Littleton Alston's sculptures are now on display at the Fine Arts Gallery. Entertainment Editor Anna-Lisa Gallagher spoke with Alston about the origin and meaning of his work.

Gallagher: What medium did you use in these pieces?
Alston: They're graphite constructions, but they're also assemblages. The pieces arrange themselves. I set up a context and then begin sorting out what I want within that context.

Maybe, these pieces are all about dreams—good and bad.

What symbolism are you suggesting in the piece constructed from molds of your face, "Dreams and Aberrations?" They have to do with really good dreams, but they also have to do with really bad dreams, about time. They're all about records—that's why they're black and white. They're put together when time is night and space becomes fluid, and things are not just detail. They become very general and start to intermingle. So you might have a person beside a tree, and yet you can't tell what it is. It might look like a different shape.

It's a visual time. It's a time of associating with images. It's about presence which comes from that time.

But it's not necessarily something you saw in a dream. No, not at all. They're all about a condition—about a state of mind and when things become fluid and things start to come into a dream and move out of a dream and start to emerge.

It has to do with presence. It has to do with things you can't put specifics on. Like you can't say, "I'm absolutely sure, that's in the dark, that's a chair." It looks like it could be a shape of a chair, but at the same time it looks like it could be a person on all fours. So that there is a metamorphosis time because we associate ourselves with the world visually more than we do any other way. We use our visual guide to determine how we react around us to people and inanimate objects. This is more about time in the mind. It's more about time when your mind is fluid when things really move. In your dreams you don't really fix on one thing. You move from thing to thing very quickly.

How do your pieces correlate to each other?

That's where the art part comes in. I'm taking content and moving content in different directions. A state of mind moving through different stages, at least visually. It's almost as though there is a forced condition, and it's at the point where everything moves overhead.

It also has to do with a lot of specifics. You know how you might feel in a certain way some day, and you can't really say I felt this way because...all you know is that there is some incredible emotional feeling that has come across. You can not pinpoint it, you only know that it is, and I think that those things are really evident and that's what the pieces are really about.

They're about emotional points in my mind where I think of things. I also use them to set up a context to work within.

Are titles very significant to your pieces?

Oh yes, they are. Some of these pieces are about text. [One piece] is all about words and the arrangement of things and how I perceive the connotations of certain images that I may make—that I may construct.

So I'm building up a situation where I'm working mentally through these stages and things happen and interact. So this piece becomes what another piece envisions which is a mental time and place, and this is the actual construction of a mental space.

The umbrella and the bucket [of "Elegy"] are like rainy-day worship. Like when things get really bad you've got all of these crutches with you that help you to deal with the immediate—its promises and the future.