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Sesow at the Visionary Museum/Baltimore, Intowner (DC) article

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Adams Morgan Artist Matt Sesow Featured in Baltimore Museum Show

"Holy H_2O: Fluid Universe," which just opened and will be on view until September 4, 2005, presents the 10th "mega-exhibition" of Baltimore's astonishingly vibrant American Visionary Art Museum includes, among others, the work of local artist Matt Sesow, winner of several recent artist awards including two Adams Morgan Festival first and second prizes. His *Setting Sail (with Sesow)* joins the work of 39 other self-taught visionary artists whose paintings, sculptures, tapestries, installa-

tions, and automata celebrate, entrance, captivate, and terrify the viewer with images and objects regarding the vital role played by water in the life of man on earth.

Sesow's explosively colored and powerfully composed expressionist paintings in this exhibition are broad brushed self-portraits



photo—courtesy, Matt Sesow

Out of Water

with a compellingly dramatic tension that draws in the viewer. Both *Setting Sail* and *Out of Water* capture on canvas and board doubling figures, expressions, and markings—on the first—and a powerful head complete with a characteristic Sesow trauma scar marker on the second. (As is noted in the museum's press materials, "when he was eight, Sesow was playing in a field by an airstrip and was struck by a landing airplane. The propeller severed his left arm…Many

Cont., Sesow, p.20

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Meet Matt Sesow

Closer to home, on Sunday, October 10, between 11 am and 6 pm, the artist will be hosting an Open Studio at 1851 Columbia Road, NW (#603) to show and discuss his work. For more information, call 319-1459 or email to or visit www.sesow.com.

SESOW

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of his works contain a 'trauma scar' icon representing the changes one goes thorough after a life-changing or traumatic event."

Equally compelling is the work of two other artists singled out with Sesow in the museum's press material. Extraordinary works are those of Nancy Josephson, including her altar room to the mermaid Goddess La Siren, and Tom Duncan's huge kinetic sculpture of Coney Island. Josephson, who is a spiritual follower of Vodou, also engaged for this remarkable exhibition a number of Haitian artists with whom she has worked during many visits to Haiti. Duncan's work, which is of a totally different nature, is nonetheless very much like Josephson's in its largeness of scope, ambition of intent, and joyous enveloping of its viewers. The loving and meticulous installation of Duncan's and Josephson's works by the museum's staff is the perfect appreciative complement to the fine work of these profoundly gifted artists.

Among other artists to whose work I was especially drawn were that of the primitive and powerfully evocative oil pastel painting of Eddie Arning, whose *Coppertone Girl* is not that of the Texas Gulf Coast that Arning would have known; the walking stick made of sea shells and wood by the Finnish/Russian/American artist Harry Korpela; "Mr. Imaginaton's" bottlecap sculptures; and Paul Edlin's mosaic-style drawings made of cut-up slivers of postage stamps. In a class by itself is the Rev. Albert Wagner's *The Parting of the Red Sea*, a work which combines in my visual memory with the great painting by Frederic Edwin Church of Niagara Falls with one of those famous Futuristic paintings of an entire factory's labor force advancing like an inverted V.

This remarkably rich and handsomely mounted and lighted exhibition will reward the viewer with an encounter that is thematically varied yet artfully intertwined, one comprising an amazing cornucopia of meaningful and beautifully rendered art treasures. And the show's theme of "Holy H_20 Fluid Universe" could not be more vital to our environmentally degraded 21st century. As noted by Rebecca Hoffberger, the inspired (and inspiring) director and founder of the museum, "Holy H_20 will express the ever-changing, fluid nature of our world and broadcast an artistic S.O.S. about our planet's number one crisis—the availability of abundant and pure water."

American Visionary Art Museum is located at the foot of federal Hill on Baltimore's Inner Harbor, 800 key Highway; tel., (410) 244-1900; www.avamimages.org. Hours: Tue.-Sun., 10am-6pm. Admission, $9 ($6, seniors and students



photo—courtesy, Matt Sesow

Setting Sail with Sesow

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