

JANET ALLING  
*Summertime – From the Garden*  
 March 14–April 25, 2026



*Partly Sunny, 1984*

Janet Alling's third solo exhibition, *Summertime – From the Garden*, poignantly brings together two chapters in the artist's practice: the *Summer Annuals* paintings of the 1980s and a group completed last year. Together, they trace a decades-long return to the language of plants—forms Alling approaches not as still life, but as living presences.

The exhibition brings together five paintings from the 1980s *Summer Annuals* series—*Milieu*, *Partly Sunny*, *The Cloud*, *Storm Approaching*, and *The Conductor*—alongside five recent works from 2025. Created nearly forty years apart, the paintings share a common sensibility rooted in summer gardens, sunlight, and the vitality of plant life. For the *Summer Annuals* series, Alling worked directly from living plants and cut flowers, building each painting plant by plant. Rather than preparing sketches or predetermined arrangements, she allowed the compositions to unfold, with titles often emerging only after completion as a way of guiding viewers into the paintings' balance of close observation and improvisation.

*“Working from live plants—potted or cut flowers—I constructed each painting one plant or flower at a time. Based on the forms and colors of each one, I played and worked with the gestures and life energies of these ‘creatures’ from the earth as they moved across the picture plane in subtly composed yet dramatic ways. I was totally immersed in their world and not until completion did I really see or know what I’d accomplished.”* — Janet Alling

In 2025, Alling returned to the idea of the summer garden. Frequent visits to nurseries and flower shops yielded a new crop of subjects—*Cosmos*, *Columbine*, and *Delphinium* among them—each presented singularly against expansive fields of sky. Enlarged and isolated, the plants appear monumental, suspended in an atmosphere of heat and light.

Reflecting on the new paintings, Alling recalls an image that lingered in memory: a breezy summer scene from nineteenth-century painting.

*“After finishing the paintings, I remembered a Monet painting I had seen many years ago—‘Woman with a Parasol.’ What stayed with me was the feeling of the day itself: hot, breezy, full of sunlight. That sense of weather, of being outdoors in the open air, unconsciously inspired these paintings.”*

Across both bodies of work, Alling's paintings treat plants as dynamic actors. Leaves and stems bend, cluster, and unfurl in gestures that feel lithe and lyrical—at times even orchestral—independent forms moving within a shared rhythm. Set against luminous skies or expansive fields of color, the plants take on a theatrical presence, where the drama of light, growth, weather, and resilience quietly unfolds.

Painters have long approached plants this way. Dutch still-life painters of the seventeenth century—particularly Rachel Ruysch (1664–1750), newly admired by Alling—arranged flowers within carefully constructed compositions. Alling lovingly turns that tradition inside out. No longer contained in vases or interiors, her plants are released into sky and space. Enlarged and animated by gesture, they command the scene.

In her 2018 book *Thus Spoke the Plant*, ecologist Monica Gagliano observes that “stories are encoded with the memories of our species and all the life forms we descend from... each story is notated separately for individual plants, and still all stories are sounding together to remind us of our deep history of connection and interdependence with all others, humans and non-humans.” In Alling's paintings, those quiet stories seem to unfold across time. *From the Garden* carries the energy of one moment forward through time. With their animated presence, the plants suggest constant growth and change. Set against bright skies and gathering storms, they embody the resilience and persistence of the natural world.

Janet Alling (b. 1939, New York City) lives and works in Providence, Rhode Island. While at Yale in the 1960s, Alling studied among a legendary generation of artists including Chuck Close, Tony Phillips, Richard Serra, Nancy Graves, Janet Fish, Rackstraw Downs, and Brice Marden. They helped transform contemporary art through radical shifts in material, scale, subject, and perception. Influenced by her mentor Alex Katz, Alling focused her gaze on capturing and magnifying the natural world to redefine a category of painting long regarded as decorative and conventional.

In a 1972 *New York Times* review of the artists' first New York exhibition, critic Peter Schjeldahl placed her among a group of artists who were “advancing realist painting in an important way. Almost brutal in its scale manipulations and its assertions of detail, but full of acidity and sweetness of personality... work like Alling's reintroduces us to the visible world with a bang.”

In 2023, Alling was included in the exhibition *Womanish: Audacious, Courageous, Willful Art* at the McNay Art Museum in San Antonio, Texas, and participated in the New York Studio School's Annual Benefit Auction and Spring Lecture Series. Past solo exhibitions include the Newport Art Museum, RI; York College, CUNY, Queens, NY; St. Mary's College of Maryland; Vassar College, Poughkeepsie, NY; and Kornblee Gallery, New York. Her work is included in the permanent collections of the Rhode Island School of Design Museum of Art; Neuberger Museum of Art, Purchase, NY; NYC Health + Hospitals Arts in Medicine Collection; Florists Transworld Delivery Collection; Fralin Museum of Art, University of Virginia; Frances Young Tang Teaching Museum and Art Gallery, Skidmore College; the Bank of America Art Collection; and the McNay Art Museum, San Antonio.

JANET ALLING

*Summertime' - From the Garden*

INDEX OF WORKS

SEVEN SISTERS



*Giant Lamb's Ears*, 1982  
60 x 60 in. oil on canvas



*The Cloud*, 1984  
58 1/2 x 80 1/4 in. oil on canvas



*What in the World...*, 2025  
48 x 60 in. oil on canvas



*Blazing Sunset*, 2005  
60 x 48 in. oil on linen



*Cosmos*, 2025  
60 x 48 in. oil on linen



*Partly Sunny*, 1984  
57 x 68 in. oil on canvas



*Milieu*, 1984  
66 x 72 in. oil on canvas



*Delphinium*, 2025  
56 x 40 in. oil on linen



*Purple Columbine*, 2025  
56 x 40 in. oil on linen



*The Conductor*, 1986  
48 x 72 in. oil on canvas



*Storm Approaching*, 1986  
66 x 72 in. oil on canvas



*Cosmos Study*, 2025  
24 x 12 in. oil on linen



*Periwinkle Haze*, 2023  
16 x 16 in. oil on linen



*On the Clouds (Dusty Miller, Snapdragons)*, 2007  
14 x 18 in. oil on linen



*Dusty Miller/Marigolds with Shadows*, 2007  
14 x 18 in. oil on linen



*Marigold/Dusty Miller*, 2005  
14 x 18 in. oil on linen



*Convergence*, 2023  
16 x 16 in. oil on linen

*Lambs Ears/Yellow Sky*, 1982  
*Lambs Ears/Blue Sky*, 1982  
25 1/4 x 33 1/2 in.  
oil on canvas



*Lambs Ears/Pink Sky, Yellow Sun*, 1982  
30 x 36 in.  
oil on canvas