



HAWTHORNE Fine Art

Kate W. Newhall (1840—1917)

Autumn on the Black Brook, 1876

Oil on canvas

6 x 10 inches

Signed and dated, recto and verso: Kate W. Newhall; 1876

Catherine White Newhall, more commonly known as Kate W. Newhall, was a prolific oil landscape painter whose subjects range from the mountains and rivers of New England—where she was raised—to the coastal scenes of the San Francisco Bay area, where she resided as an adult.

Newhall was born in Fall River, Massachusetts, and spent her youth in Concord, New Hampshire. After discovering her love of and talent for painting, she enrolled at Cooper Union in New York City in her early twenties, from 1863—64, from where she received a certificate in “Drawing and Painting from Still Life.” In addition to her studies at Cooper Union, she also took classes with three reputable landscape and marine painters: Rufus Wright (1832—1900), Carleton Wiggins (1848—1932), and Mauritz F. H. de Haas (1832—1895). By 1870, she was residing in Brooklyn and had garnered a reputation as a talented landscape painter whose subjects were drawn from the New England countryside. She relocated to Plainfield, New Jersey in 1875, where she remained until 1897, when she travelled with her brother, an itinerant missionary, to California.

Autumn on the Black Brook is from Newhall’s residency on the East Coast. Black Brook is a tributary of the Ausable River, which runs through Adirondack Park in New York. Newhall depicts the waterway as if the viewer is standing within it, with the watery expanse stretching across the whole of the lower canvas. Newhall was particularly known for her sensitive depictions of sunsets, a talent that is evident in this canvas. The quiet scene of the brook running through the mountains, as if cradled amongst their peaks, is bathed in a warm autumnal glow.



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The artist's sense of perspective is equally impressive; the details of the trees and rocks located on the peninsula in the lower right corner juxtaposed with the ghosts of mountains in the background communicate the vastness of space for which the Adirondacks are known.

Newhall, along with her brother, settled in Berkeley, California after two years of travel throughout the state. She continued to paint landscapes and marine scenes until her death, now drawing her inspiration from the Bay area, as well from excursions to Lake Tahoe. While in Berkeley, she became close friends and sketching partners with the Tonalist painter William Keith (1838—1911) and the architect Leola Coggins (1881—1930). As she had done on the East Coast, Newhall became well known for her talents, and was able to support herself through the sale of her works—a considerable feat for any woman at the time, and one more important for an unmarried woman such as herself. In addition to having her work shown on the walls of various local businesses for sale, she was included in several exhibitions between 1875 and 1908, including at the Brooklyn Art Association (1875), the San Francisco Art Association (1900—01), Golden Gate Park Museum (1902), and the Berkeley Art Association (1908).

Selected Bibliography

Hughes, Edan Milton. *Artists in California: 1786—1940*. Sacramento, CA: Crocker Art Museum Press, 2002.

Kovinick, Phil and Marian Yoshiki-Kovinick. *An Encyclopedia of Women Artists of the American West*. Austin: University of Texas Press, Austin, 1998.