

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## JANE DICKSON

**All That Is Solid Melts Into Air**

January 16 – February 17, 2019

Reception: Wednesday, January 16, 6-8pm

James Fuentes is pleased to present Jane Dickson, *All That Is Solid Melts Into Air*. The exhibition includes works spanning from the early 1980s to the present, each offering an important document of New York City.

Jane Dickson is known for her vivid depictions of Times Square's nocturnal energy. Born in Chicago, Dickson arrived to New York in 1977, and a year later began a job programming visuals for Times Square's first digital billboard. She mostly worked the night shift and was responsible for the New Year's Eve countdown, witness to upturned faces basking in the hallucinatory glow. Two years later she moved to an apartment on 43rd Street and 8th Avenue, where she lived and raised two children with her husband. From this vantage point Dickson observed Times Square after dark, absorbing the seductive haze and structured environment in which figures and shadows moved.

Dickson soon began to carry around a small, discrete camera as a way to record fleeting episodes. Many of these impressionistic photographs contain a rich field of dark blackness, punctuated by effervescent neon signs, the glow of a cigarette being lit, the fluorescent insides of a storefront, or the reflection of rain against the streets. As well as her snapshots, Dickson also made rough charcoal sketches describing the posture of figures—rushing, waiting, a young man being frisked, the shape of a cop on a horse—and this very gesture of peering over a ledge, looking in, like the artist. As much documentary as they are voyeuristic, these are the details that fill Dickson's paintings. Since the 1980s, starting at Times Square, she has chronicled and memorialized scenes of life in America, from the glittering spectacles of Las Vegas casinos and demolition derbies, to the monotony of strip malls, highways, and suburban sprawl. In Dickson's own words, "I paint to locate baseline reality within an unstable world."

As well as being a deeply-rooted observer of New York's street life, Dickson is an important part of the city's creative history, involved in connecting the downtown art and punk scenes to uptown graffiti and hip-hop subcultures. During her time working on the Spectacolor billboard she invited peers—including Jenny Holzer, Keith Haring, and David Hammons—to make animated works for it, initiating a program that ran many years after she left the job. While working with her husband, Charlie Ahearn, on the production of the seminal hip-hop film *Wild Style*, Dickson was exhibiting at FUN Gallery as well as Fashion Moda of the South Bronx, and was an early member of the downtown collective Colab. In 1980 Colab and Fashion Moda collaborated to present *The Times Square Show*, a watershed exhibition that combined the visual, music, and performance cultures of uptown and downtown in the setting of an abandoned Times Square massage parlor.

Dickson is currently included in the major survey exhibition, *East Village NY: Vulnerable and Extreme* at the Seoul Museum of Art. Dickson has exhibited at venues including The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New Museum, Jewish Museum, The Whitney Museum of American Art at Philip Morris, Creative Time, The Hirshhorn Museum, Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, Art Institute of Chicago, and Kunsthalle Vienna. Her work is included in the collections of the Museum of Modern Art, the Metropolitan Museum, the Whitney, the National Portrait Gallery, the Brooklyn Museum, Jewish Museum, Art Institute of Chicago, Philadelphia Academy of Fine Arts, and the Walker Art Center, among others. She is a recipient of the Joan Mitchell Award, and in 2008 she was commissioned by MTA to produce a permanent artwork for Times Square Station. *All That Is Solid Melts Into Air* follows the 2014 exhibition, *The Real Estate Show* at James Fuentes.

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