Michael Chelminski's interest in landscape started in secondary school, when he was given his first set of paints. He went on to study Art at Carnegie-Mellon and Yale summer Art School at Norfolk, ending up at Yale, where he received a BFA and MFA. He was at Yale in a particularly dynamic time. (some of his classmates were Chuck Close, Janet Fish and Rachstraw Downes). His was the generation that, trained by abstract painters, turned to new definitions of figuration. Interestingly, Chelminski feels his most significant influence from that time was Josef Albers, who he continues to refer to in discussions of his studio practice.

 After Yale, he moved briefly to Bloomington, Indiana to teach at Indiana University. Where he met his wife, Sarah Jane Hope. Early in the marriage the young couple, like many people in that time, became interested in Eastern philosophy and art. An extended trip through India and the Himalayas came early in their marriage. It is tempting to see his serene and introspective recent work as being a manifestation of this interest. It was on this trip Chelminski began a practice that has informed his work throughout the remaining decades: a virtual diary of observation watercolors.

Travel in both Europe and America, has continued to be a part of his life as a painter, but the center has been his studio in the woods of rural Connecticut. From there he has continued to paint, over fifty decades, a body of perceptual work, which continually balances acute observation and abstract design. This work has a range of subject matter, his family, models, still life etc. But always the landscape prevails. And the landscape is always New England; the woods of Connecticut, the sparkling harbors of Cape Cod and Maine. And always informed by rapid, calligraphic watercolors.

In an introduction to a talk on 19th century landscape painting, Michael Chelminski once said "the questioning, equivocal line between the natural and the supernatural will become, itself, the subject matter of painting".

Margaret Grimes, 2018