

James Kroner: New Work
May 28 – July 26, 2025
The gallery will be closed July 2 - 5

First Friday Artwalk: June 6th, 5:30 - 7:30 p.m.
Artist Reception: July 11th, 5:30 - 7:30 p.m. (Remarks by the artist at 6 p.m.)



Karin Clarke Gallery is pleased to present *New Work* by Washington based artist James Kroner, his third solo exhibit at the gallery. Kroner combines realism with a contemporary impressionistic approach to painting that emphasizes tonal composition, the peculiar mood created by light and atmosphere at a given moment, and the immediacy of *alla prima* brushwork. His new series of oil paintings on panel includes European urban scenes, West Coast cityscapes (Seattle, San Francisco), as well as landscapes. While many of these works are on a small scale, the exhibit also includes a number of medium and large pieces. Kroner's paintings are often created in plein air, and at times further developed in the studio. Others are built from vivid sensory impressions stored in memory during previous plein air sessions. In each case, he says, "I am capturing the essence of what I observe from life."

While Kroner is drawn to landscapes as well as to cityscapes and architecture, what he truly finds compelling is how these settings are affected by the shifting weather and the way light and atmosphere interact, notably in times of rain or fog. A central theme in his work is "the energy in nature," which was the subject matter of his Master's thesis. Painting outdoors, studying the way the light and shadows keep moving and changing, Kroner got a sense of "this energy that's present in nature, in the light and in the atmosphere. It became something that I was very interested in incorporating into my work. I wanted to capture the feeling of things shifting over time."

This is in part why Kroner works *alla prima* as much as possible, an approach which he has refined over years of experimentation. This wet-on-wet technique allows him to "go after the scene and try and capture it within a few hours or a day." Working with a limited palette, he starts by laying down the tones, focusing on patterns of light and dark to create his composition. This is followed by a second or third layer while the paint is still wet "to build up the feel of the atmosphere and the energy of the light."

As the work progresses, the painting's focal area gets developed, with Kroner refining a form, adding definition to a shape, making an edge sharper, while the surrounding elements may remain abstract to varying degrees. With quick, loose brushstrokes laid on top of brushstrokes, Kroner merely needs to suggest the details in order to provide a sense of the whole scene. Sunlight is reflected on the solid stone of an old European façade, streetlights shimmer and the pavement glistens in a coastal city at dusk, a veil of haze envelops rolling hills in Italy... These are fugitive moments that we all recognize.

Born in 1978 in San Francisco, Kroner grew up in the suburbs of San Mateo, California. From a young age, writing was for him a means of creative exploration and an essential tool in his eager search for a better understanding of himself and his environment. As a young man, initially attracted to philosophy, he eventually decided to pursue art and earned both a BFA (2010) and an MFA (2013) in drawing and painting from the Academy of Art, San Francisco. He received a full scholarship for the 2011 Study Abroad Program in Italy, an experience that proved decisive for his career. Encountering on site and in person the art of the Renaissance that he had previously studied deepened his understanding of the potential of painting, and Umbria and Tuscany kindled his interest in landscape. The program also inspired him to lead workshops on plein air painting in Europe and the US, which he continues to do to this day. Both gallery owner Karin Clarke and her mother, renowned painter Margaret Coe, attended some of his workshops, and were impressed with his work, which has been exhibited in both solo and group shows since 2006. Kroner has also been the recipient of numerous awards.

- Sylvie Pederson