

# Abraham Lincoln Walker

Abraham Lincoln Walker (b. 1921, Henderson, KY; d. 1993, East St. Louis, IL) moved to East St. Louis, Illinois at the age of seven. A house painter by trade, Walker, like many self-taught artists, started out by imitating painting styles and making reproductions, working to understand basic palette and composition techniques. He leaned towards representational depictions of the neighborhood, his canvases bursting with odes to Black culture —bright colors and brushstrokes that moved with the syncopation and groove of jazz.

His work is represented in the permanent collections of the Nelson-Atkins Museum, Kansas City, and the High Museum of Art, Atlanta, and featured in the exhibition *Black Artists in America: From the Bicentennial to September 11*, opened at Crocker Art Museum, Sacramento and traveling to the Dixon Gallery, Memphis, TN.

Much of Walker's work from the late 1960s through early 1970s features elongated and masked figures displaying ambiguous relationships and gestures, situated in desolate landscapes. His deeply affective dystopic visions vacillate between the world outside his studio, the biblical world deeply rooted in his upbringing, and, increasingly, a world of his own making. In many of his paintings from the 1970s onward, his figures become fragmented and distorted, overwhelmed by a visionary, celestial space in which faces, limbs, and other barely identified human forms are entangled in the fibrous tentacles of a living world, but fully capable of communicating their psychic bearing.

