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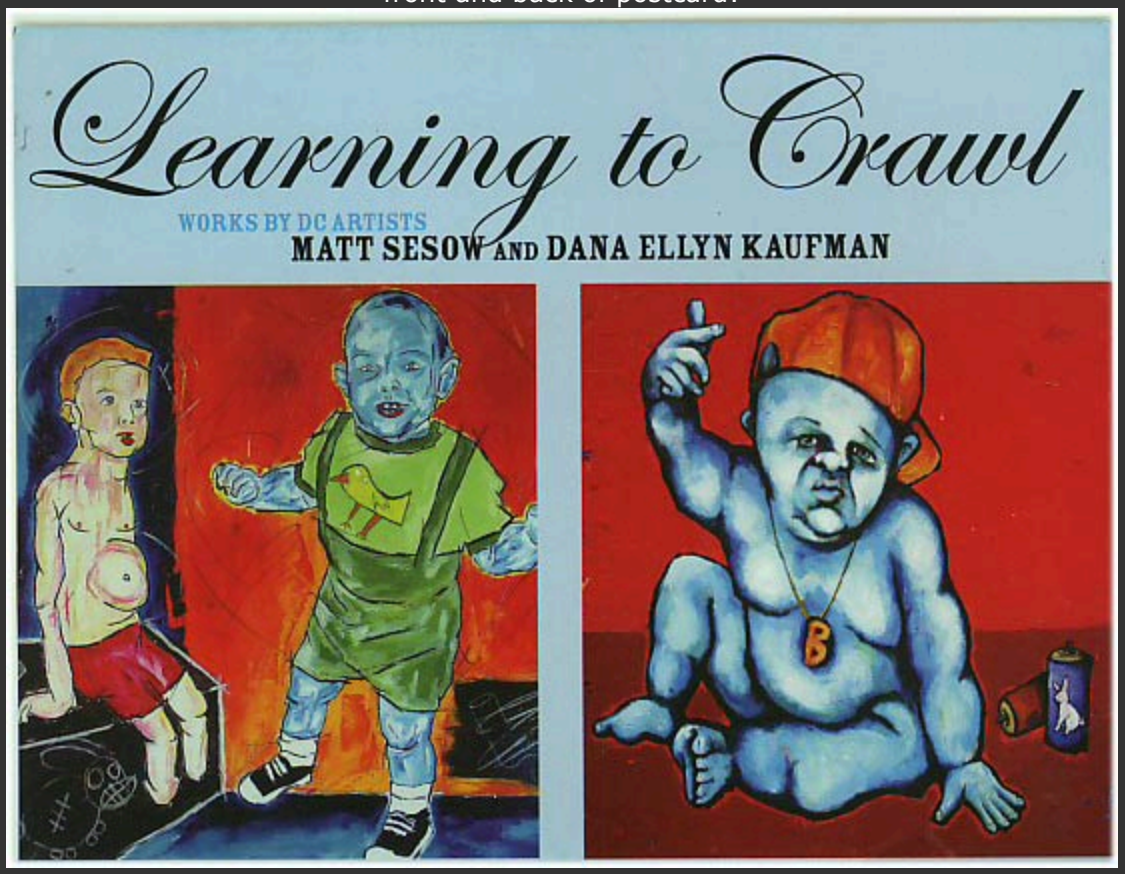
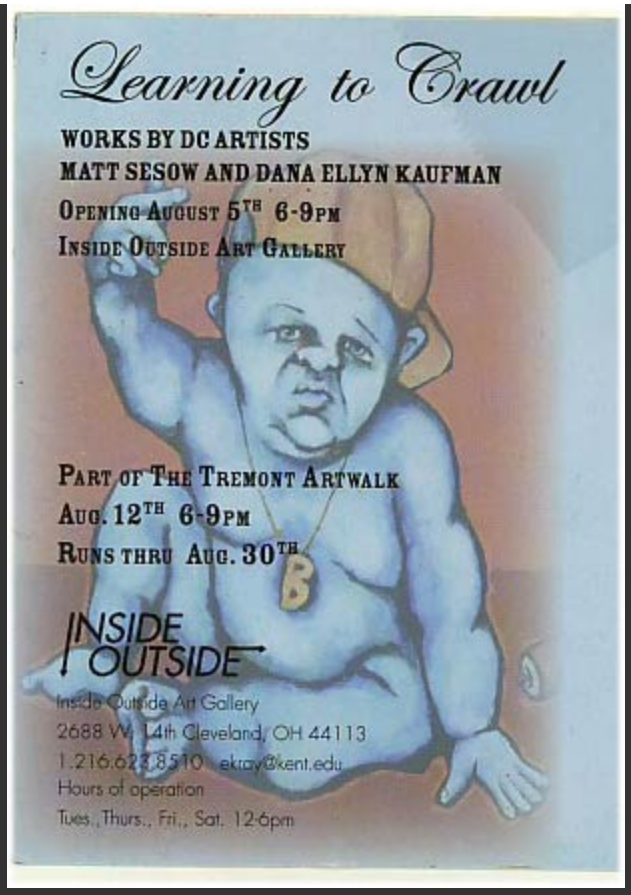
# Sesow in "Learning to Crawl"

with Dana Ellyn

**Cleveland, Ohio**
August 2005

front and back of postcard:




Learning to Crawl
WORKS BY DC ARTISTS
MATT SESOW AND DANA ELLYN KAUFMAN
OPENING AUGUST 5TH 6-9PM
INSIDE OUTSIDE ART GALLERY
PART OF THE TREMONT ARTWALK
AUG. 12TH 6-9PM
RUNS THRU AUG. 30TH
INSIDE OUTSIDE
Inside Outside Art Gallery
2688 W. 14th Cleveland, OH 44113
1.216.623.8510 ekray@kent.edu
Hours of operation
Tues ,Thurs., Fri., Sat. 12-6pm

# On View

## Capsule reviews of current area art exhibitions.

Published: Wednesday, August 10, 2005

**NEW**

***Learning to Crawl* --** Before you can crawl, you need balance. It's clear from this show that Matt Sesow and Dana Ellyn Kaufman, Washington, D.C.-based artists in a self-proclaimed experimental phase, will soon be standing upright. But their work also is polarized, either obvious or confusing. Many of their acrylic and oil paintings here belong to a project called *31 Days in July*, pictures inspired by last month's daily news, one image per day. Most are Kaufman's blunt, literal, pulp-style reactions to specific events: Karl Rove's unpunished blunder, the London attacks, the G-8 conference; others are more general and surreal (one compares Kate Moss to a starving African child). Her best one powerfully juxtaposes Lance Armstrong's victory with the aftermath of an Iraqi car bomb. Sesow is the duo's abstract expressionist, painting frightening alien figures with pointy nipples, bulging eyes, hooks for hands, cue-ball heads, squat legs, and huge feet. They're messy, furious, and slightly cubist in perspective. But while his work is more engaging, it's largely uncommunicative. He references the Madonna and Child in "Ascending," but what to make of "Generic Overdose," in which a hideous creature crouches mysteriously in pain or fear? There's an intuitive depth to Sesow's work, but crawling, for him, will entail guiding us more clearly to appreciate him. *Through August 30 at Inside-Outside Art Gallery, 2688 W. 14th St., 216-623-8510.* **-- Zachary Lewis**



**Matt Sesow's "Better Days," part of *Learning to Crawl* at Inside-Outside Art Gallery.**

# Art/Stage

## ON VIEW

### NEW

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INSIDE
OUTSIDE













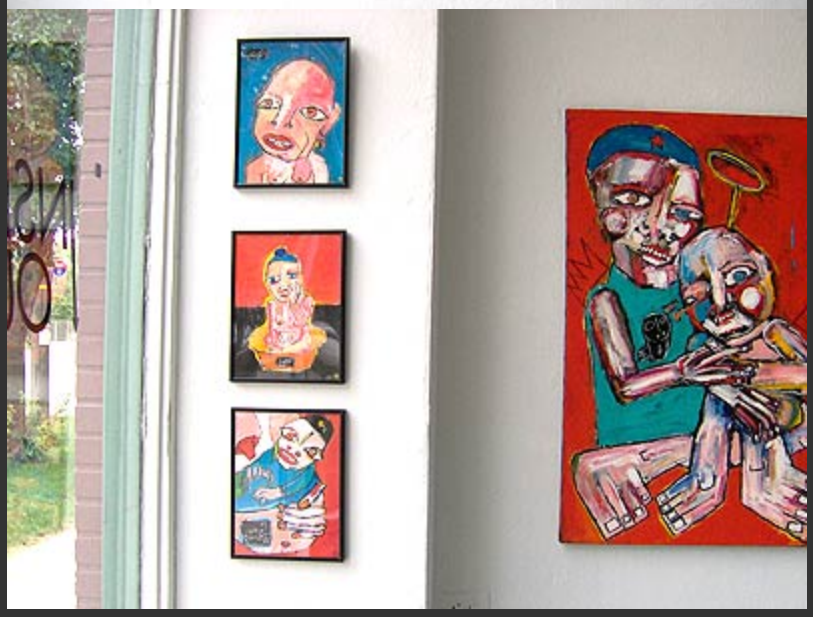

















NEW PAINTINGS

Canvas/Large un-sold works

Paper/Small un-sold works

"Very Small" paintings

"31 Days in July" project

**PRESS RELEASE "LEARNING TO CRAWL"** "Inside-Outside Art Gallery" (2688 W. 14th Street in Cleveland, Ohio)
AUGUST 2005

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Fellow DC artist and "31 days in july" participant, Dana Ellyn Kaufman, will be showing with me at the "Inside-Outside Art Gallery" (2688 W. 14th Street in Cleveland, Ohio).

**OPENING RECEPTION: 6-9PM ON FRIDAY AUGUST 5TH**

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About the show (by Matt Sesow):
"Learning to Crawl" is an exhibit of two of Washington DC's hardest working and dedicated artists. The title of the show was conceived by Matt Sesow to help explain the idea that similar to the way a baby must learn to crawl before it learns to run, an artist faces a similar route in his/her development.

Students whom choose to attend art schools are oftentimes taught how to

Paintings (2000-2004)
Solomon Islands and Bulgaria
Paintings (1994 - 1998)
Short Film
Contact Sesow.com
Biography
Interviews and Articles
Shots from Shows
In the Studio
Sesow.com

paint, how to execute "technically accurate" representations of objects, safely and under the tutelage of an "expert". The trained artist is taught to run immediately, without risk of falling or using "incorrect" materials and techniques. Oftentimes the crawling phase of learning is skipped, and the art student is left to paint post-graduation hitting a creative wall hearing the "voice of correctness" from their instructors. Although Dana Ellyn attended art school, she taught herself how to crawl as a child artist, creating as a self-taught artist, alone. Indeed, she is learning to shed the art school compulsion of creating perfect pretty pictures.

The world of the self-taught artist is series of mistakes, blunders, and accidents. A self-taught oftentimes "falls" into the pursuit of painting, without tutelage, and without support. There is no graduation and no goal to being a self-taught hobby artist. Individuals who turn to art without education are oftentimes channeling personal struggles into the art in order to help heal or explain feelings. Matt, inspired by Warhol's "15 minutes of fame" tag line, insists that everybody has at least 15 paintings in them. The real struggle is the endurance and dedication it takes to believe in yourself enough to do it all the time, get past the 15 paintings, keeping it fresh, and improving. Matt feels he is still "a crawler", with the occasional "first step".

Currently, Dana and Matt paint together at least once every week in one of their two Washington, DC studios. They have been a positive influence on each other's work and direction, continuing to crawl and run together. Thanks for looking, Dana and Matt.

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Matt Sesow:
Matt started painting in Washington, DC as a hobby and a way to impress a girl back in 1993. At that time, he was gainfully employed as a software engineer for IBM and had never considered painting as a way to make a living... let alone spend his free time. Since then, the thousands of paintings he's created have evolved from being curious oddities amongst friends and family, into a full-time professional pursuit with hundreds of collectors around the world. Matt's work has gained a lot of attention within the gallery and academic field studying "outsider art".

In the beginning, Matt obsessively created paintings that were influenced and inspired by a childhood accident with a landing airplane. When he was eight years old, he was struck by the propeller of an airplane that subsequently amputated his left-dominant hand. Early paintings reflected the trauma and frustration of growing up in rural Nebraska with a physical disability. While his work continues to be influenced by disability, Matt's paintings have emerged to tackle a variety of societal, personal, and historical subjects. Since leaving the computer field in 2001, Matt has been living entirely off the sale of his paintings.

Dana Ellyn Kaufman:
Dana Ellyn has always known that she is an artist. Growing up in Connecticut she oftentimes spent hours on end quietly drawing in her room honing her skills of representation. Dana was recognized throughout her

childhood by winning a variety of international and statewide awards for her abilities as an artist. Her determination catapulted Dana to be admitted on scholarship into the fine arts and art history program at George Washington University (Washington, DC).

Beginning in 2002, Dana left the corporate world to pursue art full time. Her abandonment of several of life's luxuries has afforded her the time and focus to create a dazzling array of thoughtful and well-conceived paintings. The allure of a Dana Ellyn painting is that it tells a story, her paintings have meaning, and sometimes the message may come as a shock... Don't let her pigtails fool you.

**CLICK HERE FOR MORE PAINTINGS...**