

Northwest Art

A Collection of the Junior League of Seattle



Artworks in Exhibit Three

Glen Alps	<i>Untitled, Lithograph</i>	lithograph	37.5" x 29.5"
William Cumming	<i>Untitled, Painting of a Girl, 2001</i>	Painting on paper	16" x 17.5"
Morris Graves	<i>Woodpeckers(reproduction), 1940</i>	tempera, watercolor, gouache	37.25" x 27"
Paul Horiuchi	<i>Fantasy at Night, 1962</i>	collage of rice and mulberry papers	21.5" x 35.5"
Carolyn Krieg	<i>Deer/Monk, 1995</i>	mixed media (polaroid, 35mm film)	35.75" x 24.75"
Andy Ostheimer	<i>URS Red</i>	paper mache and oil	24.25" x 18.25"
Michael Spafford	<i>Three Divers Red, 1978</i>	oil on paper	33" x 37"
James Washington, Jr.	<i>Woodchuck, 1965 (carved stone sculpture)</i>	carved stone	

Glen Alps
Untitled
Lithograph, 1960-1961
37.5” x 29.5”

“A rainbow is the ultimate symbol of beauty, tranquility and rightness of being.”

BIOGRAPHY

Born	1914, Loveland, CO; deceased November, 1996 at 82
Resided	Seattle, WA
Education	M.F.A., specializing in printmaking at UW
Medium	Printmaking and sculpture (paper, matboard, string, canvas, thread, wire, glue, burlap, silk, buttons, ground walnut shells, etc.). This piece is a lithograph. Lithographs are created by a planographic printing process in which proofs are pulled on a special litho-press from a flat surface that has been sensitized by chemical means so that the ink takes on the design areas only and is repelled by the blank areas. A litho crayon is used to create the design. Both the printing and non-printing areas lie in the surface of the lithographic stone or metal plate. The two areas are differentiated only by their respective attraction and repulsion of printing ink when it is applied to the dampened surface of the stone or plate.

BACKGROUND

Glen Alps was introduced to drawing and painting while studying to be a teacher. Early on, he took a drawing class and was singled out by his teacher who said he ought to be involved in fine arts. This surprised Alps, but it was the beginning of his commitment to art. He learned silk screening and stencil art while working for a sign painter. After learning lithography in school, he became interested in printmaking techniques.

While teaching at the UW in a class called “Introduction to Printmaking” in 1956, he and a class began to develop a technique of using a collage as an intaglio plate. Alps has received widespread recognition for developing the collagraph printmaking technique used by artists all over the world. He also invented and produced a widely sought “Alps Press” especially designed for collagraphs. It is through his exploration into techniques as tools for creative imaginings that printmaking has attained such a high

stature in the contemporary art world. Although best known for his serigraphs, lithographs and etchings, Alps was also a master sculptor.

The Junior League lithograph was created at the Tamarind Studios on Los Angeles. He produced a series of 16 from 1960-1961. Tamarind Studios are now in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

PRESENTATION IDEAS

Discussion Points:

- Discuss process of creating a lithograph. (See above description under “Medium”).
- Discuss abstract vs. realism – very optional

Questions:

- Why do you suppose the artist did not use color on the lithograph?
- Does the black and white theme signify anything to you?
- Is the lithograph a happy piece? Sad? What makes it so?

William Cumming
Untitled, Painting of a Girl, 2001
16" x 17.5"

“I never quite got over the idea that being an artist was not a respectable occupation for a grown man.”

BIOGRAPHY

Born	1917, Kalispell, Montana, grew up in Tukwila, Washington
Resides	Near Issaquah, Washington, on a ranch
Education	Self-taught
Medium	Acrylic on paper
Teaching Career	Taught at Burnley School of Arts since 1953, and Cornish School of Allied Arts since 1962 and the Seattle Art Academy until his retirement.

BACKGROUND

William Cumming, a master of figures in action, began painting seriously after a series of correspondence lessons as a teenager in the early 1930s. He was intrigued by figures of action found in western scenes of Charles Russell and Tanagra figures. As a youth, he was inspired by a quote of Delacroix saying, “That any man, to be an artist, should be able to draw a figure falling from the fifth story of a building before the figure hits the ground.” This challenged Cumming to learn, literally to draw bodies in motion. At the same time he developed a keen interest in literature, which is second only to his interest in art.

He began his professional career in 1938 working for the Federal Art Project of the Works Progress Administration (W.P.A.). It was here that he met Morris Graves. Through Graves he soon became the youngest member of the circle of friends who became known as the Northwest School of Artists. This group included Mark Tobey, then nearing 50, patriarchal leader of the group, Guy Anderson, Morris Graves, Kenneth Callahan and his wife Margaret, a writer and critic who became a direct influence on Cumming’s work.

Ill health that began in 1948 and lasted a decade, and included tuberculosis, forced Cumming to give up painting. Although he continued to draw and study Renaissance and Baroque masters, he felt nothing he painted was worth showing. This turned around in 1958 when he won the Purchase Award at the Bellevue Arts and Crafts Fair. “It marked the time I first felt I could make a drawing and a painting come together.” This was followed by a major one-man exhibition held at the Seattle Art Museum in 1961.

Cumming's paintings are beautiful celebrations of people. The artist as a draftsman has resulted in hundreds of drawings of people walking, trudging, skipping, dancing and waiting in notebooks, across the pages of old textbooks or on pieces of scratch paper. For one piece, he even went as far as suiting up for a high school sports even in Duwamish in order to draw the athletes. Cumming's sketches provide the line and organization, which make up the skeletons of his paintings. He uses strong outline to define his flat figures. Since he believes "the gesture explains the man", he depicts the form and motion of his subject in simple, strong strokes lacking in detail. His figures have expressionless faces, if there are faces at all. Cumming paints scenes peculiar to himself, "through a landscape that is familiar only in its strangeness, I company of faces that are recognizable only in the obscurity", relates Cumming.

If Cumming had to give a name to the idiom of this painting, he would choose to call it "mystic realism". "The creatures of myth grow out of the world of reality, while the creatures of reality are passing into myth before our eyes."

PRESENTATION IDEAS

Discussion Points:

- Describe how this painting makes you feel. (happy, sad, etc.)
- Discuss the lines in this piece. (bold, fine, etc.)

Questions:

- What is the girl doing? Describe her position.
- What do you think the artist intended placing the girl in that position?

Morris Graves
Woodpeckers, 1940
Tempera, Watercolor, Gouache
(reproduction)
37.25” x 27”

“I paint to evolve a changing language of symbols, a language which directs towards qualities of our mysterious capacities which direct us towards ultimate reality. I paint to rest from the phenomena of the external, to pronounce it, to make notations of its essences with which to verify the inner eye.”

BIOGRAPHY

Born	1910, Fox Valley, OR (moved to Seattle as a child). Died in Loleta, Ca. in 2001 at the age of 90
Education	Self-taught, contemporary of Mark Tobey
Medium	Tempera, oil, watercolor, gouache

BACKGROUND

Morris Graves was a native of the Pacific Northwest. His early life was dominated by illness. As one pneumonia infection followed another, his parents came to regard him as permanently impaired and frail. He became a moody, pensive child who his parents believed would never be well enough to accomplish much.

During the lengthy period of recuperation in 1918, he became fascinated with gardening, an activity which he has pursued all his life and which remained for him second in importance to painting. He recalled that during the long hours of convalescence, he amused himself by mentally designing gardens and arranging flower beds, pools and rock walls. His solitary identification with the objects, plants and wildlife inhabitants of the garden foreshadowed the creative images of his later work.

It was also during his early teens that he made his first attempts at painting, although no work survives from these early efforts. He was about 14 when he saw several color reproductions of murals at Yale University in a glossy magazine. Graves recalled that there were scenes of Greek heroism relating to the American Scene. The colors and subjects of this allegorical painting fascinated him and the impression made on him was great. Graves explains, “They comprised my idea of art for a long time.”

In the summer of 1928, when Graves was 17 and in better health, he longed for travel and adventure. His parents conceded that Morris was in need of something school was not

providing. By the age of 20, he had traveled to the Orient three times as a cadet on the American Mail Lines. These trips had a great aesthetic impact on Graves' art. He began to paint with some regularity at this time.

While living in Edmonds in 1933, Graves began a long and close friendship with Guy Anderson, an artist a few years older than Graves, who had formal training in painting, unlike Graves. The friendship was beneficial to both artists. That same year, Graves won a hundred dollar prize for his painting "*Moor Swan*" that he submitted to the annual exhibition of Northwest artists held at the Seattle Art Museum. Graves continued to exhibit regularly in these annual exhibits in subsequent years and had his first solo exhibit in 1936 at the Seattle Art Museum.

Graves became the youngest member of the "Northwest School" that included Tobey, Anderson and Callahan. His work was the first from the group to receive national attention when 30 of his works were included in an exhibition at New York's Museum of Modern Art entitled "*Americans 1942*." Graves achieved national "celebrity" status because of that exhibition, and his work has since been included in numerous important exhibits and in private collections all over the world.

When the term "mystic painter" is used, Graves comes first to mind, since he was one of the first Northwest artists to combine the mystic with an oriental influence. His study of Zen is evident in the meditative and introspective approach that he took to his paintings, resulting in a simplicity of form that holds a deeper meaning. This approach is strongly experienced in his "bird" paintings or in the quest for delicacy of his later "flower" paintings. Graves' paintings were, for him, an attempt to capture the inner essence of the world around him and share a spiritual responsibility rather than a physical truth.

"*Woodpeckers*" is a busy, noisy painting creating a symphony of birds. The use of lines denotes time passing. The birds all relate together, but each represents a definite period of time. His use of white is influenced by Tobey's white writing.

PRESENTATION IDEAS

Discussion Points:

- Lead-in: Can you find a noisy painting? How many have ever seen a woodpecker?
- Look at the birds' stomachs (they don't have a finished line). What do you suppose this signifies?

Questions:

- Who's heard a woodpecker? What kind of sound do they make?
- Is this a painting of one or many birds? (Usually solitary birds.) What would it be like if a bunch of woodpeckers gathered in one tree?

- What are the birds on? (Assume a tree even though no top or bottom.)
- How does the artist call your attention to the birds? (Use of red)

Paul Horiuchi
Fantasy at Night, 1962
Collage of Rice and Mulberry Papers
21.5” x 35.5”

“I believe that the art of painting itself, should convey a feeling of serene satisfaction and inner harmony.”

BIOGRAPHY

Born	1906, Kawaguchi, Japan (foot of Mt. Fuji). Died in 1999 in Seattle.
Education	Studied sumi brush techniques with Japanese master Iketani
Medium	Collage (rice and mulberry paper)

BACKGROUND

Paul Horiuchi always liked to paint. His earliest recollections were those of watching traveling artists who stopped in his village at the foot of Mt. Fuji to paint the mountain. Encouraged by his grandfather, Horiuchi studied sumi brush techniques for three years as a teenager with the Japanese master, Iketani. “I began painting as a child in Japan,” Horiuchi said, “but I never expected to be a professional painter. I painted for fun.”

Horiuchi immigrated to the United States in 1922 at the age of sixteen, eventually settling in Rock Springs, Wyoming. He relocated to Seattle in 1946 and made his home here until his death, with frequent travels back to Japan. Horiuchi worked at a variety of jobs during this time. For four years he painted automobiles. “I was a good auto painter, I could match colors easily.”

While working as an antiques dealer, Horiuchi received encouragement as an artist by Zen Master, Takazaki, who introduced him to Mark Tobey. A close relationship with Tobey evolved through mutual interest in Zen philosophy and Japanese antiques. The relationship developed into a fruitful one for Horiuchi who says “I was introduced into the enlightenment of Oriental philosophy by an Occidental.”

The early works of Horiuchi were dark and brooding landscapes and city scenes done mostly in oils. The year 1956 was to mark the end of these landscapes and the start of something new. His idea for collages, which Horiuchi calls “attempts to produce areas of peace and serenity with which to balance the sensationalism of our time,” started in the International District where he was walking one day. He saw various layers of posters and notices on outdoor community bulletin boards where segments of the old could be seen through the new. Since then, that became his principal medium.

His first one-man show was in 1957 at the Zoe Dusanne Gallery in Seattle, with a second

one at the Seattle Art Museum a year later. Since that time he fulfilled major commissions and has been included in many prestigious museum collections.

Comments by art critic turned novelist, Tom Robbins, written more than a decade ago, describe Horiuchi as a “world master of contemporary collage. Horiuchi’s importance is that he made the art of collage a painterly process. He took a rather gimmicky structural, hybridized art form and reunited it solidly with the more direct and basic art of painting.”

Horiuchi’s works sometimes created the order he saw in nature. His art combined the subtleties and quietness of his Oriental heritage with his vivid experiences of Washington and Wyoming’s rugged landscapes. He may at times have created a feeling of great energy, and then in contrast, created quiet reflections of past moods and feelings.

The collages are made from layers of hand painted rice and mulberry paper (an ancient tradition dating to 105 A.D. when the Chinese invented paper making it from rice fibers) that is torn into a variety of shapes. He might have used 20 sheets of paper before he was satisfied with a piece.

“*Fantasy at Night*” was inspired by the waterfront in the moonlight where the moon changes the water into a fantasy. Birds, rocks and driftwood are suggested in the torn paper shapes. The horizon is implied by a dark sky. The colors and shapes are used to move your eye around the piece. The glowing red shape offsets the larger dark shapes. This strong dark/light color and size contrast unifies the piece. It has perfect balance. A sense of stillness can be felt when viewing the collage.

PRESENTATION IDEAS

Discussion Points:

- Lead-in: Prop: rock. Walk around with rocks (prop) and ask if they remind them of one of the paintings
- Pretend you’re at the beach at night. Reflections of moonlight on water. Use imagination, what do you see? Do the shapes remind you of anything? (Rocks, birds, driftwood)
- You could make one (colored tissue, tear and build up)
- Nonobjective vs. realistic
- What’s important to artist is what others see/feel about his art, not what he thinks

Questions:

- Is it noisy or quiet; night or day? (Wants to recapture peace and serenity to balance hectic times; everything he does creates restful feeling.)
- Where does your eye go first?

Carolyn Krieg
Deer/Monk, 1995
Mixed Media
35.75” x 24.75”

“It’s pretty conscious, I could tell you a story about every image. My work is not about getting any particular meaning across to my audience at all; I believe that they (my pieces) mean something entirely different to someone else. There’s something there...and people can extrapolate their own meaning from it”.

BIOGRAPHY

Born	1953, Vancouver, WA
Resides	Seattle, WA
Education	1987 UW, Seattle; 1984 Marylhurst College, Oregon; 1976; University of California, Santa Barbara; 1973 American College in Paris, France
Medium	Polaroid, 35mm film, collage

BACKGROUND

Carolyn Krieg states the following:

“My manipulations begin in the computer studio with scanning, painting, and drawing programs, followed by hand-working of the Polaroids, and finally, various printing practices. I do not permanently keep anything on disk in an attempt to keep the computer steps minimal. I edit the image as I go, pushing it through four and sometimes five generations until I am satisfied. Ultimately, I compose the images in different color and size combinations, until I exhaust the possibilities and print the final generation.

In my mural-sized works, textures are most evident, often including tears, cracks, And burns, adding a push to the pull of the flat surface and creating an illusion of 3-D. The enveloping style presents an invitation to enter the image. The smaller pieces are like Tarot cards, capturing specific details. In either scale, layering expresses ambiguity, color infusions flow together and overlap, giving emotional context.”

PRESENTATION IDEAS

Discussion Points:

- Discuss the process the artist uses to create her art. (Describe above).

Questions:

- What are some of the images you see in this piece of art? What does it look like to you?
- What would you title this work?
- If there were to be another painting after this, what would it look like?
- How would it relate?
- What is the story this picture is telling you?
- How do you think this work was made?

Andy (Ann) Ostheimer

URS: Red

Paper Mache and Oil

24.25” x 18.25”

BIOGRAPHY

Born	1950, New York, NY
Resides	Seattle resident until 1984
Education	Undergraduate degree from Wesleyan University
Medium	Mixed; paper mache and oils; photography

BACKGROUND

Andy Ostheimer frequently worked in an art form known as diorama (a three dimensional scene provided by placing objects and figures before a painted background). Often the background is divided into three parts and has outer panels which are hinged and can cover the central panel. Although the Northwest Art Collection piece, “URS: Red” is not in the diorama format, the figure is similar to others she has used.

Ostheimer’s figures are often made of paper mache and painted in oil. Mysterious animal forms are frequently Ostheimer’s trademarks.

PRESENTATION IDEAS

Questions:

- Is this a sculpture or a painting? (Both)
- Can a picture of a bear be art?
- What is the gold curved object above the bear’s head? (Halo, rainbow, jump rope, religious artifact).
- Have you worked in paper mache? What animal would like to make from it?
- Is the bear painted? Where are its eyes, nose?
- Do you see a pattern in the painting? Do you see other paintings that also have a pattern?

Michael Spafford
Three Divers Red, 1978
Oil on Paper
33” x 37”

“Dualism, metamorphosis, the confrontation of opposites, the struggle for achievement, the ultimate failure of a heroic effort – each of these gestures is expressed in the myths I use. My effort is to translate these gestures into abstract visual terms and pass their energy on to the viewer.”

BIOGRAPHY

Born	1935, Palm Springs, CA
Resides	Seattle, WA
Education	Undergraduate degree from Pomona College, Claremont, CA, 1959; Master’s degree from Harvard University, Cambridge, MA, 1960
Medium	Oil

BACKGROUND

Michael Spafford relates that he has been encouraged and aided by many people during his painting career. His mother was the first person to express appreciation for his efforts to make pictures. By the time he graduated from college, the difference between making pictures and painting had become clear to him.

Spafford’s interest in art was stimulated by his studies of art history, philosophy and the classics. He was influenced by the work of the abstract expressionists, the German expressionist and Mondrian. A class in early Netherlandish paintings had a great impact on his emerging sensibilities. The great muralist, Jose Clement Orozco (mural of *The Triumph of Prometheus* at Pomona College), Rico Lebrun and Leon Golub in Los Angeles exposed the artist to contemporary art based on art historical models. He lived in Mexico from 1960 to 1963 and thus observed the Mexican muralist movement firsthand.

Figurative expressionism, where the images are simplified compressed forms, describes Spafford’s style. He explores recurring themes over time, especially Greco-Roman mythology. “I try to describe a shape in a verb sense – to show a figure falling or grabbing- whatever it is, I try to describe the action graphically. My use of paint is physical rather than illusionist.”

In a painterly process Spafford draws, scrumbles, trowels and scrapes paint onto or

off of the surface in broad gestures that have become his signature. Ranging from thick, stab-like strokes to scraped stain creates textural surfaces that are sensual and are physical. Multiple layers of paint are used to redefine his canvases. "I have never been able to get a painting right the first time."

The use of sequential structures of one form emerging out of another is an important aspect of Spafford's painting. "Three Divers Red" is a good example of this technique. The theme of divers and swimmers preoccupied Spafford for about one year. This series was inspired by the 1984 Summer Olympics and Mark Spitz.

PRESENTATION IDEAS

Discussion Points:

- Have students make quick gesture drawings to record the feeling (note all the details of each frozen moment).

Questions:

- What do you see here? (inspiration from 1984 Summer Olympics/Mark Spitz).
- Is this a painting of one diver or three?
- What is a triptych?
- What other action might be interesting to do in a freeze frame? Note movement is from left to right. This gives it a narrative quality.
- Look closely; notice how the artist has cut out the painted figurines. Do you think that this helps the idea of the painting?
- How do you know it is a human figure (no eyes, etc.)?

James Washington, Jr.
Woodchuck, 1965
Carved Stone on Wood Base

“Our bodies are a temple of God, and the spirit of God dwells in us. And it’s that spirit, if we possess it, (that) we can inject into subject matter and make it live.”

BIOGRAPHY

Born	1909, Gloster, Mississippi; died in 2000.
Education	Self-taught, studied with Mark Tobey and Glen Alps
Medium	Sculptures are stone, wood or basalt; paintings are oil

BACKGROUND

Washington was born in Gloster, Mississippi in 1909. He was the son of a Baptist minister and a deeply religious mother who encouraged him at an early age to explore his creative potential. Given the obstacles facing a black child growing up in the South in the early 1900s, the supportive environment created by his parents counted for a great deal. In discussing his childhood, James returns continually to a theme which became the guiding principle in his life; the realization of potential – whether in shoe making (one of his early vocations) or painting – through imagination. The issue, for him, is how an individual can best use his or her talent, given by God, to achieve an ideal environment – one conducive to the search for truth and ultimate enlightenment.

James’s memory has it that he aspired to be an artist from his “drawing-on-concrete days” (as a child), and that even in Gloster, he was teaching himself what he could about art and painting. Moving from a river commission boat job in Vicksburg to be near his mother, he went to work for the government in the shoe repair shop at Camp Robinson in 1942. By then, he had come to view this government employment as a means to support his artistic avocation, looking ahead to the day when he could devote himself entirely to painting. He was already, at least in his own mind, an artist.

When he arrived with this new bride in 1944, to work at the Bremerton Naval Yard as a journeyman electrician, he was an artist indeed self-trained. However, he wasted little time in making his connections with the most important painters working in the Pacific Northwest. He studied painting with Mark Tobey for several years, and although he drew inspiration from established painters from the region – Tobey, Morris Graves, Kenneth Callahan and Paul Horiuchi – he kept his distinctive, naïve painting style.

Until 1956, Washington devoted his artistic activity almost entirely to painting. During that time he continued to work for the government – his “vocation” as he calls it – in several different capacities. The experience of these years required tenacity and resilience, both important components of his character. Having painted for almost twenty years, James felt it was time for a gallery exhibition. So he walked into the Little Gallery at Seattle’s Fredrick & Nelson department store, where he met the director and was offered an exhibition almost immediately upon showing several paintings.

At some point Washington decided that, for him, the “force” was more powerful within the stone than on the canvas. As early as the mid-1940s, he had already produced a few sculptures. One, a wood sculpture marked the first time he consciously introduced symbols into his work. Washington’s personal symbolic vocabulary gives his sculptures and a few paintings, their distinctive character. It was as a painter that in 1951 Washington decided to go to Mexico City, hoping among other things to meet the muralist Diego Rivera. The event of greatest impact for him as an artist was his visit to Teotihuacan and a chance encounter with a small stone there.

In 1951, Washington traveled to Mexico and visited the pyramids at Teotihuacan. While walking down the Avenue of the Dead, his attention was drawn to a stone on the ground. At first, he ignored the impulse to pick up the stone and continued on his way. But after walking a hundred feet, he was moved so strongly by the urge to go back and pick up the stone, that he felt he could not resist. He brought the stone back to Seattle and stored it in his basement. However, he couldn’t quite forget about the stone’s Presence. After about a year of thinking about the stone, he went down to look at it. The idea came to mind that he could sculpt it. This was the beginning of a lifelong devotion to discovering what stones could disclose to him. His method of sculpting is to study the raw stone, to approach it with love and reverence and to seek its secret. By carving away the nonessential elements, he reveals the forms within the stones, all of which have to do with the renewal of life and the spirit of God in nature.

Some of the more frequently used symbols in his sculptures are: the eagle, symbolic of Resurrection/renewal; the owl, another attribute of Christ, among other things; the rabbit, a symbol of those who seek salvation in Christ’s passion; the bear cub, symbol of Christianity which reforms the heathen; and the fish the most prevalent symbol of Christ and baptism. Less conventional symbols appearing regularly on Washington’s sculptures are the two equilateral triangles (either separately or in combination) representing the Trinity – or the blood, the water, the spirit in your body – and the circle with a dot in the center, God in man.

Washington was clear about his goals as a sculptor and his relationship to his art. He was not, strictly speaking, creating objects; rather he was participating in a kind of ritual through which he was brought into contact with what he described as a universal life force.

Information for this background section is excerpted from *The Spirit in the Stone The Visionary Art of James W. Washington, Jr* by Paul J. Karlstrom and a Foster/White Gallery press release.

PRESENTATION IDEAS

Discussion Points:

- Let the children feel the sculpture and guess what it is (a woodchuck) and what it is made of. (You may want to do this on the way out since it is too heavy to pick up and pass around.)
- Artist would bring rocks home and hold on to them until he knew what to carve out of them. Ask the children about their collections at home; do they collect rocks?
- The creation is very understated, primitive.