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## 251 DeKalb in King of Prussia unveils lobby art gallery

By [Gary Puleo](#), The Times Herald

UPPER MERION >> The lobby of the upscale 251 DeKalb South apartment building in King of Prussia is not the sort of place where you'd expect to encounter a couple of generic potted plants and a few pleasant but unprovocative acrylic landscapes adorning the walls.

Still, art lovers that they are, owners Candlebrook Properties LLC went above and beyond in creating an ever-evolving art gallery to be savored by residents and guests alike because, as well-known gallerist and art dealer Kathy McCarver Root of KMR Arts noted, "having exhibitions in the public space of 251 DeKalb is connected to the layering of art as interesting elements of décor and also adding depth to the environment. It brings relevance to people's everyday lives."

McCarver Root was commissioned by Candlebrook to launch a gallery under the branding of KMR Arts @ 251 in the lobby of the South building. The intriguing "Everglades," a collection of "alternative" works by photographer Lisa Elmaleh, who specializes in 19th Century photography techniques, marks the debut installation in the lobby of the building that features the most spacious, family-friendly residences in the complex.

However, KMR Arts @ 251 is not limited to the eyes of the \$1,200-a-month-for-a-studio apartment/\$2,300-for-three-bedrooms tenants, or their guests.

Anyone is welcome at any time to come and view the collection, which is here through the end of August, and all the exhibits to follow. They simply need to let the concierge know the purpose of their visit.

The slightly sepia-toned black and white "Everglades" photos accent the bright decorative motifs of the lobby and its attendant gaming parlor, echoing 1960s modern décor with a crisp contemporary edge, while adding an integrity that invokes the past while embracing the present.

As a native of South Florida, Elmaleh, now based in Brooklyn, said that the Everglades shaped her vision as she documented the flora and fauna of the setting using her large format camera and the wet collodion process, a 19th Century process requiring that the image be exposed and developed on site.

"The process renders light slowly and reveals the passing of time, a quality which is essential in my work," Elmaleh said.

The KMR Arts exhibit perfectly suits the "lifestyle-driven" setting of 251 DeKalb, noted Candlebrook Properties director Adam Zucker.

“Kathy is originally from the Main Line, so when we approached her about bringing her world-class artists to this area, it was a natural fit,” Zucker noted. “Her father is Tim McCarver, a former Phillies catcher, so there’s that element of local pride. Kathy was excited to come back into the zone as well.”

Candlebrook purchased the former Marquee property two years ago with the goal “to infuse it with a big emphasis on lifestyle and community building,” Zucker pointed out. “When this was built it was the glamorous centerpiece to King of Prussia’s suburban Philadelphia development. That was 50-some years ago, so it needed a face lift and we definitely did that.”

The \$150 million renovation spanned all 650 apartments and included exterior as well as interior upgrades across the 26.2 acres, including a TechnoGym fitness center, Kidville children’s playspace, pool and even a cozy coffee klatch space called The Coffee House featuring La Colombe.

The now completed South building is one of three zones under construction, with the West building due for occupancy sometime in June.

“Each of the three lobbies will have its own unique flavor, but as part of the overall aesthetic of experiential living, and offering opportunities for residents to meet each other and enjoy a cultural environment,” Zucker explained.

As a cultural space that doubles as a retail venue for somewhat urbane art, KMR Arts @ 251 was designed to be accessible from the get-go, Zucker allowed, noting that the current pieces on display are in the \$1,600 range.

“Kathy can furnish million-dollar mansions with very high-end art, but that was not the intent here. We wanted this to be beautiful, inspiring art that is also accessible to the average person to a certain extent. That was the goal for this growing company. We’ve exceeded expectations in bringing residents from near and afar to King of Prussia. We leased 260 apartments in a year, which is record speed for this area. And we continue to grow because of things like this,” he added, glancing around at the lobby. “So this is now a really good opportunity for the public to come and check us out.”

As publicist Abby Littleton of Neff Associates said, “You don’t have to feel like you are tiptoeing through a high-end art gallery when you’re here. You can enjoy the art and purchase it. It’s just amazing what you can get at 251 DeKalb that you can’t get at other places.”