

Mary Randlett
Artists of the Pacific Northwest

From the Western Gallery Exhibition 1970



Antonella Antonini
Summer 2009 Intern Project for
Sarah Clark-Langager, Director, Western Gallery

Mary Randlett

During her long career, the Northwest photographer Mary Randlett has created a distinguished body of work. Her photography has achieved national recognition for its iconic rendering of the Pacific Northwest landscape and atmosphere. Western Washington University's Art Collection contains three nature photographs by the artist. In addition, Mary Randlett's depiction of Northwest artists and thinkers represents a precious and indelible documentation of the intellectual and artistic life of the Northwest during a particularly creative period in the second half of the 20th century.

In 1977, the Western Gallery exhibited a collection of Randlett's photographs of Northwest artists that the artist graciously donated to the Gallery. In recognition of her important artistic contributions, the Gallery has decided to post her work on the Western Gallery website for the benefit of the University community and public at large.



Mary Randlett (b. 1924)

Self-Portrait, September 1988

Black and white photograph

Published in Mary Randlett, *Landscapes* (Seattle: University of Washington Press; Tacoma, WA: in association with Tacoma Art Museum, 2007), 117.

© University of Washington Libraries, Special Collections, Mary Randlett Collection.

Mary Randlett (b. 1924)

Mary Randlett was born in Seattle, Washington, on May 5, 1924. Randlett's father, Cecil Durand Willis, ran a blueprint company in Seattle, known as *Superior Reprographics*.¹ Her mother, Elizabeth Bayley, devoted her life to the promotion of arts and crafts and exposed Mary to an enriching cultural and artistic milieu.² In particular, her mother introduced Mary to the circle of Northwest artists in Oregon and Washington State whose careers spanned from the 1930s to the end of the 20th century.

Randlett's communion with photography started early in life and her training was influenced technically and artistically by her interaction with photographers such as George Mantor, Minor White, Imogen Cunningham and Hans Jorgensen who taught her to use a twin-lens Rolleiflex camera ("the whole world opened up and my career in photography began."³) Beside her passion for depicting nature, Randlett's photographic portfolio has covered diverse aspects of the Northwest artistic and cultural scene — architecture, public art and the portrayals of Northwest writers and artists.⁴

Her interest in Northwest artists might have had a serendipitous beginning within her mother's circle of friends. Indeed, among her sitters, were Morris Graves (1910-2001), a

¹ Mary Randlett's detailed biography is reported in Deloris Tarzan Ament's informative book on Northwestern artists, *Iridescent Light: the Emergence of Northwest Art* (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 2002). This summarized version of Randlett's biography has been adapted from Ament's book. Ament's biography of Mary Randlett is also published in *HistoryLink.org. The Free Online Encyclopedia of Washington State History*. http://www.historylink.org/index.cfm?DisplayPage=output.cfm&File_Id=3844 (accessed June 22, 2009.)

² Among the numerous achievements of Elizabeth Bayley, it is worth mentioning, her curatorial work at the University of Washington's Henry Art Gallery (1947,) at the San Francisco Museum of Art and at the California Palace of the Legion of Honor (1950 to 1951). She also promoted Northwest artists Mark Tobey and Morris Graves. Her interest in folk handcrafts led her to visit India several times. Her collection of Indian textiles was donated to the University of Washington and was seminal in the creation of the University's Costume and Textile Study Center, now part of the Henry Art Gallery. The *Elizabeth Bayley Willis Papers* are held at the University of Washington Archives. http://www.lib.washington.edu/specialcoll/findaids/docs/papersrecords/WillisElizabethBayley2583_019.xml (accessed June 10, 2009.)

³ Mary Randlett, *Landscapes* (Seattle: University of Washington Press; Tacoma, WA: in association with Tacoma Art Museum, 2007), 101.

⁴ *Randlett, Mary (b. 1924): Landscape as Poetry*. HistoryLink.org Essay 3844. http://www.historylink.org/index.cfm?DisplayPage=output.cfm&File_Id=3844 (accessed June 22, 2009.)

family friend and a neighbor in Woodway Park in Seattle, and poet Theodore Roethke, also a friend of her mother Elizabeth.

Mary Randlett not only continued to photograph Northwest artists, but also the process of their artistic endeavor. For example, in 1968, she captured on film the creation of Duane Pasco's totem pole in Seattle's Pioneer Square. In 1969 and 1970, she photographed the beginning of the Whatcom Museum in Bellingham and documented the fabrication and installation of Noguchi's *Sky Viewing* sculpture at Western Washington University. These latter photographs can be seen in Western Washington University's Miller Hall.



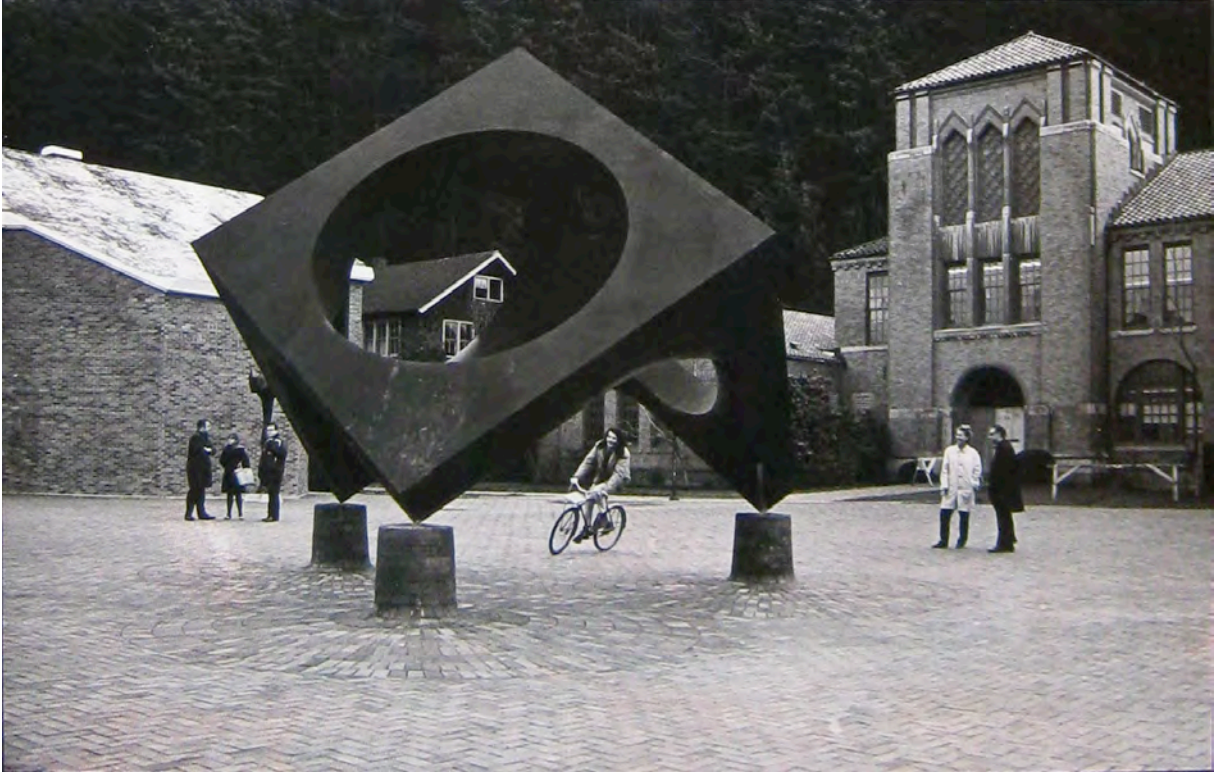
Isamu Noguchi

Skyviewing Sculpture, 1969

Painted Iron plate; approx. 14' h. x 17' w'.

Western Washington University Art Allowance from Miller Hall Addition construction funds.

© Isamu Noguchi and the Isamu Noguchi Foundation and Garden Museum.



Mary Randlett

Detail of one of three panels documenting the construction and installation of Isamu Noguchi's *Skyviewing Sculpture*, December 12, 1969.

Black and white photographs

© University of Washington Libraries, Special Collections, Mary Randlett Collection.

In 1980, she photo-documented two totem poles carved by James Bender for Market Park in Seattle, renamed Victor Steinbrueck Park after Victor Steinbrueck's death in 1985.

Randlett's approach to depicting creative people is antithetical to formal portraiture as she aimed at capturing the artists' identity from their conscious or unconscious stance within their normal living or working environment.

I have always worked in the field, never in a studio, because I wanted to photograph subjects in their own environment. It is the spirit of the subject which is most important. As the photographer, I have always tried to stay in the background, and shoot the subjects as they arrange themselves. My subjects become forms in space, forms moving through space, especially in nature,

where they become illuminated and molded by the light and shadow of the moment (Randlett Statement, 1996).⁵

She contacted numerous artists for permission to photograph them in their studio. Her efforts resulted in an extremely rich and insightful documentation of painters and sculptors as well as poets, writers and composers of the Pacific Northwest. These photographs stimulate our imagination and provide insight to their creative process.

An important consequence of Randlett's interaction with Northwest artists and their artistic sensibilities has been the inspiration of Randlett's own sense of aesthetic. Indeed, these encounters have refined her responsiveness to the essence of a natural scene, to the fleeting moment that characterizes the changing of weather, or to the sparkle in the movement of water.

Doing artists gave me wonderful eyes to see nature. Morris Graves, Kenneth Callahan and Neil Meitzler gave me the eye to see the mountains. Richard Gilkey and Clayton James, the delta land and rivers. Philip McCracken, many images in nature. Robert Sund taught me how to listen to poetry. People have been my catalysts.⁶

It is possible that these artists influenced Randlett's sense of what Alfred Stieglitz and later, Minor White called "Equivalence" — the depiction of an emotion. As White clarifies, a photographer "recognize[s] an object or series of forms that, when photographed, would yield an image with specific suggestive powers that can direct the viewer into a specific and known feeling, state or place within himself."⁷

During her highly productive career, Mary Randlett has been part of countless solo and group exhibitions and authored or co-authored a vast array of books and publications. Her works are in the permanent collections of over thirty museums. She currently lives in Olympia.

⁵ Deloris Tarzan Ament, "Mary Randlett: Landscape as Poetry," in *Iridescent Light: the Emergence of Northwest Art* (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 2002), 229.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 231.

⁷ Minor White, "Equivalence: The Perennial Trend" *PSA Journal*, Vol. 29, No. 7, 17-21, 1963. <http://www.jnevins.com/whitereading.htm> (accessed June 24, 2009).

Mary Randlett's Nature Photographs

People familiar with the Pacific Northwest climate can re-experience in Mary Randlett's nature photographs the characteristics of the coastal atmosphere. During the cold months, the air is perceived as watery and fluid through the thin veil of fog that covers or barely reveals. Shapes become vague and gray, and yet the scene is often lit by zones of luminosity. Only during the summer, the landscape is uncovered and the eyes can span far into the horizon. Among the three large photographs at WWU, *Untitled (Tree Covered Hills), July 1970* depicts this sense of quiet and vast expanse, where the presence of people can be forgotten.



Mary Randlett

Untitled (Tree Covered Hills), July 1970

Black and white photograph

Commissioned by Ibsen Nelson, Architect, Capital Art Program. WWU University Art Collection.

© University of Washington Libraries, Special Collections, Mary Randlett Collection.

Randlett pointed out that her interaction with the artists that she portrayed had changed her esthetic sensibility. She goes beyond the narrative of the landscape and

focuses on the light, shapes and tonalities with a propensity toward abstract forms in which the familiar form or the scale of the image can hardly be discerned. In *Untitled (Coot Swimming)*, March 1968, the bird paddles by and leaves a wake creating an interplay of light and shadow in the water that transforms the image into a study of movement and stillness.



Mary Randlett

Untitled (Coot Swimming), March 1968

Black and white photograph

Commissioned by Ibsen Nelson, Architect, Capital Art Program. WWU University Art Collection.

© University of Washington Libraries, Special Collections, Mary Randlett Collection.

In *Untitled (Reflections on Water)*, March 1968 the final transformation into abstraction is accomplished. The reflections of light into the water are now geometric forms, irregular in their overall shape but containing strikingly regular patterns of periodic light and dark lines. The perception of the 3-dimensional space and size becomes ambiguous as the figures float toward the viewer or recede in space.



Mary Randlett

Untitled (Reflections on Water), March 1968

Black and white photograph

Commissioned by Ibsen Nelson, Architect, Capital Art Program. WWU University Art Collection.

© University of Washington Libraries, Special Collections, Mary Randlett Collection.

**Mary Randlett's statement on the occasion of the Western Gallery's exhibition:
October 27 — November 17, 1970**

PHOTOGRAPHS BY

MARY RANDLETT
ARTISTS OF THE
PACIFIC NORTHWEST

My basic interest in photography developed from an early passion and respect for the beauty of nature. Following this period I concentrated on pictures of children in a nature environment. In 1949 I photographed the painters Mark Tobey and Morris Graves, friends of my mother, Elizabeth Bayley Willis. The years 1950 to 1962 were occupied with family and children. The work continued, but at a much slower pace. In 1963 I photographed Theodore Roethke and the idea of documenting a large number of creative people in the Pacific Northwest began to evolve. Starting with well-established figures in the area, the project expanded to include younger painters and sculptors as well as poets, writers and composers.

Among many people who have helped and encouraged me are:

My mother, Elizabeth Bayley Willis

My teacher, Hans Jorgensen

My friends, Betty Bowen and Neil Meitzler who assembled this exhibition

And particular thanks are due

The Bloedel Foundation

The Skinner Foundation

The Hauberg foundation

The Louisa Kern Fund,

Mimi Steward McCardle

Mrs. Sidney Gerber

The artists who have so generously given of their time, making my work a warm and rewarding experience, my deep gratitude and thanks.

Circulated by the Western Association of Art Museums

Northwest Artists Viewed by Mary Randlett

Mark Tobey (1890-1976)

Mary Randlett photographed Mark Tobey in August 1949 at Morris Graves' home in Careladen, Woodway Park. The artist was in his late 50s. He is shown immersed in nature — timidly appearing between two large trees, or sitting at an outdoor table. Tobey never looks directly into the camera, or he is photographed at a distance with a rich natural expanse between him and the camera. Mark Tobey and nature — Randlett could not have better expressed the spiritual and intellectual character of this artist for whom the principle of human existence resides in its spiritual connectedness and identification with the natural world. He affirmed, “I like best to see in nature what I want in my painting. When we can find the abstract in nature we find the deepest art.”⁸

Mark Tobey's curiosity and passion for learning transformed him into a world traveler visiting Europe, Japan, China and Mexico. Although close to European avant-garde movements and experimenting in cubism, De Chirico surrealism, primitivism and abstraction, Tobey also embraced Asian art for its two-dimensionality and its calligraphic brushwork techniques. In the mid-1930s, Tobey developed the innovative “white writing,” in which masses of interlaced thin white lines give a sense of a paroxysmal dynamism and an expression of light. This stylistic approach matured out of his experimentation in Chinese calligraphy and possibly, surrealism.

White lines in movement symbolize light as a unifying idea which flows through the compartmented units of life bringing a dynamic to men's minds, ever expanding their energies toward a larger relativity.⁹

Tobey's “white writing” had a catalytic effect on Abstract Expressionist gesture painters. Indeed, in 1944 Elizabeth Bayley Willis introduced Tobey's work to Jackson

⁸ CMT Committee Mark Tobey. *Texts from Mark Tobey Selected Notes*. http://www.cmt-marktobey.net/Texts_from/Tf-08/tf-08.html (accessed June 27, 2009).

⁹ Quote extracted by Arthur Lyon Dahl from the Palace of Legion of Honor catalog, 1951. *Mark Tobey*, Page by Arthur Lyon Dahl, <http://yabaha.net/dahl/tobey.htm> (accessed June 27, 2009).

Pollock who became intrigued by the “all over painting” technique.¹⁰ However, for Tobey, abstraction represented a language to express his deep spirituality, a road to meditation and contemplation.

I know very little about what is generally called 'abstract' painting. Pure abstraction would mean a type of painting completely unrelated to life, which is unacceptable to me. I have sought to make my painting 'whole' but to attain this I have used a whirling mass. I take up no definite position. Maybe this explains someone's remark while looking at one of my paintings: 'Where is the center?'¹¹

Early in life, Tobey accepted the Bahá'í World Faith, a holistic and universalist creed that highly influenced his world perception and his art. For Tobey reality became synonymous with a spiritual journey in which, according to the Bahá'í concept of ultimate unity, humanity, human achievements and nature were one and divine. According to the art historian and painter William Chapin Seitz, a tree is the perfect metaphor for reconciling the Bahá'í concept of oneness with the mundane perception of multiplicity — humanity is like a tree in which each individual is a part and the product of a single seed.¹²

¹⁰ Deloris Tarzan Ament, “Mark Tobey. ‘The Old Master of the Young American Painting,’” in *Iridescent Light: the Emergence of Northwest Art* (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 2002), 29-30.

¹¹ Quote extracted by Arthur Lyon Dahl from one of Tobey’s letter dated 1/2/55, Whitechapel catalog, p. 13. *Mark Tobey*, Page by Arthur Lyon Dahl, <http://yabaha.net/dahl/tobey.htm> (accessed June 27, 2009).

¹² William Chapin Seitz, *Mark Tobey* (New York, Museums of Modern Art; Cleveland Museum of Art, Art Institute of Chicago), 10. http://books.google.com/books?id=YAk1I1QwT7wC&pg=PA38&lpg=PA38&dq=marc+tobey+music&source=bl&ots=d0Dz087xNK&sig=KEcpM6jCR51qv-6RywwH0ZwgE2U&hl=en&ei=S7hGSr-nHpKQNsKxuJsB&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=1 (accessed June, 27 2009).

In her photographs of Mark Tobey, Mary Randlett perfectly rendered the artist's spiritual affinity with nature. Looking at them, one is reminded of Tobey's words — "I have discovered many a universe on paving stones and tree barks."¹³



Mark Tobey



Mary Randlett (b. 1924)
Black and white photographs
© University of Washington Libraries, Special Collections, Mary Randlett Collection.

¹³ Quote extracted by Arthur Lyon Dahl from one of Tobey's letter dated 1/2/55, Whitechapel catalog, p. 13. *Mark Tobey*, Page by Arthur Lyon Dahl, <http://yabaha.net/dahl/tobey.htm> (accessed June 27, 2009).

Tobey's works are abstract in style and small, enticing the viewer both to intimately focus on the details and also to embrace the whole of the image. The print *Vibrating Surface*, a scatter of fine red lines on a yellow/orange background, brings to mind a musical analogy — a fast interlude of fleeting notes.¹⁴ The image could also be interpreted as an abstraction of a natural scene.



Mark Tobey (1890-1976)

Vibrating Surface 1972

Etching, Ed. 76/150, 11" x 14"

Gift of R. Hugh G. Merriman, WWU Class of 1977, Collection Western Gallery

© Mark Tobey Estate/Seattle Art Museum.

Indeed, a photograph by Mary Randlett, *Lake at Mount Baker, October 1971*¹⁵ depicts grasses in water, the surface of which is barely moved by drops of rain and strongly recalls Tobey's *Vibrating Surface*. The thin white threads of the grasses appear

¹⁴ Marc Tobey was also a gifted composer.

¹⁵ Mary Randlett, *Landscapes* (Seattle: University of Washington Press; Tacoma, WA: in association with Tacoma Art Museum, 2007), 55.

as calligraphic signs, an abstraction of a natural form more than a form themselves, consonant with Tobey’s intuition that “when we can find the abstract in nature we find the deepest art.”¹⁶



Mary Randlett (b. 1924)
Lake at Mount Baker, October 1971
Black and white photograph
Published in Mary Randlett, *Landscapes* (Seattle: University of Washington Press; Tacoma, WA: in association with Tacoma Art Museum, 2007), 55.
© University of Washington Libraries, Special Collections, Mary Randlett Collection.

¹⁶ CMT Committee Mark Tobey. *Texts from Mark Tobey Selected Notes*. http://www.cmt-marktobey.net/Texts_from/Tf-08/tf-08.html (accessed June 27, 2009).



Mark Tobey (1890-1976)

Paeon, 1971

Etching, working proof, 11" x 14"

Gift of R. Hugh G. Merriman, WWU Class of 1977, Collection Western Gallery

© Mark Tobey Estate/Seattle Art Museum.

Carl Morris (1911-1993)

California born, Carl Morris trained at the Chicago Art School, as well as in Vienna and Paris. During the late 1930s through the Depression era Work Projects Administration program, he became director of the Spokane Art Center and by 1941 had settled in Portland, Oregon. He traveled extensively in the United States and abroad and his varied styles reflect his curiosity and desire for experimentation. In fact, his extensive and rich body of work ranges from figurative works to murals to abstraction. Mary Randlett's photographs of Carl Morris and his wife Hilda, an accomplished sculptor (1911-1991), were taken in their studios in Portland. Both artists understood art in terms of a profound personal experience with nature and place. Randlett depicts them together, in homage to their lifelong artistic dialogue.

Again, it is the connection to nature that distinguishes these two talented Northwest artists. In an interview conducted in 1983 by Sue Ann Kendal for the Smithsonian *Archives of American Art*, Carl Morris explained how the impressions and emotions that nature offers are reflected in abstraction — “the more abstract I became the closer I felt I was getting to nature.”¹⁷ Although, Morris did not paint directly from nature, his experience and emotion were spontaneously reflected on canvas.

Often the experiences are the material of my paintings. They come back to me as much a surprise as they do to other people. I suddenly see on a canvas, I've been there.¹⁸

Therefore, abstraction is the interpretation and exteriorization of a personal experience that can translate into a universal symbolic language.

When the viewer approaches a painting of mine I do not feel that the success of that painting is going to depend on whether or not they have experienced the same thing that I have experienced in a given place, but they will have experienced something in their own life that will be parallel and the painting then stands as a centerpoint, a communicating point that in a sense brings two people together.¹⁹

¹⁷ Oral history interview with Carl Morris, 1983 Mar. 23, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution. <http://www.aaa.si.edu/collections/oralhistories/transcripts/morris83.htm> (accessed, June 29, 2009).

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

The viewer of Carl Morris' abstract works is struck by the glowing light that seems to emanate from behind the canvas. In *Transition #1*, part of the Leese Collection donated to the Western Gallery, colored, luminous shapes emerge from a somber landscape. As they traverse the canvas, the forms appear animated by a slow, powerful movement, as rocks carried by a glacier.



Carl Morris

Transition #1, [Purchased 1980]

Oil on cardboard, 20.5 x 27.25"

Al and Vera Leese Collection, Gift of Marian Boylan, 2005

© Carl Morris, Courtesy of Laura Russo Gallery, Portland, OR.

From Randlett's portrayals of Carl and Hilda Morris in life and work, there emerges a sense of their effortless connection with nature and insight into the thoughtful and careful manner in which they translate this natural experience into artistic forms.



Carl Morris Hilda Morris



Mary Randlett (b. 1924)
Black and white photographs
© University of Washington Libraries, Special Collections, Mary Randlett Collection.

William Cumming (b. 1917)

In *Sketchbook: a Memoir of the 1930's and the Northwest School*,²⁰ William Cumming recounts how his artistic and philosophical development was influenced by artists including Kenneth Callahan, Mark Tobey, Morris Graves and Guy Anderson. Cumming's art is figurative, bold, colorful and stylistically distinctive from the majority of art produced by the circle of Northwest artists.

Conscious of the changing social environment and politically involved,²¹ Cumming had an acute sense of history and sought to represent in his art the realities of a modernizing world. As such, his work remained committed to figurative representation. However, the artist rejected the fundamentals of three-dimensional, illusionist art for a more direct, flat representation.

That form of drawing called objective drawing, governed by standards of realism or photographic realism, represents for me the furthest extreme of abstraction away from direct comprehension of reality."²²

Cumming focused on the human body in movement — the act of moving, the “continuity of gestures.”²³ For the artist, movement provided an allegory for modernity — a restless city, a “world of gesture and transience, a world that vanishes as it appears.”²⁴

Two works by William Cumming belong to the Leese Collection. The first work, a poster for the *Hunger Project Benefit City of Light Choir* (1985) is an explosion of form, movement and color emerging from a muted background and brings to mind Cumming's personal interpretation of the colors in the Northwest, where “the moist air creates a field of grayed color in which pure colors are allowed to shine out brilliantly.”²⁵ The second work is a poster for Puccini's *Madame Butterfly* (1982), a gift to the Music Library, that demonstrates Cumming's familiarity with Japanese woodblock prints, a form that the artist enriches with a sense of dynamism and large contours tending toward abstraction.

²⁰ William Cumming, *Sketchbook: a Memoir of the 1930's and the Northwest School* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1984).

²¹ Cumming was blacklisted during the McCarthy era for his activity in the Communist Party. Ibid., 235.

²² Ibid., 233.

²³ Ibid., 228.

²⁴ Ibid., 229.

²⁵ Ibid., 233.



William Cumming

Poster, *Hunger Project Benefit City of Light Choir*, 1985

Color lithograph, Artist Proof 3/50, 30 x 24"

Al and Vera Leese Collection, Gift of Marian Boylan, 2005

© William Cumming, Courtesy of Woodside Braseth Gallery, Seattle, WA.



William Cumming

Poster for *Puccini's Madame Butterfly*, *Seattle Opera*, 1982

Color lithograph, Ed. 61/100, AP, 30.5 x 24"

Gift of Vera Leese and Estate of Al Leese, 2003 to Music Library

© William Cumming, Courtesy of Woodside Braseth Gallery, Seattle, WA.

Mary Randlett depicted Cumming in diverse settings that stand as a metaphor for the artist's connections with his urban and work environment. These photographs show the artist in familiar places — at work in front of a model or during leisure time— and also in formal settings at the Henry Art Gallery in Seattle. Randlett also captured his workspace with objects, photographs and other memorabilia on his desk and walls that symbolically trace the artist's search for pathways to connect with his time and place.



William Cumming



Mary Randlett (b. 1924)

Black and white photographs

© University of Washington Libraries, Special Collections, Mary Randlett Collection.

Paul Horiuchi (1906 - 1999)

Born in Oishi Village at the foot of Mount Fuji, Paul Horiuchi²⁶ spent the majority of his adult life between Rock Springs, Wyoming and Seattle, where he settled after WWII. Horiuchi was mainly self-taught, his academic artistic studies being limited to a course of *sumi* painting while he was living in Japan and basic training in European-style drawing and watercolor landscapes with his mentor Campanella during his stay in Wyoming. Horiuchi's initial artistic production was representational depictions of family narratives and landscapes. In Seattle, he became involved with artists and thinkers fascinated by Eastern philosophies who inspired him to search within Japanese traditions for forms and meanings. In the 1950s, Horiuchi, together with Mark Tobey, were inspired by Zen's philosophical concepts of being in the present moment, wholeness and the universality of life experiences.²⁷ Horiuchi internalized these concepts and his art was transformed. He turned to abstraction, creating fields of colors and collages with hand-painted papers²⁸ to render a simultaneous sense of transience and tranquility.²⁹ Northwest nature and climate were the source of his inspiration — “When you really approach nature, nature will come to you. . . . You can't help it, you have to paint — just like when you sing, you have to sing!”³⁰

Thoughts in Color and Shapes #3 shows large patches of colors, recalling the formalism of abstract expressionism, interrupted by fragments of collages. The muted colors of the artwork evoke the Pacific Northwest atmosphere while the vertical collages

²⁶ Horiuchi's original name was Chimakasa. When he married Bernadette Suda, a Catholic native of Seattle, Horiuchi converted and changed his name to Paul — “I took the name in honor of Paul Cezanne and Pablo Picasso, both of them I admire very much,” *The Seattle Time*, March 23, 1980 (reported in Kazuko Nakane, *The Light from within. Following the Art of Paul Horiuchi*. Co-Sponsored by the *International Examiner*, Seattle, WA, and the Museum of Northwestern Art, La Conner, WA, 2000).

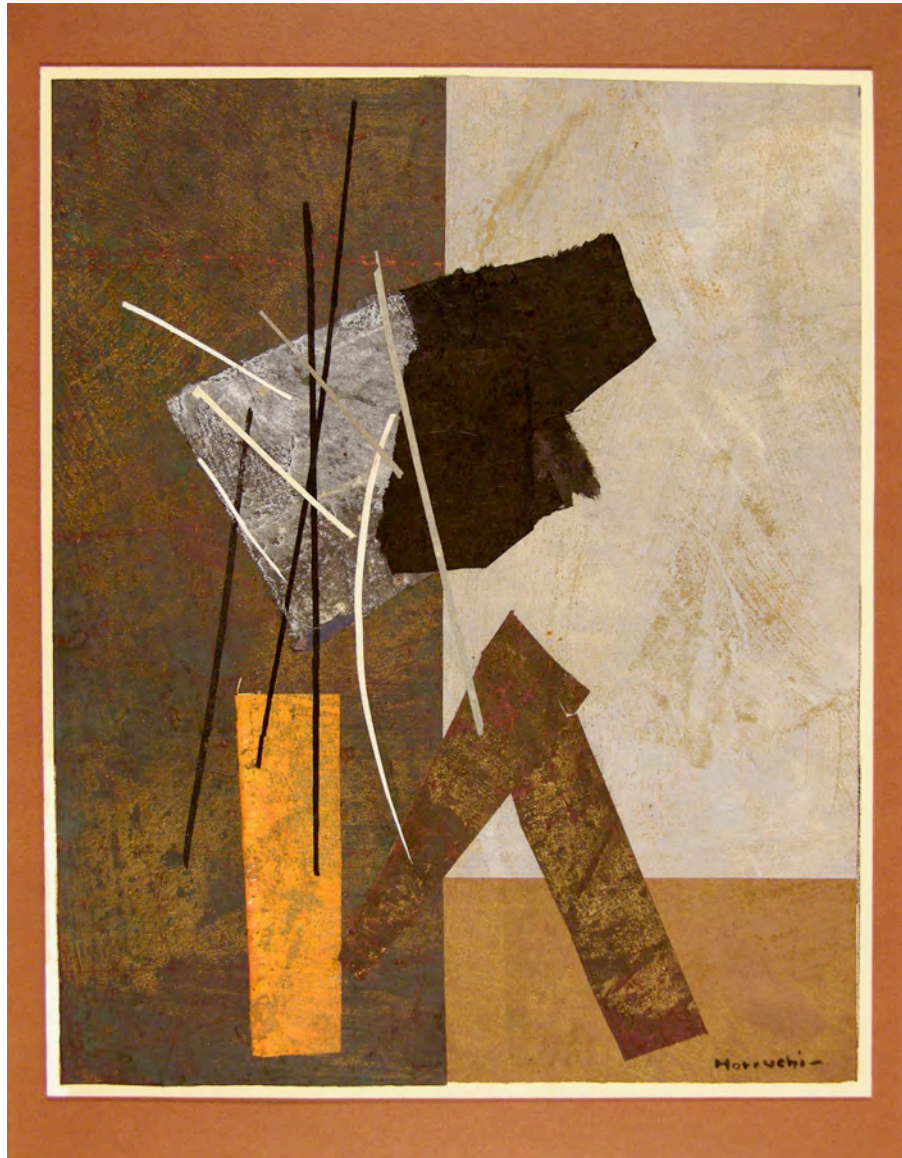
²⁷ Barbara Johns, *Paul Horiuchi: East and West* (University of Washington Press, Seattle and London, Museum of Northwest Art, LaConner, Washington, 2008) 40-41.

²⁸ Horiuchi rediscovered an ancient form of Japanese collage, called *shikishi*, in which torn papers are arranged to give the impression of landscapes. Deloris Tarzan Ament, “Paul Horiuchi. Master of the Collage,” in *Iridescent Light: the Emergence of Northwest Art* (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 2002), 86.

²⁹ Barbara Johns, *Paul Horiuchi: East and West* (University of Washington Press, Seattle and London, Museum of Northwest Art, LaConner, Washington, 2008), 61.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 61.

recall Japanese poem papers used for writing poetry with one's best calligraphy — an allusion to an aesthetic that in Japan is as important as painting itself.



Paul Horiuchi
Thoughts in Color and Shapes #3, [Purchased 1978]
Oil and collage, 25 x 19"
Al and Vera Leese Collection, Gift of Marian Boylan, 2005
© Paul Horiuchi, Courtesy of Vincent Horiuchi, Seattle, WA.

Paul Horiuchi



Mary Randlett (b. 1924)

Black and white photographs

© University of Washington Libraries, Special Collections, Mary Randlett Collection.

Mary Randlett portrayed Paul Horiuchi in his studio during the composition of one of his collages. Horiuchi is also photographed through the abstract shape of a steel sculpture — a medium that the artist explored in the 1950s as a possible three-dimensional spatial counterpoint to abstract paintings.

Richard Gilkey (1925- 1997)

Gilkey was a native of Bellingham and spent his career between the Skagit Valley and Seattle. He was a careful observer of nature and found his inspiration in the land, waters and fauna of the Pacific Northwest. His landscapes emanate a peaceful luminosity emerging from the waters, the sky and even from the yellow grasses that the artist often depicted with short and rapid brushstrokes.

Gilkey was a Marine during WWII and returned home traumatized by the experience. He was drawn by the artwork of Mark Tobey, Guy Anderson and Morris Graves and their search for human wholeness and spiritual integrity. He is considered a younger member of the Northwest School.

The discovery of works by Anderson, Graves and Tobey in the Seattle Art Museum was a revelation and a turning point in my life. Here were paintings that addressed my concerns from very different points of view. Guy Anderson had painted the fallen parachutist, the wounded and damaged warrior, figures in rocks, in the sea and on the beach. Graves used personal symbols to indicate his feeling of the senselessness of war: birds, moons, gloves and urns. Tobey enmeshed figures, cities and worlds in threaded light and pointed to the unity of energy in all forms and deplored the egocentrism of warring nations. After meeting these artists, I gained from their encouragement, guidance and friendship.³¹

(Gilkey Statement for Guy Anderson's exhibition at the Seattle Art Museum, 1966; Deloris Tarzan Ament, 262).

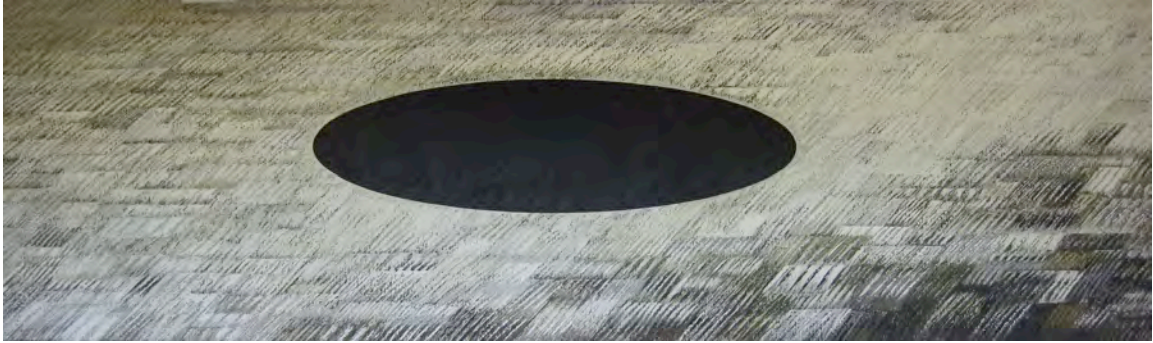
His friendship with these artists transformed his philosophical perspective. Indeed, through landscapes, but especially through his abstract artwork, Gilkey sought to capture, "universal aspects of reality and consciousness through light and form."³² (Deloris Tarzan Ament, 271).

Quiet Field, a commission for Western Washington University, emanates a Zen-like feeling of unity between an earthbound space and an abstract conceived space. The canvas is covered by oblique brushstrokes of luminous yellow, white and brown waves recalling the characteristic wind-blown grasses of the artist's landscape paintings. A

³¹ Deloris Tarzan Ament, "Richard Gilkey. The Tiger of the Blue Moon," in *Iridescent Light: the Emergence of Northwest Art* (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 2002), 262.

³² *Ibid.*, 271.

surreal black oval floats above the center of the painting infusing it with symbolic, transcendental meaning.



Richard Gilkey

Quiet Field, ca. 1970

Oil on canvas, 67 ½ x 242'

Acq. 1970 Commission for Bond Hall (moved to SMATE, 2005)

Ibsen Nelson Architect, Capital Art Program, WWU University Art Collection.

© Richard Gilkey, Courtesy of Janet Huston, La Conner, WA.

Mary Randlett photographed Richard Gilkey when *Quiet Field* was still dominating the artist's studio in Seattle. Gilkey also posed with canvases depicting his famous sunflowers — strong, stylized forms possibly inspired by Van Gogh's art that Gilkey greatly admired.



Richard Gilkey

Mary Randlett (b. 1924)
Black and white photographs
© University of Washington Libraries, Special Collections, Mary Randlett Collection.

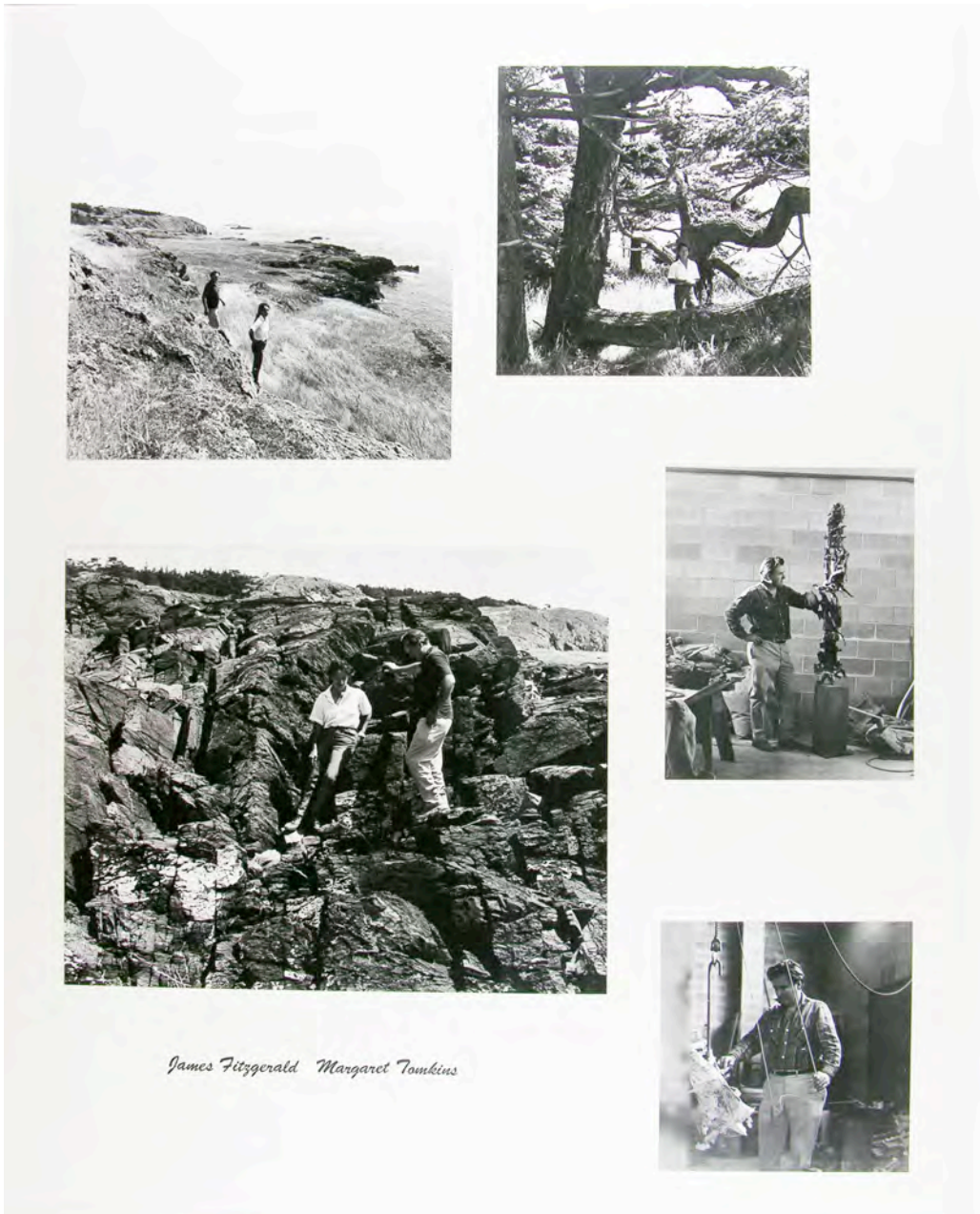
James FitzGerald (1910- 1973)

James FitzGerald was an eclectic artist who left a memorable artistic legacy of public art to the community.³³ Among his numerous works, are sculptures for the Washington Building, the Public Library and the Civic Center Playhouse Courtyard in Seattle, Washington, the United States Court House and Federal Office Building in Ogden, Utah and the Civic Center Waterfront Park in Kirkland, Washington. FitzGerald was also an instructor at the Kansas City Art Institute and the University of Washington.³⁴

Mary Randlett depicted FitzGerald and the painter Margaret Tomkins, his wife, on the rugged coast of the Pacific Northwest that was the source of such great inspiration to the artist.

³³ Martha Kingsbury, "Northwest Art: the Mid-Century Seen From the End of the Century." In *What it meant to be Modern. Seattle Art at Mid-century. An Introduction*. Henry Art Gallery, University of Washington. Exhibition October 14, 1999-January 23, 2000, 26. Barbara Johns, "Fields of Vision in Pictures and Objects" in *Jet Dreams: Art of the Fifties in the Northwest*, ed. Barbara Johns, published in conjunction with the exhibition *Jet Dreams: the Fifties in the Northwest* March 17- June 4, 1995 (Tacoma Art Museum, Tacoma, Washington, 1995).

³⁴ Sheryl Conkelton, *What it meant to be Modern. Seattle Art at Mid-Century. An Introduction*. Henry Art Gallery, University of Washington. Exhibition October 14, 1999-January 23, 2000, 40.



Mary Randlett (b. 1924)

Black and white photographs

© University of Washington Libraries, Special Collections, Mary Randlett Collection.

In 1959, James FitzGerald received a commission to build an outdoor fountain to be located in front of a new building, Haggard Hall. *Rain Forest* initiated the Western Washington University's Outdoor Sculpture Collection and was completely funded by

the university through the Art Allowance, which allocated funds for the arts from campus construction budgets.

FitzGerald's artistic sensibility reflects his passion for nature of the Northwest translated into modernist abstraction.³⁵ He envisioned his sculpture to be a tribute to the rain forest of the Olympic Peninsula.³⁶ The sculpture is composed of a tall, vertical structure reminiscent of trees moistened by the constant trickling of the water and a horizontal element resting in a pool, recalling a fallen tree and the shrubs and ferns living under the trees canopy. The fountain includes details recalling Asian calligraphic patterns as a tribute to non-Western cultures.

In 2003-2004, the fountain was restored and relocated to another part of the Western campus at the entrance of the Wade King Student Recreation Center. The inspiration for such endeavor was the desire to commemorate World War II veterans and was realized thanks to the contribution of Ted and Lee Gary and an art allocation for the Recreation Center. Ted Gary is a World War II veteran who graduated from Western in 1948 after having served in the Army Air Corps. Although Fitzgerald did not originally intend his artwork to be a memorial, the symbolism of the tree in *Rain Forest* is very powerful. A tree represents life, strength and is not only a symbol of transformation, but also a symbol for the cycle of death and rebirth. *Rain Forest's* depiction of a tree trunk fallen in the forest can also be considered an apt metaphor for a fallen soldier.

³⁵ Oral history interview with James Herbert Fitzgerald and Margaret Tomkins, 1965 Oct. 27, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution
<http://www.aaa.si.edu/collections/oralhistories/oralhistory/fitzge65.htm> (accessed July 15, 2009).

³⁶ Sarah Clark-Langager, *Sculpture in Place. A Campus as Site* (Western Washington University, Western Gallery, University of Washington Press, Seattle), 42-43.



James FitzGerald

Rain Forest, 1959

Bronze Fountain, 14' h. x 12' W x 24' l.

Western Washington University Art Allowance 1960 from Haggard Hall construction funds. 2004 Student Art Allocation for Wade King Student Recreation Center and Ted E. Gary Family.

© James FitzGerald, Courtesy of Miro FitzGerald, Sedona, AZ.



James FitzGerald

Equinox, 1957, bronze, lost wax

Bronze, 5" x 2" x 3d

2004 Gift of Miro Fitzgerald, Iala FitzGerald and Jared Fitzgerald.

© James FitzGerald, Courtesy of Miro Fitzgerald, Sedona, AZ.

Ambrose Patterson (1877- 1966)

Born in Australia, Ambrose Patterson's artistic eclecticism developed from his academic learning in Melbourne and Paris merged with personal artistic experimentation during his extensive travels in Europe, Mexico and United States. In 1918, Patterson joined the faculty at the University of Washington School of Art and was instrumental in opening the academic art scene to the new developments in European Art, such as Post-Impressionism and Fauvism. Ambrose retired from the faculty in 1947.

Mountains with Trees reflects Patterson's attachment to nature. Here, the characteristic Northwest landscape of a snow-capped mountain and the wooded valley beneath are shown from a bird's-eye-view perspective, typical of Japanese prints. The colors are muted and delicate, as seen through a glowing light.



Ambrose Patterson
Mountains with Trees (descriptive title)
Color woodcut, 14 ½ x 9 3/8
Collection of Western Gallery.

Mary Randlett photographed Ambrose Patterson and his wife Viola, an accomplished painter, in their home and studio.



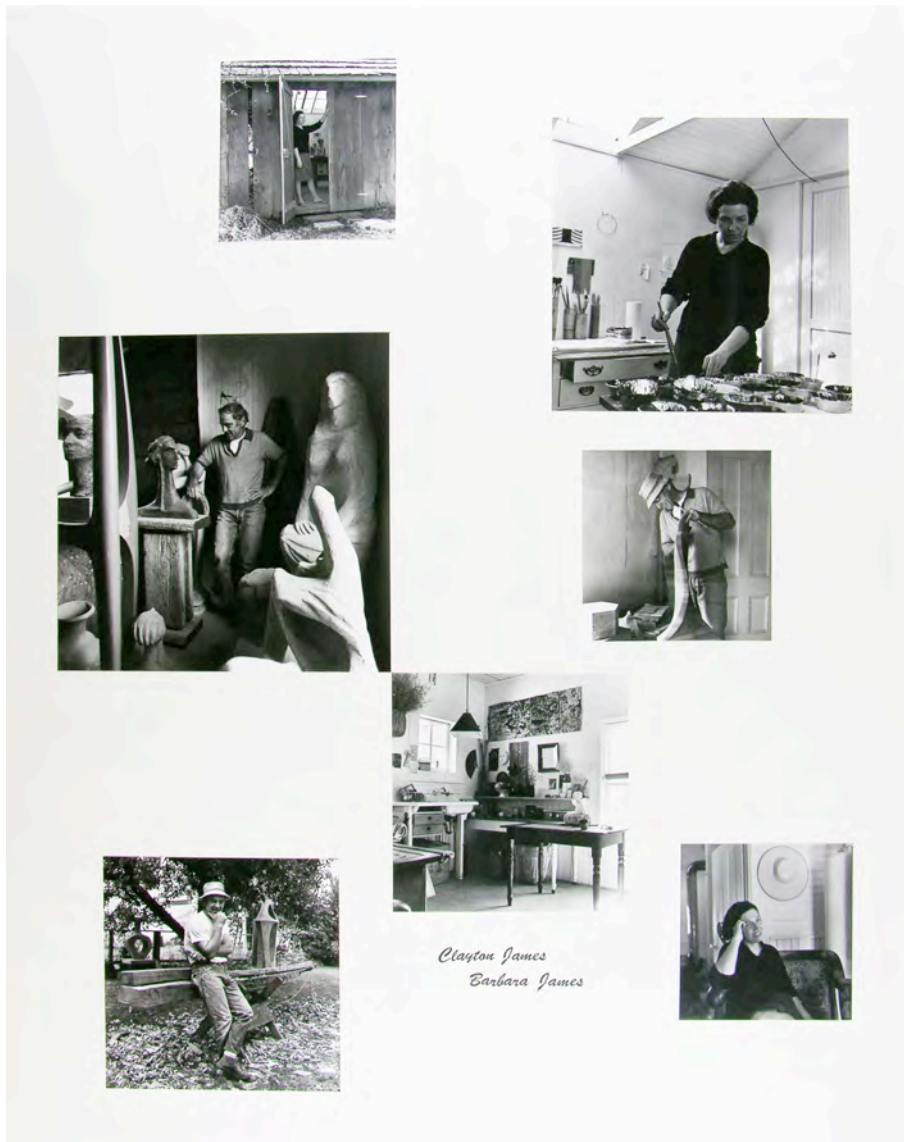
*Ambrose Patterson
Viola Patterson*

Mary Randlett (b. 1924)
Black and white photographs
© University of Washington Libraries, Special Collections, Mary Randlett Collection.

Clayton James (b.1918)

The Western Gallery Collection includes several ceramic artworks by Clayton James. James, who lives in La Conner, Washington, is an eclectic artist who has experimented in a variety of media including painting and sculpting in concrete and wood.

Mary Randlett photographed the artist and his wife Barbara Straker James in 1965 at their studio in La Conner, Washington. Barbara, who passed away in 2007, was also a painter and curator of the Museum of Northwest Art in La Conner.



*Clayton James
Barbara James*

Mary Randlett (b. 1924)

Black and white photographs

© University of Washington Libraries, Special Collections, Mary Randlett Collection.

Clayton James is depicted with his sculptures — a diverse collection of figurative pieces and organically shaped abstractions. James experimented in diverse styles of ceramics, from coil-built pots, to humanoid shapes with a characteristic smoky finish.

Originally from Michigan, Clayton James's first experience of the Northwest was during World War II when he lived in Camp Angel, a conscientious objectors camp in Waldport, Oregon. At Waldport he met, and began a lifelong friendship with, Morris Graves who visited the camp as an invited artist. Married in 1944, the Jameses moved to Washington State where they often lived immersed in pristine nature in wood-made dwellings that James constructed himself.³⁷ In 1950, Clayton was accepted for an apprenticeship in woodworking with George Nakashima in Philadelphia.³⁸ According to Ament, Nakashima's simple and elegant style certainly influenced James's future sculpture.³⁹

James became fascinated with ceramic works after he participated in a summer program with Jim and Nan McKinnell, potters from the Archie Bray Foundation in Montana.⁴⁰ James found in clay the suitable medium for simultaneously expressing a modernist design and a link to tradition.

I like to call it the continuum of the cultural flow from the ancients. It could be that the material itself is so ancient — man has been picking up a wad of clay and pinching it into forms for so long a time.⁴¹
(James to R.W. Campbell, in La Mar Harrington, *Ceramics in the Pacific Northwest: a History*, 121)

³⁷ Vicki Halper, *Clayton James* (Museum of Northwest Art, La Conner, Washington, University of Washington Press, Seattle, Washington; London, UK., 2002), 12-13.

³⁸ *George Nakashima Woodworker* studio is currently operated by his daughter Mira (<http://www.nakashimawoodworker.com/>). *The George Nakashima House, Studio and Workshop* is listed on the US national Register of Historic Places (<http://www.nps.gov/nr/listings/20080822.HTM>)

³⁹ Deloris Tarzan Ament, "Clayton James: Simplicity and Purity," in *Iridescent Light: the Emergence of Northwest Art* (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 2002), 182-193.

⁴⁰ The summer school was organized by the University of Washington art professor Ruth Pennington. *Ibid.*, 187-188.

⁴¹ James to R.W. Campbell, in LaMar Harrington, *Ceramics in the Pacific Northwest: a History*. (Published for the Henry Gallery by the University of Washington Press, Seattle, Washington and London, UK), 121.

In the 1970s, after a journey to New Mexico, James was inspired by the shapes and colors of the indigenous pottery. The artist hand-built a series of large clay pots that demonstrate his mastery of the medium. His elegant, essentialized forms, expressed in a natural color palette, transmit a sense of softness and malleability. James' ceramic works in the Western Gallery Collection also recall the simplicity of *Shibui* aesthetic — a subtle beauty — suggesting James' integration of Eastern and Western creative styles.



Clayton James
Untitled
Ceramic, round pot, buff, 19 x 19 1/2", lip 5 1/2" w
Western Gallery Collection
© Clayton James



Clayton James
Untitled
Ceramic, pot with lip, buff, 15 x 19", lip 5" w
Western Gallery Collection
© Clayton James



Clayton James
Untitled
White buff, ceramic, 30 x 21"
Western Gallery Collection
© Clayton James



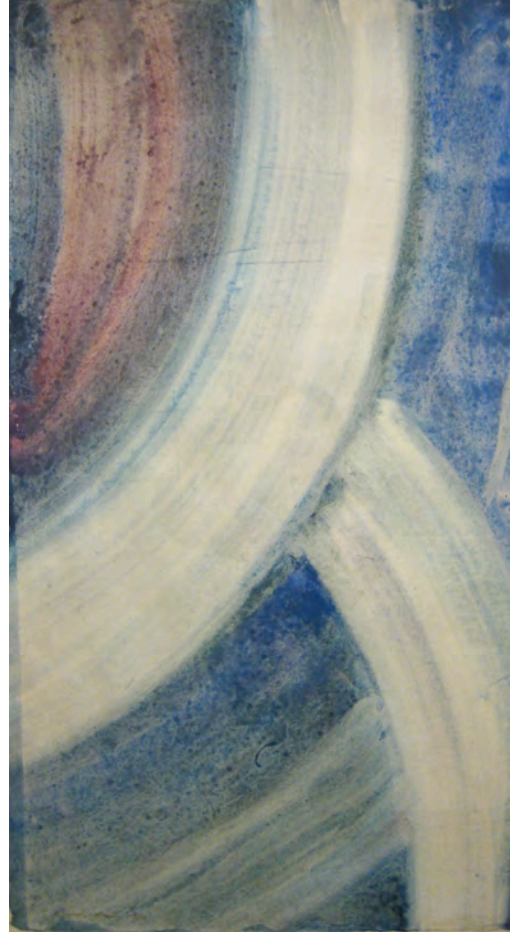
Clayton James
Pentagonal Stele, 1982
Stoneware, 33 x 12 x 8"
Gift of Mary Margaret Aiken Collection.
© Clayton James

Laurie Olin (b. 1938)

In 1970, Ibsen Nelsen, the architect who designed Bond and Miller Halls at Western Washington University, commissioned Laurie Olin to paint a series of waterfalls in watercolors to be used in the cafeteria at Miller Hall.⁴²



Laurie Olin
Untitled, Waterfall, 1970
Watercolor, 36" x 20"



Laurie Olin
Untitled, Waterfall, 1970
Watercolor, 36" x 20"

Commissioned by Ibsen Nelson, Architect for Bond and Miller Halls, 1970
Collection of Western Washington University
© Laurie Olin

⁴² Richard Lee Francis, Professor Emeritus of English of Western Washington University, interviewed by Tamara Belts on April 23, 2003.
<http://www.library.wvu.edu/specialcollections/oralhistories/richardfrancis.htm> (accessed July 9, 2009.)



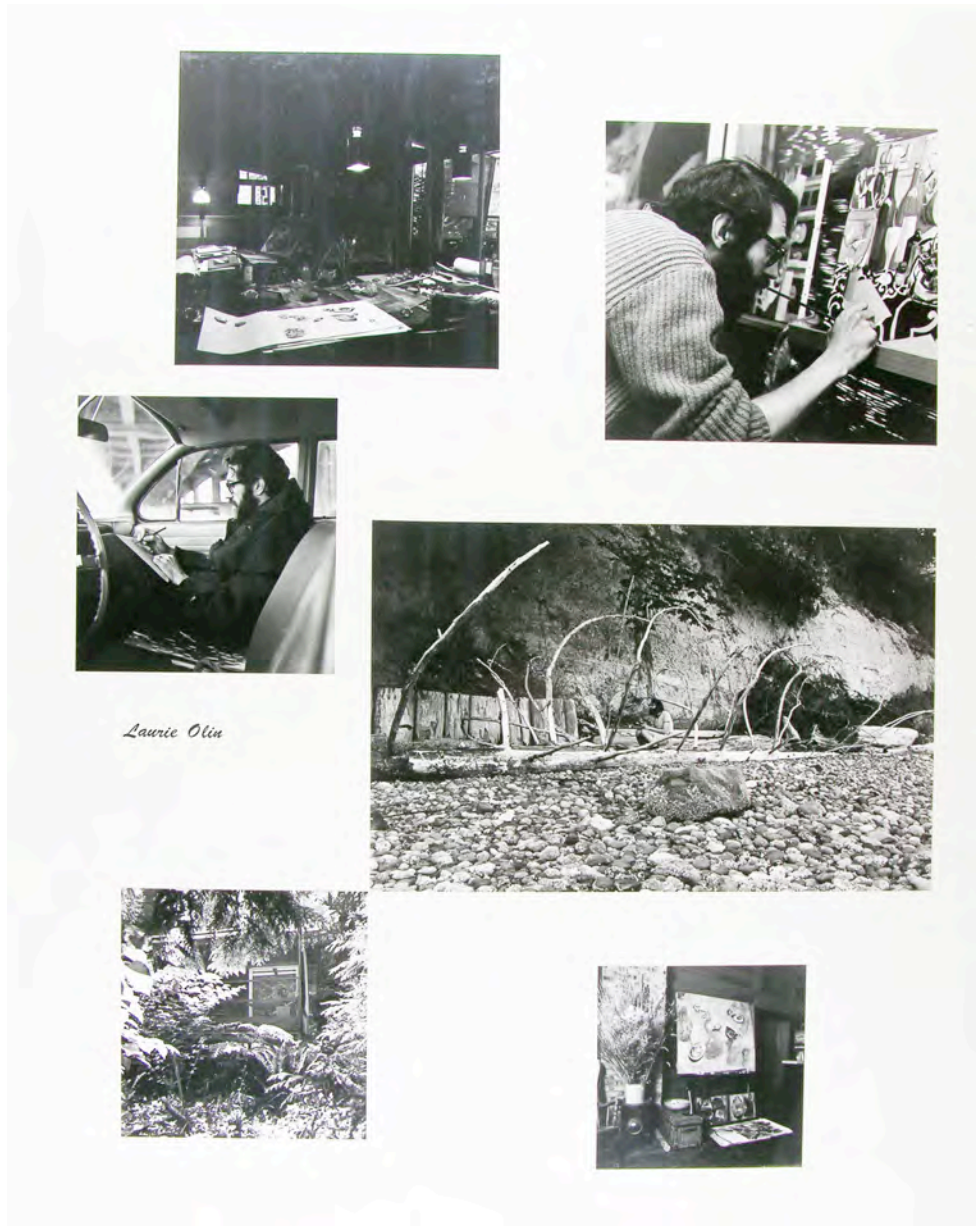
Laurie Olin
Untitled, Waterfall, 1970
Watercolor, 52" x 36"



Laurie Olin
Untitled, Waterfall, 1970
Watercolor, 52" x 36"

Commissioned by Ibsen Nelson, Architect for Bond and Miller Halls, 1970
Collection of Western Washington University
© Laurie Olin

In a few, simple brushstrokes, Olin's formalism captures the essential qualities of cascading water — it's verticality, the sense of rushing, foaming water and an undefined glimpse of red rocks underneath.



Laurie Olin

Mary Randlett (b. 1924)

Black and white photographs

© University of Washington Libraries, Special Collections, Mary Randlett Collection.

In the 1960s, Randlett photographed Seattle architects Ibsen Nelsen, Victor Steinbrueck and Laurie Olin and their works as part of the *Action: Better City* program organized by the Seattle chapter of the American Institute of Architects.⁴³

⁴³ Deloris Tarzan Ament, "Mary Randlett: Landscape as Poetry," in *Iridescent Light: the Emergence of Northwest Art* (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 2002). The

In her photographs, Olin is depicted as he sketches or paints. He is also photographed immersed in nature, in keeping with his attachment to the natural environment. As Olin's career developed in landscape architecture, his goal was to harmoniously integrate man made structures and nature.

Laurie Olin is professor of Landscape Architecture and Regional Planning at the University of Pennsylvania and former Chairman of the Department of Landscape Architecture at Harvard University.⁴⁴ Olin is also a founding partner of the firm now known as Olin Partnership⁴⁵ and has individually published or co-authored numerous texts on the history and theory of landscape architecture.⁴⁶ Olin's design projects include the National Gallery of Art Sculpture Garden in Washington, D.C.; the Columbus Circle in Manhattan, the J. Paul Getty Center in Los Angeles, California. Olin's redesign of the Washington Monument grounds received the 2008 Design Honor Award from the American Society of Landscape Architects.

establishment of *City: Better Action* is recounted in the American Institute of Architects of Seattle, http://www.aiaseattle.org/archive_aiaseattlememories_bassetti93.htm (accessed July 29, 2009.)

⁴⁴ http://www.design.upenn.edu/people/olin_laurie-d

⁴⁵ <http://www.theolinstudio.com/#/intro>

⁴⁶ His publications include *Across the Open Field: Essays Drawn on the English Landscape*. (University of Pennsylvania Press; 1999), *Transforming the Common Place: Selections from Laurie Olin's Sketchbooks* (Princeton Architectural Press; 1997); *Fertilizers* (co-authored with Peter Eisenman; ICA Philadelphia, 2007); *Placemaking* (co-authored with Dennis C. McGlade, Robert J. Bedell, Lucinda R. Sanders, Susan K. Weiler, David A. Rubin ;The Monacelli Press, 2008); *La Foce. A Garden and Landscape in Tuscany* (co-authored with B. Origo, M. Livingston and J. Dixon Hunt; University of Pennsylvania Press; 2001.)

Victor Steinbrueck (1911-1985)

In 1969, Ibsen Nelsen, the architect who designed Bond and Miller Halls for Western Washington University (at that time called Western Washington State College) commissioned Victor Steinbrueck to produce several artworks for capital projects within the Arts Program. Steinbrueck created a series of ink drawings depicting houses in Bellingham and a barn in Skagit Valley. In a letter to Harold Goltz, then Director of the Office of Campus Planning, Steinbrueck explained how historically and architecturally valuable these buildings were and how important it was to document them as part of Bellingham's history.⁴⁷

My intention as an artist (and an architect) was to convey my feelings regarding the quality of two important kinds of architecture prevalent and characteristic of the Bellingham area.

The many Victorian style houses still extant are a significant reminder of the heyday — the age of elegance of Bellingham and Fairhaven. Their flamboyant vitality says much about the life style of the people and the community during the last decade of the Nineteen Century, as well as adding spice and interest to the present townscape. May they be well preserved and cared for and lived in by their owners as a very special and irreplaceable civic heritage.

The noble and magnificent barns of nearby Skagit Flats (or Valley) are expressive of the honesty and directness of the good people who built them. Constructed of wood and well conceived to use the material appropriately, and to serve the farming or dairying use, as well as to suit the climate, these fine structures are part of the best architecture that America has produced. Of course they are architecturally anonymous. They stand well as inspiration to architects and all who care for this land.

(from Victor Steinbrueck's letter to Harold Goltz, dated 31 March, 1970 and received by the Office of Campus Planning on April 1st, 1970)

His pen and ink sketches demonstrate interesting visual perspectives. Steinbrueck also emphasized particular architectural details by incorporating them into the backdrop of the house drawings.

⁴⁷ Letter dated 31 March, 1970 and received by the Office of Campus Planning on April 1st, 1970. The letter is presently in the Western Gallery Collection.

ARCHITECT
VICTOR STEINBRUECK
FELLOW AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS
SEATTLE WASHINGTON

31 March 1970

My intentions as an artist (and an architect) upon being commissioned for art work to be placed in the excellent Western Washington State College buildings designed by the architectural firm of Ibsen Nelson and Associates was to convey my feelings regarding the quality of two important kinds of architecture prevalent and characteristic of the Bellingham area.

The many Victorian style houses still extant are a significant reminder of the heyday - the age of elegance of Bellingham and Fairhaven. Their flamboyant vitality says much about the life style of the people and of the community during the last decades of the Nineteenth Century, as well as adding spice and interest to the present townscape. May they be well preserved and cared for and lived in by their owners as a very special and irreplaceable civic heritage.

ARCHITECT
VICTOR STEINBRUECK
FELLOW AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS
SEATTLE WASHINGTON

The noble and magnificent barns of nearby Skagit Flats (or Valley) are expressive of the honesty and directness of the good people who built them. Constructed of wood and well conceived to use the material appropriately, and to serve the farming or logging use, as well as to suit the climate, these fine structures are part of the best architecture that America has produced. Of course they are architecturally anonymous. They stand well as inspiration to architects and all who care for this land.

Victor Steinbrueck

Part of Victor Steinbrueck's letter to Harold Goltz, dated March 31st, 1970, and received by the Office of Campus Planning on April 1st, 1970.



Victor Steinbrueck
2820 Eldridge Avenue, 1970
Pen and Ink, 1' 4" x 1'



Victor Steinbrueck
1015 16th Street, 1970
Pen and Ink, 1' 3" x 1'

Commissioned by Ibsen Nelson, Architect for Bond and Miller Halls, 1970
Collection of Western Washington University.
© Victor Steinbrueck



Victor Steinbrueck
1402 F Street, 1970
Pen and Ink, 1' 3" x 1'



Victor Steinbrueck
1001 16th Street, 1970
Pen and Ink, 1' 1" x 1' 1"

Commissioned by Ibsen Nelson, Architect for Bond and Miller Halls, 1970
Collection of Western Washington University.
© Victor Steinbrueck



Victor Steinbrueck
2230 Henry Street, 1970
Pen and Ink, 1' 3" x 1' 5"



Victor Steinbrueck
1602 J Street, 1970
Pen and Ink, 1' 3" x 1'

Commissioned by Ibsen Nelson, Architect for Bond and Miller Halls, 1970
Collection of Western Washington University.
© Victor Steinbrueck



Victor Steinbrueck

2120 Utter Street, 1970

Pen and Ink, 1' 3" x 1'

Commissioned by Ibsen Nelson, Architect for Bond and Miller Halls, 1970

Collection of Western Washington University.

© Victor Steinbrueck



Victor Steinbrueck

Barn in Skagit Flats, 1970

Pen and Ink, 10.2" x 1' 6"

Commissioned by Ibsen Nelson, Architect for Bond and Miller Halls, 1970

Collection of Western Washington University.

© Victor Steinbrueck

In a short biography sent to Harold Goltz, Steinbrueck defines himself as “citizen advocate of environmental quality.”⁴⁸ Indeed, Steinbrueck, who was Professor of Architecture at the University of Washington (he joined the University of Washington faculty in 1946 and retired in 1976)⁴⁹ is remembered for his dedication to historic preservation. For example, Steinbrueck’s urban activism was instrumental in saving Seattle’s *Pike Market* area as an historic district and preserving the culture of the market within the City center.

As a civic architect, he built spaces that would nurture a healthy integration between people and their environment. Among his works in Seattle, it is worth remembering *Market Park* (renamed *Victor Steinbrueck Park* after his death in 1985) that he co-designed with Richard Haag, the *Exhibition Pavilion* for the 1962 Seattle World's Fair, and the now iconic *Space Needle*, symbol of the Fair, co-designed with John Graham and Company.⁵⁰

Steinbrueck befriended many protagonists of the Northwest artistic and cultural life, including Mark Tobey, Morris Graves and Mary Randlett. Randlett photographed Steinbrueck as he sketched in the city streets. Steinbrueck included a number of these sketches in his books *Seattle Cityscape* (1962), *Seattle Cityscape II* (1973) and *Market Sketchbook* (1968).

⁴⁸ Letter dated 31 March, 1970 and received by the Office of Campus Planning on April 1st, 1970. The letter is presently in the Western Gallery Collection.

⁴⁹ Illman L. Deborah. University of Washington Showcase. “Victor Steinbrueck,” <http://www.washington.edu/research/showcase/1946a.html> (accessed August 4, 2009.) HistoryLink.org “*Victor Steinbrueck: Life and Ideas*: Essay 2126 http://www.historylink.org/index.cfm?DisplayPage=output.cfm&file_id=2126 (accessed August 4, 2009.)

⁵⁰ HistoryLink.org, “Space Needle (Seattle)” Essay 1424 http://www.historylink.org/index.cfm?DisplayPage=output.cfm&File_Id=1424 (accessed August 4, 2009.)



Victor Steinbrueck



Mary Randlett (b. 1924)

Black and white photographs

© University of Washington Libraries, Special Collections, Mary Randlett Collection.

R. Allen Jensen (b. 1935)

Allen Jensen was a member of the faculty of the Department of Art at Western Washington University from 1965 to his retirement in 1997. Artist Harold Hollingsworth, one of Jensen's students at Western at the end of the 1980s, remembers him as an inspiring teacher, always counter-current and questioning the commonplace,

R. Allen Jensen's theater of art making was one of negation: negation of the avant-gardist concept of originality, negation of logic and reason, negation of the desire to assign uniform cultural meanings to diverse phenomena. His was the craft of making art that would become a record of a performance, mixed with very autobiographical references, and very universal ideas.

(Harold Hollingsworth, <http://haroldhollingsworth.blogspot.com/2006/07/r-allen-jensen.html>, 7/31/2006)⁵¹

Jensen's artistic expression combines painting, drawing, assemblage and collages reminiscent of Robert Rauschenberg, yet expanding in multiple directions. In the Western Gallery Collection, *Four Figures Landscape* is an expressionist work in charcoal. The broad, sweeping charcoal lines create nudes that emerge as negative, static shapes and have lost their link with the sculpted, 3-dimensional form.

⁵¹ Harold Hollingsworth, "R. Allen Jensen," 7/31/2006
<http://haroldhollingsworth.blogspot.com/2006/07/r-allen-jensen.html> (accessed August 7, 2009)



Allen R. Jensen
Four Figures Landscape, 1965
Charcoal, 31 x 21”
Collection Western Gallery

Mary Randlett photographed the young Jensen at work in his studio. A more recent documentation of Jensen’s studio (“R. Allen Jensen at his Studio” <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bsV37IbQ-xo&feature=related>),⁵² is an imaginative phantasmagoria and a reflection of Jensen’s eclecticism.

Jensen’s eclectic character inspired him to present his works under several *aliases*. For example, in 2008 on the occasion of International Land Mine Awareness Day, Jensen

⁵² “R Allen Jensen at his Studio” <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bsV37IbQ-xo&feature=related> (accessed August 7, 2009).

prepared a series of diverse artworks related to the land mine issue from the perspective of six *alter egos* that expressed different stylistic and thematic qualities. The exhibition “Land Mines for Sale” at the Smith & Vallee Gallery in Edison, WA, conflated Jensen’s civic commitment, his artistic multiplicity and a critique of the concept of the artist’s uniqueness.⁵³



R. Allen Jensen

Mary Randlett (b. 1924)

Black and white photographs

© University of Washington Libraries, Special Collections, Mary Randlett Collection.

⁵³ Amy Kepferle, “Sharing Spaces. Of Mines and Monikers,” *Cascadia Weekly*, www.cascadiaweekly.com/pdfs/issues/200814.pdf April 4—20, 2008 (accessed August 8, 2009).

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The Northwest Group

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