First, as a person so occupied with language, why do you think you gravitated to visual art/painting and when did you in fact start making art.

When I first started taking art seriously it was under the influence of Saul Steinberg, the New Yorker cartoonist. He made words and letters characters in his drawings, I took to it. But mine was not a logical path, there were many tangents along the way. By the time I got to the work I do now I had made all my experiments and I knew twenty four years ago that the arrangements of text and color was a sufficient path forward for the future.

I started drawing boats as a child and never stopped making something two dimensional. However, I thought I might be a writer in high school, won a few prizes, got to college and could not write a word, and went straight to the art department, I never looked back.

My answer to your question, "when did I start making art," is when I started making this group of work in 1993. Prior to that I was deeply involved in my own learning curve.

Two, how many works will be in the "Pairs" exhibition and what attracted you or intrigued you about presenting works in pairs. Is it okay to talk about the message board of would you like that to be a surprise for people's first viewing.

There will be six pairs of artworks in the show. I could have included several more but then the show would just be a pile of pairs. Given the space for this show, six pairs seemed like just enough.

Sometimes an idea needs more than one operating theater, like the "Work" paintings, to do just one in either color or gray would have sold the idea short. Plus, to do a meaningful artwork about "work" you need to show some real work! Similarly, the "Counting" paintings needed more than one canvas. As I researched various idioms about numbers I had enough counting expressions to warrant two paintings, that is how counting became a pair. The "Drawing" paintings were a natural pair, "drawing conclusions" and "drawing a blank" are two sides of how the mind works. In one case there is no comprehension and in another there is. The "Samplers" are modeled after 19th Century samplers and I could have made several but I thought two were enough. The "Ohs," are an ongoing series of small paintings and I thought a pair of "Ohs" would work for this show. And finally, "Time Pieces - Free Time" and "Time Zones," this pairing is special for this show. A still image under a reflective plexiglass where the viewer's image will be present along side of an eight minute program of almost 200 idioms about time. If you think about it "Time" is all any living thing has so juxtaposing these two time rich artworks will make for a very dramatic presensation. Feel free to discuss the message reader as it will not compromise the real thing.

Three, could you tell me a little about the literal process of creating these works which seems very laborious and time consuming, particularly when working on larger canvases. Our designer James was marveling at your technique and patience.

I design almost everything on the computer well before the painting gets considered. As computer files these sketches can be tweaked for years like the "Work" paintings.
The alphabet I designed is 2" by 1" at an angle, this is a constant and the arbiter the scale of all studio work. All the artwork uses this scale and is relative to the overall scale of the painting.

Once the text is mapped on the painting surface the process of making the colors work is a series of paint decisions and no longer a series of computer color decisions.

Lastly, establishing such a defined and individual aesthetic, do you ever feel confined or anchored too heavily too it or do you find it liberating to start with that foundation, one which is wholly yours.

I never feel confined by my approach to making art. Frankly, its just the opposite, it is a formula for a wide degree of possibilities. Its like having my own radio station. But it also possess all the ingredients I think are important for a conversation about the world we live in which include the handshake between constant technology and human inconsistencies.