

# Robert Lange Studios

continued from Page 5

works could only be created with both artists, as the title says, “combining their powers.” Durfee, who has become recognized for painting fanciful realities, said, “These collaborations act as a call-and-response. Rob creates precise compositions, that frankly hold up nicely on their own, and my job is to add to the conversation. The magic is in finding a response that’s equal parts belonging and unexpected. The blend elevates each of our parts.” All are welcome June 5 for an all day opening where, pandemic pending, each artist will be on hand. Please check the gallery’s website for updated opening information.

Although the two artists haven’t seen each other since the lockdown, Durfee says, “Our conversation continued through art. Rob and I became creative pen pals through the pandemic, which has been a comfort for me.”

Although Lange tries not to play favorites, there is a 24” x 24” painting of a brown bear facing a hummingbird as he pretends to fly in a make-shift airplane. This piece ended up being the title painting for the show. Lange painted the bowl and colorful cloth and Durfee created the bear and scenery. Lange then went back into the piece and painted the hummingbird. Lange said, “The process for many of the works was, I would paint something and Nathan would react to it. However, there are a few paintings in the show where we went back and forth a few times. This exchange of ideas is what really makes the entire show so interesting. The body of work goes beyond each individual artists capabilities and fulfills the old adage of making something that is greater than the sum of its parts.”



Work by Robert Lange & Nathan Durfee

Although the Bear is Lange’s favorite, the painting *The Creative Blueprint* a 18” x 36” oil on panel perhaps best illustrates the wonderful call and response that was accomplished in the series. Durfee said, “We also tried to stretch the limits of the concept. *The Chef’s Table* was one of our largest collaborations yet, which inherently has a lot of risk involved. *The Creative Blueprint* was passed back and forth between us 6 times, and easily was the most time consuming of the project. Rob had the ‘final say’ in this piece, and depicting his son painting his own version of the imaginative tower which tied the piece together.”

As the exhibit opening date was approaching, Lange and Durfee both had the desire to make a specific piece reflecting on the Covid-19 experience. Lange says, “Of all the paintings Nathan has made over the years, I have always been emotionally moved by his paintings where two



Work by Robert Lange & Nathan Durfee

characters were embracing or hugging.” In the painting *Heroes Having a Moment* Lange painted only the clothing of two people in an emotional embrace. Nathan finished the scene with two masked and caped superheroes in a warm hug. The piece is an homage to all the hard work and effort of our healthcare and essential workers who have given so much but are also experiencing the same feelings of loneliness and an unknown future.

This show has many narrative elements; telling stories to tie the paintings together within the body of work is something both artists often do separately in their careers. Together, the end effect showcases what can be achieved when working together and trusting each other as artists.

This trust has been years in the making. Durfee said, “It’s been nearly a decade since Rob and I have had a collaborative show. Not only have we both matured and grown as individual artists, but we’ve learned from previous collaborations and have discovered where the art really works. The Chrome bowls are a perfect example: they give Rob a chance to flex his photo-realism muscles in the chrome, while also providing a vessel for me to create a narrative.”

“*With Our powers Combined*, a 1990’s Captain Planet reference, became a perfect fit for our show title. Through all of this exploration and cooperation, we wanted to make sure it was still fun! Collaboration involves risk and trust, and it’s hard to accept those if you’re taking yourself too seriously. The show’s title became a reminder that the work will be it’s best when we’re inspired and enjoying ourselves. Rob and I are both on the Gen X/Millennial cusp, so Saturday morning cartoons were a big influence in our childhood,” said Durfee.

Overall the exhibit is the perfect example of both artist’s unyielding ability to consistently evolve as painters. Lange says, “Since we both have studios in the gallery, Nathan and I talk about our careers and our artistic paths on a fairly regular basis. A commonality we share has always been the desire to grow and never plateau as artists. We knew with this concept for an exhibit we would be leaving our comfort zones and the outcome would be anything but expected, a perfect place to learn something new about ourselves.”

For further information check our SC Commercial Gallery listings, contact Megan Lange by calling 843/805-8052 or visit ([www.robertlangestudios.com](http://www.robertlangestudios.com)).

## Editorial Commentary

continued from Page 4 / [back to Page 4](#)

<http://www.facebook.com/PatriciaCotterill>

Linda D’Elia  
Instagram @lindadeliafineart

Jacqui Fehl  
[www.Instagram.com/jacquifehl](http://www.Instagram.com/jacquifehl)  
[www.Facebook.com/jacquifehlart](http://www.Facebook.com/jacquifehlart)

Annette Giaco  
Instagram @ agiacoart  
Facebook.com/agiacoart

Page 8 - Carolina Arts, June 2020

website [www.agiacoart.com](http://www.agiacoart.com)

Susan Irish  
<https://www.susanirishartist.com/artist-support-pledge>

Erin Keane  
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continued above on next column to the right

[Table of Contents](#)



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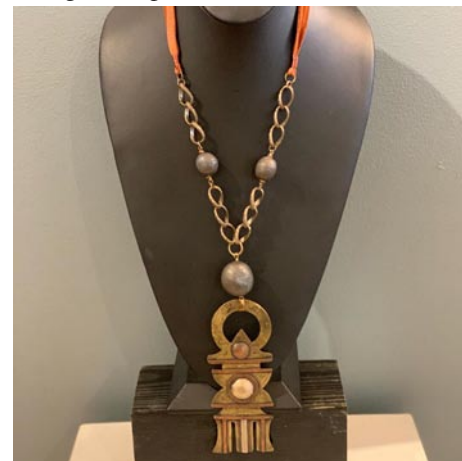
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Meryl Lefkovich  
Instagram @meryllefkovichdesign  
website: [www.MerylLefkovichDesign](http://www.MerylLefkovichDesign)

Denise Markbreit  
<https://www.facebook.com/denise.markbreit>

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