Michael Pellettieri was born in New York City, where he has been painting and printmaking since 1959. He has taught printmaking, drawing, and painting at the Arts Students League since 1977 and printmaking at Columbia University. He has lectured at Pratt Institute in New York and Kalakshetra Academy in Chennai, India.

Pellettieri started exhibiting his work in New York and around the country in 1966. He received a State Department Grant to travel and study in India in 1969. Pellettieri has been the recipient of a MacDowell Fellowship, as well as numerous awards in national and international printmaking exhibitions, including the Robert Conover Memorial Award, the Mitchell Fund Award, the Boston Printmakers' Jurors Award, the Ford Foundation Award, the Ben and Beatrice Goldstein Foundation Award in Printmaking, and the Burr Miller award for lithography from the Society of American Graphic Artists.

He is represented by The Old Print Shop, and was previously represented by The Associated American Artists, Weyhe Gallery, and The New Renaissance Gallery. His painting and prints have been exhibited at the National Academy of Design and nominated for the Childe Hassam award in painting at the American Academy of Arts and Letters. Numerous public and private collections have acquired his work, including The National Gallery (Washington DC), The Library of Congress (Washington DC), The New York Public Library, The Newark Art Library, Kidder, Peabody & Co. (New York), The Columbia Museum (Columbia, South Carolina); The Dave and Reba Williams Collection (New York City), and The Art Students League of New York.

He graduated from the High School of Music and Art, and went on to study at the New School with John Ross. Following the New School, he attended the Art Students League of New York, studying drawing, painting, and printmaking with Harry Sternberg, Edwin Dickinson, Robert Beverly Hale, and Joseph Hirsch. He holds a BA in Fine Arts from the CUNY School of Arts and Sciences and a MA in Fine Art from Hunter college.