



The Liberian mask, We, also called the Guere Mask, will be on display during Portland State University's "African Art from Portland Collections" exhibit, May 10 to June 14 in the Littman Gallery. (Photo: Jerry Taylor)

African art at PSU tribute

by Nathaniel Scott

Portland State University (PSU) and the Portland Art Museum will pay special tribute to African art with an African art symposium and exhibition May 10 and 11.

The free symposium: "Contexts of African Art: Environment and Society," will be held in the art museum's Berg Swann Auditorium. It begins Friday, May 10 and concludes Saturday, May 11. In addition, the museum will have African art objects on display both days.

The exhibition: "African Art from Portland Collections," May 10 - June 14, will be in PSU's Littman Gallery, located on the second floor of Smith Memorial Center. To help celebrate the exhibition's opening, Friday, May 10, Obo Ady will perform and refreshments will be served between 5 and 8 p.m. PSU's Black Studies professor, Candice Goucher, is guest curator for the exhibition.

The art pieces: jewelry, textiles, sculpture, masks, baskets, bronze castings and other pieces are "functional, everyday items and items of ceremonial and ritual importance," Goucher said. The art museum's contribution will be pieces from the Gebauer and the Gladys Lawther collections. The Gebauer collection comes from the Cameroons in West Africa and the Gladys Lawther col-

lection stems from East Africa. Goucher said the Gebauer collection is probably the "finest collection" of Cameroon art in the U.S. and one of the finest in the world.

In addition to the museum's pieces, collectors, both private and public, are contributing objects for the exhibit, Goucher said.

"The exhibition is a kind of window of African experience and it reflects politics, economics, and the social and intellectual life of African society," Goucher said. "This exhibition is an opportunity for Portlanders to increase their awareness and understanding about African culture and African history."

"You can look not only at the kinds of tragedies — the apartheid regime in South Africa and the famine in Ethiopia — destroying individual lives, but also tragedies that destroy the culture and cultural traditions of a major part of the world," she said.

The African art exhibition will be complimented by a host of PSU events, including: Joyce Carol Thomas' prose and poetry readings on May 16 - 17; the African developmental conference; and the Spring Festival of Cultural Events, May 17; and the African Cultural Night, May 24.

All events except the African Cultural Night are free and open to the general public.

American Playhouse: Tale of half-Black orphan

Although it was written more than 30 years ago, Kurt Vonnegut Jr.'s short story, "D.P.," which deals with the offspring of American G.I.s and German women in post-World War II Germany, remains as pertinent today as when it was first published in 1950.

Following the Second World War, cities, towns and villages all across Germany were filled with young children without fathers and many without homes. It is a problem comparable to the one currently being experienced in Southeast Asia where thousands of children, sons and daughters of American G.I.s and Vietnamese women, have been made outcasts of society by the Communist regime which currently rules Vietnam.

"Displaced Person," Fred Barron's hour-long adaptation of Vonnegut's 1950 short story, will be televised on American Playhouse Monday, May 6, at 9:00 p.m., ET, over the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS). The story, which first appeared in the volume, *Welcome to the Monkey House* (Dell) in 1950, is a heartwarming drama about a young half-Black, half-German homeless boy, somewhere in post-war Germany, who believes that a Black Army sergeant is his father.

The boy, portrayed by Julius Gordon, lives in a makeshift orphanage run by a nun, Sister Agnes, played by Rosemary Leach. His chief goal in life is to find his roots by locating his father whom, he has been told, was a Black American G.I.

One day when a group of American soldiers come into the area, the young boy sees a Black sergeant (Stan Shaw), the first Black man he has ever laid eyes on. He immediately believes that this man must be his father.

The sergeant is shocked when he is approached by this adorable young

Black boy speaking German and calling him "papa." It is the first time that he has been aware of the problem: children left homeless by the departure of their American G.I. fathers.

That problem, first written about by Vonnegut in 1950, still exists in Germany and is responsible, in part, for the continuing anti-Black sentiments that exist in Germany today, according to a story which appeared in the March 1983 issue of *Newsweek*. It is estimated that since World War II, that story said, more than 10,000 "besatzungs-kinder" (occupation children) have been born to Germany mothers and Black American fathers.

"This situation is a universal one which, I am sure, has existed in this world ever since peoples began warring with each other," says Alan Bridges, who directed "Displaced Person" for American Playhouse.

"It is a natural film subject when you consider what a great instrument the camera is for seeking out people's communion with themselves," he notes. "There is no conflict in 'Displaced Person' — simply a group of people looking for their identity."

According to the director, "It is a very basic story about the ownership of life, about orphans. It's not about their misery or sadness, but about young people left alone in a world and how they communicate, particularly one young boy who thinks he has found his roots and his 'raison d'etre.' However, he, with his disarming innocence, represents the rest of us in a microcosm."

"This is a story that is being lived right now in different parts of the world — southeast Asia, the middle-east, Afghanistan, Poland—wherever there is an occupation Army. It's a story that is as pertinent today as it was in Biblical times, no doubt."



Stan Shaw, Julius Gordon and Rosemary Leach in a scene from an upcoming American Playhouse television production.



JOAN MORRIS (Photo: Richard J. Brown)

Jamaican novelist recounts British society prejudice

by Nathaniel Scott

*Lawd! God! she's here.
A voice.
A song bird beating her wings against an unjust cage.
A sparkle.
A ray.
A storyteller singing her song.
She is...
Joan Morris.*

Morris is from Jamaica. She came to Portland (and America) from England. She brought the scars of British societies' racial prejudice with her. And beneath those scars are scars: other scars that stem from "the struggle for the liberation of the people; Jamaica people," she said, as she introduced her first fiction novel, *The Unbelonging*.

The novel will be released (in America) this May. Doubleday will publish it in America and the Women's Press is publishing it in England. It is the story of a West Indian woman who didn't grow up. She remains an 11-year-old child. Consequently she doesn't see either the Jamaican or British society in their true light; the light that illuminates suppression and bigotry.

Morris exudes pride; Black Jamaican pride. She emphatically denies that Blacks are inferior. And in 26 years of living, she has faced a lifetime of grief.

Born in Hopewell St. Mary, Jamaica, she studied political communication in Brighton, England, and she found through self-experience that "West Indians are treated shabbily by British society." Moreover, she said, "West Indians are treated as if they

are third class citizens in British society."

The novel, *The Unbelonging*, is not Morris' first attempt at portraying the problems West Indians face when they attempt to assimilate into British society.

While studying for her master's degree, she published, under an assumed name, a series of papers exposing "the closed aspect of British society." She said she didn't use her name because the things she wrote about were "sensitive" things.

For instance, Morris stated, up until the late 60s, 70 percent of all West Indian children who went to Britain ended up in "off-site units." Off-site units are the equivalent of the Portland School District's special education classes that supposedly educate the "problem child," "the slow learner," the rebellious, the unmotivated, the disadvantaged, the categories that are disproportionately Black.

When writing poetry, Morris said she writes about life: "A lot of my poetry is political." She explained the political aspects of her life and poetry in this manner: "I grew up in a society that was torn and it was difficult for children not to take sides."

The society Morris grew up in is on Jamaican soil. She said it had, and it continues to have, very little semblance to democracy. "We have an eradication squad in the police department whose duty is to eradicate," she said. "In Jamaica we go to the polls with the gun at our heads."

Morris has a four-year-old daughter, Lethra, and her 32-year-old husband, Wesley Morris, is a biochemist at Oregon's Health Science Center. She said the family plans to stay in America (Portland) for three more years. After that, she said, the struggle will be from the homeland.

Vietnamese rediscovers medium

After a long separation, Cahn Truong has rediscovered art.

The 23-year-old refugee from Vietnam didn't draw for five years, mainly because he was unable to locate the medium he worked with in that country. After considerable experimentation, he's discovered he can make his own charcoal medium. He's begun working on portraits again for pleasure.

Truong studied art for two years in his own country and worked as an artist for a year and a half. At the age of 16, he escaped from Vietnam on one of the many boats that brought people to Thailand. He lived there for 11 months, then came to the United States to join a sister.

In Portland, Truong attended

Cleveland High School. He started classes at Portland Community College's Sylvania Campus in fall of 1983 in the drafting program. Truong dropped drafting after a year. "I didn't like it," he explains. He is now a full-time commercial art student and works part time in the college's Instructional Materials Center as a sign painter.

Truong, who still has difficulty with English, has a hard time explaining how he discovered how to duplicate the medium he used for portraits when in Vietnam. It comes from France and he is unable to find it here. He found that when he removed the carbon buildup from the chemneys of oil-burning lamps it worked the same as the material he purchased in his native country.



Cahn Truong, Vietnamese artist, displays his work, hampered for five years.

Chiropractic Week: Health Fair

Mayor J. E. "Bud" Clark will sign a proclamation on May 2, 1985, declaring the first full week of May to be the First Annual Chiropractic Awareness Week.

The idea of a week-long event celebrating the chiropractic profession was developed to promote the fact that chiropractors are healers. To assure the success of this promotion, the chiropractors in the metropolitan Portland area will put aside their personal feeling and open their hearts, minds, and office doors. The mayor has suggested that free spinal exams be offered to anyone calling for an appointment during that week and that open houses be held for the general public on Wednesday, May 8, from 5 - 8 p.m.

Western States Chiropractic College is offering a free Health Fair

May 11 and 12 featuring gait analysis, blood pressure screening, massage, nutrition and exercise counseling, entertainment and food. Mayor "Bud" Clark will open the fair Saturday morning and there will be an 8-K run beginning and ending at the campus. Free gifts will be offered to the first 500 mothers attending the fair.

Health Fair times will be Saturday, May 11, 10 a.m. - 6 p.m., and Sunday May 12, 12 noon - 5 p.m. at the college campus, 2900 NE 132nd Ave., just off Halsey. For more information, call 253-0082.

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