

# Robert Lange Studios in Charleston, SC, Features Works by Matt Story

The Robert Lange Studios in Charleston, SC, will present *Breaking the Surface*, featuring contemporary figurative paintings by Matt Story, on view from Feb. 1 - 22, 2019. A reception will be held on Feb. 1, from 6-8pm.

In this series of paintings Story captures the movement created by the figure as it moves underwater, specifically focusing on bright uplifting colors.

“For me, *Breaking the Surface* is a trinity of meaning: firstly, simply piercing the surface of the water and taking a breath when bubbling up from below; but also, breaking the surface of the painting to see through the two dimensions of the work to construct the three dimensional idea in mind; but also, breaking the surface of meaning to reach a deeper more collective experience triggered by viewing a particular depiction,” says Story.

While creating his paintings Story often has the viewer’s experience in mind. “The paint surface is in some sense a mirror for the viewer, reflecting back not his or her superficial self, but a deep shared humanness. This is the essence of looking at a piece that’s totally unfamiliar to you and yet, being awed with a sense of recognition. Your reactions, those memories and feelings are uniquely yours but you’re suddenly filled with a sense that you share them, at least with the artist, but probably even with everyone else. That of course is art at its best: the artist, sometimes doesn’t even know what he’s doing because he’s a conduit of his or her own collective awareness,” said Story.

In a number of works in the show Story plays with the emotions created when a figure is juxtaposed against a foreign feeling space. “Two pieces in this show particularly bely my recent obsession with the feeling of cool and warm tones closely transitioned.

In *Cool Blue Night*, the figure is warm and alive in an otherwise cool void. In *Neon Green Layback*, there is a similar play between cool and warm tone, but not sharply transitioning in tenebrism, but instead graduating ever so smoothly from the bright warm surface at the central horizon, to the cool depth below and above.”



Work by Matt Story

This exhibit is a celebration of the artist’s love of motion, color and light created in the underwater world. Story says, “I was striving to put classical forms in contemporary settings in a new way. When I saw the underwater environment, I was hooked! So instead of Manet’s Olympia reclining nude on a sofa, I have her doing a backflip underwater in a bikini! (Ha! Take that École de Beaux-Arts!)”

“I’ve also always been attracted to rendering extreme lighting conditions (such as with my cityscapes at night in the rain, or treed landscapes in the snow near dusk),” adds Story. “And the natural light in an underwater environment is extreme, with these spectacular aberrations, the fleeting prisms and compound reflections. It seemed technically impossible at times; so naturally, I thought it was the ideal brick wall to begin pounding my head against.”

Throughout history water has been a strong point of symbolism. Story said, “I think, one of the things painting does well, as an art form, is present metaphor. Water is this amazing metaphor for the deeper self. We drink, wash, drown, float, swim and splash our way through life. When I paint a woman floating under water, I see her as suspended in her own self-awareness. She’s



Work by Matt Story

immersed in the deeper self, with its risks and fears, and then her emerging takes on a sense of re-birth, a cleansing, a baptism. Our first sensations occurred to us while floating in a warm, nurturing maternal pool too, so the similes are complex.”

“Of course, water also has a fun playful side. We all share those memories of fun and relaxing summers at beaches and pools, immersed in joy. I’d bet the vast majority of us have at least one cherished memory like that.”

Story studied art from an early age and demonstrated a unique skill for rendering verisimilitude, or hyper-realism. “I was lauded for ‘photo-realistic’ technique, but I was never after that, really, after what a camera impartially sees, because there’s so much more there, captured only by the human filter of memory. We all possess these invisible imprints, through experience and living, but often its only artists who can play it back for us, to remind us. The paint surface needs to be a mirror for the viewer, reflecting back not his or her superficial self, but a deep shared humanness. This is the essence of looking at a piece that’s totally unfamiliar to you and yet, being awed with a sense of recognition. Your reactions, those memories and feelings are uniquely yours but you’re suddenly filled with a sense that you share them, at least with the artist, but probably even with everyone else. That of course is art at its best: the artist, sometimes doesn’t even know what he’s doing because he’s a conduit of his or her own collective awareness.”

Story worked as a technical illustrator and graphic artist from his early teens, and studied art in the United States and Western Europe. After graduating from U.C.L.A. he worked extensively throughout North America in film and television production. “The collaboration drove me crazy at some point. Of course, the isolation in the studio can be challenging too, but it suits me far better. In fact, I’m filled with a melancholy at the end of the day and I can hardly wait to rise early and launch into the studio (to the chagrin of my family).”

Story has worked for over twenty years from his studio in Los Angeles but in mid-2013 began traveling with his wife, first with a long hiatus on the Isle of Palms near Charleston, SC, and recently a long stint near Santa Fe, NM, and is currently in New Orleans where he paints today, often twelve or more hours a day and seven days a week. His method of oil painting on canvas and panel closely resembles the classical method, used for centuries by masters such as Titian and Caravaggio, two of Story’s heroes, fastidiously building up thin glazes, painting “fat over lean” with traditional materials. His work is included in private and corporate collections in the United States, Europe and Asia.

Robert Lange Studios is a gallery space run by artist and gallery owners Megan and Robert Lange. As such, it is dedicated to the development of an on-going dialogue between artists from a diverse range of artistic disciplines at differing levels of their careers.

For further information check our SC Commercial Gallery listings or call the gallery at 843/805-8052.

The deadline each month to submit articles, photos and ads is the 24th of the month prior to the next issue. This will be Feb. 24th for the March 2019 issue and Mar. 24 for the April 2019 issue. So, if you want to be in the March issue, you better get working on that ad or press release now, as time waits for no one - nor does Carolina Arts.

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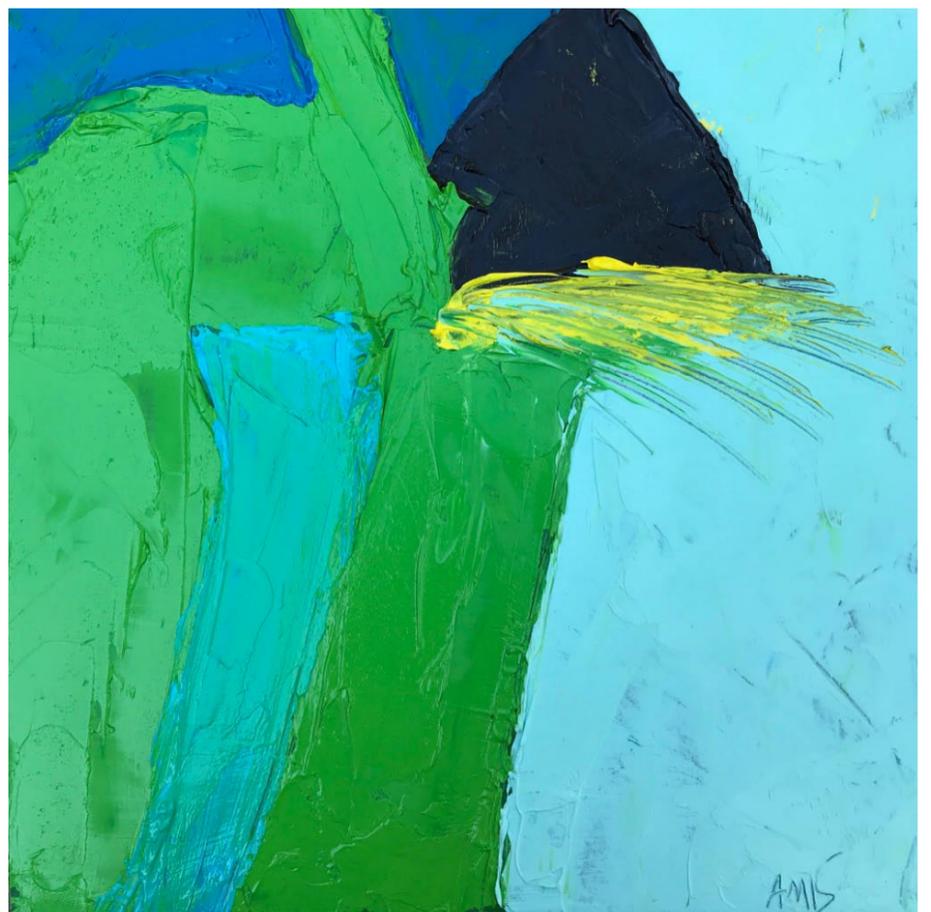
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