

# THE GREAT OUTDOORS



*Glenn was often enveloped by his subject. Rudderow painting a landscape study for a larger work to be executed in the studio. No photo credit.*

## **Bayshore Painter**

*Glenn Rudderow was a regional painter who uniquely captured our Southern New Jersey Bayshore region on his canvases*

By J. Morton Galetto, CU Maurice River

Recently we lost an iconic painter of the Southern New Jersey Bayshore. Glenn Rudderow passed away on April 27, 2025.

Glenn, by his own admission, was a classical "regional painter." He spoke of his physical limitations as a possible reason for his geographical focus although he did venture to other areas, like Nova Scotia, to paint. However the truth was that he WAS a regional painter, not just because of physical limitations, but because he loved our Southern New Jersey Bayshore region, and because he was intimately familiar with it.



*Glenn includes himself crabbing beneath a former Hansey Creek Bridge. He thought it a prank of sorts depict himself standing- something he could not do after a tragic fall in*

*life. His art allowed him to envision a different reality. Oil by Rudderow, 52" x 48.*

You may ask why an artist would be the topic of an outdoor column. Aesthetics have always played a major role in the visitation and protection of lands. The great painters that came out of the Hudson Valley School of classical painters took to the rails in the mid-1800s and America's travel tourism was born. They painted the vast wilderness and people wanted to see the landscapes that they depicted.

Before the famous railroad paintings, artists like Thomas Cole painted scenes of Kaaterskill Falls in New York, and those paintings inspired people to drive to see them. Today the Falls are on the Hudson River School Art Trail and are part of the New York State Forest Preserve system.

Artists have always played a major role in the appreciation of our landscapes and our place in them. Glenn has indisputably increased awareness of the beauty of our region. Furthermore he had an interest in man's place in the landscape and painted many colonial farms and their structures.

Classically-trained artist Belva Prycl described Glenn as embodying a triumph of the human spirit and grasp for our region's

landscape. She noted that his work possessed a quality in its expression that "captures something of the spirit of South Jersey in a way that is unmatched by anybody else." Indeed Glenn was a master.

From 1986 until 2002 he taught portrait painting, life painting, and antique cast drawing at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts. Throughout his career, Glenn's work was exhibited regionally and nationally, including at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, The National Academy of Design, The American Watercolor Society, and various other galleries.

Glenn participated in local art shows at the Noyes Museum (then in Galloway Township), the Riverfront Renaissance Center for the Arts, the Millville Library, and WheatonArts, all three in Millville. His shows were always extremely well-attended. His work resonated with those of us who love the Bayshore, and sales were always brisk.



*This comical self-portrait by Glenn Rudderow is titled, "The magician." He often told our columnist that art was an illusion of reality, thus the artist is a magician. Oil by Rudderow, 24"x 30".*

I knew Glenn well both in my professional capacity, as a friend, and as a collector of his paintings. I co-produced two documentary films about Glenn with New Jersey Network's Louis Presti. The first film was about multiple painters: "Bayshore Artists," and the second was "Reflections of a Bayshore Painter," with sole focus on Glenn and his artistic ability. The latter I also scripted from countless taped interviews with him. These films premiered at the county college to a packed house, attesting to the extent to which Glenn's work was beloved. The 2005



"Reflections of a Bayshore Painter," won an Emmy.

One of the most striking aspects of Glenn's work is the feeling that you are actually at the location being portrayed. His work is realistic but not photographic. It achieves something much more powerful than a camera because he portrays the ambience of a location, the feeling of a place. He decides what to leave in and what to leave out, very much like Andrew Wyeth – abstract realism, magic realism, or simply realism. Once I asked if he would be offended if I compared his work to Wyeth's and he replied, "Not at all; I'm a fan."



*Glenn Rudderow captured the solitude and vastness of the Delaware Bayshore masterfully. Oil by Rudderow, 30"X60".*

He and I talked about his exploration of the same location, multiple times, over many years. The Burcham Farm, East Point

Lighthouse, Bivalve, Turkey Point and Caviar beckoned to him again and again. He said that viewing places in different lighting, seasons, and angles all gave deeper insight into their portrayals. He felt that as a painter becomes more intimate with a subject, he comes to know it better, and that by painting it again and again the artist's ability progresses as well.



*Glenn visited the Burcham Farm often, painting the house and its environs. Oil by Glenn Rudderow, 59" x 48".*

His approach to painting, as with life, was one of tenacity and a stubborn spirit. His physical challenges demanded persistence. And he was just as tenacious about his resolve to paint. Glenn tackled all that he did with dogged determination. If I asked him if he had been painting he would respond, "How could I not? A painter is commanded to paint."

He was immersed in our region. We would discuss wetland issues, sea-level rise, sinking ground, flooding, oyster boats, sea captain homes, sunsets, ducks, Caviar, Greenwich, the Burcham sisters, diked farming, abandoned churches - anything that culturally delineated our region.

Above all else Glenn was an artist; it defined him. He knew it did, and anyone who knew him recognized that it did. He portrayed our landscape in new ways and got us to look more closely at it. His work played on our love of the region, but it also helped to develop it further by allowing us to see it in new ways through his eyes.

He wasn't just a painter, he was an explorer and very cerebral about his craft. He articulated his intent with clarity and we spent countless hours discussing his work and approach.





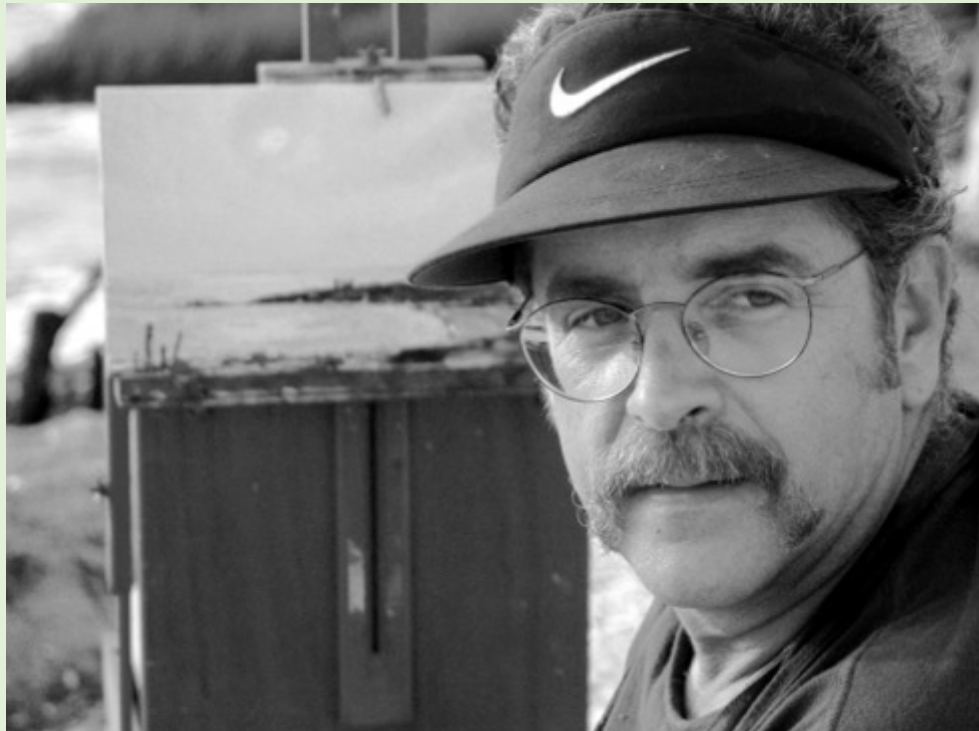
*Glenn's works showed situations in a new light. This work gives East Point Lighthouse the feeling of being dwarfed by its setting, offering a sense of place. Oil by Glenn Rudderow, 14" x 18".*

Glenn once addressed what he wanted the legacy of his work to be and what the viewer might take from it. "I would hope that they had a sense I was there, and that I was experiencing what I was painting, that I had a feeling for it. Possibly they would look at my work and say there's a spirit there, that this painting is alive. Not every painting has that quality, and certainly not every painting of mine has that. But hopefully in the long run there will be enough of them that might, and that will be what people remember my work by (Bayshore Artists 2001)."

## For Your Viewing Pleasure

NJN's *Reflections of a Bayshore Painter* and *Bayshore Artists* can be viewed on the CU Maurice River website under YouTube offerings.

Glenn quoted Thomas Eakins describing himself as a "painter" in *Bayshore Artists*, and then, almost with comic self-realization, he said, "I'm an artist," and laughed.



*Glenn painting East Point Lighthouse from a Delaware bayside vantage point. Photo: NJN, Reflections of a Bayshore Painter.*

