

MoNA

Museum of Northwest Art

At the Seam: *The Museum of Northwest Art's Permanent Collection*



Morris Graves, *Spirit Bird*, 1950, Tempera on paper, 18" x 25.25"

February 3, 2024 - January 12, 2025

Seams as Metaphors



Seam: (*noun*)

1. A line along which two pieces of fabric are sewn together in a garment or other article
Synonyms: *Join, closure, suture, joint*
2. An underground layer of resources, like ore or coal
Synonyms: *Layer, stratum, vein, deposit*

A museum's collection can be thought of as a patchwork quilt, a collection of pieces from individuals with shared location, history, or culture. In constructing a quilt, a pattern is followed to create a finished design. Similarly, museum collections follow a pattern of acquisition to construct the collection. By looking at the history of the Museum of Northwest Art, we can see the collection patterns and whose works have been included and excluded from our metaphorical quilt.

At the Seam: The Museum of Northwest Art's Permanent Collection

represents a small number of art pieces in the permanent collection. Like a seam of precious metal under the earth, the collection represents the collective efforts of artists, staff, donors, and community members to preserve and share art with the public.



Dan Friday, *Sxwo'le Anchor*, no date, Blown glass, 11" x 11" x 5.75"

About the Museum of Northwest Art's Permanent Collection

Since its founding in 1981, the Museum of Northwest Art has collected art created by artists of the Northwest region. MoNA's permanent collection now includes over 2,400 artworks, ranging across all media and spanning from the early 20th century to the present. At the core of the permanent collection is the seminal work of the Northwest School 'big four': Guy Anderson, Kenneth Callahan, Morris Graves, and Mark Tobey. Between 1930-1950's the 'big four' created works of lyrical beauty inspired by the landscape and unique quality of the light of the Skagit Valley and influenced by Asian aesthetics, surrealism, cubism, and abstract expressionism.



George Tsutakawa, *Yellow Sun*, no date, Sumi ink on Mulberry and Gansai papers, 25.5" x 29"

Following in the footsteps of the 'the big four,' more than twenty artists are credited with being affiliated with the Northwest school. Some studied under them, others were encouraged by them but not taught, while some looked at the 'big four' for inspiration without having any form of contact. The Museum of Northwest Art's Permanent Collection includes the work of the following Northwest School artists: Doris Totten Chase, William Cumming, Richard Gilkey, Paul Horiuchi, Clayton James, William Ivey, Helmi Juvonen, Leo Kenney, John Franklin Koenig, Philip McCracken, Neil Meitzler, Carl Morris, Hilda Morris, Ambrose Patterson, Jay Steensma, George Tsutakawa, Windsor Utley, James W. Washington Jr. and Wesley Wehr.

In the 1990's and early 2000's, the Museum of Northwest Art expanded its collecting priorities beyond the Northwest School to strategically reflect a broader swath of artistic sensibilities—equally defining the Northwest art scene. More recently, the past 15 years have seen the Museum's collecting priorities shaped by numerous new factors, from world events to our evolving cultural and social values due to the accelerating interconnectedness between the regional art scenes and global realities. We have engaged deeply with contemporary art, with an eye to making the permanent collection more broadly representative of the wealth of narratives in the region, encompassing diverse communities and lived experiences, such as Black, Latino, Asian American, Indigenous and LGBTQ+ artists. However, there is work to be done in building a collection capable of instilling a sense of belonging in every visitor that walks into the galleries.

The Museum of Northwest Art's permanent collection is positioned at the seam between past and present, between co-existing cultural areas, and between the different artistic sensibilities and values that art embodies over time. ***At the Seam: The Museum of Northwest Art's Permanent Collection*** is an ongoing engagement with the collection as the place of contact for the many artistic identities of the region. The exhibition asks to look not only at the individual works but also at the 'seams,' where works representing different artistic trends and cultural identities come in touch with each other. When they come in contact, these works tell stories of coexistence, contrast, and difference within the social fabric of the Northwest region, past and present.

Art Talk!

Take a closer look at the pieces on display in *At the Seam: The Museum of Northwest Art's Permanent Collection*. Some pieces feature forms and landscapes, others are highly abstracted - emphasizing color, line, movement, shape and pattern. Use the discussion prompts to talk about the art on display.



Spencer Moseley, *Viola's Mandolin*, 1958, Oil on canvas, 40" x 40"

How do these artworks speak to each other?

How do their similarities and differences inject energy into the museum space?

Why do you think these particular pieces are displayed next to each other?

Does the display arrangement highlight anything more about each piece?



Lucinda Parker, *Starburst*, no date, Mixed media on several canvases structured together, 58" x 77"

The Building Blocks of Art

Look at this list of art elements and principles of design. These concepts help us understand how artists create art. Can you see any of these art building blocks within the pieces on display?

Line: a mark that moves from one place to another



Shape: when a line joins to enclose an area



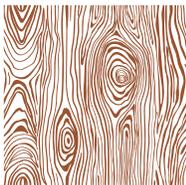
Form: 3-D representation of a shape



Color & Value: value is the relative lightness or darkness of a color



Texture: the simulated or actual look or feel of a surface.



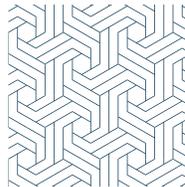
Movement: repetition of lines or shapes can create a sense of movement or rhythm



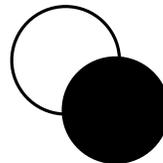
Space: our perception of the depth or distance between objects in a piece



Pattern: a repeating element within a piece



Contrast: differences within the art elements or themes that draw the eye



Emphasis: where your eye is drawn to in a piece. Size, color, contrast, line, detail, shape can all help provide emphasis



Visual Thinking Strategies

Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS) is a research-based teaching method that promotes aesthetic development including critical thinking and communication skills. Here at MoNA, we use VTS to engage students and general visitors with art encouraging them to observe closely, think critically and discuss respectfully. VTS teaches participants to take the time to observe closely, describe what they see in detail and provide evidence for their observations.

To facilitate a VTS discussion, you first encourage viewers to take a quiet moment to observe the work you are going to explore. Then you ask the following questions and paraphrase the responses without adding any of your own judgements.

What's going on in this picture?
What do you see that makes you say...?
What more can you find?

These three VTS questions ask everyone to focus, become reflective, and to question - the basis for critical thinking. Answering the questions is engaging and fun because no one is going to be wrong.

For more information about
Visual Thinking Strategies,
visit www.vtshome.org
or scan this QR code!



Support for education programs is made possible by our members and in part by:



Upcoming Events & Workshops

FEBRUARY

- 03** *Opening Events*
- 24** *Oil Painting Techniques w/ Claire Johnson*

MARCH

- 02** *Paint Yo! Dreams: Tree of Life Workshop w/ Safiuchi*
- 09** *Solarize Skagit Collaborative Drawing Event: Surrealist Soil and Luminous Leaves*
- 20** *MoNA Book Club*
- 23** *Roots of Baile Folklórico*



APRIL

- 04-05** *Spring Break Art Day Camp!*
- 06** *Roots Poetry Symposium*
- 20** *Carbon Flows: A Collaborative Talk with Artist Suze Woolf & Scientist Dave Peterson*
- 27** *MOVING MEMORIES Workshop & EL SUEÑO Dance Film Screening*

MAY

- 04** *Draw The Forest: Preliminary Drawing Fundamentals for Plein Air Painting w/ Trish Harding*
Art in the Forest Walk with Friends of the Anacortes Community Forest Lands
- 11** *My Adult & Me Mixed Media Class w/ Rachel Simpson*
Don't forget to look up!: Fantastic fungi and where to find them w/ Dr. Korena Mafune



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