

ART: REVIEWS

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Kim Curtis' paintings at Kasia Kay Art Projects are all landscapes in which the artist has uncovered and made prominent the underlying abstract elements. Presumably inspired by natural settings caught in different seasons and at different times of day, the paintings are less actual transcriptions than evocations of places through form, light and color.

The best of them are small, as Curtis has a talent for creating tightly circumscribed, densely packed panels. The larger canvases are to my eye less successful, though they sometimes also have the deep glowing colors of stained glass and in a single instance--the one titled "Almost Spring"--suggests the unseen growth process more than what is already visible above ground.

The light in many of the pictures is the fiery red of dusk that used to illuminate most of the Wisconsin north-woods paintings by Tom Uttech. However, Curtis--who also lives and works in the heartland, Urbana--uses it less to give her scenes drama than to take the chill off the spare wintry landscapes that seem to be both her preference and forte.

Among the highlights is a group of panels one or two feet wide but only three inches high. Here she has pared down landscapes to their irreducible essentials, and the asceticism is most persuasive. Each and every mark is necessary to the abstract compositions, which still have not lost any of their atmosphere or ability to function as poetic evocations.

Kasia Kay Art Projects Gallery through April 22
At 1044 W. Fulton Market, 312-492-8828.
www.kasiakayartprojects.com