

John Moore

Early Paintings, 1968-1989

January 3 – 31, 2024

L O C K S G A L L E R Y



John Moore, *Wainwright*, 1978, oil on canvas, 60 x 50 inches

Locks Gallery is pleased to present an exhibition of early paintings by the American realist painter John Moore (b. 1941). These still lifes and architectural landscape paintings span from the late 1960s to late 1980s.

Moore has been well recognized for his poetic realistic paintings of studio interiors, urban architecture, and post-industrial landscapes using his unique blend of realism and illusionism. In the late 1960s, an era dominated by formalist abstraction, Moore turned to still lifes as a way to reengage with the physicality of the visible world. These still lifes are painted from observation as well as photos and sketches, combining memory and presence into single compositions. In works like *Morning Still Life* (1978), mundane objects are depicted with precision equal to the distant cityscape viewed from his Frankford, PA studio, offering a subtle commentary on the fading ideals of American industry and progress.

Moore's paintings are uniquely sensible to the responsiveness of light. The artist uses mundane objects as measures of light to ground the rest of his imagined compositions. Art historian John Stomberg wrote, "rather than subordinating his art to reproducing the visible world, Moore's paintings extend the world by sharing his perceptions and responses." Works such as *Wainwright* (1981) use light and reflection to dance between realism and illusionism, distinguishing Moore's poetic naturalism from other photorealists and precisionist styles.



John Moore, *Morning Still Life*, 1978, oil on canvas, 16 x 20 inches

Moore's architectural landscape paintings evoke those of early American realism and precisionist painters like Charles Sheeler, Charles Demuth, Ralston Crawford, and Edward Hopper. *Near Lincoln Highway, Coatesville* (1988-92) is based on his visit to the steel mills of Coatesville, Pennsylvania where these earlier painters had worked. Though unlike these early modernists, who rendered industry as icons of progress, Moore portrayed urban and industrial architecture "with a more distanced eye, noticing its current desuetude and abandoned state," as put by art historian Debra Bricker Balken. Moore's paintings reflect on the lifespan and evolution of American architectural landscapes by joining confrontations with the present with ruminations on past promises. His works are nostalgic and contemplative, bringing forth the charged emotionality of where memory and presence meet.



John Moore (b. 1941) was born and raised in St. Louis, Missouri and spent much of his career in Philadelphia. He is the former Gutman Professor of Fine Arts in the School of Design at the University of Pennsylvania, where he served as chair of the department for ten years. He previously headed the graduate painting program at Boston University, and taught at the Tyler School of Art of Temple University and the University of California, Berkeley. At Washington University he completed his BFA and went on to receive an MFA from Yale University. Moore was elected to the National Academy of Design and has been honored several times by the American Academy of Arts and Letters. His paintings are included in major collections such as the Art Institute of Chicago, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, the Philadelphia Museum of Art, the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art and many others. The artist has exhibited with the gallery since 1976.

This exhibition will be on view in the first floor gallery and open to the public Tuesday through Saturday, 10am – 6pm.

For all press inquiries, please contact Adrianna Brusie, abusie@locksgallery.com.