Press Release

SKY GLABUSH: IF THE WILD BIRD COULD SPEAK

20 November 2026 – 9 January 2027
Preview: Thursday 19 November, 6-8pm



Sky Glabush, *The tipped cup of the moon*, 2026. © Sky Glabush. Courtesy of Alison Jacques. Photography: Joseph Hartman.

Alison Jacques is pleased to present our first exhibition by Canadian painter Sky Glabush (b.1970, Alert Bay, British Columbia; lives and works in rural southwestern Ontario), after announcing representation earlier this year. The exhibition considers painting as a means of cultivating perception through sustained engagement with the natural world. For Glabush, landscape is neither motif nor destination but a site of encounter. His paintings emerge from prolonged observations of forests, fields, gardens and the shifting qualities of light, transforming recognisable subjects into immersive environments.

Large-scale paintings of great lakes, forests, dense vegetation and fields of sunflowers anchor the exhibition, accompanied by a series of more intimate works. While rooted in observation, these paintings resist description, inviting viewers into spaces where perception slows, and awareness deepens. They are less records of particular places than meditations on presence, encouraging an experience of nature that is simultaneously physical, emotional and metaphysical.

Glabush compares his approach to painting like the evolution of a folktale: ‘you have a very common almost benign subject that you use as a kind of road map and then in the process of painting something new may or may not appear.’ Each work starts with what he describes as the ‘architecture’ of an image, which gradually breaks down, sometimes disappearing entirely, before re-emerging in an unexpected form. Working intuitively, Glabush allows each painting to develop through its own internal logic. Images are discovered rather than planned, as gestures accumulate and materials determine the direction of the work. As the artist observes, ‘The materials themselves have to guide the painting to present an image or idea that didn’t come from me.’

Light and texture operate as generative forces. Often incorporating sand into the oil paint, Glabush creates relief-like surfaces that suggest forms felt rather than fully seen; ‘I want the surfaces of my paintings to feel tactile, almost sculptural. Sand introduces an element of texture that traditional paint alone doesn’t offer. It changes how light interacts with the surface and allows me to explore depth and relief in a way that feels more connected to the Earth.’

Raised between the temperate rainforests, mountains, and fjords of British Columbia and the grassland Prairies of Saskatchewan, Glabush’s formative years instilled an early attentiveness to landscape and material. Saskatchewan has a rich history of fostering intellectual and experimental artistic practices through the Emma Lake Artists’ Workshops that operated between 1955–1970 and realised in other forms until 2012. Organised by the University of Saskatchewan, the workshops became one of the most important meeting places for modernist painters in North America, bringing together Canadian artists with leading international figures including Barnett Newman, Clement Greenberg, and Frank Stella. Deeply informed by the legacies of Modernist painting, Glabush’s practice probes its unresolved questions – the enduring tension between abstraction and representation, and the relationship between nature and form.

Poetry and literature have long provided an equally important point of reference to Glabush’s practice. The writings of Emily Dickinson, Ted Hughes, Seamus Heaney, and Al Purdy offer ways of thinking about landscape as memory, presence and transformation. ‘When I create paintings I often find myself returning to poetry, reading lines that resonate with the visual energy of the work.’ Rather than illustrating literary texts, Glabush absorbs their rhythms and sensibilities, allowing them to inform the emotional tenor of his work. His paintings, like poems, unfold through rhythm, compression and suggestion, sustaining an ongoing dialogue between the visual and the verbal, and between the organic and the symbolic.

Living and working in rural southwestern Ontario, Glabush draws continual inspiration from the landscapes that surround him, yet his work ultimately moves beyond any particular geography. They propose painting as a space where the visible and the imagined, the remembered and the immediate, remain in constant dialogue. Glabush invites the viewer into an encounter with the world that is at once physical, emotional, and quietly transformative, oscillating between memory,

sensation and lived experience.

For further information:

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