Robert Minichiello was born in 1951 and grew up in a large family in a then-almost rural setting in Nyack, New York: a big house on two acres of land, where the nine children were encouraged by their art-loving parents to roam and explore. He took painting classes from Ken Nishi at the Rockland Center for the Arts and eventually attended the School of Visual Arts in New York. He soon left formal training, however, as he found it too restrictive. Over many years of exploration of the medium, he came to inhabit painting as a way of life. In his youth he worked in New York; eventually he returned to his place of origin and continues to work there.