

CHARLIE MIESMER

A Southport resident for over 30 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 decade, resulting in a body of work marked by a refined use of color, original composition and a very unique sense of humor.

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 15 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.

Aside from landscapes and abstractions, Charlie has also worked on a series of paintings which reveal his fascination with words and the tricks they can play on the human eye. On occasion, words and phrases are repeated multiple times in different directions making up the entire composition and often communicate something very different than the words themselves, becoming hypnotic and oddly funny. At other times, a more limited use of text is incorporated into larger fields of color formed by strips of paper which Miesmer again tears, paints and sands to achieve specific tonalities and textures. While there is no doubt that this aspect of his work has been stimulated by his experiences in advertising, it has also gone well beyond that, and will continue to do so.