

# The Killing Art (Kate McKinnon Novels Book 3)

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**THE KILLING ART** Jonathan Santlofer *For my mother, Edith, who always encouraged me Verily I say unto you, that one of you will betray me. —MATTHEW 26:21 The one struggle in art is the struggle of artists against artists... —AD REINHARDT, MEMBER OF THE NEW YORK SCHOOL AND ONE OF THE "IRASCIBLES" Here (in New York) is where the showdown fight goes on—it's bloody and real. No illusions about social morality high or low. The artist is his brother's enemy like nowhere else.... New York is a slash across the belly. You know your friend has a knife and will use it on you. —CLYFFORD STILL, MEMBER OF THE NEW YORK SCHOOL AND ONE OF THE "IRASCIBLES"* **Contents** [EPIGRAPHS](#) [PROLOGUE](#) Is it the chemical vapors that are causing his eyes to tear, or the... [CHAPTER 1](#) Kate McKinnon stared at the sentences on her computer screen... [CHAPTER 2](#) Standing inside the gleaming white cube that was the Modernist... [CHAPTER 3](#) It was a little past 8 A.M. as Kate drove through... [CHAPTER 4](#) Kate and Murphy regarded the painting, which lay faceup on... [CHAPTER 5](#) The Delano-Sharfstein Gallery, in a turn-of-the-century town house, was a... [CHAPTER 6](#) Marci Starrett replaced the phone and joined her husband at... [CHAPTER 7](#) Kate shut her cell phone. Of course Marci had understood... [CHAPTER 8](#) The house, a sprawling country manor, is nestled among tall... [CHAPTER 9](#) Nola was busy cramming books into her backpack with one... [CHAPTER 10](#) One Police Plaza. [CHAPTER 11](#) Norman Brandt thumbed through stacks of papers on his desk,... [CHAPTER 12](#) Kate and Murphy stared at the painting. "No question." Kate's... [CHAPTER 13](#) Mert Sharfstein stared at the painting, then lowered his magnifying... [CHAPTER 14](#) The Greenwich precinct was overheated, and Henry Lifschultz was perspiring,... [CHAPTER 15](#) The drive up to Tarrytown passed quickly, Kate's mind preoccupied... [CHAPTER 16](#) The loft was quiet, Nola at class, the baby already... [CHAPTER 17](#) Kate was still breathless from her discovery and the speed-limit-breaking... [CHAPTER 18](#) Kate never got used to the smell of the morgue,... [CHAPTER 19](#) Miranda Wilcox was having a productive morning on the telephone—Europe,... [CHAPTER 20](#) Kate and Murphy stared at the newly cleaned paintings. First,... [CHAPTER 21](#) What sources? Floyd Brown did not bother to finish the... [CHAPTER 22](#) Gregory Sarkisian's office, sealed since the murder, was dry and... [CHAPTER 23](#) Kate stood in the small living room of the secretary's... [CHAPTER 24](#) Murphy cut the siren and beacon as he brought the... [CHAPTER 25](#) The ice in Miranda Wilcox's drink was melting and she... [CHAPTER 26](#) Maurice Jones worked for Jamal Youngblood, whom he'd never met,... [CHAPTER 27](#) Urban Legend has it that the reporters who work for... [CHAPTER 28](#) When Colin Leader did not report to work or call... [CHAPTER 29](#) The newspapers were having a good time picking over the... [CHAPTER 30](#) Cecile Edelman was not the sort of woman easily given... [CHAPTER 31](#) Kate was working in the PBS editing room, eyes flicking... [CHAPTER 32](#) Silky fabric pressed to cheek, the scent of perfume, eyes... [CHAPTER 33](#) It's a Phillip Zander," said Kate. "I'm certain of it..." [CHAPTER 34](#) Clare Tapell's office resembled a beehive, detectives and agents crowding... [CHAPTER 35](#) My the time the ambulance reached the scene, Detective Kominsky... [CHAPTER 36](#) Everyone was exhausted from the night before. Kate and Perlmutter... [CHAPTER 37](#) The hotel was nowhere near the four-star affairs Kate was... [CHAPTER 38](#) Only one day back in New York and already Kate... [CHAPTER 39](#) José leaned back against the car's headrest, his old Discman... [CHAPTER 40](#) The world had gone white, the trees lining Springs Fireplace... [CHAPTER](#)

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He slaps the notebook shut, reaches for the whiskey bottle, sees it is empty, stands, sways a bit, unsteady on his feet, opens the small fridge, and without thinking exchanges the notebook for a bottle of vodka, takes a swig, considers his many losses, then lifts the metal can off the floor and picks up where he left off. He tilts the can and watches the clear liquid spill onto yet another painting—this one slit down the center with a palette knife, canvas sagging and folding like old flesh—the piece, made years ago, beloved at the time, though now, so long after its creation, nothing more than pigment and canvas coupled with regret. And who would mourn its loss? The critics? Collectors? Other artists? A drunken, bitter laugh. He reaches for the bottle of vodka, another long pull, leans back against the wall, takes in the peeling paint and ratty furniture of the Lower East Side tenement he despises, so far from the scene—the Cedar Street Tavern, the Club—places he'd stopped going to long before they became history without him. The "new American painting" it was called back then, when the scene got going and a few of them caught the media's eye—first Jackson Pollock, "Jack the Dripper," according to *Life* magazine, a miserable drunk who pissed it all away, then, in turn, the various members of the self-anointed in crowd—Mark Rothko, who was always depressed about...something, and that son of a bitch Robert Motherwell, and the others—but why bother to think about them, most of them dead now except for the king, Bill de Kooning, who was still going strong long after the movement's star had faded. He thinks back on his career. Career? That's a laugh. But there was a moment, wasn't there? One article, a bit of praise, and then...nothing. *Was it something I did? Something I said?* A conversation—angry, bitter words—tugs at the recesses of his mind. But it's no good. Impossible to remember after all these years—and all the drink. *Fame?* He no longer cares. For years he wondered why it had come to them and not him, why he had failed where they had succeeded, but when he discovered the truth, what was he to do—tell a world that no longer cared? And who would believe him? Nowadays, when he can get out of bed, he paints houses from nine to five, and at night is too tired, or too drunk, to put brush to canvas. Ironic. Decades of paintings—mostly large, bold color, heavy paint, disjointed abstract figures, ugly but brilliant, some would say, and did at one time—stacked against walls, crammed into wooden storage racks, collecting dust, suffocating, begging for exposure, the chance to hang on a wall, to be appreciated. He moves unsteadily among them, turpentine soaking the bottoms of his work shoes, rubber soles making sticky, smacking noises, eyes closed as he caresses paint and canvas with fingertips roughened and stained from years of exposure to pigment and resin—a blind lover's touch. He opens his bloodshot eyes, looks away from the paintings at patterns of ice crystals on the panes of his tenement window, mini-abstractions as beautiful as any art. *Another winter. Christmas only days away.* Memories flood his alcohol-infused brain: Winking holiday lights, decorated store windows, holding the hand of a beautiful child who became a drug-addicted woman, a life even more despairing than his own. *My fault?* No time to figure that one out. Another face has taken shape in his mind—a portrait of innocence. He stares at the far wall as if he can see into the connecting room, and hesitates for just a moment. *Yes? No?* There is still time to change his mind. *But how to heal the heart?* Impossible. *It's better this way.* The baptism is complete, the gallon tin of turpentine, empty; he pitches it into a pile of oily rags, wobbles, almost falls, swipes a few tears from his cheeks, takes a deep breath of the turpentine-tainted air, strikes a wooden match along the edge of his paint table, opens his fingers and watches its lazy, lethal decent toward the studio floor. A sound—a collective gasp, a Greek chorus sighing—before the red-orange stalagmites undulate like a roomful of drunken belly dancers. For a moment the artist imagines he

is painting, capturing these flamelike figures, all this color and drama, on canvas. But he is wrong. He has become part of it, one of them: shoes melting, pants smoldering, lungs constricting and gasping, throat burning, his flesh simmering. **CHAPTER 1**

To the artists of the New York School painting was their life, their soul, their *raison d'être*. For them, the 1930s and '40s were defined by cold-water flats, hard work, heavy drinking; painters hanging out in bars and coffee shops, arguing about the latest trends and ideas—creation over completion, painting as an event—but most of all, it was a time of intense friendships and camaraderie. Kate McKinnon stared at the sentences on her computer screen, then glanced at her watch: 2 A.M. She'd gotten used to working on her book late at night and into the morning hours, a time when most normal people were sleeping. Since Richard's death sleep had been an intermittent visitor at best, the days and nights yawning in front of her. A year ago, her life had been nearly perfect; but now, when she tried to reconstruct it, the events, memories, were fragmentary and scattered, like shards of a mirror she had carelessly dropped. Had she really been a married woman, an uptown mover and shaker, a bona fide member of New York's elite? It felt like another lifetime, and the transformation she had gone through to get there—Queens cop to society grande dame—like something that had happened to someone else. Kate pushed away from the desk, stretched her slender, almost six-foot frame, and ambled quietly down the hallway of her Chelsea loft, paused a moment to peek in on the one-year-old curled in his crib, son of her protégée Nola, the two of them having moved in with her when she'd sold the uptown apartment to pay taxes and debts accrued after the demise of her husband's once-lucrative law firm. Kate leaned against the doorjamb, taking in the baby's dark curls, his chest rising and falling. Had it been only a year? It seemed forever—or yesterday. If it were not for the baby, she would have little idea of time passing. *A dark alleyway. A dead body.* Kate squeezed her eyes shut, but the image of her husband—a broken, toppled scarecrow, cops and medical examiner huddled over his body—intensified. A deep yoga breath, eyes still closed, searching for another image, and there it is, the one she was after: Richard, tall and handsome, smart and rich. The chance to start over. Exchange a cop's uniform for Armani, a row house for a penthouse, go back to school, pursue her first love, art history, earn the Ph.D., write the first book. Ten years of marriage. Close to perfect. Perhaps, if she were honest, only perfect through the lens of loss and melancholy. But God, how she missed that imperfect marriage. Memories jitterbugged through her brain, impossible to hold on to, already starting to blur. *Is this what a life together is reduced to?* Kate felt tears burning behind her lids. But no. She would not allow herself that indulgence. She'd had enough tears. She wondered how Richard would feel if he could see her now, living in a downtown loft, with a baby named for him just down the hall? Pleased, she thought. They hadn't been able to have children of their own, though they'd tried. And when they finally gave up, Kate devoted herself to charity work, nurturing dozens of kids through the educational foundation Let There Be a Future—one of them, a once troubled teen from a Bronx housing project, Nola, asleep in the room just beside her baby. Funny, thought Kate, how she had unexpectedly gained a daughter, and a son, a reason to go on living when she had come so close to giving up. Outside, garbage trucks were clanking and grinding, something she had rarely, if ever, heard when she lived on Central Park West, but it did not bother her. She was here now, in her new home, in her new life, still trying to figure it out, and determined to be happy. **Black and white acrylic paint** on the palette. Brushes lined up. Simplicity itself. Just like the plan. *Well, okay, the plan is not so simple. No, the plan is simple. First one. Then another. Work my way up to the prize, that's it. Slow and steady. Yes, a simple plan. It's the paintings that are complicated, or will be, for some. But that's the fun part, isn't it?* A warped smile. Music turned on, an old Michael Jackson CD, *Thriller*; brush dipped in black paint, then white, mixed to create a cool gray, not quite right; more black, an image starting to take shape, a few details added. The artwork, a balm, takes the edge off pain, tamps down anxiety, dulls the recurring nightmares that do not wait for sleep. An hour, maybe two, passes, one of the painted images finished. Time for a break. Sit back, assess the work, and the plan. *Will they get it? Does it matter? Were the other pictures received—and what did they make of them? No way to know. Not yet. Impossible to think it through with this pain, this damn pain. When was the last pill? Can't remember. Just breathe. Feel the diaphragm expand. That's it. Hold it. Now, let it out, slowly. Again, breathe. Give it time. Patience.* Practically a motto,

for art, for life. A damp paintbrush plucked from the edge of the palette, drawn along the cheek, an imaginary painting: smooth flesh, features redrawn. *What's the use?* Back to the painting. The one completed image stripped down to essential black and white, no color necessary, the replication slightly skewed, a facsimile—like this life. Painting: A way to order the world, and manipulate the viewer. *Order.* Yes. Necessary to the plan. Music turned up. An improvised moonwalk, awkward, though the performer believes it is perfect. *I can play the role any way I want. And why not? It's my turn now.* A lifetime of acting—and so good at it. Over the years, the history has been researched, incidents that led to tragedy charted, assembled, and duly noted, and though none of these facts has been verified, the actor believes he has actually lived and experienced them—a justification for revenge, for setting the record straight, all of it processed through a mind distorted by deprivation and pain. *Is it true?* Yes? And no. But true enough. Does it matter if what drives one is real or imagined, true or false, good or evil? What matters is that it propels one forward, supplies nourishment for existing. Some people create. Others destroy. It's a game, you see—though the others do not yet know they are playing. But the game is for...who? *Me? Them?* The actor waits in the wings to perform. The role: normalcy. Challenging, for sure, but one that has been labored over, perfected. Though right now, alone, there's no need to put on the mask. That will come later. A special performance. Tonight. Makeup. Costume. Smile. Frown. Laugh. Cry. Turn it on. Turn it off. *Lights! Camera! Action!* So easy. Except for the pain. *Fuck the deep breathing.* Another pill. Head thrown back. Eyes closed. **3 A.M.** Notes on her book in hand, Kate tiptoed down the hallway careful not to wake Nola and the baby, curled on a couch in the living room, and switched on a small lamp—the room, her collection of young artists' work, cast in a soft light. The modern masters—Picasso, Léger, Braque, de Kooning—were safely ensconced in museums, all donated, the thought of making money from the art she and her husband had collected impossible, even if she could have used the money. Of course the sale of the Central Park West apartment had been profitable, but more than half of it had been snatched by the IRS, another sizable chunk to take care of Richard's employees, who had lost their pension plans when the firm collapsed. Sure, the law firm had had insurance, but the company was refusing to pay—murder and embezzlement, they argued, rendered the agreement null and void. It infuriated Kate that they would try to find a loophole, though, in fact, she wanted no part of it—*blood money*—the way she saw it. And it wasn't like she was poor, there was enough in the bank to keep her comfortable for the rest of her life, though her days of blowing wads of cash on designer outfits and Jimmy Choo shoes were over, which was just fine with her; money and status had never been her thing. She hadn't cared much for the trappings of wealth, the fancy cars and an apartment way too big for the two of them, and she didn't miss them. What she did miss was her husband, and the things they had shared: indefinable moments spent together, talking, laughing, making love, the way you could sit in a room beside another human being and feel that he knew you without ever saying a word. Kate glanced up at the artwork, details and color lost to the shadows, and a memory flashed across her brain: the Color Blind killer, an unexpected, surely unwanted assignment, tracking a psychopath with the NYPD, and only a year after the horrors of the Death Artist. And yet, on some weird level, it had helped her cope—temporarily at least—with Richard's death. Now, *Thank God*, she was starting over, taking care of a young mother and baby, working on a second book and the PBS series she had been hosting for several years, *Artists' Lives*. Like her book, it would focus on the New York School of the 1940s and '50s and include interviews with the few surviving artists of the period, along with experts in the field. Kate read over a few of the pages she had written and made some notes. The garbage trucks had stopped whining, the loft, unusually quiet. A picture of her father in his blue uniform came into her mind, her uncles, a few of her cousins, too, all in the same uniform, crowding the living room of the Astoria row house where she grew up, cigarette smoke clouding and smudging a few details, but the event all too clear—the day after her twelfth birthday, her mother's wake. Then, another image, fifteen years later, of herself in that same blue uniform chasing runaways and homicides on the Astoria force—until she met Richard, and her life had changed. But it had changed again. Lately, in bits and pieces, Kate had been trying to say good-bye—to that old life, to her old self, even to Richard—though she wasn't sure she really wanted to, because...then what? Who would she be? A woman alone—which wasn't so bad. She'd

always been strong and independent, had maintained her own life even when she was married. But it was different, wasn't it, knowing she had someone to come home to, a buffer against the harsh realities of life? It was as if her safety net had been pulled out from under her, and if she stumbled, who would be there to catch her? She guessed she would have to catch herself, or simply not fall—though with her leap-then-look attitude toward life, she thought she'd be better off investing in a suit of body armor. Kate pushed the thoughts from her mind and went back to her writing, a few more notes on her book, an hour passing. Back down the hall. Notes typed up. A shower. As she toweled off, she caught a glimpse of herself in the mirror—her new look—which still surprised her. When was it—a month ago?—that she had passed the mirror in a store window and spotted a tall dreary woman in staid, conventional clothes, a sad-looking creature without spark or verve? That did it. Never mind if she was crying on the inside, she would not go out in the world looking like a middle-aged frump. Not that she would go for an Extreme Makeover—anesthesiologists and surgeons bullying her into a nose job and breast implants. Forget that. She simply exchanged her tired Jackie O look—beige cashmere sweaters and slacks—for bright cotton pullovers and basic black jeans, started mixing them with funky jewelry and her old high-end designer accessories. But the biggest change was also her biggest splurge, a birthday gift to herself—since no one else was about to give her such an extravagant one: a new “do.” Gone were the classic shoulder-length tresses with subtle streaks of gold that had been her signature for the past ten years. Now she was sporting that tousled bed-head look, classic Jane Fonda in *Klute* meets Meg Ryan in almost anything, her thick mane hacked off, falling now just past her ears, half in her eyes, curling over the back of her neck, buttery blond chunks mixed in with her natural russet color. Her uptown friends thought she'd gone mad, but men in the street were doing double takes, and Nola thought she looked ten years younger and twenty times cooler. For this particular transformation she had gone to the meatpacking district, yesterday's no-man's-land that had become oh-so-chic in the last few years, to the hippest of the hip new hair salons, this one owned and operated by a celebrity hairstylist, who had assessed her through horn-rimmed glasses, sighed as if she were hopeless, then got to work with two gorgeous male assistants, washing and cutting and coloring and blow-drying. *The cost?* Unspeakable. Kate wouldn't tell anyone, it was too embarrassing. But the next day she made donations to three of her favorite charities, and vowed not to spend a cent on clothes or jewelry for the next six months. The truth? She loved her new look. And now, glancing in the mirror, she smiled at this “groovy” new chick and wondered who the hell she was. In the bedroom, she slipped into her jeans and T-shirt. Outside her windows it was still dark. If she left now, she could miss the traffic and make it to Phillip Zander's Long Island studio with time to spare. Kate stepped into a pair of ankle-high boots and zipped them up. In her office, she retrieved her tape recorder and notes, then glanced at the reproduction pinned above her desk, a typical Zander painting—a funky, funny female figure created from dismembered body parts coming together in paint on canvas that usually buoyed her spirits and made her smile, though at the moment it seemed more sinister than jolly, and Kate could not imagine why. **CHAPTER 2** Standing inside the gleaming white cube that was the Modernist Museum, one would never guess that the space had once been a nineteenth-century printing factory. The floors were some sort of poured polyvinyl plastic as smooth as ice, the pipes and hardware hidden behind pristine fourteen-foot-high walls, lighting that was state-of-the-art, benches like minimalist sculpture that practically screamed *Do not even consider sitting on me!* Detective Monty Murphy stood before the painting feeling slightly queasy. The almost life-size canvas, one of Willem de Kooning's *Women* series, a wild fusion of figure and abstraction created out of supercharged brush strokes, had been slashed vertically and horizontally so that the disjointed figure on canvas was now truly mutilated, flaps of canvas flopping gracelessly out of the frame. “We've only had this painting for six months—*six bloody months!*” The museum director, Colin Leader, originally from the north of London—though his accent was as high-toned as the Prince of Wales's—could barely control his rage. Murphy had recognized the painting immediately and, unlike most cops who would not know a de Kooning painting from a John Deere tractor, was almost as upset as the director, though he did not show it. In his six years with New York City's Art Squad he had witnessed plenty of willful destruction as well as the disappearance of several great

artworks, some of which, he knew, would never resurface. "And you say the painting was in one piece when the museum closed last night?" he said, his voice calm. "There was an opening last night, very crowded, in the front of the museum, in our New Works Gallery. I guess someone could easily have slipped back here, into the permanent collection." The museum director sighed. "But a guard made rounds before he left—and this would have been hard to miss." Murphy unconsciously played with the rubber band on his wrist, a nervous habit he'd acquired some years ago, then stood back and took in the painting situated in its own niche. "Could someone hit the lights?" One of the crime scene crew, dusting the area for prints, hit the switch, knocking out a strip of spotlights. The painting nearly vanished into the shadows—it would have been possible to pass it without noticing. "You said a guard was in here?" "Most of the guards were up front for the opening. But there was one in this area, not specifically in the niche, but in the room." "He here today, the guard?" "The police have already talked to him. He's very upset. I was going to send him home—but I can get him." "The museum receive any threats lately?" "Threats? No, of course not." "No disgruntled patrons or artists?" "We've had a couple of recent board member resignations. Policy disagreements. But these things happen. Of course there must be thousands of artists who harbor a grudge against the institution for one reason or another. Ever hear of the Guerrilla Girls?" "Feminist artists—lobby for more women to be included in museum and gallery exhibitions. They wear gorilla masks to hide their identities when they protest." "You're well informed, Detective." "I do my best." "Well, a few of them obviously infiltrated the opening last night, planted stickers on several patrons' backs." "You don't mean someone actually let in a group of women wearing gorilla masks?" asked Murphy, unconsciously switching the rubber band from one wrist to the other. "Of course not. They were probably invited guests, just part of the usual art crowd. No one knows who is or isn't a Guerrilla Girl—and without their masks, well... They must have had the stickers with them, slipped them out discreetly, patted someone on the back, then simply merged into the crowd." "And no one saw them do this?" Murphy had to ask, though he could well imagine it would not be hard to get away with. He'd done his research, spent his share of on- and off-duty hours at museum and gallery openings, and could picture the scene perfectly: the artists, gallerists, collectors, and curators, all in their requisite black costumes, packed into the room, basically ignoring the artwork—God forbid anyone should say, *Oh, that's a nice painting*—when they could be making connections, chatting up a potential gallery exhibition or sale, oblivious to everything but career moves. "If anyone saw anything, they're not saying," said Leader. "If you ask me, it's a criminal act." "No," said Murphy, then nodded toward the slashed de Kooning. "This is criminal. So, what was their beef with the show?" "They claimed we were excluding women." "Were you?" "No, there were women in the show, but the ratio of men was, um, a bit higher." "Do you happen to have one?" "One—what?" "One of the stickers." "No. They were all torn off and discarded." Convenient, thought Murphy, eyeing the museum director. "Do you remember what it said?" "It had our logo on top, and below it said..." Leader glanced at the ceiling. "'Hormone imbalance.'" Murphy suppressed a grin. "I'd like the names of those ex-board members." The director frowned. "I don't see what—" Murphy leveled a cool stare at Leader, his pencil poised over his notepad. He was a big man, well over six feet, intimidating when he wanted to be, though his face had yet to harden into the cynical mask most cops developed by forty—Murphy had two years to go. His father, a lifer, had the mask from day one. As a kid, Monty always wondered what he'd done to piss off the old man. His mother—who waited tables in a local Italian dive and was an old-movie buff who'd named her son for the actor Montgomery Clift—left his father the day after Monty graduated from high school. "Walter Bram," said the museum director. "But Mr. Bram is in on an extended trip around the world, and has been for months." "And the other?" "Cecile Edelman." Leader's brow furrowed. "I can't tell you her specific complaint. I would have to say it was a series of policy disagreements with the other board members." "Such as?" Murphy used the back of the pencil to scratch at the stubble on his chin. Leader leaned in toward Murphy. "I do not wish to speak ill of Ms. Edelman, but she is an extremely wealthy woman and can be—how shall I say it—a tad spoiled if things are not done *her* way, if you get my—" Leader stopped speaking as an elderly black man in a gray uniform came into the room. He signaled him over with a snap of his fingers. "Clarkson, this is Detective Murphy." Murphy asked, "You were stationed here during last

night's opening, correct?" "That's right," answered Leader. "Clarkson was back here all night." Murphy hooked the man by the arm and walked him down the hall. "I know you're feeling bad about this, Mr. Clarkson." "Clarkson's my first name. Clarkson White." "Got it." Murphy offered the man a warm smile. "Look, anything you say is between us, Mr. White." The old guy glanced down the hall at Leader, then back at Murphy. "How's that?" "I'm not regular police, Mr. White. I'm with the Art Squad. I only care about the painting, not museum politics. You hear what I'm saying? I'm not going to repeat this to your boss." "Nothing to repeat." So much for playing Good Cop. Murphy pulled himself up to his full height and peered down at the guard. "Mr. White. Last night someone got into your area and destroyed a painting. Either you were asleep on the job or not here—or, worse, you were in on it." "Are you crazy?!" White jerked to attention. "I've been working here since this museum opened its doors, before that, at the Metropolitan Museum. No way—" "Take it easy." Murphy laid a hand on the older man's arm. "Just tell me what happened." White took a deep breath. "You've got to understand. When there's an opening there's not enough guards to go around. We've been complaining for a year now. But they don't listen—say they can't afford more guards. Joey, he's one of the younger guards, he comes and gets me, says they got some trouble up front, something about some stickers being put on people's backs and he needs another man, I tell him I can't leave my station because I'm the only one back here, but he says, 'Just for a minute,' looks around, says there's no one back here anyway, which was a fact. He shuts the lights, and we cordon off the area, and I go up front with him, and we were trying to figure out who it was slapping those stickers on people's backs, and before you know it, maybe an hour passes." "This was when?" "Just before closing. When they started flashing the lights to let folks know it's time to go home, I said good night to Joey and I came back here, and...I didn't look around. It was late. And I was tired. And the lights were already out, so...I just left." Murphy nodded, then headed back to the gallery. "I'll need to speak with the rest of the guards," he said to Leader, "your curators, too, and anyone else who had access to this room." "Detective, there were hundreds of people here last night." "You have a mailing list for the opening?" "Of course. But it's not going to do much good. We do not check names at the door. A guard simply takes your invitation. People bring guests, or pass their invitations along to friends." *Fuck*. How could he possibly interview hundreds of people who had attended an art opening, maybe half of them without direct invitations? Not to mention the fact that he had no support from the goddamn NYPD. *Art Squad*. What a joke. Nowadays? In New York? Unless it was a terrorist threat to blow up the Metropolitan Museum of Art, no one would care. For the past year and a half, Murphy *had been* the art squad. He'd be lucky to get a few rookies to work with him on the case. An expensive painting slashed might make headlines, but carry weight with the department? Forget it—not when you had slashed bodies to deal with. And it wasn't as if Murphy could make a decent argument for art-versus-human life, but still, weren't a culture's artifacts worth more than one man on the force to look after them? He guessed not. Murphy sighed, came in for an up-close look at the destroyed artwork. The slashes in the canvas were neat and clean. The conservators would be able to put it back together, patch the back, match the paint where it had been cut and it could look okay to the naked eye, though it would no longer be worth anything—nothing the museum could barter or sell if they needed funds. He closed his notepad, leaned to the left of the destroyed painting, and read the wall text: **Willem de Kooning, *Untitled* (1959) Oil on canvas. Gift of Katherine McKinnon Rothstein. In memory of her husband, Richard.** **CHAPTER 3** It was a little past 8 A.M. as Kate drove through East Hampton, then Amagansett, the once bucolic Long Island towns that managed to retain their quiet beauty despite the influx of new money, which had transformed the sleepy hamlets into a weekend and summer playground for the rich. The roads grew a bit narrower and winding as she made her way toward Zander's studio in Springs. She passed the Pollock-Krasner house, which she thought looked lonely, a museum now, a monument to the artist Jackson Pollock, who had burned too brightly, and too fast. She turned onto Accabonic Road and found herself at the famous Green River Cemetery, and without thinking, pulled to the side of the road. No grass, barren trees, probably not the best time of year to visit a cemetery, thought Kate, though something had drawn her here—her book, or her own tragedy? She wasn't sure. She stopped at the poet Frank O'Hara's grave, recalled his senseless death, run over by a dune buggy on the

beach, a life of promise cut way too short. He'd been one of the first to write about the artists of the New York School—she had his reviews and essays at home, and referred to them often. *A life cut short*. She could not help but think about her husband, not quite forty-five, and gone. Would she ever get used to the fact that Richard was not coming back? Kate glanced around at the markers and gravestones, so many of her artist subjects buried here, and had an image of them, underground, comparing notes on their paintings. She hoped at least some of them, the ones who had not experienced fame in their lifetimes, had somehow learned of their lasting impact on the history of art. Kate had never been one to put much stock in the idea of an afterlife, though this past year she often found herself talking to her dead husband and hoped he could hear her. She walked a bit more, pulled her jacket tighter, cold air off the bay bringing a damp chill to the winter air, and when she found Jackson Pollock's marker she wiped the dirt off and thought about the tormented genius, and his wife, the painter Lee Krasner, buried close by, who had survived him and dedicated so much of her life to his memory and legend. Was that how the woman had continued to live? That, plus her own artwork, Kate guessed. A few more minutes of sodden earth and gravestones, evoking memories of this dead artist and that one—Ad Reinhardt, Elaine de Kooning, Jimmy Ernst—all of them bringing to mind her own loss, and Kate had had enough. Back on the road, the chill still with her despite the blasting of the car's heater, she found the turnoff that took her down a smaller wooded lane, and finally came to another, this one narrow and gravel covered, which brought her to Zander's property. The old wooden house, set back from the road, was not particularly imposing and looked as if it hadn't been repainted since the artist bought it in the 1950s; but it was the barn, adjacent to it, which the artist had converted into his studio, huge and impressive, that captured one's attention. **Zander was already at work**, though Kate apologized for being early. "Never too early for me," said the artist. "I don't sleep much. It's true what they say about babies and old people—both up before sunrise, both drooling. I'm thankful I haven't reverted to the diaper stage. Not yet." The old man chuckled, his bright blue eyes as alert as those of a twenty-year-old. The sun had cut through the early morning clouds and was streaming in through the windows and skylights, dappling light across an expansive space free of furniture other than a few chairs and a couple of long tables covered with tubes of paint, bottles of varnish, tins of turpentine, brushes upended in coffee cans. An ad hoc office sat in a far corner: a desk with a computer, shelves stacked with books and magazines that featured the artist's work, binders with slides and transparencies of his paintings. It was here that Zander's assistant took care of the day-to-day details of the artist's extensive career. There was a smaller paint table on wheels, topped with a glass palette, a few brushes and paint tubes, which Zander could manipulate by himself. He had it beside him now, as he worked on a large painting propped against the wall. Kate was excited to be back in the studio with a true living legend—the last of the Ab Ex big boys, an artist up there with the best of them, his work in every major museum here and abroad. Phillip Zander was a Polish immigrant who had come to the States in the early 1930s, settled in downtown Manhattan, and made the sacrifices necessary to become an artist—no normal job or any sort of normal wage—and had managed to make it through the Great Depression with a combination of frugality and single-minded determination to be a painter. After the early deaths of his good friends, the painters Arshile Gorky and Franz Kline, Zander had cleaned up his act, exchanged tea for alcohol, vitamins for cigarettes—and apparently it had paid off. He was now ninety-four, though, with his shock of white hair and relatively clear skin, he looked closer to seventy. Kate checked the small video camera that had been set up in Zander's studio for the past few weeks and switched it on as subtly as possible. The artist would not allow any actual cameramen, reminding Kate that after Jackson Pollock had been filmed painting, the artist, feeling like a fraud, had gone on a bender from which he'd never recovered. But Kate had persisted, finally convincing Zander to allow just one small video camera to film her interviews and the occasional moment of him working. This was their second interview. The first had centered almost entirely on Zander's artwork, the wild abstract figures he'd become famous for—disjointed jigsaw-puzzle body parts meshed into thick, acid-colored paint, intentionally crude. At the moment, there were over a dozen such paintings lining the walls of the huge barn studio—paintings for an exhibition of the artist's new work that was to be held in the spring. "It's going to be a great show,"

said Kate. "Who needs another show at my age? But the art dealer, he kept asking until I finally gave in." Zander looked happy and self-satisfied when he said it. "The figures look like they could dance. But maybe it's the music." Ella Fitzgerald was scatting in the background, and the barn's high ceilings created concertlike acoustics. "To have music all day," said Zander. "It's one of the best reasons to be a painter. Even when I was broke I bought records, the big ones back then, seventy-eights, not like those tiny things they have today. You know, Mondrian, the Dutch painter, when he came to this country, to New York, in 1940, the guy was an absolute miser, but he bought a record player because he loved American jazz. Even named his last paintings for it. "*Broadway Boogie-Woogie* and *Victory Boogie-Woogie*," said Kate. "Exactly," said Zander. "Which reminds me—" He was off and running, one story after another. How most of the artists had met on the WPA, twenty minutes on the economics of the period; the artists' shared poverty, how they would hang out in cafeterias—first Stewart's on Twenty-third Street, later the Waldorf, and Bickford's—talking all day, nursing five-cent cups of coffee; eventually trading the cafeterias for bars—the Cedar, on University Place, the most famous—coffee giving way to booze, talk to arguing. "We even had nicknames for one another," said Zander. "Ad Reinhardt, the Monk, because of those black, minimal paintings he made. Mark Rothko, the Rabbi."

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History and fiction collide with deadly consequences in the third Kate McKinnon novel—a story of bitter revenge, where the past invades the present and a decades-old secret proves fatal

Kate McKinnon has lived many lives, from Queens cop to Manhattan socialite, television art historian, and the woman who helped the NYPD capture the Death Artist and the Color Blind killer. But that's the past. Now, devastated by the death of her husband, Kate is attempting to quietly rebuild her life as a single woman. Gone are the Park Avenue penthouse and designer clothes. Now it's a funky Chelsea loft, downtown fashion, and even a hip new haircut as Kate plunges back into her work—writing a book about America's most celebrated artistic era, the New York School of the 1940s and '50s, a circle that included Jackson Pollock, Willem de Kooning, and Mark Rothko.

But when a lunatic starts slashing the very paintings she is writing about—along with their owners—Kate is once again tapped by the NYPD. As she deciphers the evidence—cryptic images that reveal both the paintings and the people who will be the next targets—Kate is drawn into a world where art and art history provide lethal clues.

*The Killing Art* is Jonathan Santlofer's most gripping and chilling story yet, but that isn't the only reason the novel is remarkable. The author, who is also an acclaimed artist, has created works of art just for the book that tantalize and challenge readers by using well-known symbols in innovative ways, allowing them to decode the clues along with Kate. A masterwork of both suspense fiction and art, *The Killing Art* will impress both thriller readers and art fans as the plot twists and turns toward a shocking climax.

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New Arrivals - His book Killing Pablo won the Overseas Press Club's 2001 Cornelius Ryan Award as the book of the year. Among his other books are Guests of the Ayatollah, an account of the 1979 Iran hostage The Three Battles of Wanat. McConnochie & Marion Maddox & Mary-Rose Maccoll & Maureen McCarthy & Moira McKinnon The 2017 Emmy Awards let Sterling K. Brown finish his - Book Review of The Killing Art written by Jonathan Santlofer . Death Artist has written another great thriller featuring cop-turned-art historian Kate McKinnon. Movies - Winnipeg Free Press - She has also directed three documentary films for the National Film Board of Canada, including "The Song and The Sorrow," which won several awards on the digital publisher Archives - ... preserve the art of witty, wise and knowledgeable film and TV criticism, as we remind the world of our community's influence on the screen arts on society at large as 3, 2019 - Hollywood, CA - GALECA: The Society of LGBTQ Entertainment of the Year, while the Diane Keaton comedy "Book Club" and "Aquaman" are Movies - Winnipeg Free Press - C-SPAN.org RBG, Kate McKinnon Attend Yiddish Fiddler On The Roof - A recap of all the sketches from episode 2 of season 45 of Saturday Night Live, The acclaim given to Waller-Bridge's Fleabag, including the three Emmys the mind behind the Emmy-winning psycho-hunter dramedy Killing Eve. Kate McKinnon comes on as Elizabeth Warren, giving "thank you" calls to 'Frozen II' Becomes Third 2019 Release to Stay No. 1 at Box - Pick of the books on Open Book this week. Behind the Scenes at the Museum by Kate Atkinson. The Winter King by.. Books List " Sunday 30 December and Thursday 3 January. Reading Art " Art for Book Loves by David Trigg. Books List. The Killing House " Claire McGowan. Storyland by Catherine McKinnon. Forthcoming historical novels for 2019 - Historical Novel Society - History and fiction collide with deadly consequences in the third Kate McKinnon novel -- a story of bitter revenge, where the past invades the present and a Bombshell review: Nicole Kidman's all-star Fox News - ... cast was full of known names like Allison Janney, Kate McKinnon and Connie Britton. Then Awards season audiences have taken notice. Kate McKinnon debuts new girlfriend at Emmy Awards - ... cast was full of known names like Allison Janney, Kate McKinnon and Connie Britton. Then Awards season audiences have taken notice. Gift Center - Reviews of books...and occasional other stuff. And Flannery is a master of the art of converting scientific information into language easily understandable by

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