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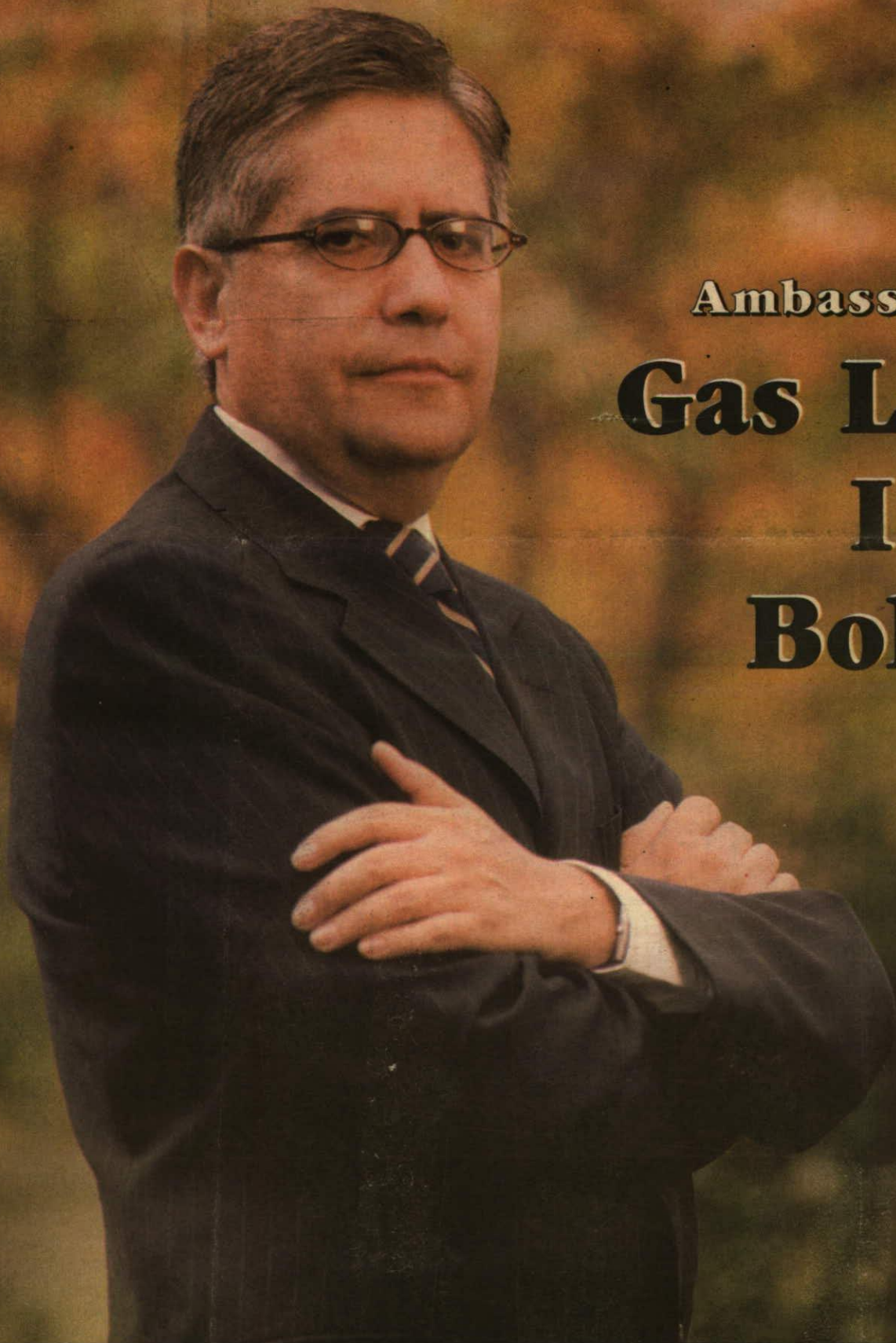
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Ambassador Jaime Aparicio

Gas Line Project Is Exposing Bolivia's Woes


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**A-10 Transforming Military
May Be Eluding Rumsfeld**

**B-3 Bard's 'Dream'
Given New Vision**



Shinice Jackson
~~neuroblastoma~~

 To look at Shinice Jackson, you'd never know cancer had once spread throughout her body. You'd never know about her family's fears when they received the diagnosis. You'd never see the prayers, the tears or long nights. You wouldn't know that her mom took her to the children's cancer specialists at the M.D. Anderson Cancer Center, where they've seen more cancer than anyone, including cancers that strike children. No, just to look at Shinice, you'd never know any of these things. Mostly, you'd just see a happy, healthy, six-year-old. And the people of M.D. Anderson wouldn't have it any other way.

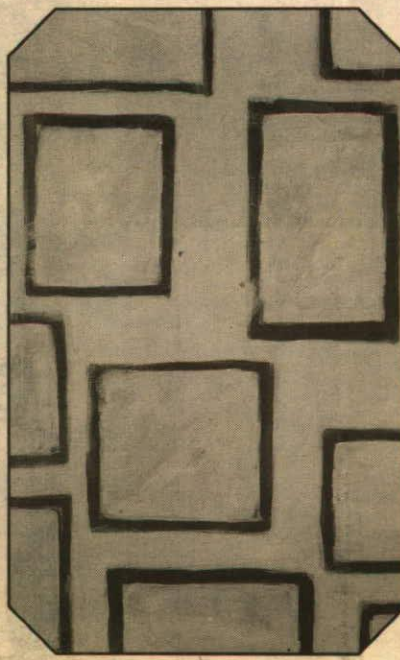
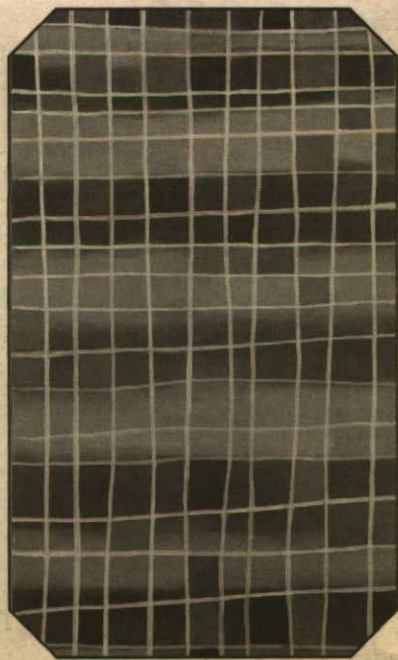
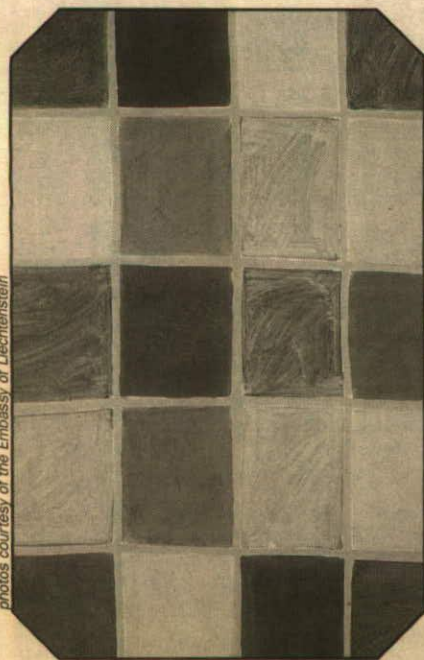
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Art

Color and Rhythm

Work of Liechtenstein Abstract Artist Büchel Is Bright, Bold



Liechtenstein artist Elisabeth Büchel specializes in abstract paintings that feature rhythmic patterns of color and shape, as seen in her new exhibit, "Connections—Earth and Sky—Canvas and Color."

by Carolyn Chapman

Have you ever heard of Liechtenstein," asked Manfred Fritsche as I wandered around the exhibition for Liechtenstein artist Elisabeth Büchel at CP Artspace. I had heard of Liechtenstein, but I had to admit that I unfortunately did not know anything about the tiny principality other than where it is located on a map.

That did not seem to phase Fritsche, husband of Ambassador of Liechtenstein Claudia Fritsche, as he continued to tell me about his country—a landlocked mountainous region between Switzerland and Austria that is roughly the size of Washington, D.C. I learned quite a bit about Liechtenstein that night, particularly about its art scene, which is very active and well rounded for such a small nation.

"We have an extremely lively cultural identity, especially considering our size," agreed Ambassador Fritsche. "We have everything from events that are rather folkloristic to a very good theater."

Now that Fritsche has settled into her new embassy, which officially opened earlier this year (see the March 2003 issue of *The Washington Diplomat*), she is working to introduce Washingtonians to Liechtenstein art and culture.

"Connections—Earth and Sky—Canvas and Color" by Elisabeth Büchel is the first exhibition of what Fritsche hopes will be many more to come. But the problem is that unlike larger embassies with built-in exhibition space, the Embassy of Liechtenstein works out of rented office space in the building next to CP Artspace.

Fritsche, who is always scouting out spaces for possible events, regularly passes the gallery on her way to work each morning, and one day she decided to approach the gallery about hosting an exhibition. Fritsche and Büchel have known each other for the past 20 years, and CP Artspace selected Büchel for the show among a list of possible artists.

The first thing that viewers will notice about Büchel's abstract paintings is her use of color: The natural patterns are bright, bold and rhythmic. Büchel's style is also marked by her flowing shapes and lines. "I don't refer to images—it's just the color and the shape, but not geometrical shapes. Each line has the freedom of the hand," said Büchel. "I use these lines and these simple shapes as my own vocabulary. I put them down as my own language. I don't use images because I want to develop these shapes and lines as my vocabulary."

The majority of Büchel's paintings are untitled because the artist believes that sticking a title on a work will bias viewers' thoughts on what they are seeing. "When you look at them you have your own think-

ing. It's more important what the image means to you. Each image means something different to different people," said the artist. "I don't want to teach anything with my paintings and I don't want to tell a story."

Rather than telling a story or portraying a particular image, Büchel's paintings are all about the act of painting itself. She focuses on producing colors, lines, shapes, and rhythm with her brushstrokes. The process of painting is what Büchel said she savors, creating shapes and canvases filled with horizontal lines connected by varying shades of one color or big blocks of color encased by another color.

Büchel, who has been painting for more than 20 years, studied at the University of Bridgeport in Connecticut and the University of Tulsa in Oklahoma. Like all Liechtenstein artists, she had to leave her native country to study art since Liechtenstein has no art university. "It's good that we study in different countries," Büchel said. "That's important to go to other places when you live in a small country, to meet other people, and to make new experiences."

Büchel said she hopes to have her next exhibition at her alma mater, the University of Tulsa, but until then she has other plans to expand her work. "I want to develop my paintings higher and bigger," she said. "I'm also looking for more transparency."

If Fritsche has her way, Washington will meet many other Liechtenstein artists in the coming years. In addition to the space issue, Fritsche also worries about the competitiveness of Washington's embassy art scene. To compete with bigger embassies, "we will have to be a bit creative," she said. For a woman who began an embassy from scratch, however, those seem like problems that can easily be overcome.

"Connections—Earth and Sky—Canvas and Color" by Elisabeth Büchel runs through Dec. 12 at CP Artspace, 1350 I St., NW. For more information, please call (202) 326-0447.

Carolyn Chapman is a contributing writer for *The Washington Diplomat*.

