

A year after its originally scheduled timing, "Mike Glier: Bird Songs of the Boston Public Garden" is on view March 18 - April 21, 2021. Krakow Witkin Gallery is proud to present paintings and drawings that developed from that week of May 2019, that not only present sound and sight together, but also time and interconnectedness, themes much important at this moment, and always.

"When I draw outside, I feel like the place is giving me little gifts. It gives me shapes and colors and sounds as prompts and with appreciation, I return the gift in the form of a drawing. I am reluctant to describe this exchange as if it were a relationship with another sentient being, since it suggests I've gone a little nutty, and strayed from rationality to favor magic! But there is something here worth considering and it's not necessarily at odds with rational thinking that drives science. Imagining the human relationship with nature as one of reciprocity, or more simply, thinking of it as a culture of gift exchange, may be the turn of mind necessary to counter the extremes of rationality that have provided argument for taking too much and depleting the natural world to the point of crisis." (Mike Glier)

In conjunction with the exhibition, Krakow Witkin Gallery presents Glier's related drawings. Some of these finished works echo the motifs in the Boston paintings and others from a new series that the artist calls, "Answer Music", are responses to natural events of the last year. In keeping with Covid travel restrictions, the drawings were made near the artist's home in upstate New York and describe with a mix of abstract and representational styles, events in nature as grand as hurricanes and as modest as squabbling robins. The artist describes the project this way:

"Answer Music" is an extended series of pencil drawings which, like my paintings, record an exchange with the living world. The title, "Answer Music", is another term for "call and response", a form of worship in which the preacher makes a declaration and the congregation responds with fervid unity. To make these drawings I first take a walk and I find a good place to sit and wait for the call. If I'm near a river, the prompt may be a sound, like the mix of low rumbling and cheerful bubbling made by shallow water as it passes quickly over stones. Or if I'm in the woods, it might be a movement, like the trajectory of a dying leaf as it falls in a series of quick arcs to the ground. Once noted, I respond to this little gift by sketching motifs that seem essential to it. I take these notes back to the studio and assemble them on paper, often in horizontal lines as if they were a musical score. These drawings are rhythmic and repetitive like time spent watching a river and when I make them, I try to be as constant as the river. As hard as I try to be regular and repetitive, however, I can never sustain it. My arm tires, or my mind wanders and as a result the mark changes; but it's these little failures which insert change into the process that I find most poignant, since they represent the mutability of life. At moments like this, I often think of John Cage and his passion for chance as the driving force in any creative, dynamic adventure. And as I collect motifs and combine them, I think of Sol Lewitt and his fascination with variables and the potential for beauty to be discovered in their permutations. But I also think about Robin Wall Kimmerer, a botanist, and citizen of the Potawatomi Nation who has written about the grammar of animacy, which is a language that has few nouns to indicate uniqueness, but endless verbs to describe the ceaseless exchange between all things. In the series, "Answer Music", it's my hope that through the direct study of nature I can find the abstract motifs and rhythms that depict, not the things, but the dynamic relationship between things and create a grammar of animacy in drawing. (Mike Glier)