

Mike Shaffer

PAINTER, SCULPTOR, AUTHOR

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Mike Shaffer lives in Ijamsville, Maryland. He received a B.S. degree in chemistry and mathematics from the University of Maryland, an M.S. degree in physiology from Southern Illinois University in 1964 and has studied additionally and at the Maryland Institute of College of Art. Early on his work as a lifeguard, machinist, office assistant, sales associate, instructor and teacher, construction worker in most of the building trades and business owner broadened his horizons and sharpened his interest in painting. Pursuing a dual career, he worked as a scientist in private industry and the government for over thirty years and, at the same time, as an artist before turning his full-time attention to the arts in 1995. His scientific and technical writings have appeared in hundreds of newspapers and magazines around the U.S. and he is the author of two volumes of poetry. His creative writings and images have appeared in *The Washington Post*, the *New Art Examiner* and in several literary reviews including *Connections*, *Lit Wit*, *Potomac Review* and *William and Mary Review*. Born and raised in Cumberland, Maryland, Shaffer is Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Hyattstown Mill Arts Project, a non-profit public cultural arts organization in Montgomery County, Maryland and a member of the Board of Directors of the Washington Sculptors Group. Recipient of nine art awards, two from the Baltimore Museum of Art, he has shown paintings, drawings, works on paper and sculpture including large scale outdoor installations in more than 100 formal group and solo exhibitions in galleries, museums and art centers primarily in the mid-Atlantic region.

Shaffer traveled extensively to art centers and museums around the U.S. in the 1970s and 80s and photographed hundreds of works by leading artists of the time. After giving up a successful start making architectural and interior design accessories and working with found objects, he championed abstract wholeness and minimalism, exploring lines and grids and linear objects and materials in the form of both painting and sculpture. Growing out of a group of carefully controlled work in wax crayon and acrylics in the manner of Agnes Martin, he launched into his latest series, called "Line Paintings," a collection to date of over 100 paintings that take the form of explosive networks of sweeping line fields, grids and swirls complicated with splashes and spots suggestive of the works of Jackson Pollock.

He also does caricature and figure drawing and digital and video work and writes poetry and short stories but believes that abstract painting is the most creative form of artistic expression. Shaffer maintained a studio in Rockville, Maryland for 15 years before moving into a new building in 1985 adjacent to his home in Frederick County, Maryland just north of Washington, DC.