



Tennessee Williams
American, 1911 – 1983

Midnite Show, late 1970s or early 1980s
oil on canvas

Lent by Carol Cole Levin, L2020.8.3

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

1983: Died February 25 in New York, New York