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TRACING “CONSTELLATIONS” OF MEANING
The collages of Ian Parsons provoke speculation and interpretation
in new Riverworks Art Center exhibition

POOLESVILLE, Md. — When words and images travel the planet at unthinkable speeds, how can we measure our lives? In a striking new exhibition, artist Ian Parsons uses collage to confront the complexity of that question—and asks us to make it our own.

Building up vividly layered surfaces from magazine clippings, raw wood, old books, art prints, greeting cards, product packaging, compact disc cases, and other found objects, Parsons’ collages offer no easy answers. Instead, they call us to reflect on uncertainty and rediscover our own thoughts against a landscape of mental noise.

“I use the medium of collage to create constellations of meaning, opening these pieces to the free association and interpretation of the viewer,” Parsons explains. “The aesthetics and sensibility in this work are informed by my growing up in the age of globalization and fast information, exemplified by the Internet.”

“Constellations” will be on display from **Wednesday, October 9, 2024, through Sunday, December 8, 2024, at Locals Farm Market, 19929 Fisher Avenue, Poolesville, Md.** This show is the fifteenth Riverworks “Artist in the House” exhibition to be featured on the second floor of the historic Veirs-Stevens House at Locals.

An opening reception will be held at Locals on **Sunday, October 20, 2024, from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m.** The reception is free and the public is invited to attend.

In the past year, Parsons has been highly visible at Riverworks as the Arts Programming Assistant. Riverworks co-founder Sandy Wright points out that this show spotlights the thoughtfulness that makes him so essential to Poolesville’s rapidly growing arts community.

“Ian moves effortlessly between his organizational role and his calling as an artist,” she observes. “His background attunes him to the needs and interests of our artists, so it’s only fitting that we welcome him to their ranks.”

“From the beginning, we wanted our mission to include supporting young, up-and-coming artists,” adds Riverworks co-founder David Therriault. “It’s really meaningful for us to host Ian’s first solo show.”

Even though Parsons is just beginning his career, some of the ideas at play in “Constellations” are whispers from the past, voices that waited generations to find expression in art.

“The work in this show grew out of the legacy of my grandfather and his appetite for thinking,” he recalls. “He left behind a physical legacy in his vast collection of books in philosophy, history, politics, and sociology, as well as stacks of vintage magazines that served as the initial spark for this series.”

Parsons finds that when he creates art, the great questions that have preoccupied thinkers for centuries echo always in his mind—including insights from Taoism and Buddhism, the ancient Greeks, and modern writers such as Milan Kundera, Jean-Paul Sartre, and John Steinbeck. As he joins their ongoing conversation across time, he proposes, for now, only one tentative conclusion:

“In both art and life, there is always more than one way of thinking.”

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ABOUT THE ARTIST:

Ian Parsons graduated from St. Mary’s College of Maryland in 2023 with a degree in Studio Art and a minor in philosophy. There he was awarded the William Thomas Rowe Endowed Scholarship for his drawings from life and participated in multiple group exhibitions, also winning Best Work for a Fourth Year in the 2023 annual all-student show at St. Mary’s Boyden Gallery. He became Arts Programming Assistant at Riverworks Art Center in September 2023 while working actively as an artist, transitioning from printmaking and drawing to found object collage. He has since exhibited in Artomatic 2024 in Washington, D.C., and in a group exhibition, “A Paean to Paper,” at the Sandy Spring Museum in Maryland.

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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 two years, Riverworks has hosted more than 150 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](#) 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 and Thursday 7 a.m. to 3 p.m., Friday and Saturday 7 a.m. to 8 p.m., and Sunday 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. Locals hosts Riverworks jam sessions open to musicians of all ages and experience levels on Friday nights from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. Music-loving audience members are welcome and encouraged 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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