

Charles Burchfield exhibit displayed

By JIM ROBBINS

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Two questions which often make a brief appearance on the minds of Buffalo State students are "Who is Charles Burchfield?" and "What is a Charles Burchfield Center?"

Glad you asked.

Located in a quiet, spacious room on the third floor of Rockwell Hall, the Charles Burchfield Center is an art gallery for the display of works executed by area artists.

The center, which is funded mainly by the community, receives financial help from National Endowment, New York State Council on the Arts and a contribution of space and staff services from Buffalo State College. The gallery falls under the auspices of Dr. Edna M. Lindemann, a Buffalo State design professor.

The exhibits usually run for approximately six weeks. The present show is the collected paintings, drawings and sketches of Charles Burchfield, the center's namesake. These are from the permanent collection of the center.

Born in Ashtabula, Ohio in 1893, Burchfield moved to the Buffalo area in 1921 to take a position as assistant designer at the Birge Wallpaper Company. Burchfield taught art classes and exhibited his paintings around the eastern half of the United

States. He received honorary doctorates from many schools, including Harvard, Yale and Princeton.

Ironically, Buffalo was one of the last places to recognize him as the genius he was, dedicating the center only one month before his death in 1967. He achieved national artistic prominence in the middle 1930's.

The center, which was established on Dec. 9, 1966, is open to students as well as the general public. An extensive local art library is located within the center and contains clippings, slides of all previous exhibits and various films which are available for public use.

The center is open Monday through Friday from 12-5 p.m. excluding Thursday when the gallery stays open until 9 p.m. It is open on Sundays from 1-5 p.m. Burchfield films are shown Sundays at 3 p.m. and Thursdays at 8 p.m.

The next exhibit will host the Buffalo Society of Artists works from March 21 until May 2. The following display will be that of Living American Artists and will run from May 9 until June 27.

Show Traces Burchfield's Life as an Artist

By NANCY TOBIN WILLIG.
Courier-Express Art Critic

A HIGHLIGHT of the Burchfield Center's yearly exhibition schedule is the annual show of works by the artist the center memorializes.

This winter's Charles Burchfield display is also the first comprehensive exhibit of works in the permanent collection of the Buffalo State College center, more than 100 watercolors, drawings, sketches, original paintings for wallpapers (Burchfield came to Buffalo in 1921 as a designer for the Birge Co.) doodles, journals and memorabilia.

A show that traces Burchfield's life as an artist, it includes pieces from nearly every year of his 51 years as a professional. Burchfield considered 1915 the beginning of his professional career, when he was a junior at the Cleveland Art Institute.

THE DISPLAY — and the Burchfield Center — is rich in drawings and working studies. For students of Burchfield — or art students of any form — the wealth of drawings shows the process of creation, the development of ideas, the working through problematic areas, and the themes that concerned him for his entire life.

But, the collection is hard pressed for the finished product — the vibrant, energetic, nature watercolors of a mature Charles Burchfield that brought him international prestige as one of the most accomplished painters of the 20th century.

Three major Burchfields on extended loan that usual hang in the center have been removed for the permanent collection show. The missing works: "Oncoming Spring," 1954; "Orion in Winter," 1962; and "Song of the Telegraph," 1917-1952 leave gaping holes in the otherwise full display.

CENTER DIRECTOR Edna M. Lindemann conceded that the collection "aches for several of Burchfield's pivotal works."

But in spite of its lack of major paintings, this collection is the essence of Burchfield. Even the smallest drawings and telephone pad doodling reflect the artist's joy in line. The collection also includes areas that presented problems to Burchfield, in addition to the areas in which he excelled.



Buffalo State College

Uncharacteristic study by Charles Burchfield, "Genesis"

... revealing watercolor in comprehensive display

more complete watercolor study.

A DEEPLY RELIGIOUS man, Burchfield must have grappled furiously with the theme. The two studies in the display are failures visually, but what light they shed on the man himself! Burchfield was unable to portray God creating, though he excelled in interpreting what God created.

Another "failure," but equally significant work in the show is one of the few works Burchfield did in oil paint — then considered to be the most permanent artistic medium.

The 1938 oil of grain elevators on the Buffalo waterfront is important simply because it demonstrates how an artist can excel in one medium, yet freeze in another.

The work has none of the

fluidity or verve of Burchfield's watercolors. Indeed, it presents a set of overworked, static images.

MORE THAN half of the works in the collection are new to the center and have not been exhibited there before. Among these is a wonderful unfinished watercolor and charcoal of a bedroom interior with its decorative wallpaper, knickknacks, comforters, and sleeping figures in a massive bed.

"Walnut Bed," and a large number of other drawings and small watercolors are recent gifts from the Burchfield Foundation, established by the artist in his lifetime especially for the center.

OTHER NEW acquisitions exhibited here for the first time include a set of 1915 drawings

given to the center by Mr. and Mrs. Peter Parisi; a 1917 watercolor portrait study (posed by the artist's mother) given by the Retired Alumni Assn. of Buffalo State College; a group of small drawings and studies from Mr. and Mrs. Joseph R. Takats; an unfinished watercolor in two parts, "Easter Morning" right and left sides presented in memory of past Courier Express Art Critic D. Kenneth Winebrenner; a small drawing given in memory of Gregory Van Spann by Mr. and Mrs. Mortimer Spiller; and "Sky Map" from the artist's studio on permanent loan from Mrs. John and Miss Joan Albarella.

The Burchfield display will continue on view from noon to 5 p.m. weekdays; noon to 9 p.m. Thursdays, and 1 to 5 p.m. Saturdays through March 15.

"Genesis," and the Creation of life was a theme that popped up in Burchfield's paintings during his entire lifetime. Yet, as a visual subject by itself, it brought the artist more trouble than satisfaction.

The collection owns two studies for a never-completed painting of God creating Earth — a charcoal drawing and a

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Art exhibit at Burchfield Center

The first comprehensive exhibition of works in the Permanent Charles Burchfield Collection of the Burchfield Center will be presented at a reception honoring donors and friends from 2-5 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 1. The exhibition will continue through Sunday, March 15.

Over 100 works in the Collection will be exhibited, including watercolors, one of the artist's few works on oil, drawings, sketches, original paintings for wallpapers and doodles. The earliest works are dated 1915, the year Burchfield referred to as the beginning of his professional career when he was a junior at the Cleveland Art Institute. Most of Burchfield's 51 years as an artist are represented by works in the Collection.

In establishing and developing the Collection at the Center, a broad spectrum of the artist's expression is represented. According to Dr. Edna M. Lindemann, efforts are being made to cover Burchfield's work chronologically in terms of subject matter, media, his various concepts and

techniques.

The significant collection of Burchfield wallpapers was made possible by the assistance of the Birge Company, Inc., which brought Charles Burchfield to Buffalo in 1921 as assistant designer; the artist's sister, Miss Louise Burchfield, and others. Five additional original paintings for wallpapers have recently been added to the Collection.

Two 50-minute films on Burchfield, *His Golden Year* and *Hymn to Nature*, will be shown at 3 p.m. Sundays and 8 p.m. Thursdays during the exhibition. Admission is free.

New hours for the Center beginning February 1 are:

Monday-Friday	12-5 p.m.
Thursday	12-9 p.m.
Sundays	1-5 p.m.

Closed Saturdays

Closed Thursday, Feb. 12, Friday, Feb. 13 and Monday, Feb. 16.

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