

W E S T E R N • G A L L E R Y

Western Washington University

ALFRED HARRIS

MIKE HASCALL

JODY ISAACSON

May 7 - June 9, 1990

Alfred Harris, Mike Hascall and Jody Isaacson

As artists of the '90s, Alfred Harris, Mike Hascall and Jody Isaacson have inherited the vast repertory of nature — like the activities of the human figure — as a primary source. However, they are not scenic or landscape artists in the traditional sense. For example, in their art the viewer does not obtain any panoramic view of Seattle or the Northwest. Informed by 20th-century art, they employ fragments of nature. Ironically, the Northwest as a geographical place is, perhaps, more important now than it has ever been. The western corridor often has been characterized as a relatively low-lying urban environment situated among dense vegetation, expanses of water, suffused light, and mountain ranges. Today, in order to evoke their specific sense of place in a post-modern western society, these three artists work with an overlay of space and images from nature and culture.



With the exception of the figure on the motorcycle in Alfred Harris' painting *I Rode My Motorcycle* (1987), human presence in these three artists' works is not literal. Characteristically, the figure in Harris' painting is only a shadow soon to evaporate; he rides in an open-ended water-sky environment with buildings. Elsewhere in this work, the images of truck and whale/submarine seem to collide at a horizon line of darkness and light. In this selection of paintings from 1987 to 1989, Harris has transformed the slight traces of the rider into bulbous shapes reminiscent of internal organs. The towers and rooms of citadel and church change into bridged structures, pits and geodesic domes. Motorized images become floating bulbs and phantom blimps. Playing with the perceptual dichotomy of inside/outside, Harris uses the devices of diagrammed shapes, fluid brushstrokes, transparency, underpainting, variations of light, and a watery atmosphere to evoke the layers of the subconscious, the harboring of secrets, and a psychological construction of himself and habitat.

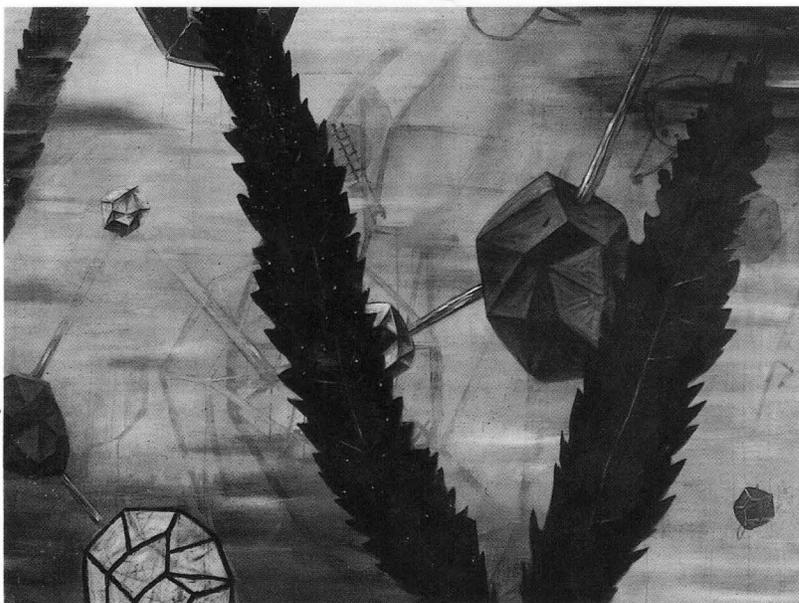
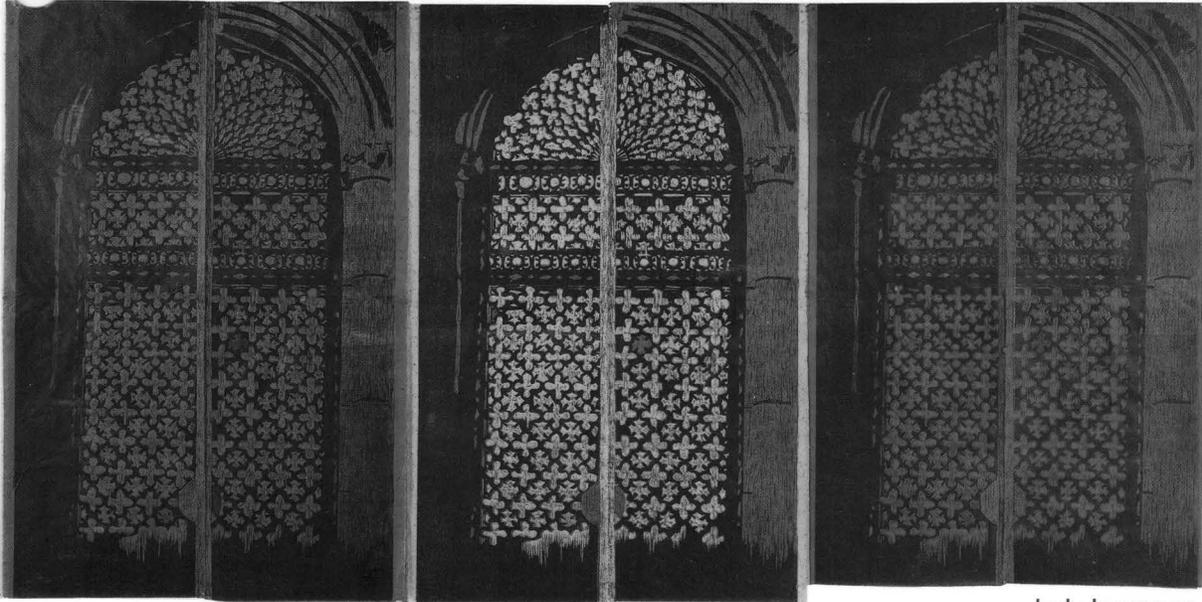


photo credit: Arthur S. Aubry

Alfred Harris
Arena, 1989

photo credit: Rod del Pozo



Jody Isaacson
Gates, 1990

Whereas Harris has worked with both a pocket of space with curtain and a deep drifting space, Mike Hascall has chosen to totally screen his images. Through the staging and mirroring of lines extracted from nature and lines invented by the artist, through a grid format, and through the actual simulation of mesh and chain link fences, traces of nature, objects from daily life, and industrial patterns appear. For example, in *Lines from the Real World* (1988), banks of clouds, trees and mountain ranges interlock with sprinkler system, railroad tracks, and some type of industrial plate with a grid of rivets. These interchanging surfaces — mountain and riveted plate — and lines — shadowed edge of clouds and threading marks — build a shimmering sieve in another painting, *Lines with Chain Link* (1989). Here the grains or dots in the earth also become layers of trees, feathery branches and loose brushwork; they soon enlarge into the links of the fence. The ragged edges and weave of the cloth or spread applied to the canvas open to form tangled wire, distant swirls of smoke and shadows of a tall tree. In Hascall's paintings nature may seem to be a device to hold together only formal concerns of diverse materials, textures and space. However, his lines of clouds, trees, rocks, chain link fences, water pipes, tracks, smoke, corrugated aluminum, drapery folds and suitcases suggest an underlying concern with real and imaginary boundaries in nature and culture.



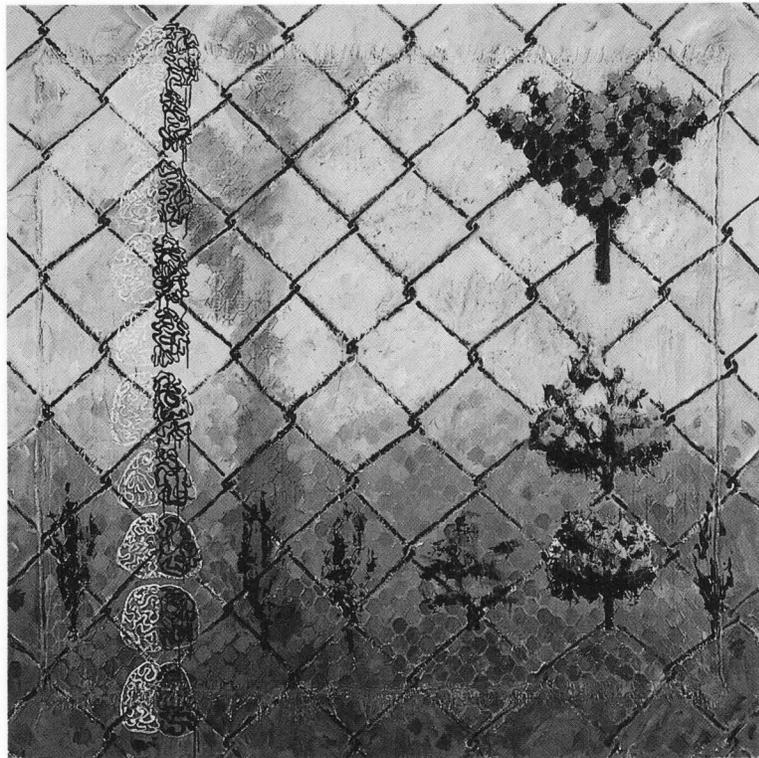
Jody Isaacson's medium is printmaking, but she, as others, has given it a status and scale equal to painting. During the eighties there was a renewed interest in the woodcut associated with the German Expressionists. Particularly in her woodcut image of the tree (*Protection, 1989*), Isaacson renews our memory of Franz Marc's abstract work, *The Trees Show Their Rings, the Animals Their Veins* (1913; best known as *The Fate of the Animals*). Whereas Marc, conditioned by World War I, had an apocalyptic message for the German people, Isaacson celebrates the tree as part of the ecological system. In this series of fourteen panels, she heightens for the viewer the organic nature of the tree by interweaving sections of trunk and

limbs with bark patterns and rings. Likewise in *Woodgrain* (1989), she emphasizes the majestic scale of the tree by starting with its smaller patterns. By exhibiting the actual carved wood panels along with the reduction prints, she focuses on both her own process and the tree's fibrous material of pulp. Underlying her celebration is a comment on the collision of nature and the daily existence of man in the Northwest. In her most recent work, Isaacson is similar to Hascall in her concern for layering of materials and images. For example, in *Bloedel Reserve, Reflection Pond* (1990), she utilizes the inherent striped lines of her paper to highlight the light in the trees, the reflections in the pool, and the manmade walls. In her series of *Gates* (1990), Isaacson does not represent a scene from nature but rather refers to the secondhand nature of the abstracted leaf motif in the iron gate. She further compounds the issue when she superimposes the image of the gate over the imprint of the reflective pool in the reserve.



If this is, in fact, the decade of the environment, then, these artists are mature in addressing this issue. However, rather than portraying the desecration of the natural environment or the decline of a heavily industrialized center, they have suggested the threat of loss of connectivity and blurring of boundaries. Without hype, they have subtly stated the confusion between man's conquering of nature for personal gain and his struggling to be compatible within its framework.

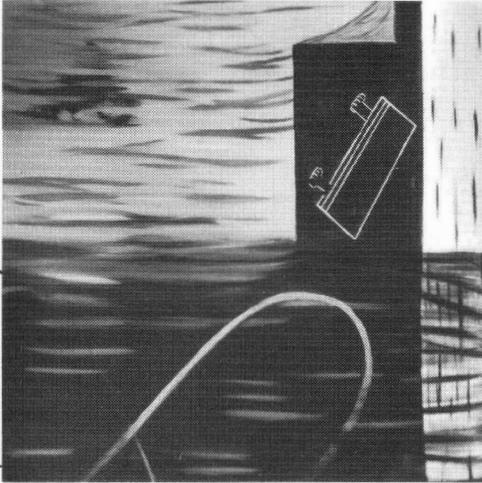
Sarah Clark-Langager, Director



Mike Hascall
Lines with Chain Link, 1989

photo credit: Roger Schreiber

photo credit: Arthur S. Aubry



Alfred Harris
I Rode My Motorcycle, 1987

Works in Exhibition

Alfred Harris

I Rode My Motorcycle, 1987

oil on canvas, 48x48"

Citadel, 1987

oil on canvas, 48x72"

Arena, 1989

acrylic on canvas, 72x96"

Boil, 1989

oil on paper, 56x82"

Curtis Bay, 1989

acrylic on canvas, 54x54"

Harbor, 1989

oil on paper, 52x81"

Pit, 1989

oil on canvas, 60x60"

Pocket, 1989

acrylic on canvas, 60x60"

Samy, 1989

acrylic on canvas, 48x88"

All works in the exhibition are courtesy of the artist and Cliff Michel Gallery, Seattle.

Mike Hascall

Lines from the Real World, 1988

acrylic, feathers, walnut shell, charcoal on polypropylene fabric, 120x168"

Arrangement with Lines and Tree, 1989

acrylic and feathers on canvas, 70x70"

Line of Flight, 1989

acrylic and lace on canvas, 70x70"

Lines in Space, 1989

mixed media, 70x70"

Lines with Chain Link, 1989

mixed media, 70x70"

Reptile, 1989

acrylic and fiberglass on canvas, 70x70"

Various Lines, 1989

mixed media, 70x70"

Two Lines, One Real, One Imaginary, 1990

oil and wax on linen, 36" diameter

All works in the exhibition are courtesy of the artist and the Linda Farris Gallery, Seattle.

Jody Isaacson

Protection, 1989

reduction woodcut on paper, 14 prints, each 48x24"

Woodgrain, 1989

ink on 17 carved wood panels, each 11-1/4x48"

Gates, 1990

reduction woodcut on paper, 3 sets, each 76x25-1/2"

Bloedel Reserve, Reflection Pond, 1990

reduction woodcut on paper, 76x48"

Bloedel Reserve, Reflection Pond and Gate, 1990

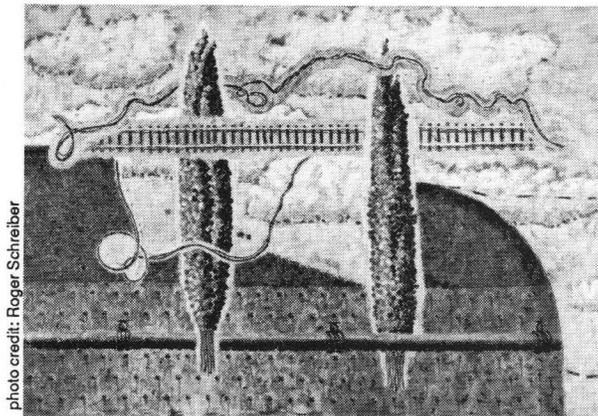
reduction woodcut on paper, 76x48"

All works in the exhibition are courtesy of the artist and the Greg Kucera Gallery, Seattle.

photo credit: Rob Vinnege



Jody Isaacson
Woodgrain, 1989



Mike Hascall
Lines from the Real World

Alfred Harris

Harris was born in 1953 in Stuttgart, Germany. In 1975 he received his B.F.A. from the Maryland Institute, College of Arts, Baltimore. During the '80s he has had one-person exhibitions in Seattle at the Cliff Michel Gallery (1990, 1989, 1988) and The Virginia Inn (1986). In 1985 he created a window installation for 911, Contemporary Arts Center, Seattle. Since 1983 he has exhibited his paintings, drawings and prints in group exhibitions in major cities of the Northwest. He has been a recipient of a residency at Centrum Foundation, Port Townsend (1988), the Betty Bowen Merit Award, Seattle Art Museum (1988), and the Djerassi Foundation Fellowship, Woodside, California (1989). His 1989 exhibition at the Cliff Michel Gallery was reviewed in *Artforum* (New York, February 1990). Harris lives in Seattle.

Mike Hascall

Hascall was born in 1951 in Defiance, Ohio. In 1973 he received his B.A. from Yale University, New Haven. During the '80s he has had one-person exhibitions in Seattle at the Linda Farris Gallery (1989, 1988, 1986), Donnally-Hayes Gallery (1984), Roscoe-Louie Gallery (1982, 1980), and Glover-Hayes Gallery (1981). In 1989 he created three new works for the Pacific Northwest Ballet Company, Seattle. Since 1982 he has exhibited his paintings, prints and drawings in group exhibitions in major cities in the Northwest, Reno, and New York. He has been the recipient of awards from the King County Arts Commission (1988), Centrum Foundation, Port Townsend (1987), and 200+1 Club, Seattle (1986). His work has been reviewed by Bill Berkson and Matthew Kangas for *Art in America* (September 1986; October 1982) and consistently by critics for Seattle area newspapers. Hascall lives in Seattle.

Jody Isaacson

Isaacson was born in 1954 in Seattle. In 1981 she received her B.F.A. from the University of Wisconsin, River Falls and in 1983 her M.F.A. from the California College of Arts and Crafts, Oakland. During the '80s she has had one-person exhibitions at The Art Gym, Marylhurst College, Marylhurst, Oregon (1989), and in Seattle at the Greg Kucera Gallery (1989, 1986, 1984), Public Art Space of Safeco (1987), and Cunningham Gallery, University of Washington (1985). Since 1980 she has exhibited her work in group exhibitions in major cities of the Northwest, River Falls, Long Beach, Hilo, New Haven, Reno and Missoula. She has been the recipient of awards from Art Matters, Inc., New York (1989); Centrum Foundation, Port Townsend (1989, 1986); Ucross Foundation, Ucross, Wyoming (1988); and Washington State Arts Commission (1986). Isaacson's recent one-person exhibition was reviewed in both the *Weekly* (September 20) and *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* (September 25).



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