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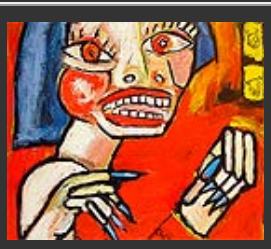
Matt Sesow at Gallery Neptune

"Driven" (Bethesda, MD)
Two-person show with Dana Ellyn
August 25 - Sept 4 2006

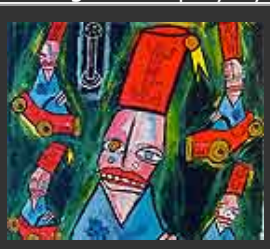
Some of the paintings on display by Matt Sesow:



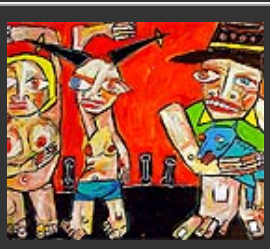
"Sobriety Check"
24" x 36"
oil on stretched canvas



"Handmaiden"
24" x 20"
oil on stretched canvas



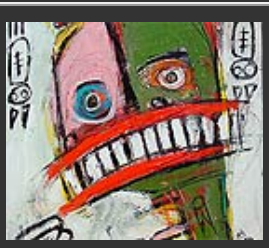
"Driven"
60" x 29"
acrylic on canvas banner



"Parking Jockeys"
24" x 36"
oil on stretched canvas



"soap box"
24" x 20"
oil on stretched canvas



"walmart shopper, disabled parking spot, a hotdog"
15" x 20"
oil/mixed on watercolor board



"bumper skiing"
15" x 20"
oil/mixed on watercolor board



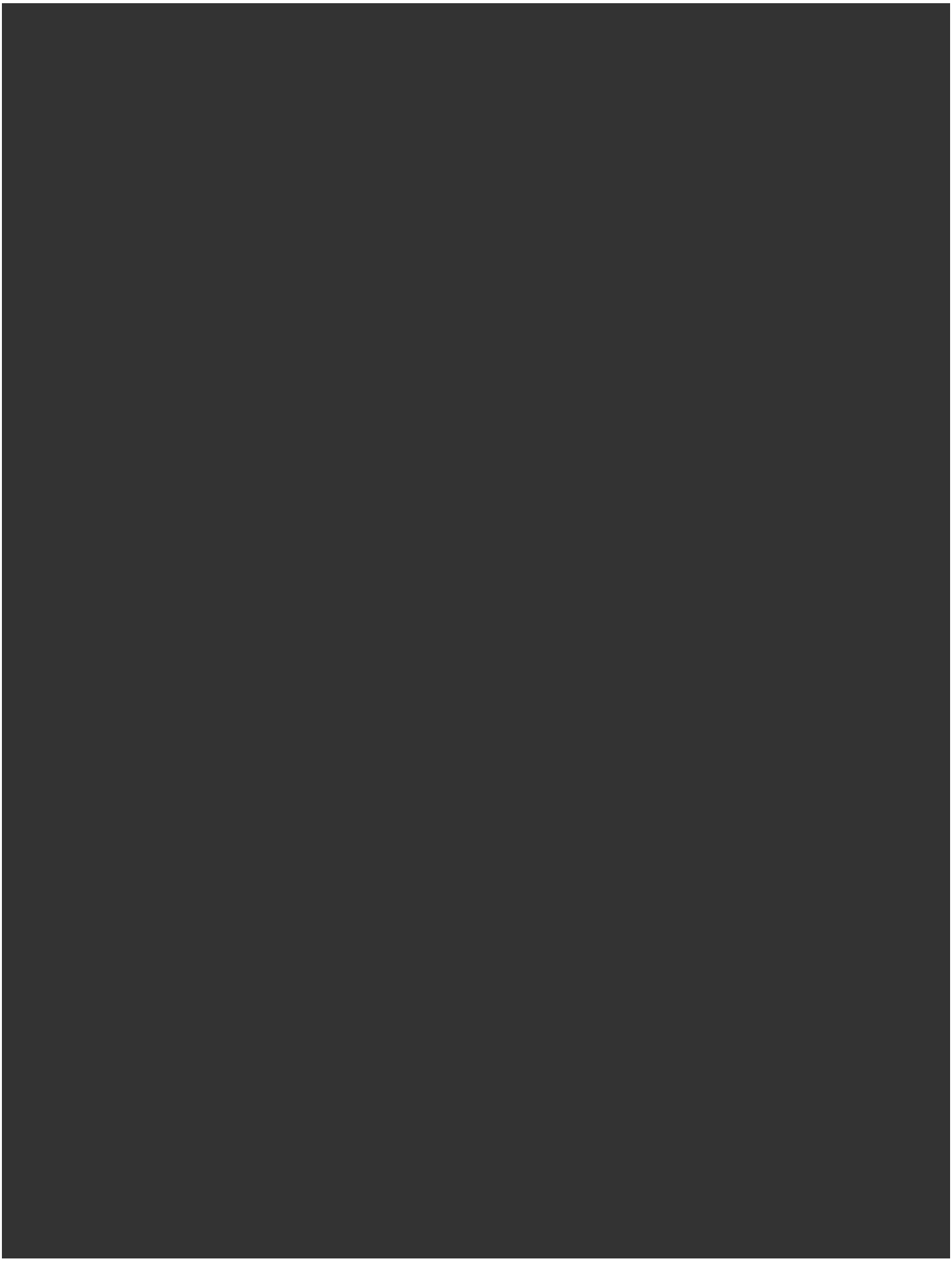
"mister smith"
15" x 20"
oil/mixed on watercolor board



"Standing at the Crossroads"
60" x 29"
acrylic on canvas banner



"The Habitual"
11" x 15.5"
oil/mixed on matboard



gallery Neptune

ABOUT CURRENT FUTURE P

CURRENT WORK

June 8 – July 1, 2006

"Driven" Dana Ellyn and Matt Sesow

Artist's reception Friday, June 9, 6-9 PM





As the downtown of Bethesda continues to increase its cultural and residential venues, our little city becomes more of an urban center all the time. It's fun to come here and it's hard to park. Funny what a little bit of color can evoke.

Oh, the first glimpse of that yellow paper on the windshield! If there is conversation most easily made in the city, it's about great food and annoying parking tickets. What better theme to bring to Bethesda's Gallery Neptune than a show about the notorious PARKING VIOLATION. Leave it to two of Washington, DC's most active painters and political satirists, Dana Ellyn and Matt Sesow to bring some levity to this topic. In addition to parking tickets there is so much more to owning a car these days. As a result, "Driven" will explore a range of topics including fuel economy, status symbols, smart growth, road rage and drunk driving.

Matt Sesow has been painting seriously since 1993 and is now a full time artist living in Adams Morgan, Washington, DC. Matt's entire lifestyle is centered on painting and selling his work. At any given month, Matt's work can be seen through open studio visits, gallery exhibits, street festivals and on his well maintained website, www.sesow.com. Most of his work is gestural, vivid and energetic. There is an obvious immediacy of paint in Matt's work, a visual echo of the wake up call he shouts to us. It is his passionate response to the human condition. A long list of exhibits and awards trail behind him, most notable are works shown at the American Visionary Museum, Baltimore, Maryland, The Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, DC, The Folk Artists Museum, Flat Rock, North Carolina, and at the Kentuck festival in Northport, Alabama. *"I suppose everybody has experienced some pain and fear in their lives. Just as paintings of pretty flowers and sunsets with horsies make us smile and feel content, I want to paint emotionally charged intense works that cause discomfort or inspire people to challenge themselves. I had some unique physical trauma as a child that got me started on this path... I'm a generally happy person, but I have taught myself to channel anger and intensity in art. The best musicians and painters have done it, those are my heroes."*

Dana Ellyn lives and works in an equally productive and vital artistic environment. From her Washington, DC studio and home, Dana creates political and social commentary using a vibrant palette and narrative content. *"The subject matter of war and its effects have been central to many of my works over the past three years. I hope you can see from the paintings I create that I am committed to mission of documenting the times I live in. I feel that it is the responsibility of contemporary painters to create meaningful work and respond, through their art, to the politics and policies that shape our world not to simply regurgitate trends or create decorative art to be hung above couches."* Dana supports herself full time as an artist through the sale of her paintings and by teaching painting classes from her studio. Her vast portfolio can be found on her website (which is updated frequently with new paintings) at www.danaellyn.com

Below are ten questions that Matt and Dana responded to for their exhibit "Driven".

If you were a car, what would you look like?
Matt: Without a doubt, I would be a Tuk Tuk. the three-wheeled backbone of transportation for the developing world. I'd be colored with imagery of voodoo and Christianity, socialism and capitalism, cats and bunnies.
Dana: I'd be a two-seater. Just room for me and Matt. When I need to transport paintings to hang a show, I'd attach a trailer on the back with my website plastered across it in huge letters.

If you could walk around wearing a meter cop uniform all day, how would that change your life?
Matt: People would stare at me less. Perhaps I would get a level of respect that I have never felt.
Dana: It sure would be a change from spending all day every day at home painting in my pajamas.

If you were a car, who would you want to drive you?
Matt: Dana Ellyn, Courtney Love on heroin, or my mom.
Dana: Teenagers, so I could listen to their conversations and remember why I'm so happy to be in my 30's.

If you were a car and drive-in movie theaters were popular again, what movies would you really want to see?
Matt: "Gummo", "Fitzcarraldo", "Rushmore" or Sarah Silverman's "Jesus is Magic"
Dana: I'd take my collection of favorite feel-good flicks and play them all over and over on the big screen; "Drop Dead Fred", "Grease", "Pretty in Pink", "Muriel's Wedding" and so on...

What do you think of the art car phenomenon?
Matt: I respect the idea of people obsessing on anything. Almost anything that causes someone happiness and motivates their creativity is ok with me. I know some people that have created art cars, and they are swell folk.
Dana: I'd be afraid to drive behind one – something might fly off and hit me.

If you could get a parking ticket that was hand made and really beautiful, would you mind getting a ticket?
Matt: No, because maybe I could sell it on eBay to pay for the violation.
Dana: It would almost feel like a reward for my misbehavior.

If you could recycle parking tickets, what would you do with them?
Matt: I would probably paint on them or build a park bench.
Dana: Do a drawing of the person who received the ticket on each one. Then, do an exhibit of all of them and call it "Violated".

If you could feed a meter with something other than coins, what would you feed it?
Matt: personal sacrifice
Dana: Compliments.

If parking tickets were edible, do you think most people would eat them?
Matt: Yes, especially if they tasted like cheese.
Dana: If they made them out of fat, addictive foods, people might even park illegally on purpose.

Finish this sentence:
"Parking tickets are to people, what _____is to _____."
Matt: "Parking tickets are to people, what eternal damnation is to sinners.
Dana: "Parking tickets are to people, what hangovers are to me on Sunday mornings – I don't like them but I know what I did to deserve it."

From the "Express" daily paper (Washington, DC), June 2006:

express
www.readexpress.com
The latest news and notes in D.C. and beyond

Q&A: 'Driven' in Bethesda



ONE COULD SAY that **Dana Ellyn** and **Matt Sesow** create site-specific paintings. In the case of "**Driven**," an exhibition at **Gallery Neptune**, the D.C.-based artists were asked not to make works to fit the gallery's space but the gallery's neighborhood — traffic-choked, there's-no-parking **Bethesda**. The result is a series of colorful, comic, eerie, insightful paintings about the vehicular madness that is the modern driving experience. Express talked with Ellyn, whose "**Driving Miss Crazy**" is at right, and Sesow about the exhibition.

EXPRESS: How did this show come about?

MATT SESOW: What **Elyse** [**Harrison**, the gallery's owner] asked us to do was to create paintings based on our opinions on the car culture. We basically worked on it for about two months, creating work for the show. And I guess one of the funny things worth mentioning is that neither Dana nor I have cars.

EXPRESS: Wha?

SESOW: Yeah, we both used to have cars of course but in order to become full-time painters we needed to reduce expenses.

EXPRESS: Was road rage the first place you went to with this assignment, after which you widened your range?

DANA ELLYN: For me. it didn't come from a place of anger, I started off with almost a comical view of it — just a commentary from all points of view. Elise's original view was to talk about parking tickets, because apparently Bethesda has these horrible parking problems, and Matt and I went up there, where we had dinner and hung out and just observed the culture.

SESOW: If someone parks illegally in front of a building, so my take on it was more like, well, maybe parking tickets aren't that bad an idea. Also, I have a physical disability, and I don't know if you've ever seen anyone just drive into a handicapped space ...

EXPRESS: Oh, yes. Where do your other inspirations come from?
SESOW: A lot of my **Shriners**' stuff came from is, I grew up in the Midwest where the Shriners are really big, and they drive around in those little cars. Dana and I completed around 60 paintings for the show, and only 15 or so of them made it into the show, so we have a lot more in the series.
ELLYN: We are both pretty project-oriented, since we got this assignment some months ago.

EXPRESS: You both sound awfully hard-working.
SESOW: Our next project is called "**31 Days in July**." We each independently create a painting, one a day. We'll be inspired by **The Washington Post**, just taking off from what the news is that day. Get up, read the paper, start the painting.

EXPRESS: That sounds ... exhausting.
SESOW: I do a 30-by-40 inch painting for each day, so they're pretty huge. We think it's really important to document the times we live in; that's what the project's perfect for. We're serious about the idea of paintings that have a story or make people think or talk about it. We have a responsibility to our time.

» Gallery Neptune, *4808 Auburn Ave, Bethesda; through July 1, 301-718-0809 (Bethesda)*

Weather
Saturday: *Morning rain. High 77. Low 62*
Sunday: *Partly sunny. High 79. Low 60.*
Details, C8

129TH YEAR NO. 181 B DC MD VA

The Washington Post

SUNDAY, JUNE 4, 2006

OUR PICKS

CAN'T MISS

Five reasons to get off your couch this week:

1 VAN HUNT
[CONCERT] Buzz has been slow to build around the neo-soul crooner, a relative newcomer who hit the music scene in 2004 with his self-titled debut that featured the moderate hit "Down Here in Hell (With You)." Though sales were slow for the 29-year-old singer, songwriter and producer, he has won over many critics and has even been dubbed the new Prince. Sure, Bilal and D'Angelo have enjoyed the same flattery, but Hunt might just have them beat since he not only nails the Purple One's upbeat grooves and smoother joints with panache, but can rock a handkerchief turban or a paisley printed shirt with equal machismo.
Thursday at 8:30 p.m. Black Cat, 1811 14th St. NW. $18. 202-667-7960.

2 CARS
[MOVIE] The computer-animated film is shaping up to be *the* cartoon movie of the year, eclipsing other recent animated releases, all of which seem to rely on the same hackneyed animal theme. Heavy on the NASCAR references, the Walt Disney Studios and Pixar Animation Studios joint production takes cartoons out of the zoo and onto the racetrack, as central character Lightning McQueen, a cherry-red hotshot rookie race car voiced by Owen Wilson, discovers there's more to life than the next big race. Paul Newman, Bonnie Hunt, Larry the Cable Guy and others round out the cast of voices.
Opens Friday.

3 DRIVEN
[EXHIBIT] If "Cars" isn't up your alley, get in touch with your inner road rage at this two-person show that explores the way parking

Driven includes Dana Ellyn's "Driving Miss Crazy." Opens Thursday. (See Can't Miss, this page.)





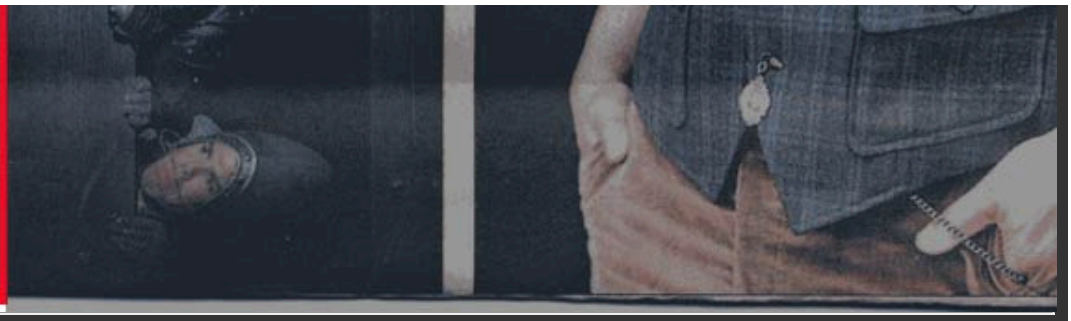


Monty Python's **Spamalot** comes to the National Theatre. Opens Tuesday. (See On Stage, next page.)



issues and autos in general can drive us all a little nutty in an increasingly congested city. Local artists Dana Ellyn and Matt Sesow show brightly colored — and slightly frightening — paintings that just might illustrate what you look like when you get behind that lousy driver or are stuck in rush hour traffic.

Opens Thursday. Reception Friday, 6-9 p.m. Through July 1. Gallery Neptune, 4808 Auburn Ave., Bethesda. Free. 301-718-0809.



















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