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**ARTIST JAMES VISSARI BRINGS LIGHT AND COLOR TO “MY TOWN”
Riverworks Art Center exhibition captures the feel of small-town Poolesville
and the fleeting beauty of the Montgomery County Agricultural Reserve**

POOLESVILLE, Md. — Sunsets and storm clouds, ruined mills and resilient barns, storefronts and cornfields, the infinite faces of Sugarloaf Mountain—in his new Riverworks exhibition “My Town,” artist James Vissari shows us a rural landscape that thrives as it faces the passing of time.

Informed by four decades in the 93,000-acre Agricultural Reserve in western, upper Montgomery County, the paintings of James Vissari draw upon a mastery of color to convey the feeling of seeing these gorgeous vistas and everyday streetscapes for the first time—while letting locals experience their home in new and emotional ways.

“My Town” will be on display from **Wednesday, October 4, 2023, through Sunday, November 12, 2023, at Locals Farm Market, 19929 Fisher Avenue, Poolesville, Md.** This show is the eighth Riverworks “Artist in the House” exhibition to be featured on the second floor of the historic house at Locals.

An opening reception will be held at Locals on **Saturday, October 7, 2023, from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m.** The reception is free and the public is invited to attend.

Devoted to helping others find their creative vision, James teaches classes for all levels of experience at Riverworks Art Center and is a popular teacher at the [Yellow Barn Studio](#) in Glen Echo Park. He holds degrees from the Corcoran School of Art, Montgomery College, and the University of Maryland. He has also served as president of the Montgomery Art Association in Kensington, Md.

Raised in Wheaton, James now lives in Poolesville, where he has spent more than 40 years observing and painting the Ag Reserve.

“When I was looking for passion, a friend inspired me to paint what I love, for me,” James says. Like artists before him, he turned to his immediate surroundings, viewing this quiet corner of the county with trained eyes and timeless influences. Some of the paintings in “My Town” show an intimate knowledge of color that pays tribute to Vincent Van Gogh. This exhibition also includes some of the pieces from his “36 Views of Sugarloaf Mountain” series inspired by the Japanese painter and printmaker Hokusai. Taken together, the paintings in “My Town” reveal an artist who can be as subtle as he is bold.

“Just look at his work,” says Riverworks co-founder David Therriault. “It’s so varied. James can capture the emotion of a place or a moment in color and light. You look at the stunning way he shows us what he sees and you don’t need words. You just think: Yes, that’s how I felt too.”

Often seen drawing and painting along Poolesville-area roadsides, James knows that all places are fated to change, and much-loved sights will someday disappear. For that reason, he paints rural Montgomery County with an urgency meant to inspire awed gratitude for this special, precarious part of the world.

“I hope to encourage respect for keeping a place not stuck in time, but living and thriving in the peace and tranquility we’re so fortunate to have here,” he explains. “As the landscape changes and time goes on, I hope this area will continue to be a place where people can find tranquility and amazement. This is a hidden part of the county that deserves to be preserved, and I hope my paintings encourage that preservation.”

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Established as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit in 2022, [Riverworks Art Center](#) offers a wealth of arts and culture programs in a restorative rural setting, including art classes, introductory workshops, community roundtables, Storytellers presentations, theater and music classes for children, fine arts exhibitions, outdoor concerts, community festivals, weekly jam sessions, and more.

Riverworks is rooted in the small town of Poolesville, only 40 minutes outside the D.C. Beltway and just half an hour south of Frederick, with Sugarloaf Mountain rising eight miles to the north. The surrounding 93,000-acre Montgomery County Agricultural Reserve offers hiking trails, riverside views, farm-fresh produce, independent restaurants, African American historic sites, Civil War trails, local beer and wine, and more.

Riverworks holds events at three locations in and around Poolesville:

- **Alden Farms** (19215 Beallsville Rd., Beallsville)
classrooms, studios, art library, event pavilion, and sculpture garden
- **Locals Farm Market** (19929 Fisher Ave., Poolesville)
art gallery, jam sessions, local artisans market
- **Historic Methodist Church** (17617 W. Willard Rd., Poolesville)
outdoor stage and future home of the Riverworks Performing Arts Center

In its first year, Riverworks has hosted nearly 100 art classes, programs, and public events, many of them low-cost or free, with the goal of cultivating creativity and connection in the rural corner of Montgomery County and with visitors from across the D.C. region.

To learn more, visit the Riverworks website: www.riverworksart.org.



Established in 2020 at the height of the Covid pandemic, [Locals Farm Market](http://www.localsfarmmarket.com) at **19929 Fisher Ave., Poolesville, Md.** is a vital restaurant in the historic heart of Poolesville that serves as a welcoming first stop for visitors exploring the Ag Reserve, a community gathering place, an art gallery, and a marketplace for the work of local artists, writers, artisans, and farmers.

Locals is open Wednesday through Sunday, 7:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. and Friday 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. for Riverworks jam sessions. Musicians of all ages and experience levels (and music-loving audience members) are invited to attend. The Locals menu emphasizes fresh ingredients from area farms. Guests can eat, meet, and relax in a shade-covered outdoor setting or indoors on two floors of the historic 1840s Veirs–Stevens House.

The second floor at Locals hosts rotating Riverworks “Artists in the House” exhibitions featuring the work of respected local and regional artists.

To learn more, visit the Locals website: www.localsfarmmarket.com.

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