

August 3 through October 19, 2025

Constructive Landscape

paintings by

Karen Matheis
of Lawrence, Kansas



Kansas Prairie Fields

Artist Statement

The Role of Maps

Exploration into human interaction with nature is present in my landscapes. Inquiry in history and the culture of landscape reveal initial cartography blur lines between landscape and maps – reflecting diversified points of view. My representation of Kansas builds upon various narratives.

Concept Origin

The initial development of this body of work occurred during long highway commutes, where observation of the land and human structures were seen.

My background as a woodblock printmaker, using multiple block overlay, plays a role in the development of this work.

Seeing Landscape as Maps

Various types of maps show the same data in different ways and include typographical, road maps, and cartograms. I incorporate “layer” systems found on Google Maps – including streets, terrain, traffic, wild fires, and photographic views where zooming in and out of specific places is possible.

Although the land naturally has boundaries such as rivers or tree lines, I am fascinated by cadastral maps which reveal how humans have manipulated land use and created boundaries within the land. Displayed by both whimsical and structured gestural lines and blocks of color, the layering of these components reflects the complicated multi-use of the land.

I continue to investigate ideas and ways to reflect upon the land as memory mapping.

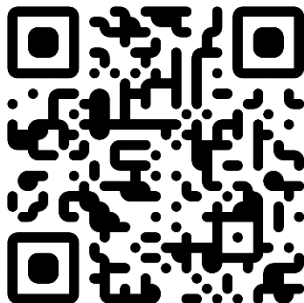
Biography

Karen Matheis is an oil painter working in Lawrence, Kansas. Her studio is located in her farmhouse home. Prairie fields are a backdrop for her morning jogs.

Karen works in many genres including landscape and still life paintings. Color is an important element in her work. Her unique color palette is inspired by nature as well as nostalgia.

Karen is an arts advocate and participates in public outreach. Her work is included in public and private collections throughout the country.

To see a short video about Karen's process, scan the QR codes below



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