

JANE DICKSON

99¢ Dreams

April 8–May 7, 2022

In Jane Dickson's *99¢ Dreams*, the past overlaps into the present. For Dickson, observing the world in paintings and photographs has been a decades-long practice of grounding and location. Through her images, Dickson does the same for us, too. In a period of pandemic isolation, Dickson revisited photographs she'd taken of Times Square in the 1980s, where she lived her first 12 years in the city. Looking at them now, she recalls the key details of those moments she once occupied. Other details sink into the shadows, and the intentional use of perspective—looking up at an angle or down into a scene—situates us firmly within the image. Since that time, Dickson has traveled across the US, steadily expanding her life-long project of reflecting the American psyche through the country's landscapes of highways, tunnels, billboards, parking lots, demolition derbies, motels, strip clubs, and casinos. *99¢ Dreams* celebrates this commitment.

As markers along the way, Dickson has often turned to literal signs as clues to our shared desires and dreams. A brilliant colorist, she builds yellow and orange against navy blue; nearby, violet shadows surround a cerise neon glow. Transmitting information about the world around us, her paintings touch on our common experiences through the narrative frames of photographic film, the windshield of a car, or the area of a billboard, seeking to preserve through her work the evocations they contain. Dickson's sensitivity and engagement is also reflected in her creative involvement with various collectives since her first decade in the city, when she participated in projects with Fashion Moda, Fun Gallery, Collaborative Projects, and at the Whitney Museum at Philip Morris. Of utmost importance to Dickson's work remains her understanding of art making as a series of continuous dialogues, at once personal and public.

Early on, Dickson painted onto unexpected materials including black garbage bags, astroturf, textured vinyl wall covering, and felt to record the texture of these moments in paint. Moving to canvas, she uses carefully scumbled oil sticks tuned to the key of the composition against a matte black or colored ground. The works in *99¢ Dreams* represent an important development and timely return in her work to one of its origins—delivering the brilliant nocturnal scenes witnessed from the windows of her apartment on 42nd Street or the view from the Spectacolor billboard where she programmed the night shift—documenting a landscape that has all but disappeared. Dickson speaks to this sensation in more detail: “My show is called *99¢ Dreams*, and I'm noticing that keyboards don't have a cent sign anymore. I'm trying to type it, but the cent symbol is gone. I guess you can't have dreams that cheap anymore.”

Alongside the exhibition, a new publication on Dickson's work by James Fuentes Press includes an interview between artist Odili Donald Odita and Dickson, in which she shares: “At this point in my life, my trajectory is not linear anymore, it's a spiral. Over the last two years, I had time to reconsider my history. I'm a different person and the world is a different place and this neighborhood, as it stood, no longer exists. This work of Times Square that's from '80s photos is really the first time I am looking back on something that's gone. Up until now, my subject has been that I'm often looking at things that are anachronistic in the present. [...] I think that perspective literally means where you're looking from. I'm not giving you a universal truth: this is what this corner of contemporary reality looks like to me from my spot, right now.” Designed by Other Means, the publication also includes contributions from Chris Kraus and Shellyne Rodriguez.

Jane Dickson (b. 1952 Chicago, IL) has featured in many solo and group exhibitions, including the 1985 Whitney Biennial; The Metropolitan Museum of Art (1991); *Creative Time* (1993); *Jane Dickson: Paradise Alley*, curated by Thelma Golden at the Whitney Museum (1996); and most recently in the survey exhibition *New York Underground: East Village in the 80s*, presented at the Seoul Museum of Art in 2019 and traveling through China. Her work is in the collections of the National Portrait Gallery at the Smithsonian, The Museum of Modern Art, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Whitney Museum, The Brooklyn Museum, The Art Institute of Chicago, and the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, among others. She will feature in this year's *Whitney Biennial: Quiet as It's Kept*. Dickson lives and works in New York.

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