

## WILBUR NIEWALD

Wilbur Niewald is in love with the world and all it has to teach us. With the keen eye of a scientist, he studies the human visage, the objects of daily use, the natural environment, and the complexities of constructed cities and traffic ways. With the skilled insight of an artist, he renders that world in oil paintings that bring us close to the life of things.

Niewald's focus is on the intimately known world of his hometown, Kansas City. He studied at the Kansas City Art Institute and went on to teach there for forty-three years, twenty-eight of them as chair of the painting and printmaking department. During these years, his own work continued to evolve. Cézanne's influence can be felt in the structural clarity and faceted planes of Niewald's paintings, while the Impressionist passion for painting *en plein air* inspired him to begin working entirely outdoors in 1970. His paintings capture this freshness in luminous hues and confident brushwork.

Niewald is forever seeking new locations, while returning to favorite spots, on occasion, to explore them with new eyes. His paintings offer glimpses of the world we move through but forget to see: giant, dark trees sweeping the sky above the verdant plains of Loose Park, where Union and Confederate soldiers fought and fell long ago; or a bend in the Missouri River, where Lewis and Clark's keelboat passed more than two hundred years ago, but where concrete, steel, and bricks dominate today.

History is but a subtext of Niewald's painting, however. His chief aim is to situate himself within time and space, and faithfully depict the scene before him. His is the omniscient eye, looking down upon and across wide vistas, analyzing and abstracting broad passages while bringing others into sharp focus. His reverence for his subject is matched only by his passion for painting.

—Jan Schall



*Gerry with Black Vest*, 2001  
oil on canvas  
24 x 20 inches  
Courtesy of the artist



*Still Life with White Pitcher and Yellow Cloth*, 2000  
oil on canvas  
26 x 32 inches  
Collection of John and Linda Johntz



*Pine Trees at Loose Park*, 2003  
oil on canvas  
29 x 36 inches  
Collection of Adelaide Ward