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SOUTHLAKE

STYLE



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READERS' CHOICE



Art In The Square Featured Artist Has A Distinct Style

Hailing from a small town in upstate New York, David Palmer grew up surrounded by dairy farms, wooded fields and creeks whose fertile grounds shaped his childhood summers and artistic abilities. David sold his first painting at a school art show at the age of 12. Today, this Californian's body of work can be seen in galleries and museums across the country, not to mention more than a dozen Hollywood feature films and at this month's Art In The Square.

A TRIP TO ITALY TOTALLY CHANGED... the way I thought about painting. I'd always thought of a painting as just a visual image. But seeing 500-year-old frescos falling apart, being patched and repaired, reminded me that they are also physical objects, subject to the elements and the passage of time. The surfaces of my paintings reveal patches of underlying color, reminiscent of those aging frescos, and of the peeling American billboards I see out on the road.

MY WORK IS A COMBINATION OF... the vocabulary of Pop Art and classical sensibility. The style I call "Retro Pop" features singular subjects, bright colors and a shallow picture space. While much Pop Art is a response to mass media, my paintings are inspired by daily life. They are rendered with an attention to detail that has more in common with classical painting than with comic books or advertising.

I FIND INSPIRATION IN... dreams, memories, daily life and contemporary culture. I paint things from personal experience that are also universal. My cow paintings remind me of riding my bike past the Holsteins near our house when I was a kid. The Arrivals series came from eating at the In 'N' Out Burger next to LAX while watching the planes come in.

MY ASTRONAUT SERIES... came to life after hearing a news story about the crew aboard the International Space Station. After six months in orbit, they were returning to Earth in the midst of a pandemic. It got me thinking about how they were going from one kind of social distancing to another and about the isolation we were all experiencing at the time. I wondered if they'd keep wearing their space suits at home.

THERE ARE TWO PARTS TO... being an artist — the solitary process of creating the work, and the social part of getting it out into the world. I'm

thrilled to be a featured artist at this year's Art In The Square and that my painting "Re-Entry" helps define the visual identity of this year's show.

I TRAVEL TO... art fairs across the country showing my paintings. Some are in big cities, like Chicago or Philadelphia, and others are in vacation destinations like Palm Springs or Park City. What I love about Art In The Square is that Southlake feels a bit like the small town I grew up in, but it's also part of a major metropolitan area. The setting and the audience are a wonderful blend of urban and rural.

"THE X-FILES," "SPIDER-MAN" AND "THE POLAR EXPRESS"... all featured digital effects I helped create. It was a cool day job and my work appeared in over a dozen big Hollywood films. While creating the three-headed dog for "Harry Potter," I worked with modelers, lighters, animators, composers and computer programmers to realize the director's vision. After spending the day in front of a computer, I'd go to my studio and paint. The film work helped support myself while I pursued the thing I loved.

MY STUDIO IS... a converted two-car garage just 20 feet behind our house in Pasadena, California. There's a huge tree in the backyard, with a noisy population of crows and ravens. My dog Wilson is my studio manager, and he does a good job of letting me know when to take a break and throw him a tennis ball. It all helps balance my work and personal lives.

WHAT I MOST ENJOY IS... exploring recurring themes and experimenting with new ideas. It's like taking a walk in a new neighborhood. At each corner, I decide which way to turn, and I end up arriving at places I couldn't have predicted. The journey into the unknown is what I find exciting. I can't imagine ever stopping.



FIVE MINUTES *with...*

DAVID PALMER