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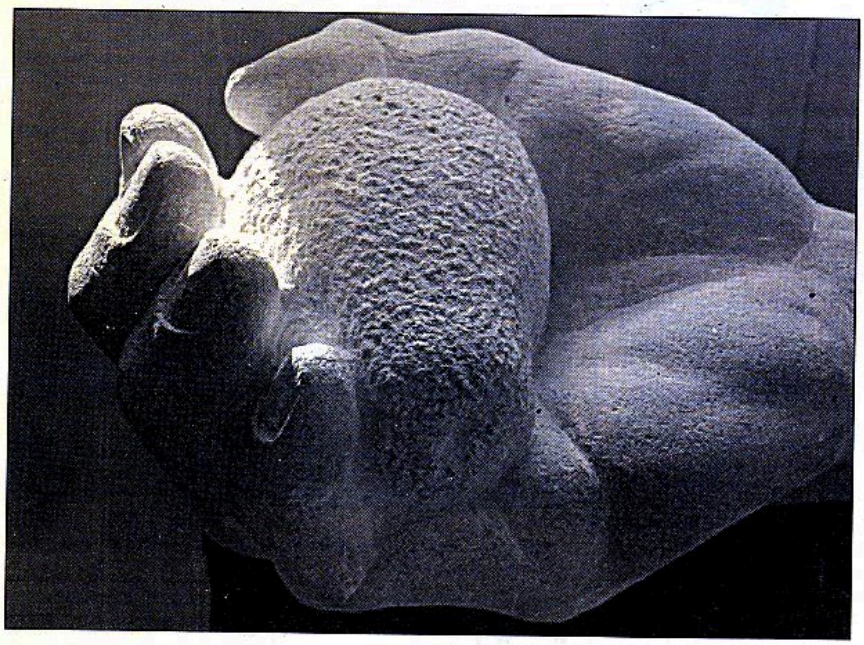
Matt Sesow at Stone's Breath Gallery

Oceanview, Deleware
2002

Stone's Breath gallery brings Washington art scene to shore



Wave Photo by John Duffy

SOFT STONE —Michael Breathe's stone carvings combine lifelike accuracy and soft curves in this hand, the second in a series.

By John Duffy
Staff Reporter

If you talk to any artist who has studied extensively the human figure, it is the hands that are perhaps the most difficult part of the body to render.

Bones, tendons, lines in the skin, not to mention having so many different configurations a hand can perform.

"They are so complex, there is so much going on," says Michael Breathe, proprietor and resident artist at Stone's Breath in Ocean View. "I figured if I could master the hands, then everything else would come easily," he reasoned.

Breathe's gallery, which he co-owns with his wife Narnia (whose work is also on display), had its soft-opening on Memorial Day weekend, and its first artists' reception on June 8.

In addition to Michael's sculpture and Narnia's watercolor abstractions, works by photographer Lisa G. Traynham, ceramicist Margaret Boozer, whimsical pop-artist Dan Hicks, and self-taught painter Matt Sesow.

The Breathes moved to Ocean View from Manassas, Va., just four months ago, and opened Stone's Breath with the aim of bringing Washington D.C. art to the lower Delaware shore.

And though Michael's stone carving has evolved to include all human forms, the hands are a subject he frequently returns to. Two examples of his "digital" mastery were on display Saturday, at the grand opening exhibition at Stone's Breath; a pair of languidly crossed hands (as in a dancer's pose), and a second piece consist-

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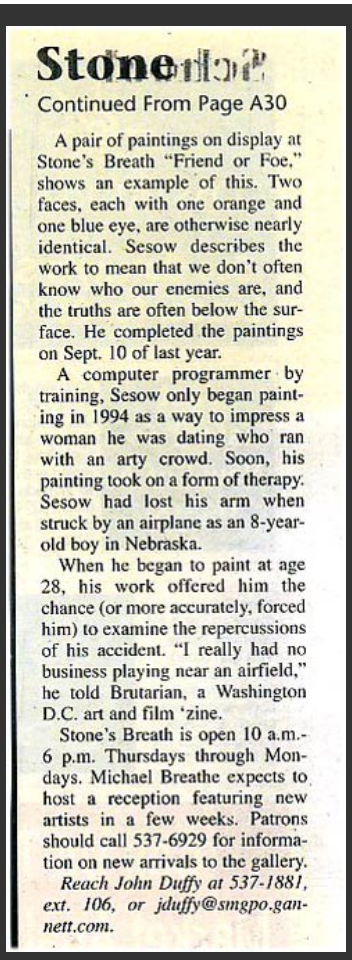
'Stones Breath' Gallery.
2002
'Night in Newcastle'
'Hellbound again"
'Friend or Foe'



Stone's

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A pair of paintings on display at Stone's Breath "Friend or Foe," shows an example of this. Two faces, each with one orange and one blue eye, are otherwise nearly identical. Sesow describes the work to mean that we don't often know who our enemies are, and the truths are often below the surface. He completed the paintings on Sept. 10 of last year.

A computer programmer by training, Sesow only began painting in 1994 as a way to impress a woman he was dating who ran with an arty crowd. Soon, his painting took on a form of therapy. Sesow had lost his arm when struck by an airplane as an 8-year-old boy in Nebraska.

When he began to paint at age 28, his work offered him the chance (or more accurately, forced him) to examine the repercussions of his accident. "I really had no business playing near an airfield," he told Brutarian, a Washington D.C. art and film 'zine.

Stone's Breath is open 10 a.m.-6 p.m. Thursdays through Mondays. Michael Breathe expects to host a reception featuring new artists in a few weeks. Patrons should call 537-6929 for information on new arrivals to the gallery.

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