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## ART IS REDEFINED IN CEMETARIES AND GRAVESTONES

**Traditional stigmas of cemeteries are challenged in Cooney's photographs that are not just for Halloween.**

SEATTLE – Oct. 8, 2007 – C. Thomas Cooney has found more than just cold stones in the cemeteries he photographs. Leaving behind the traditional Halloween depictions of spooky graveyards he has found a beautiful reverence in the atmosphere to photograph.

Today cemeteries are a place that many wish to avoid unless they have a reason to visit. They seem to exist in solitary sadness. Cemeteries were not always thought of as such. The beautiful landscaping and natural settings became a place for people to escape the confines of the city and enjoy visits to their family's graves. It was from the creation of these lush burial grounds that parks such as New York's Central Park were born.

C. Thomas seeks to portray beauty of the cemetery and the stonemason's art through his lens. He is not daunted by today's attitude of the impending reminder of mortality but challenges the way we see the beauty found within.

"I feel that these places are more than just cold marble slabs and granite. Each cemetery I visit has a unique story all it's own, and each grave marker and monument tells it's own tale of how the person buried there lived, worked, loved, fought and died and highlights their contributions."

C. Thomas's challenging approach comes from his own interest in the paranormal, which goes back to his childhood. In 2005, he helped co-found Washington State Paranormal Investigations and Research and has been an active member ever since and functions as the group's history director. He also teaches classes in cemetery iconography at local cemeteries to his fellow members.

With his active curiosity in the paranormal and an eye for photography, C. Thomas's goal is to bring the beauty of what can be found in a cemetery to the viewer. He feels his art is unique and uncommon, but once the reminder of mortality is removed, a cemetery is a sculpture garden that can be embraced by all.

Art in its many forms is used to explain and define the world around us. C. Thomas is using it to challenge and help re-define how we see cemeteries today.

C. Thomas is currently exhibiting his work at Starbucks in Woodinville at 14015 NE 175th St through October. For more information about C. Thomas Cooney and his photographs, please visit his website at [www.cthomascooney.com](http://www.cthomascooney.com)

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