

'Paved Paradise'

DC Moore

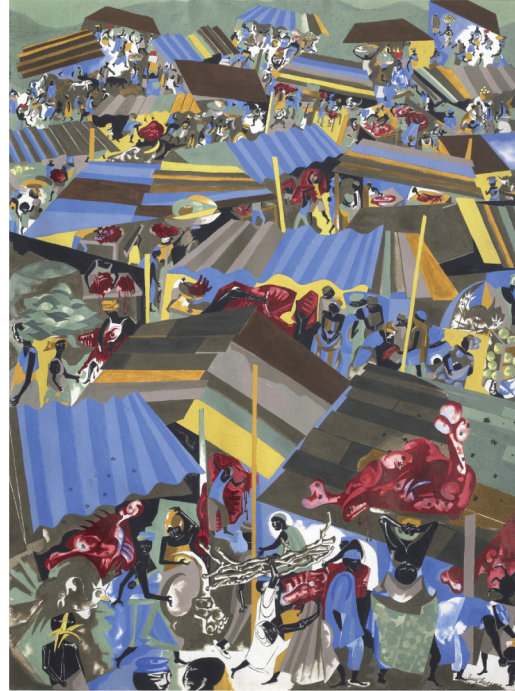
Taking its title from Joni Mitchell's poetic tirade in her classic song "Big Yellow Taxi," this exhibition brought together 25 works addressing the modern city. With contributions in vari-

ous mediums by Ann Agee, Ishmael Randall Weeks, Romare Bearden, and John Zinsser, among others, the show revealed a range of attitudes about metropolitan existence, from the cynical to the nostalgic.

A few artworks pictured human figures, but only as rough, gestural suggestions. Most were uninhabited and framed the city itself as a living subject. Mark Innerst's abstract oil on canvas, *Spectra* (2012), with its thick impasto and vertical bands of color that fade and surge, evokes a busy avenue viewed through a rain-streaked window. Pedestrians, taxis, lights, and buildings all melt into a dizzying apparition of movement—pulsing and incessant—that conjures the buzz of urban life. Jacob Lawrence's vibrant 1964 tempera on paper, *Meat Market*, is a pastiche of carnage. Lawrence presents the metropolis as a flat grid of shoddy tin roofs and chain gangs of bony men who toil in markets that proffer goods and bloody carcasses in equal measure.

In the central gallery, Yvonne Jacquette's enormous oil on canvas, *Times Square Triptych II* (1986–87), terrorized its own wall with a Warholian Pop nightmare. Aerial views of Midtown sidewalks are obscured by looming neon signs advertising consumption, both carnal and commercial: "Dirty Lily" mingles with a billboard for Panasonic, and "Taste of It," a slogan for Coca-Cola, here seems to address a darker thirst. In *Skyscraper* (1995), Robert Moskowitz reduces that iconic symbol to its romantic essence: two lone structures, simple and clean, scratching the clear blue sky—an uncluttered, triumphant vision of progress through engineering.

—Emily Nathan



Jacob Lawrence, *Meat Market*, 1964, tempera and gouache on paper, 30% x 22". DC Moore.