

CHARLES R. TURNELL

Prairie & Sky · Artist Talk

Edited reading version based on the artist's supplied text.

Standing at a threshold

At which threshold am I standing now? What am I leaving behind, and what am I about to enter? A threshold is a place where two ways of being meet. It can hold confusion, grief, excitement, and hope at the same time. Much of my work begins in that pause.

A way of paying attention

I was born and raised in Belize. My mother was a visual artist, and my father gave me my first camera. As the family messenger collecting our mail, I was often the first to open National Geographic. Its photographs became my first passport. My Jesuit education added another kind of attention: the invitation to find meaning in everything around us.

Mosaic as a slow practice

Photography remains my foundation. I photograph flowers, plants, landscapes, and the details of daily life. Those images become my palette. I select, crop, repeat, arrange, and refine them until a larger image appears. Meaning develops through that accumulation, much as it does through experience.

Grass and belonging

Visiting Frank Lloyd Wright's home and studio changed how I looked at the prairie. I began to see grass as a subject, and as a quiet expression of resilience. It bends, adapts, and endures. In these compositions, repeated blades become fields of color and rhythm.

Feathers and connection

The feathers began with daily walks. Friends and neighbors then started bringing me their own finds. Something solitary became communal. I see a feather as a fragment of presence: light and weathered, carrying a story and the suggestion of currents we cannot see.

The meeting of land and sky

Together, Grass and Feathers form a conversation between what grounds us and what lifts us. The horizon is where those forces meet. I think of this as renewed romanticism: a reawakening of our relationship to landscape, spirit, and the beauty that persists around us.

An invitation

Prairie & Sky is a space to slow down and stand at your own threshold. I hope the work creates enough stillness to consider what might be possible, and enough attention to step forward with intention.