



ELEMENTS

The Art of Cornelia Kubler Kavanagh and Charlie Miesmer

January 27 – March 10, 2024

Artists' Reception: January 27th, 5-7pm

ARC Fine Art is pleased to announce the upcoming exhibition, *Elements: The Art of Cornelia Kubler Kavanagh and Charlie Miesmer*. The exhibition will be on view from January 27th through March 10th with an artists' reception on Saturday, January 27th from 5 to 7pm in its Fairfield, Connecticut gallery. The exhibition is comprised of 18 sculptures by Cornelia Kavanagh dating from 1996 to 2022 and 13 paintings by Charlie Miesmer dating from 2009 to 2022. ARC Fine Art has worked with Charlie Miesmer since his inaugural exhibition with the gallery in 2013 and has worked with Cornelia Kavanagh since 2018, following a collaborative exhibition of her work at Tucker Robbins in New York City.

Elements brings together the art of two local artists whose artworks celebrate the seven defining elements of art: line, shape, form, space, value, color and texture. While at first glance Miesmer's work appears to be more concerned with line, color and texture achieved through his use of collaged strips of painted paper, his paintings also demonstrate an interest in form and space especially in his landscapes which reveal depth and perspective through suggested horizon lines. Kavanagh's sculptures celebrate form and space in their rounded volumes, sweeping curves and the persistent play of positive and negative shapes that are revealed within their compositions. That said, the sculptural works on view also present a love of texture demonstrated in the two discs from her most recent series *Ancient Musings* and a love of color vividly expressed in *Tsunami VIII*.

Cornelia Kubler Kavanagh is a self-taught artist who has worked exclusively as a sculptor for the past 37 years from her seaside studio in Wilson Point, Connecticut. The daughter of noted art historian George Kubler, Kavanagh was nurtured in an environment rich in the visual arts and her artistic consciousness was informed by extensive travels abroad and studies in South America and Europe. Although she had imagined becoming an artist right after college, she taught history while raising her family, before giving in to her life-long passion for translating ideas into form, expressing the essence of form in a declarative way. Kavanagh drew great inspiration from a book her father wrote, *The Shape of Time*, as well an earlier book, *The Life of Forms in Art*, by Henri Focillon. Both books assert that all shapes, art works, artifacts and even tools are bound by shared concepts over a certain period of time, independent of style.

Teaching herself to carve stone in the Modernist tradition of Moore, Hepworth and Arp, Kavanagh gradually developed a style of her own characterized by rounded, sensual shapes, evidenced in her earliest sculpture, *Seated Figure* of 1986. This enthusiasm and passion for form is brought to fruition in a pair of figurative bronzes from 2007, *Mitsuko Uchida* and *Maria Martinez*, and again in her recent trio of *After Moore* sculptures. As demand for her sculpture increased, Kavanagh turned to carving polystyrene, then finishing her maquettes in plaster, resin or polymer for casting in bronze, aluminum and stainless steel, demonstrated in *Reclining Figure* and *Tsunami VIII* which simultaneously reveal her love of form but also an interest in color heightening the dramatic expression of these pieces. Intrigued by hieroglyphic symbols of ancient cultures, Kavanagh recently completed a series of discs



hand carved from Brazilian Steatite entitled *Ancient Musings*. Two individual discs from this series, *Transformation* and *Virility*, reveal an interest in symbolism in the delicate curvilinear carved designs which lay harmoniously over the natural veining of the stone. The elemental form of a circle punctuated by a concentric cavity within bestows a quiet grandeur to her latest work.

A Southport resident for over 40 years, Charlie Miesmer studied painting and sculpture alongside a comparative literature major at Colorado College and Columbia University. After graduating from Columbia, he entered advertising and enjoyed a long and highly successful career as a copywriter, Creative Director and Vice-Chairman at BBDO, Inc. Charlie was responsible for award-winning campaigns for Visa, GE, HBO, Mars, AT&T and many others. Although he continued to paint through much of his career, he focused his creative energy on personal expression when he retired in 2006. This passion has consumed him for the last two decades, resulting in a body of work marked by a expressive use of color, original compositions and rich textural surface.

Miesmer began painting in the open air during the summers in Nantucket. Using a pad of Arches paper as an easel and working out of the back of his pickup truck, the quietude and peace he found in the landscape of sea grass, dunes and the ocean resulted in a series of intimately scaled and spontaneously sketched oil pastels. These found an immediate and receptive audience, and quickly led to the realization that he needed more space and needed to work bigger. Before long he built a studio at his home in Southport and started a period of more serious work. One day soon after this his daughter, Lily, spilled paint on the pages of a textbook. The visual result of this accident fascinated him, the reveal of words behind layers of color, and he began experimenting with it. This "experiment" has lasted for 25 years, in which individual pages from books have been painted, stained, sanded, bleached and transformed well past the intent of their original publishers and then arranged in either grid-like or random patterns on canvas, creating a surface of shifting and atmospheric fields of color. This technique is illustrated in *Water Music*, *Fog Moving In* and an untitled work of 2022 which present simplified views of land, sea, and sky yet still retain the traditional divisions of space and clear horizon lines. Other paintings like *Raga* and *Ruby* possess no identifiable subject or reference and are complete abstractions of color, shape and texture, while a few like *Night Owl* and *Contest 2* hint at objects in reality. Many of Miesmer's works incorporate text, often repeated sayings or short phrases laid out in multiple directions offering a sense of the artist's inherent humor and wit he employed in his long career in advertising.

Elements will be on view at 3113 Bronson Road, in Fairfield, Connecticut from January 27th through March 10th by appointment only. For more information, please visit the gallery website arcfineartllc.com. For inquiries or to schedule a viewing, please contact Adrienne Ruger Conzelman at 2038959595 or infoarcfineart@gmail.com.