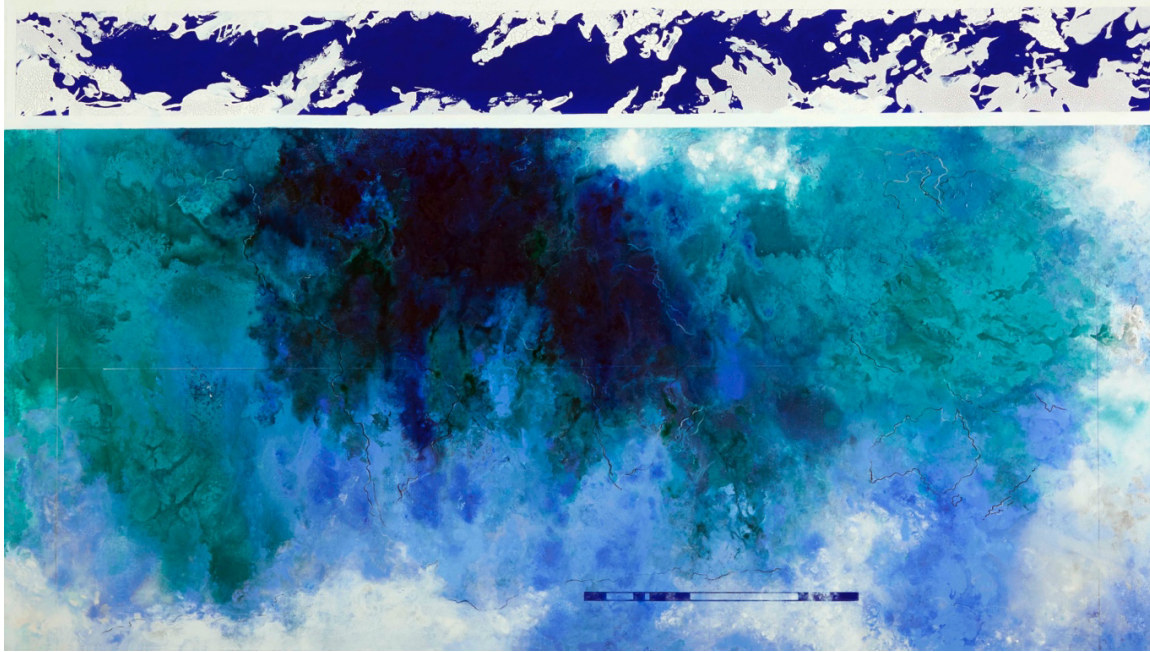


# CRISTIN TIERNEY

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Diane Burko

## *Bearing Witness*

January 31 – March 8, 2025

Opening Reception: Friday, January 31, 6:00 to 8:00 pm

219 Bowery, Floor 2  
New York, NY, 10002

**Cristin Tierney Gallery** is pleased to present *Bearing Witness*, a solo exhibition of new and recent mixed-media paintings by **Diane Burko**. The exhibition opens Friday, January 31st with a reception from 6:00 to 8:00 pm, and will be on view through March 8, 2025. This marks Burko's first solo exhibition in New York in over forty years and her debut solo show at the gallery. The artist will be present at the opening reception.

Driven by endless curiosity and an unwavering commitment to environmental preservation, Burko has spent five decades "bearing witness" to the realities of climate change. Her work offers a visual record of these investigations, drawing on visits to extreme environments worldwide—from the Arctic to the Amazon, coral reefs to deserts. The paintings in *Bearing Witness* reflect this journey, channeling her observations into emotionally charged works that seek to inspire global solidarity in defense of our shared ecosystem.

Through her art, Burko combines aesthetic experience with scientific and personal narratives. She augments her practice with public engagement, weaving facts and stories into the viewing

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experience to deepen its impact. By imbuing her work with a sense of authenticity and purpose, she aspires to spark civic awareness and action.

Burko's *World Glacier* and *World Reef* series are central to the exhibition, with their focus on the escalating effects of climate change. In her studio, the artist painted works from both series on opposite walls, allowing her to draw connections between them. The *Reef* series captures the devastation wrought by warming seawater and coral bleaching. In contrast, paintings from the *Glacier* series, such as *Glacier Map 1* (2019), depict the alarming retreat of ice as seas encroach on glaciers. Layers of blue and black acrylic and crackle paint evoke melting ice and rising waters, while faint, map-like lines allude to the scientific data underpinning her work. Burko employs techniques like pouring, sanding, and air-compressing paint to create textured surfaces that echo the fragility of the natural world.

"I struggle to use the language of paint to develop new vocabulary—to create visual poetry that draws you in, compels you to look closely, and then reveals some ugly truths," Burko explains. These "ugly truths" emerge in *Bearing Witness* through works that fuse collaged elements with expressive abstraction. By juxtaposing beauty with adversity, Burko makes the pressing threat of climate change feel both urgent and personal.

At its core, Burko's practice is about paying homage to a changing Earth while sounding a call to action. Yet her art transcends this mission; it moves beyond reason, propelled by a sensibility that transforms scientific data and environmental loss into an expressive, emotional experience.



**Diane Burko's** (b. 1945, New York, NY) work in painting, photography, and time-based media considers the marks that human conversations make on the landscape. A Professor Emerita of the Community College of Philadelphia with additional teaching experience at Princeton University, Burko has received multiple grants from the NEA, the Pennsylvania Arts Council, the Leeway

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Foundation, and the Independence Foundation. She has received a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Women's Caucus for Art.

After focusing for several decades on monumental geological formations and waterways through landscape painting, Burko has shifted in the past 20 years to analyze the impact of industrial and colonial activity on those same landscapes. The artist's practice seeks to visually emulsify interconnected subjects—extraction, deforestation, extinction, environmental justice, Indigenous genocide, ecological degradation, and climate collapse—so viewers might feel their connection viscerally through the beauty of her work. While her work deals with impending climate catastrophe, rather than lingering in dystopia, it celebrates the landscape's sublimity by honoring the intricate geological and political webs that shape the identity of a place.

Burko has exhibited extensively nationally and internationally, including shows at London's Royal Academy of Art, Minneapolis Art Institute, National Academy of Sciences, Phillips Collection, RISD Museum, Tang Museum, and Wesleyan University Center for the Arts. She has been awarded residencies in Giverny, Bellagio, the Arctic Circle, and the Amazon Rainforest. In 2021, her solo exhibition *Seeing Climate Change* at the American University Museum was cited in the *New York Times* as one of the best shows of 2021. Her work is held in 40 public collections nationwide, including the Art Institute of Chicago, Denver Art Museum, Everson Museum of Art, Hood Museum of Art, Minneapolis Institute of Art, Phillips Collection, and The Philadelphia Museum of Art, among others. Burko's studio is located in Philadelphia, PA.

Founded in 2010, **Cristin Tierney Gallery** is a contemporary art gallery located on The Bowery with a deep commitment to the presentation, development, and support of a roster of both established and emerging artists. Its program emphasizes artists engaged with critical theory and art history, with an emphasis on conceptual, video, and performance art. Education and audience engagement is central to our mission. Cristin Tierney Gallery is a member of the ADAA (Art Dealers Association of America).

## Images (from top)

Diane Burko, *Glacier Map 1*, 2019. Mixed media on canvas. 50 x 88 inches (127 x 223.5 cm).

Diane Burko in her studio. New York, NY. 1973.

## Inquiries

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