

ORLANDO WEEKLY

NEWS, VIEWS, ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

FREE

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Art epiphanies of Knickerbocker & Lax

The second-story art studio littered with paint and brushes shakes as the train rumbles along the nearby Maitland tracks. The paintings leaning against the walls come on just as strong with bold colors and primitive figures that command attention.

The artist, Lorraine Lax, stands between two 5-foot canvases that stretch just above her diminutive 4-foot-10-inch frame topped by close-cropped hair. Both of the abstracts will hang in the show that opens Monday, Sept. 16, at Art Prospectivo, along with works by another local talent, Carl Knickerbocker. (The exhibit is being held to celebrate the first anniversary of the fine-art gallery and modern-furniture showroom.)

On Lax's left is an installment in her "Allen Nation" series, with an avant-garde creature that apes a super-hero flexing high energy. On her right is a work-in-progress of a princess-like figure in a captivating red dress - more Courtney Love than Sleeping Beauty.

You don't have to look far to find the roots of the intensity reflected in Lax's painted personalities. She's never been a shrinking violet and accomplishments follow her focus, whether it's painting or working in her public relations and advertising company. Lax's right- and left-brain exercises. She started painting only a half-dozen years ago, though the arts have been omnipresent in her life: theater, fashion, photography, writing, graphics and design.

Business clients have come to expect the integration of fine-art into her commercial

LOCAL COLOR

WHAT: Abstracts by Carl Knickerbocker & Lorraine Lax

WHERE: A Different Perspective, 1250 W. Fairbanks Ave., Winter Park

WHEN: Monday, Sept. 16, through mid-October

Cost: Free; 628-8777

work, but a different muse is at play in the aggressive fantasies that flow from her subconscious onto the canvas. Lax's dreams were validated last year when she was chosen by artist David Salle to study in his artist-in-residency program at the Atlantic Center for the Arts. As the only uncredentialed artist in the three-week program, she cried every night but it strengthened her vision. Future plans extend to Paris, where there's been interest in her work.

New York roots, Central Florida-re-seeing, lack of formal art training and work in advertising are personal similarities that Lax shares with Knickerbocker, the second artist in the show. In their art, they share a bold use of color and primitive figures, but Lax's style is emotional and fantastic, and Knickerbocker's is detached and grounded.

His work makes mocking statements about contemporary society, frequently with a

Every picture tells a story: "The Last Orange Grove in Seminole County" by Carl Knickerbocker; inset, "Birthright Dream" by Lorraine Lax

political jab and always with a punchline. Sometimes the laugh comes simply from the campy images in his developing and recurring iconography: (Gatorman, for instance, with the body of a gator and a head of a man in "Gator Cassadeja Vision Vibe.") Other times, the laugh hits after title is recognized, such as "The Last Orange Grove in Seminole County," pictured here.

Conflict provokes much of his work, says Knickerbocker, 42, from his cottage studio on a wooded estate in Chululua. He himself is caught in a love-loath conflict over overdeveloping Florida.

Interest in history and sociology propelled Knickerbocker through the University of Central Florida. He now works in advertising for a real-estate company and paints at Cafe

Tu Tu Tango. Knickerbocker says he had no affinity for art or exhibitionism prior to his epiphany in 1984 when he began drawing, then painting. His validating kick came when he won the 1995 1996 Florida Individual Artist Fellowship award that came with a \$5,000 check.

There's no stopping the prolific Knickerbocker now, as he seeks outlets for his work, which he says isn't complete until it is shared by others. "I have a vision, have a style, energy and inspiration... I'm really working it," says the lanky artist, with a gleam in his eye. ♦

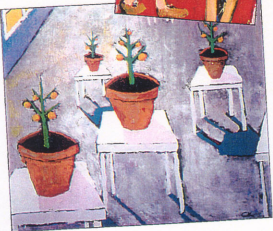
ART



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NEWS

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