

Revealing her hidden talent

Q&A: WSU administrator always has been an artist; now you can see her work

By **MICHELLE SCHMIDT**
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Kelly McGovern has been creating art as long as she can remember, but until now she's never done a show. Her work will be featured Saturday in the 10th annual Floriade at the Left Bank Gallery in Palouse.

McGovern is the director of graduate programs at Washington State University's College of Education. She was having lunch with some friends at the Left Bank Gallery some time ago when it came out that she was a painter – and had been for most of her life. Her friends had no idea. Nelson Duran, the gallery owner, asked to see her work and now her pieces hang on the gallery walls, awaiting this weekend's opening.

We checked in with McGovern to find out more about her work and journey as an artist:

360: When did you get started as an artist?

MCGOVERN: I've done art all my life. I can remember as a child trying to get the expression of the dog I grew up with – trying to get his head cock just right. I would also draw National Geographic pictures. And I always did well in my high school art classes and was able to do extra sessions with my teacher. He



"Blue Storm 2" is a painting by Kelly McGovern. She says it was inspired by a storm she watched while at the Seattle airport. **BELOW:** McGovern is the director of graduate programs at WSU.

really encouraged me to branch out beyond copying pictures in National Geographic. He expanded my knowledge on layering and combining materials.

360: Did you pursue art after high school?

MCGOVERN: I did two years at Washington State University in art and then I went on to the Cornish College of Arts, where I graduated from. I majored in printmaking – my preferred style was intaglio printing and woodcuts. I minored in drawing and in black and white photography. And then I found out I had to eat. So I had to go to work. My first job was at the Daniel Smith Artist Supply store.



throughout the years.

360: You started by doing realistic drawings and now much of your work is abstract. Tell us about that transition.

MCGOVERN: I've gotten away from the realistic style – I do that in my photography. I like doing both for different reasons.

360: What was it like to pursue an art career for years and then have to put that on hold to do something else?

MCGOVERN: It was hard. In the arts, there are ones that get the lucky breaks and they just go on. And I had that until I graduated. I always had a feeling I would go back to it. I would dabble in it here and there

360: What do you like about the realistic work, the photography?

MCGOVERN: I like the pattern and the light and being able to capture that moment that will never happen again, no matter how hard you try.

360: And what about the abstract work?

if you go

WHAT: 10th annual Floriade featuring the work of Kelly McGovern, Jim Gale and Marty Bolick

WHEN: 11 a.m.-3 p.m. Saturday; luncheon served noon-2 p.m.

WHERE: Bank Left Gallery & Bistro, 100 S. Bridge St. in Palouse

COST: Free admission to gallery; \$13/person for luncheon and \$10/person for Home & Garden Tour

MCGOVERN: I also have this need to abstract it, to do layers of colors, trying to show movement in 2D. I think of it like a cook who is adding these ingredients, every bite is a slightly different flavor. It's what happens with art if you change your viewpoint just slightly.

360: What art or artists have influenced you and your work?

MCGOVERN: I learned a lot from the Impressionists and also the Constructivists, the artists from the Communist Revolution like Lyubov Popova and Aleksandr Rodchenko. I don't agree with the Communist ideals of course, but the art that came out of that period of transition was amazing.

360: And your career – how does that affect your pursuit as an artist?

MCGOVERN: It's inspiring, all the students I interact with. It's helpful to me that it is a normal job. Because of that I feel I can put my creativity into my work as an artist. ☺

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