

Mike Glier and Charles Burchfield
November 1 – December 13, 2025

"I drew the sound, using a lot of pointed shapes to represent the impact and intensity, but also waves to describe the undulations, and balloon shapes to capture the echoing volume... this process is like building a grammar to communicate a special moment, but with visual abstractions instead of words."

—Mike Glier

"If the wave is a manifestation of energy that courses through the natural world, [Burchfield's work] brings us closer to understanding the forest as a dimensional field of atoms vibrating at different frequencies. I think Burchfield, the animist, knew this intuitively. The lively marks and permeating motifs that animate his pictures express his deep understanding that everything—rock, air, water, plant, and muscle—is alive and intermingled, and that boundaries between things are simply misperceptions on our part due to the inadequacy of our perceptual apparatus"

—Mike Glier

In 2022, Mike Glier (b. 1953, Kentucky) was invited to be an artist in residence at the Burchfield Penney Art Center at SUNY Buffalo State University. The Burchfield Penney has the largest collection of paintings by, as well as the archives of, Charles Burchfield (1893, Ashtabula, Ohio – 1967, West Seneca, NY), a painter and 'visionary artist' most known for his watercolors of nature scenes. In 2024 the Burchfield Penney released a dynamic book, "A Grammar of Animacy," and in early 2025 presented an exhibition curated by Nancy Weekly, a Charles Burchfield scholar, in dialogue with Glier that paired Burchfield's and Glier's works. Krakow Witkin Gallery is proud to extend this gesture with a second exhibition juxtaposing recent works by Glier with historic Burchfield works on loan from a private collection.

In Weekly's words, "Burchfield and Glier both use an abstract visual language, derived from plein air observation, to describe an intimate, reciprocal relationship between themselves and their subject, nature." She continues, "Burchfield died fourteen years after Mike Glier was born, so they are generations apart, but they both engage a full range of the senses, improvising with color, motif, and repetition to evoke abstract representations of sound, smell, and touch to describe the dynamic, multi-sensory experience of perception. It is here, in the act of translating the sensory experience that nature provides, that the two artists model a kind of reciprocity between artist and subject that reflects a vision of the natural world as partner rather than resource for exploitation."

Mike Glier draws and paints to explore topics of common interest. He also has taught, which he considers a happy, satisfying, and dematerialized part of his creative output. Masculine identity, desire, and violence informed much of his early work. For the last two decades, however, he has focused on the human relationship with land. "My landscape projects are propelled by a number of things, including the love of paint and abstraction, but most importantly, by a desire to do my part to help make the changes in philosophy that are required if humanity is to create a sustainable future. By studying the land and responding to it freshly, I hope to demonstrate attachment, respect and engagement. And if the paintings are good enough, they will find their way into public life to do their job of representing the joy of living in the world and the wonder of perceiving it, and if they succeed at this, to evoke the will to create balance within it."

Krakow Witkin Gallery would like to extend much appreciation to Nancy Weekly and to the lender of the historic Burchfield drawings.