



Seeing Light

KAY KNIGHT CLARKE

JUNE 11–NOVEMBER 1, 2026

Landers House

COMING SOON



This summer, the New Britain Museum of American Art is thrilled to present recent paintings by Connecticut-based artist Kay Knight Clarke. Inspired by the ephemeral effects of light, color, and atmosphere along the Connecticut shoreline, Clarke's works offer contemplative reflections on time, place, perception, and feeling. On view in the Museum's historic Landers House, the exhibition celebrates Clarke's poetic artistry and her longstanding friendship with the Museum, as a dedicated steward and Trustee.

Artist Statement

"Look at the sky. At first you see blue, then you see beauty and then you see infinity."

—AGNES MARTIN

My paintings are about the mystery, power, and wonder of the landscape. They are also about abstraction, color, light, the rhythm of shapes, and tension between flatness and space.

The work speaks of hope and beauty, while it recognizes humankind's insignificance within the universe. It aligns me with the natural world and reflects nature's timeless cycle, the ephemeral

sense of life, and the question of what else might be. Distant sky and water—with an occasional bow to earth in one form or another—are my favored landscapes. Their vastness and sense of infinity are mesmerizing. I seek to capture the feeling generated by the light, air, and color; it is my spirit. This power of nature is what T. S. Eliot described when he talked of "music that is heard so deeply that it is not heard at all."

Contemplation of nature and painting are related meditations that remove me from my past hummingbird-like activity. I spent most of my adult life in the corporate world. It was fast paced, filled with stress and constraints, but without enough freedom for self-expression or the connection to a larger world that the arts provide.

Freedom is important to me; both the act of painting and the distant views offer that. Focus on the long view combines the abstraction inherent in the distance and its relationship to infinity.

Color is equally important. It is my greatest source of experimentation; color makes me happy. A fifth-century Chinese painter and philosopher, Tsung Ping, said that the function of landscape painting is to find joy in one's soul. The combination of color and the abstraction of distance brings me joy that transcends the landscape itself but embodies the power of nature.

LEFT: Kay Knight Clarke, *Fall Leaves* (detail), Oil on linen, 24 x 30 in., Courtesy of the Artist

ABOVE: Kay Knight Clarke, *At the End*, Oil on linen, 30 x 30 in., Courtesy of the Artist

