

Rainy Night, Downtown



Bright Lights, Big City

Georgia Mills Jessup said *Rainy Night, Downtown* could represent a night scene in any U.S. city. Yet, the signs for the “Trans-Lux” Theatre and “St. H.N.W.” identify the location as Washington, D.C., the artist’s hometown.



Rainy Night, Downtown, 1967

Take a closer look

Georgia Mills Jessup (1926–2016) used abstraction, vivid colors, and dramatic contrasts of light and shadow to create a particular mood and energy in this scene. Her approach encourages us to imagine the sights and sounds that would greet us if we stepped through the frame.

Something to talk about

The Trans-Lux Theatre, one of the landmarks featured in Jessup's painting, was located on the west side of 14th Street, NW, between New York Avenue and H Street, from 1937 to 1975. That means the scene depicted was about a block from where you are standing.

Who knew?

Jessup, who described herself as a “melting pot,” was particularly proud of her American Indian heritage. As a descendent the Pamunkey tribe of Virginia the great Powhatan is her ancestral chief.

Georgia Mills Jessup, *Rainy Night, Downtown*, 1967; Oil on canvas, 44 x 48 inches; National Museum of Women in the Arts, Gift of Savanna M. Clark; © Georgia Mills Jessup

