



# CrystalCity

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## **Real-life art, virtual reality come together through events at Artomatic**

Sculpture, music and other art are common attractions at Artomatic, the one-of-a-kind arts extravaganza being held in Arlington, Va., through May 20.

But one Washington, D.C. artist is adding a new high-tech twist to the mix: Portions of the sculpture contest, live music performances and art discussions he is holding at Artomatic this month will be based in an online virtual reality world.

Jack Whitsitt, a portrait artist and self-proclaimed "online junkie," is playing host to a series of virtual art events that will link the Washington, D.C., arts community to its online counterpart. The events — which will include discussions, performances and art contests — will be held online via Second Life, a popular virtual reality world.

The events will kick off Saturday, May 12, with a virtual and real-life art critique; continue on Friday, May 18, with a virtual musical performance; and end Saturday, May 19, with a evening-long virtual arts festival. The events promise to draw a crowd: In April, a virtual concert Whitsitt held that featured musicians physically located in four countries played to an eager audience — both online and at Artomatic.

D.C.-area residents can become a part of the upcoming events by coming to Artomatic and watching the broadcast and interacting with artists and performers, or participating online through Second Life. To participate in Whitsitt's Second Life events online, visit <http://jackwhitsitt.com/dcsl> and select the "Visit the Gallery" link. An agreement with Second Life allows Whitsitt to drop visitors directly into the gallery without going through the usual orientation process.

"Artistically, I'm just using this as a metaphor to help people understand the potential value of Second Life-type worlds to the artistic community," Whitsitt said. "It lets people dip their toes into it in a form they understand. This is a vastly underutilized and underappreciated art medium and tool in a digital age."

Whitsitt is the creator of the SintixErr Gallery, a virtual art gallery for Washington, D.C.-area artists and performers that is located online within Second Life. The virtual gallery is home to 80 artworks by about 20 D.C. artists.

Boasting more than 6 million participants, Second Life (<http://secondlife.com>) is an animated world where users can create and sell virtual goods and services, interact in virtual games, own virtual property and create virtual art, among other activities.

**Reporters: To interview Whitsitt, call (703) 409-9366 or e-mail him at [sintixerr@gmail.com](mailto:sintixerr@gmail.com).**

## Schedule of Second Life/Artomatic virtual art events

### MIXED REALITY ART CRITIQUE

Saturday, May 12

7:30 p.m.

Artomatic Digital Arts Room (6A36)

*Artists and art fans will gather in-person at Artomatic and in the virtual world Second Life to discuss and critique selected works of art. Linked by audio and video, the two locations — real and virtual — will form a single discussion group, addressing each piece of art and providing feedback to the artists.*

### VIRTUAL MUSIC PERFORMANCE

Friday, May 18

8 p.m.

Artomatic Digital Arts Room (6A36)

*Atlanta folk musician Cyndrian Rutabaga will perform virtually through Second Life. The virtual performance can be viewed at Artomatic, where it will be projected onto a wall. The Artomatic audience will be able to interact with the singer and the virtual audience as well.*

### SPIRIT FENS ART FESTIVAL

Saturday, May 19

6 p.m. to 1 a.m.

Multiple art events, sponsored by Second Life businesses, will be held in a virtual “art park.” Highlights of the evening’s events include:

#### **2D Art Contest**

6 p.m. to 7 p.m.

*Through art judging and discussion, Artomatic artists will compete alongside artists in Second Life for cash prizes.*

#### **Virtual Sculpture Contest**

8 p.m. to 11 p.m.

*Second Life virtual sculptors will compete for cash prizes. There will be a jury prize, an audience prize and a runner-up prize in each category. Artomatic attendees will be able to ask the sculptors questions and will provide input on the “Audience Favorite” award winner.*

#### **Virtual Bands and Artomatic Bands**

Throughout the evening

*Real-life performers at Artomatic will be broadcast via audio and video into Second Life. Second Life performers will also play live in Second Life. A full music schedule will be available prior to May 19. See <http://jackwhitsitt.com/dcsl> for updates.*

To view the schedule of events as it is updated, visit <http://jackwhitsitt.com/dcsl>.

### **Artomatic**

**April 13–May 20, 2007**

2121 Crystal Drive, Arlington, Va.

[www.artomatic.org](http://www.artomatic.org)

Metro stop: Crystal City

Free admission, donations accepted

### **Hours**

Sunday, Tuesday, Wednesday: Noon–10 p.m.

Thursday: Noon–11 p.m.

Friday, Saturday: Noon–1 a.m.

Closed Mondays