About the Art

- The nude main figure wears a fringed neck ornament that resembles the collars of clowns, harlequins, and jesters, all figures associated with the performing arts.

- The composition of the work places the viewer standing backstage behind the actor and the curtains, looking out toward the audience. It is analogous to the type of behind-the-scenes role that the artist would have had during his career as a playwright.

- By portraying the overhead spotlight using a geometric shorthand of a simple oval outline connected to vertically sloped lines, Tennessee Williams visually provides a separate space for the figure that isolates the actor from the audience.

About the Artist

1911: Born Thomas Lanier Williams III on March 26 in Columbus, Mississippi
1944: Saw his play The Glass Menagerie produced in Chicago, Illinois
1947: Wrote A Streetcar Named Desire; it premiered on Broadway in New York, New York on December 3
1955: Awarded his second Pulitzer Prize for Drama for Cat on a Hot Tin Roof
1960s: Took up painting
late 1970s or early 1980s: Painted Midnite Show
1979: Was inducted into the American Theater Hall of Fame