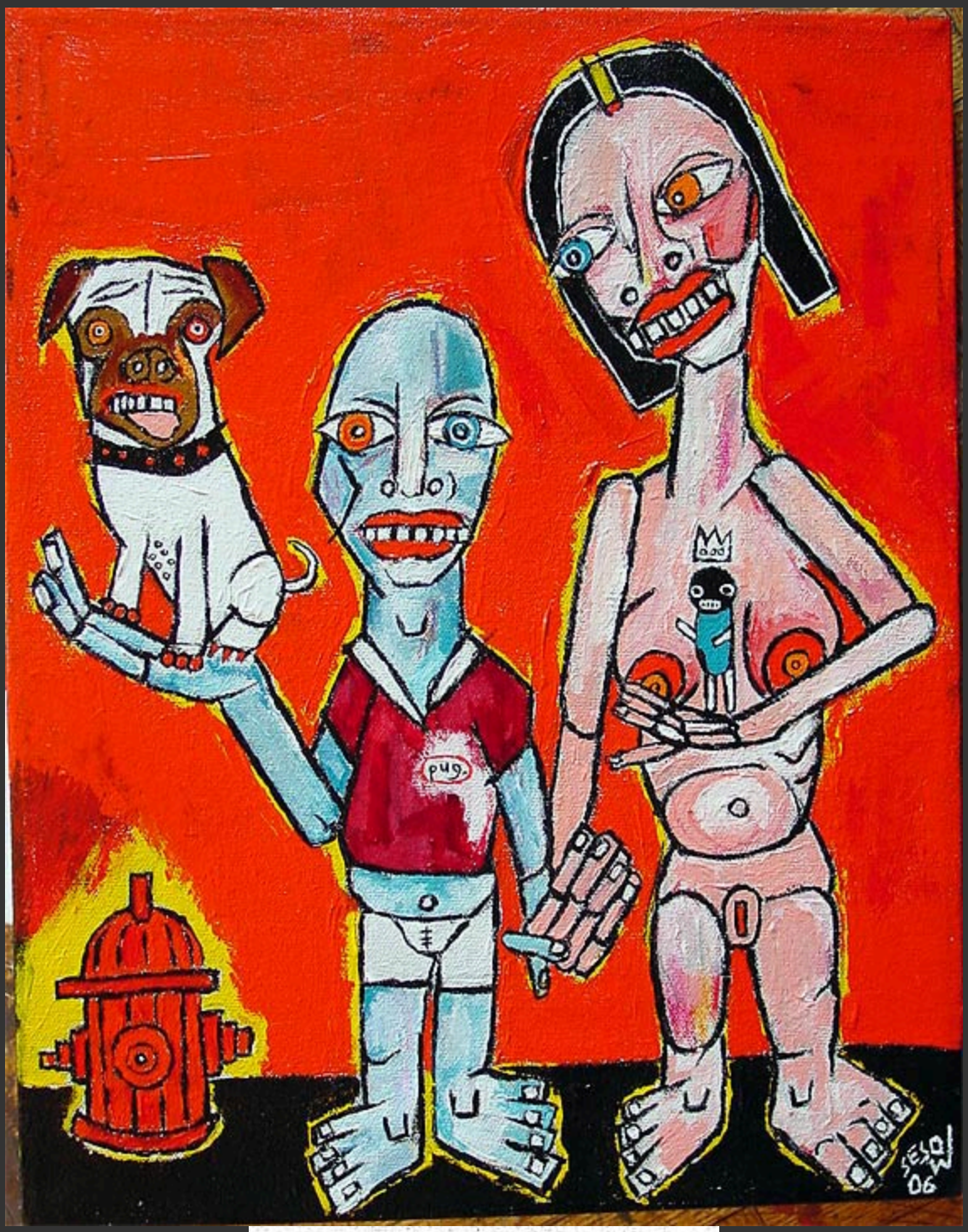
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Matt Sesow at Gallery Neptune

"Cupidity"
An artistic interpretation of the personal ads with 34 regional artists and writers.
Bethesda, MD February 2006



Max the Pug

You and Max were playing in the dog park at Columbia and Kalorama Friday around 6 p.m. I was there with Emma. You're a doll. Would love to set up a play date. **When: Friday, September 30, 2005. Where: Dog Park, Columbia and Kalorama. You: Man. Me: Woman. #901065**

WASHINGTON CityPaper
ARTIFACTS
March 3-9, 2006

You Captioned My Heart
"I Saw You" goes high concept.
By Rachel Beckman

It's hard to meet people in the city. One person's admiring look is another's unwelcome leer, and there's a fine line between asking for a stranger's number and what some skittish folks consider stalking. Much safer, then, to take out an anonymous "I Saw You"-type ad and hope the object of one's affection was similarly intrigued.

Elyse Harrison is happily married, but she loves reading missed-connection classifieds-fascinated by their mixture of hope, fate, and desperation, she sees them as individual movie scenes complete with costumes, dialogue, and blocking. Last summer, the Bethesda resident and owner of Gallery Neptune called up 17 artists who'd shown at her gallery since its opening three years ago and asked them to create pieces inspired by personal ads. Then she invited an equal number of writers to take the idea one step further„to each create another ad as if the writer had noticed a potential mate looking at one of the paintings Harrison had commissioned.

"You have to write, in a short space, the most important aspects of a short meeting," says Harrison, 47. "You have to get to the heart of it-no pun intended."

The artists and writers teamed up via a singles party of sorts that Harrison hosted in December. They mingled with one another, "looking for dates," as Harrison puts it. "I thought, Now this is getting interesting. I love art that travels through different spaces and time frames."

"Cupidity," which runs through March 4, is the result of Harrison's orchestration„a conscious mishmash of styles and media. Photographer Alexandra Silverthorne takes a literal approach with a series of eight pictures of different places and items mentioned in one ad: Cactus Cantina restaurant in Cleveland Park in one, a Scrabble board in another.

Dennis Greza, who writes under the name Antibiodick35, issues a raunchy booty call. His piece is inspired by Jean Beebe's Random Pins and Other Safety Stuff, a mixed-media collage of a man wearing camouflage pants. Various small metal objects protrude from the canvas. "I watched„mesmerized„as your friend stole two safety pins from the Beebe collage and pierced your eyebrow with one of them," writes Antibiodick35. "Would love the opportunity to stick something in you. Coffee?"

"You want the art to turn back into writing," Harrison says. "I loved the idea and the challenge."

Writer Claudia Rousseau took up the challenge by responding to a piece by glass artist Michael Janis. Her "Cupidity" contribution is a grand proclamation of love: "I know that just loving you from a distance ennobles my soul. Yet, I yearn to feel your presence and drink in your scent."

Rousseau's source material, it turns out, isn't quite so sweeping. Janis, a partner in the Washington Glass School, fired seven separate layers of glass, each covered with a layer of colored powdered glass, to create his wall-mounted panel Venus at the Metro, which shows Botticelli's goddess of love wandering through a Metro car. The original ad described the woman as "evanescent."

"I love this idea of a Venus that only one person can see," Janis says. "But instead of arriving on a clam shell, [she's] on the Red Line to Shady Grove."

CP









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