

NEWS RELEASE

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***Winter Birds Dream of Summer*, Oil Paintings by Jeremy Joseph, on View through January at Adkins Arboretum**

There's a story behind each of Easton artist Jeremy Joseph's paintings, on view in the Adkins Arboretum Visitor's Center through January. Why would a pair of bright-eyed birds be carrying potted plants on their backs, and what's behind chickadees playing mixed doubles on the tennis court? In his show *Winter Birds Dream of Summer*, the antics of these animated birds pique both curiosity and imagination. There will be a reception to meet the artist on Sat., Dec. 14 from 3 to 5 p.m.



*Jeremy Joseph, "For the Tidewater Apartment,"
oil and collage on board, 26" x 29"*

Ranging from cartoon sketches to painterly renderings of colorful ruby-crowned kinglets, Joseph's spirited birds are totally focused on their own particular activities. Some flit around the bare branches of a winter tree, while others pointedly discuss nest-building as newlywed humans might plan their first home together.

"I'm a bird nerd," Joseph said. "I feed them in my backyard. Each bird is a character. I love birds and the curiosity of birds and these little friendships and errands that they run."

A habitual observer of the birds in his yard, Joseph finds parallels with human activities as he observes their playful curiosity in gathering food, courting their mates, making nests and interacting with one another.

For the past 17 years, Joseph has been an art teacher at Easton Elementary School. For him, teaching art is really teaching the process of creative imagination. The father of two girls, now in their teens, he is continually amazed by the creativity of young people and does his best to encourage it in both his daughters and his students.

“Working with five- to twelve-year-olds, I’m like, everyone’s an artist,” he explained. “There’s no pretense to this, it’s nothing fancy—we’re exploring. I get so much juice from hanging with the little ones, and the energy and curiosity in that.”

Joseph’s own paintings are all about exploring that energy and curiosity. He loves to make quick sketches and uses loose, casual strokes of oil paint to translate them into finished paintings, often accented with bits of patterned fabric collage or marks made with graphite or crayon.

He credits Henri Matisse as his inspiration for simplifying his forms, paring them down to their most essential shapes and gestures. Turning these spare images into a kind of basic vocabulary for his stories, he explores not only the interactions of his birds and how they relate to human activity, but also his materials and the colors, textures and compositions he can create with them. Mischievously, he mingles super-simple stick-figure versions of trees and birds with lushly rendered apples or pears reminiscent of a Paul Cezanne still-life. There are no rules in Joseph’s art. It’s all about experimentation and sparking the imagination.

“I just love the process,” he explained. “The process is it for me with teaching or my own art. I don’t think people realize it’s akin to putting in a garden or cooking or building furniture, it’s all the same. I love the hand of the artist.”

This show is part of Adkins Arboretum’s ongoing exhibition series of work on natural themes by regional artists. It is on view through Jan. 31 at the Arboretum Visitor’s Center located at 12610 Eveland Road near Tuckahoe State Park in Ridgely. Contact the Arboretum at 410-634-2847, ext. 0 or info@adkinsarboretum.org for gallery hours.

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Adkins Arboretum is a 400-acre native garden and preserve at the headwaters of the Tuckahoe Creek in Caroline County. Open year round, the Arboretum offers educational programs for all ages about nature and gardening. For more information, visit adkinsarboretum.org or call 410-634-2847, ext. 0.

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