

[Skip to main content.](#)



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- [Explore a Neighborhood](#)
- [Discover Place-Based Art](#)
- [Meet the People](#)
- [About Us](#)
- [Blog](#)
- [Donate](#)

August 29th, 2016

Natural Among the Urban: Amy Falstrom's City Prairie

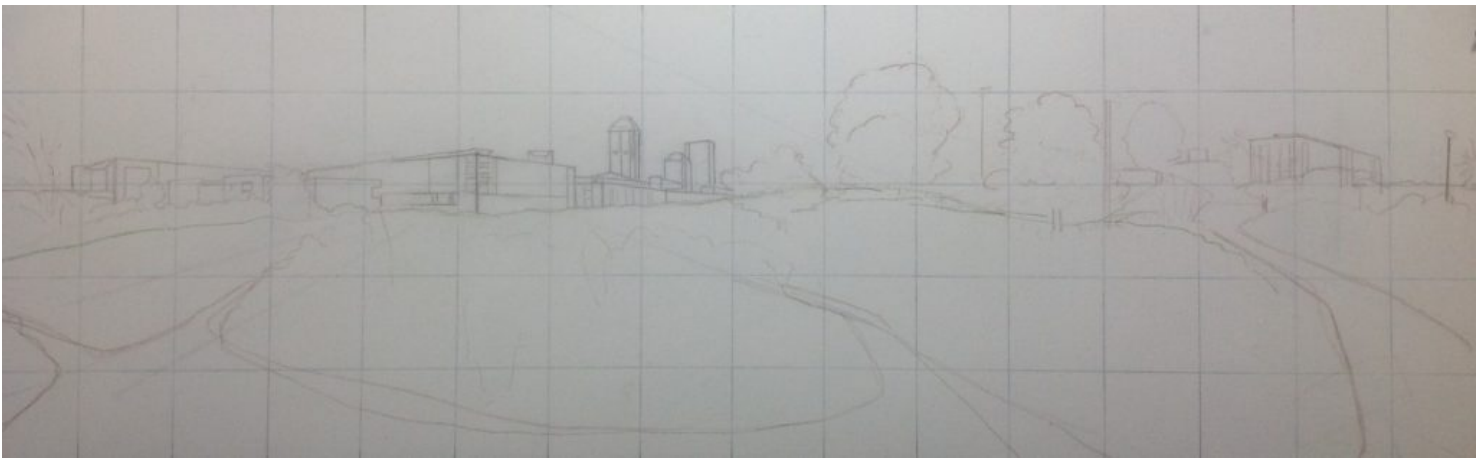
by Kate Oberreich



Once a neglected industrial block along South Street in downtown Indianapolis, the Eli Lilly sustainable garden is now teeming with native plants, recycled bricks, solar lighting, and reclaimed soils. It also serves as inspiration for Amy Falstrom's *City Prairie*, an exhibit of new paintings in the City Gallery this month.

Long observant of natural places and spaces as a witness to nature, Amy began visiting this garden on walks with her dog in various types of weather, times of

day, light, and season, noting the visual changes to the view of the city as plants grew taller as well as the play between the natural and urban settings with the downtown buildings seeming to be rising out of a vast prairie.



The new paintings for *City Prairie* differs from Amy's previous work, which often features a more abstracted and memory-infused view of the natural world, in that it's the first time she has focused on a specific place. Though she worked mostly from memory from her studio rather than on site in the Lilly garden, Amy took photos to keep a visual reference of the identifiable elements of the garden and it's downtown views, ensuring a recognizable perspective of the landscape.



Also new for this series, this exhibit marks a change in media. While it includes the richly layered oils for which Amy is known, she has added the use of acrylic paints here, noting, "It's been fun to work out new visual solutions with this paint that feels a bit strange to me."

City Prairie opens this First Friday and hangs through September 30.

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