

## CHARLES MITCHELL

Picturemaker Charles Mitchell is a Wisconsin resident whose works are attracting national attention for both their form and revelatory content. Recognized by the Vermont Studio Center of Johnson, VT (two residencies, 1996 and 1999) and the Southwest Association for Indian Arts in Santa Fe, NM (fellowship and grant to further works in progress), Mr. Mitchell's works have been shown at such museums as Chicago's Field Museum and Shedd Aquarium; Wisconsin's Leigh Yawkey Woodson and Charles Allis museums; The Heard Museum in Phoenix, AZ; the Institute of American Indian Art in Santa Fe, NM, and the Iteljorg Museum in Indianapolis, IN.

Charles Mitchell's present artistic achievement is most notable for its ability to open the mind of the viewer to new ways of seeing. He began his career as an art apprentice in Chicago, mastering the elements of drawing, design, and painting. He first achieved recognized success as a figurative illustrator, receiving awards by the Society of Illustrators (New York, NY) and the Artist's Guild (Chicago, IL). For more than a decade he successfully created works in the realist tradition--a style of practice that Mr. Mitchell cogently self-describes as "survival art."

A strong interest in the natural sciences led him to undertake a ten-year study of animal and plant life with particular emphasis on the aquatic environment. Key to this seminal period of his work was a concern for placing his fully developed artistic techniques of realist representation at the service of a more interpretive vision. Mitchell's evolving form of interpretive realism received many state and national awards, including one by the American Artist Magazine for his piece entitled "Aqua-borealis."

Although still primarily representational, Mr. Mitchell began to simplify the manner of presentation, eliminating detail unnecessary to the prime focus of the work.

Simultaneously with this evolution he began a personal journey to explore his Native American roots (he is an enrolled member of the Ft. Peck Tribes of Montana). Recalling to service his figurative drawing skills, he began a picture series of ethnic portrayals culminating in a self-designed/published book "Sing Back My Bones" (1997) which also included poetry by the noted Wisconsin poet, Ellen Kort.

A freeing-up of presenting stylistic conventions now began to appear, with new and artistically innovative forms emerging. Discovery and utilization of several printmaking processes (monotype, pochoir, etc.) accelerated his quest for greater unification of both the material subject and the space/time environment: describing such indescribable elements as time, soulfulness, and hidden nature brought into light. Applying his technical skills to bring forth a new intuitive/metaphorical form to picture the reality within and around us has enabled Charles Mitchell to create challenging and exciting work at the Ozaukee Art Center.

Mr. Mitchell has also been strongly involved in promoting public interest and understanding of the art-making process. His work, along with that of others, helped bring to the Appleton Art Center the largest audience ever to attend a 1997 show. He has given demonstrations on printmaking at schools and galleries, and has participated in an art apprentice program where young people are given the opportunity to work and study with a professional artist, increasing the student's knowledge of the artist's unique way of seeing things.

Figurative painter, "survival art" creator, and award-winning master of interpretive realism--Charles Mitchell is an innovative metaphorical/intuitive printmaker of growing national interest.