

[Ambivalence](#) by [John Meyer](#)

Giclee on Paper - Main Subject: Love and Romance





**Item Number**  
5058843129

**Retail Value**  
\$900

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**Dimensions (As Shown)**  
25W x 22H Inches  
63.5W x 55.88H cm

**Medium**  
Giclee on Paper

**Edition**  
- Edition Size is Unknown  
- Hand-Signed   
- Numbered 

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## About John Meyer

Born in Bloemfontein on 13 August 1942, he spent his formative childhood years in Klerksdorp, a small Highveld mining town west of Johannesburg in what is now Gauteng Province. From 1967 to 1969 Meyer worked as an illustrator in London, where he freelanced for magazines such as Readers Digest and newspapers like The Times and The Telegraph, as well as for various advertising agencies in the UK. He moved back to South Africa in 1969, where he became the country's first full-time, specialist illustrator servicing the advertising industry.

He has exhibited with various galleries in the United States and UK since 1978 and lived with his wife Elaine and their two children at Lake Tahoe, Nevada from 1984 to 1986.

Since his first one-man show in 1972, Meyer has been a full time painter in South Africa, where he is generally regarded as the leading and most influential artist in the realist tradition. Meyer lives and works in Cape Town.

"Like a skilled novelist he uses the imaginary narrative to highlight an intense psychological realism that speaks about intimacy and distance".

Brett Hilton-Barber, from John Meyer: Sequential Narratives John Meyer stands outside Postmodernism but looks in. He draws his inspiration from contemporary culture yet renders his subject matter with a classicist's brush. At the centre of his new work is the concept of the narrative, the unfolding story, the moving picture.

In many respects this is at the core of the Postmodernist paradigm, the perpetual present in which the story has no end. But where Meyer differs from the Postmodernist aesthetic is that he eschews gimmickry and performance and concentrates on the traditional painter's concerns of light and composition.

Meyer's paintings are reminiscent of the film noir thriller genre in terms of their moody, austere hues and the tensions evoked by their central characters. They are charged with intrigue, suspense, romance and eroticism.

Although steeped in traditional art-historical references, these paintings draw their central inspiration from contemporary culture, specifically, the moving image. "We live in an age where we are highly influenced by a cinematic view of things" Meyer explains. "Everything is sequential, we relate to stories that unfold but at the same time we are conditioned to seek resolution."

Executed in Meyer's trademark realist style each canvas forms part of an emerging narrative - like a freeze-frame or segment extracted from a film storyboard. But unlike the linear film narrative, the stories provide neither definite beginnings nor neat, singular finales. Their plots spring not only from the optic nerve of the artist but also from the imagination of the viewer.

The realism conveyed through these paintings does not refer simply to Meyer's painterly technique. In these works "reality" also simmers beneath the surface. It resides in the tautness of a look or a touch, and in Meyer's subtle manipulation of composition, lighting and brushstroke. These works evoke the paradoxical truths that often splinter into the unconscious. They are about the conflicts of self and other. They are about intimacy, ambivalence, alienation and desolation.

The viewer's role in these private, tightly hewn vignettes is that of accidental voyeur stumbling across a moment that has been frozen and magnified. Is it a moment that has passed or is yet to take place? Is it life transforming or just another dust particle in the wind? The joy is in the enigma and the exploration of possibilities&

I usually start by looking for something that will kick off a search, and it's typically a single figure. Something suggested in the attitude or body language of that figure can open a door for me that pulls me into exploring further. By adding another figure to the composition I start changing the dynamic without fully knowing where it's going. The light and shade is already established with the first figure. I invariably go through the process of trying three or four other figures to open up the narrative. Each one opens up the narrative in a totally different way. It's as if I'm playing the role of a director in a movie where there's no predetermined script and somehow I've got to create the circumstance to hold it altogether. Each new character has the potential to create a whole new story. But more often than not I commit myself to a single character in a sequence and that character becomes the primary protagonist that everyone else in the painting reacts to.

I use mixed media; essentially an acrylic based paint with a bit of sand mixed in to give it a textural quality - so that when I add layers the brush stroke often breaks up. I paint with various stages of dryness; which means with acrylic you have to work quite quickly. From the moment I mix the paint I have to paint rapidly to prevent it from drying out too fast. I'm forced to work quickly which has a knock on effect on the whole feeling of the painting.

I seek out information wherever I can find it. I watch TV and read magazines and books. I find bits of information, store them and rehash them.

I may use a real person as a starting point from a movie still I might use another figure from another movie, perhaps even from a different era.

If you want the painting to feel real to the viewer, they must be able to dig into their own experiences and identify with what I'm doing. The most important thing I find is to get the light right.

Then things follow more easily. But one needs a visual reference point as a convincing kick off.

If you work purely out of your head no matter how good you are you won't attain the sense of cinematic realism that I'm looking for.

I usually start my day by looking through my visual material options, followed by a light breakfast.

I then go to my office which is attached to my studio to take care of anything unrelated to painting, so I can clear my mind for the painting task ahead. By the time I start to work it is late morning.

I stop for a quick lunch, about half an hour, then I will keep going until the light fails. Elaine brings me a cup of tea from time to time, but everyone knows to leave me alone in the studio. Frankly, there is no other place I would rather be or that brings me more pleasure.

At the end of a typical day I relax by putting my feet up and enjoying a glass of wine and a cigar. I may read some, usually it would be something historical. Then I usually spend the night watching movies or searching for visual imagery. I'm a night owl, and seldom go to bed before midnight.

## Giclee on Paper

Giclee [zhee-clay] is a French term meaning a 'squirt or spray of ink'. This process utilizes sophisticated printing techniques whereby an industrial 8-Color to 12-Color inkjet printer sprays a staggering four million droplets of ink per second onto archival fine art paper or canvas. Requiring highly sophisticated printers and special pigment inks for an extremely wide color gamut, this blend of fine art and state-of-the-art technology produces exceptional fine art prints. Giclee prints are usually coated with a high quality gloss or varnish to minimize abrasion and increase resistance to image fading. Additionally, protective coatings protect expensive prints against moisture.

Giclee prints render deep, saturated colors and retain minute detail, subtle tints and blends. The quality of the giclee print rivals traditional silver-halide and gelatin printing processes and is commonly found in museums, art galleries, and photographic galleries.

The giclee printing process provides better color accuracy than other means of reproduction. The prints may be hand embellished by the artist using paint, ink and gold foil stamping for a mixed media effect. Giclee prints are sometimes mistakenly referred to as Iris prints, which are 4-Color ink-jet prints from a printer pioneered in the late 1970s by Iris Graphics.

Numerous examples of giclee prints can be found in New York City at the Metropolitan Museum, the Museum of Modern Art, and the Chelsea Galleries. Recent auctions of giclee prints have fetched as much as \$20,000.

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