

Wilbur Niewald

- American, b. 1925 in Kansas City, MO
- Lives and works in Mission, KS
- 1953 MFA and 1949 BFA, Kansas City Art Institute
- www.wilburniewald.com



Body of Work

Wilbur Niewald is a Kansas City Art Institute professor emeritus of painting, where he also studied as a young adult and took classes as a child. He is most well known for his cityscapes and landscapes which are painterly depictions of the well-known hills and urban vistas of Kansas City. Niewald spends his summers working outdoors at his favorite locations. His commitment to working from life, which he has passed on to generations of his students, situates him within the long and deep history of French plein air painting. Niewald's passionate belief in responding directly to the world around him keeps him in the studio and outdoors. He once told a gallery curator that being in front of something becomes the reason for painting, allowing him to get closer and see a thing more clearly.



(1996, *Trees at Linda Hall Library*, oil on canvas, Kemper Museum of Art)

Since the 1970s, he has created landscapes, portraits and still-life paintings directly from observation. In 2006 he was awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship which allowed him to travel to Santa Fe, N.M., and paint scenes of the Southwest. On his return, he decided to devote time to figure painting, using funds from the fellowship to hire models. "I've been to Santa Fe many times," Niewald said, "but I've always worked in watercolors. I've never had enough time to develop an oil painting. The fellowship will allow me to do this."

In 1988 Niewald received the Distinguished Teaching of Art Award from the College Art Association of the United States. In 1999 he became the first artist to receive the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Charlotte Street Foundation. Niewald's work is in the collection of numerous museums, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, as well as public and private collections including the Arrowhead Stadium art collection, Kemper Museum, Albrecht-Kemper Museum and Nelson-Atkins Museum. The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art in Kansas City presented a retrospective exhibition of Niewald's works spanning several decades called *In the Studio*, which was on view adjacent to the Impressionist galleries Aug-Nov 2018. JCCC owns several paintings by Niewald, including both watercolor on paper and oil on canvas.