





Kate Freeman Clark's work stands as a testimony to her talent, pleasure, and mission in painting. As she said, "the artist's mission [is] to open the eye of the unseeing to the beauties that are all about them."

*Program notes of Kate's address to the Holly Springs,
Thursday Club, March 20, 1925.*



Her painterly impressions of the Shinnecock Hills in New York testify to a deep enjoyment of and immersion in the experience of *plein air* painting. Of this landscape she said, “This is the most ravishingly beautiful picturesque place I have ever been & I am having such a fascinating time that I feel as if I should like to spend a year here and explore every nook in this charming country.”

My First Sky, Shinnecock
Oil on canvas



Out of her numerous paintings, only two are set in Mississippi. The astonishing uniqueness of the entirety of the Kate Freeman Clark art collection lies in its compendious scope. Art collector Howard Stebbins estimated that “the Clark group [is] perhaps the largest art collection in the world painted by a single artist.”

Work in Mississippi Grove
Oil on linen

Five Flowering Trees
(back cover)
Oil on canvas



Kate Freeman Clark accumulated an impressive exhibition record showing at the Boston Art Club, the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, the Corcoran Gallery, the Carnegie Institute, the New York School of Art, the National Academy of Design, and the Society of American Artists, among others. She worked at a time when female artists often used a gender-ambiguous pseudonym to receive serious professional attention. Thus, when she began submitting her paintings to juried exhibitions, she often signed simply as “Freeman Clark.” Many of her canvases remain unsigned and almost all of them are undated.

The Gardens
Oil on canvas

Through the Trees
(front cover)
Oil on burlap

Silver Water Can
(opposing flap)
Oil on canvas

Self-Portrait in Green
Oil on canvas



In the spring of 1896, twenty-year-old Kate Freeman Clark, originally from Holly Springs, Mississippi, enrolled in an oil-painting class offered by William Merritt Chase, one of America's most well-known impressionists and the owner of the Chase School of Art. Clark studied with him over the next two decades and became a proficient painter in her own right. She produced hundreds of paintings in various genres and media, including pastoral landscapes in oil and watercolor, lyrically inspired scenes, and Munich school-influenced portraiture. In 1923 she stored her entire collection of paintings in bales at a warehouse in New York City and returned to her family homestead in Holly Springs, where she lived until her death in 1957. After her death, her canvases, many of them damaged from years of storage, were recovered, and a gallery in her memory was built in her hometown.



LASTING IMPRESSIONS: RESTORING KATE FREEMAN CLARK

THIS EXHIBITION PAYS TRIBUTE TO A PRODIGIOUS AND PROLIFIC FEMALE ARTIST FROM MISSISSIPPI. IT SEEKS TO REINTRODUCE KATE FREEMAN CLARK'S WORK TO THE HISTORY OF AMERICAN PAINTING BY DRAWING ATTENTION TO THE ONGOING RESTORATION OF HER CAREER AND HER CANVASES.

Annette Trefzer and James G. Thomas, Jr., Guest Curators

The University of Mississippi Museum and Historic Houses

P.O. BOX 1848, UNIVERSITY, MS 38677 ■ t. 662.915.7073 ■ MUSEUM.OLEMISS.EDU   