

# CHARLIE BURK

In his large-format contemporary landscapes, Charlie Burk hardly shies away from the details, down to the single very colorful blades of grass that cover the canvas in his current series of paintings. A gallery statement on his work suggests that, in this oil painter's capable hands, "An outdoor landscape becomes a gently shifting kaleidoscope in which nature dances. Burk's unique vision combines an almost photographic realism with the strength of a gestured abstraction." He is a longtime state resident, born in Albuquerque and educated at the University of New Mexico, and his art education began in his childhood at home. "My father was a sculptor, later an architect, and in general a Renaissance man," says Burk, whose own art career has spanned nearly forty years. "I was taught about art, and encouraged in my creativity from the beginning."

## Q&A

### **What inspired this painting?**

The grass series is a new development in my interest in using the textures and patterns in natural forms to create contemporary compositions.

### **What prep work and painting techniques went into it?**

Following the preparation of the panel itself, I begin with an abstract underpainting. The only planning are areas of dark and light that will ultimately give depth and inner space behind the layers that will follow. I then begin adding the grasses in layers from darker to lighter, allowing my response to what develops to determine what I do next. In other words, the painting process is a reactive one; colors and shapes layered on, guided by an intuitive direction. It is much like playing music by ear.

### **What was your greatest challenge in making it?**

I am wanting to become more and more obsessive. It is interesting to me that the more detail there is, the less we see at first. It is much like looking at an eggshell: our brain sees an egg, but the simple shape is made of a very complicated surface.

### **What is your favorite part of this piece?**

This piece has motion and atmosphere, and probably would appeal to a wider range of viewers than the more minimal pieces.

### **How does it relate to your other paintings?**

This series grew out of a series of earlier pieces that used larger plant forms, patterns and shadows to create abstracted landscapes.

### **What do you feel or hope it says to the viewer?**

I feel it is a transitional piece between traditional landscape and the more abstracted ones also in the series.

