in the fight against hunger. The inspiration for the prize comes from [Dr. Norman Borlaug](#), considered to be the founder of the green revolution, who, because of his discovery of “miracle” crops, is responsible for saving the lives of over 1 billion people worldwide. The building is dedicated to his memory.





I would remiss if I didn't mention 2 people without whom this project would not be possible. First is the former ambassador to Cambodia, [Kenneth Quinn](#), whose idea it was to build this spectacular library and conference center and who put this project on his back, the same way he worked tirelessly to get America's POW's and MIA's out of Vietnam. Ken Quinn is quite the man.

Also, Deborah Beckett, Director of Design at [Gensler USA](#), over three years ago she called to inquire about artists in our group and how she may work with us. Since that first call, we have worked on countless projects together and she has stepped it up and used her exceptional taste to champion great art. Sometimes out of a project like this comes true friendship and I count myself lucky to develop a personal and professional friendship with these two people.

Our participating artists included [Gregory Manchess](#), who was commissioned to do 4 wonderful paintings that were placed at the top of the rotunda as lunettes; they depicted the four times of days in four places that Norman Borlaug made an impact with his work.



2 of the four lunettes in the rotunda by Gregory Manchess

[Mark Summers](#) created over 20 busts of the previous winners of the World Food Prize in the Founders Ballroom.



20+ portraits by Mark Summers

[David Johnson](#) did several pen and ink artworks that were engraved and now hang in the Ruan Laureate Room.



David Johnson's illustration was used on this plaque.

A wonderful project was to create 2 large mosaics that now hang in the Ruan Laureate room. The subjects were past Laureates of the World Food Prize, Dr. M.S. Swaminathan of India and Dr. Evangelina Villegas of Mexico, who was the first female Laureate. It was up to [Kinuko Craft](#) to create the paintings

after which they were sent to Canada where [Mosaika](#) artfully translated them into very detailed mosaics.



Kinuko Y. Craft's paintings were translated into mosaics.



Ambassador Kenneth Quinn with Kinuko Y. Craft and the current Governor of Iowa, Terry Branstad

Another project that needed to be fulfilled was to find a wonderful landscape artist that lived and worked in Iowa. With the help of [Gary Kelley](#), he put me in touch with Genie Patrick who created 2 large oil paintings depicting Iowa landscapes that now hang in the Iowa gallery.



Genie Patrick's landscape paintings

[Gary Kelley](#) was commissioned to paint a large oil painting, which he did in 4 panels. The artwork takes up an entire wall of the Iowa Gallery room and shows native lowans responsible for some of the most important agricultural discoveries of the 19th and 20th centuries. He also went to visit Norman Borlaug's place of birth and depicted that in another painting hanging in the Iowa room.





Gary Kelley in front of his large painting in the Iowa Gallery

Lastly, John Collier worked on 2 challenging projects: a life-size sculpture of Norman Borloug, father of the green revolution which graces the Gardens behind the building and 4 paintings. Like Kinuko's mosaics, these were also fabricated, this time into tapestries. John sent his artwork to [Magnolia Editions](#) in Oakland, CA where they were transferred into 3d weavings. They now hang in the Borlaug Ballroom.



2 of John Collier's paintings that were transferred into tapestries.



John Collier's sculpture now resides in the beautiful gardens.

It was a coming out party for me to see over 3 years of work unveiled in such a spectacular venue and made me feel proud that so many of my artists have participated.

World Food Prize official website: [www.worldfoodprize.org](http://www.worldfoodprize.org)

Des Moines Register articles about the opening [here](#) and [here](#).

Video about the history of the World Food Prize Hall of Laureates [here](#).

Posted by Richard Solomon at [4:05 PM](#)

<http://www.richardsolomonblog.com/2011/10/my-trip-to-iowa-for-opening-of-world.html>