

*The Complexities of Co*, on view at Eye Lounge until September 11, 2016 explores the evolution of artist Keith Laber as she introduces metalwork into her stone sculptures. These changes are cited as a major contributing inspiration of *The Complexities of Co* by Laber as she writes “the prefix co...together/with. For the past four years, I’ve been experiencing “together” with a woman, who I now know, is the greatest thing I have ever chosen for myself.” With the union of metal and stone, Laber illustrates these changes of self-perception in her previous state of “myself” and the transition to “together.” In their interaction, these two materials that can often stand alone, morph into reciprocal halves.



In *Companion* (above) Laber shows the two materials accompanying each other in a way that shows the strongest characteristics of both. The pillar of stone provides balance to the sculpture and features beautiful curvature, drawing the eye upwards. The metal base that Laber has welded serves as the anchor of the two intersecting materials. A chain is attached to the metal base and is pulled taut due to the weight of the stone, a testament to the importance of both materials in *Companion*, as one cannot exist without the other to lean against. Each material changes its dominance based on the angle that the viewer takes. From the front, the stone face and the texture is the focal point, however when turned sideways the stone is actually being held upright, as the supporter.



In *Coexist*, Laber shows stone and metal in a more integrated tone. The stone hasn't been smoothed and is still in its jagged form as if plucked directly from its source. The metal has penetrated the stone and wraps itself around and through, mimicking a vine. The wide base balances the sculpture and even though both materials are roughly shaped, they merge in unity, a theme Laber often visits. She writes "By myself", felt sure, safe, simple. A way of being that didn't require me to be vulnerable, yet it felt diminished and lacked potential."



In *Complement* Laber shows a complete merger, with the metal forming a column shape and the stone exposed towards the top of the sculpture. The wire achieves its shape from the stone, as it would not have grown by itself to climb upwards. Laber's statements on relationships are seen in various interpretations that take place within her work. While one person may see the wire closing off the stone, Laber uses the wire as a ladder for the stone to be raised at a high position, something not possible for both in their original states.

Laber writes "The emotions and feelings communicated with each piece are the same emotions and feelings all human beings experience." She uses *Companion*, *Coexist*, and *Compliment* to take the viewer through the reactions connected to becoming "together." Laber's sculptures are strong examples of abandoning the safety and security of isolation and embracing the new vulnerability that goes with merging two opposite but strong materials.