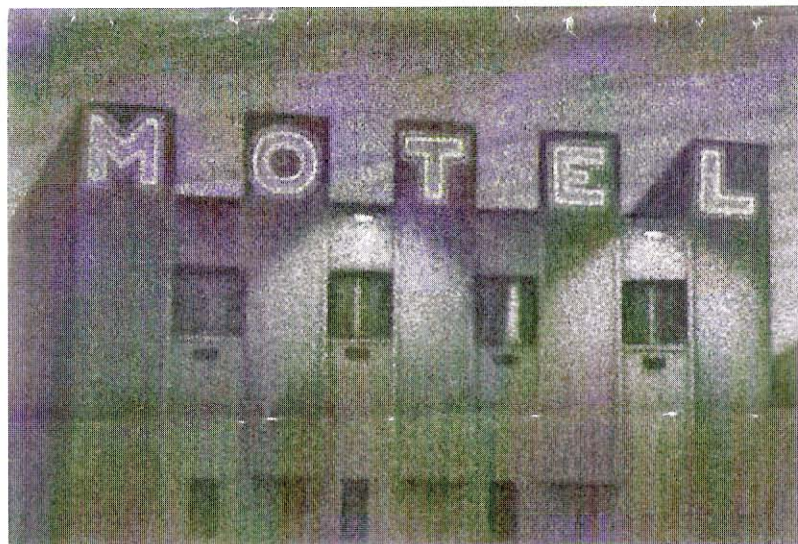
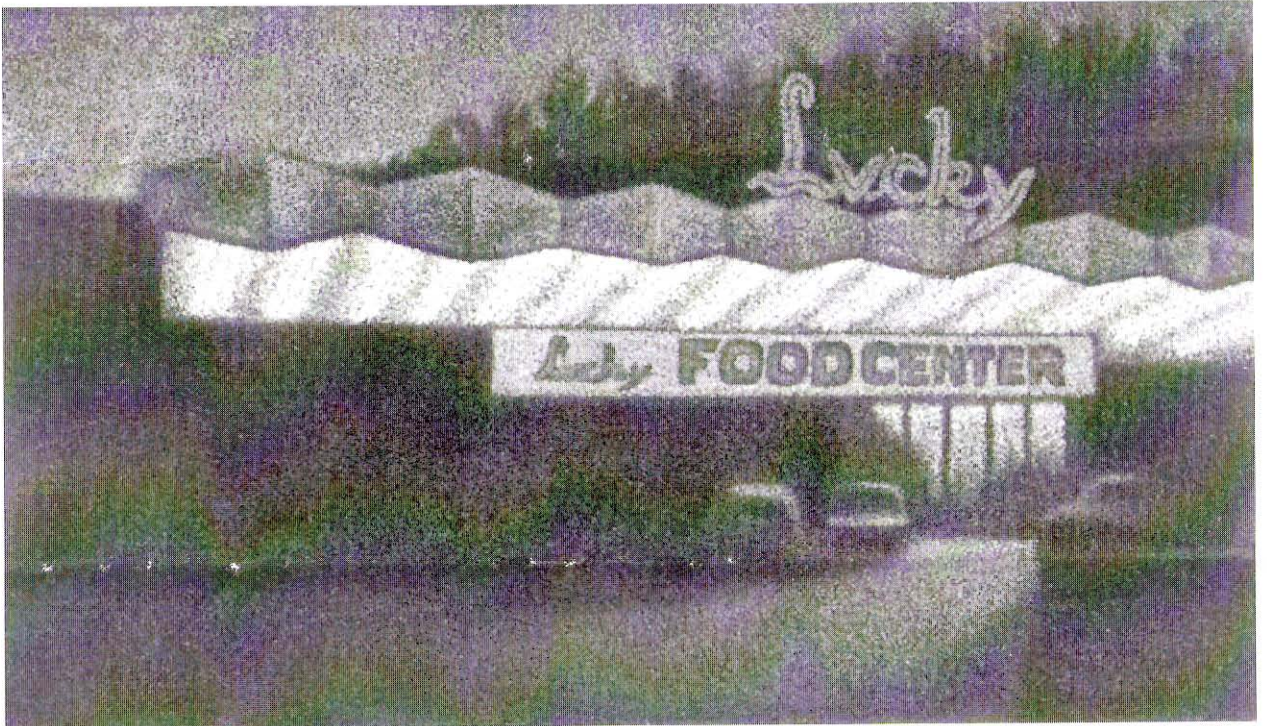


jersey city
museum



jane dickson: almost there



Strip Mall—Lucky Food, 2002, oil on astroturf, 38in x 65in, Courtesy of the artist

“ ...this push-pull of seductive and abrasive, in terms of materials and in terms of subject matter, seems to be at the core of my work. ”

Since the 1980s, Jane Dickson has been painting images about place. Her images of Times Square by night are filled with lone urban dwellers beneath neon lights. In other works, suburban homes, highways, bridges, tunnels, strip malls, and aging roadside buildings have all made appearances. This exhibition, *Almost There*, features four paintings, each one of a very distinct place, a place that relates to the experience of leaving a city and encountering a variety of views along a local highway.

Rather than presenting epic, majestic images of the contemporary landscape, Ms. Dickson is instead interested in a seamier, less desirable, and more socially complex view of our scenery. Like the underside of the New Jersey Turnpike, or the motels at the exits of the Holland Tunnel or the George Washington Bridge, Ms. Dickson prefers to explore those things that we try not to see in great detail. Her *Chinese Kitchen* is like a stand-in for hundreds of similar roadside places, something vaguely remembered perhaps from a

daily commute between work and home. *The Lucky Food Center*, with its hazy parking lot and wall of black, silhouetted trees in the background, is charming for its unapologetically 1960s-era architecture. Lozenge shaped cement details protrude from the façade of the building, lit from beneath with yellowish fluorescent bulbs. Majestic in its size and color, the “Lucky” sign reigns over the front entrance to the building.

The gradually receding light, apparent in all of these works, adds a sense of stillness, sorrow even, to the image. The sky is neither the sunny blue of midday nor the deep black of night but some unnamable color in between, when the sun is nearly gone and the stars have yet to light. Particularly appropriate to this is the artist’s unique choice of support, Astroturf. Developed in 1965, this product was originally called “chemgrass” but was later re-named Astroturf for its widely publicized use in the Houston Astrodome. The texture achieved by Ms. Dickson with this support is one she has cultivated for many years. Earlier

works with this grainy, filmic quality were purposefully created in oil, acrylic and oil stick on a variety of surfaces like vinyl, sandpaper, rough linen and carpet. She notes: “...this push-pull of seductive and abrasive, in terms of materials and in terms of subject matter, seems to be at the core of my work.”

In the quiet of this waning light, the bright orange letters of a motel blaze their message across the top of the building. Below the giant letters, darkened windows reveal nothing about their contents. One small gap between curtains allows a bright slit of light to escape, a lonely glow. All of these scenes are accessed by a singular vision of the Lincoln Tunnel. Seen through a deep, yellowish-green haze, the serpentine curve of the tunnel leads us more and more deeply toward our destination. This issue of destination is a critical one for the artist, given the exhibition’s title. The question she subtly proposes to the viewer is, “Almost where?”

—RAA



Jane Dickson: Almost There
Project Gallery
September 14 through
January 1, 2007

Cover: *Motel III*, 2000, oil on astroturf,
48 x 72in, Collection of Brandon Fradd

Left: *Chinese Kitchen*, 2003, oil on astroturf,
36 x 93in, Collection of Dr. Cyrus Katzen

JANE DICKSON was born in Chicago, Illinois in 1952. She received her BA in Visual Studies from Harvard University and also received a studio art degree from the School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Her work has been shown in numerous exhibitions in China, France, Japan, Korea, the Netherlands, Spain, and throughout the United States. Her work is in the collections of the Brooklyn Museum, the Chicago Art Institute, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Museum of Modern Art, the National Museum of Women in the Arts, and the Whitney Museum of American Art, among many others. She currently teaches in the Art Department at Pace University.



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