



About the Cover

Market Lane III
Artist: James K. Cudjoe
Size: 48 x 36"
Acrylic on canvas
Year: 2005

The urban market scene is a theme that is frequently romanticized in contemporary African art. It is typically presented as a crowded *mélee* of color, capturing the urban hustle of people trading and socializing in the tropical heat. In “Market Lane III,” James Cudjoe chooses to capture a market at a different point in time. He captures the early morning calm—a time when street vendors are arriving with hope for a day of brisk trade. By representing this early morning scene, James is able to draw attention to the beauty of elements that are frequently overlooked, such as the kaleidoscope of multicolored roofs that line the market lane.

James Cudjoe, a new-generation cosmopolitan artist, was born in 1971 in Takoradi, a bustling port city in Ghana. He repeats his mother’s tale, now family legend, of how his seer grandfather predicted an artistic future for the just-born baby James. His father draws, as do many on his father’s side of the family. James’ first memorable influence, a reproductive pencil sketch for primary school art homework, came from his older brother.

James’ childhood memories of life and art are bittersweet. As a preteen, he remembers sketching, drawing and shading in his

spare moments; reproducing pictures; and attempting still-life, while nursing silent dreams of going to art college. His talent was unmistakable, and his family was indulgent and supportive. But his parents’ relationship was unraveling and family life was fracturing. By his early teens, the damage was irrevocable: his father was performing perfunctory financial duties from afar, while his mother took on the role of sole nurturer. He and his older siblings had to work for their keep, selling small goods to increase a meager family income and to generate sufficient spending money for secondary school. James escaped the increasing destitution by immersing himself in art, observing and documenting life around him in sketches and shadings. Then he got a job as a trainee video poster artist, from a local art business.

He experimented with different art forms and media, constructing collages and attempting mosaics. By the time James won a place at Ghanatta College in 1993 and made his way to Accra (150 miles east of Takoradi), he was “more than ready for the experience.” His ability to pick up complex artistic styles and trends with relative ease earned him the moniker “Wizard.” He quickly established himself as the best student, broke his own academic record year on year and graduated top of his class.

Since his graduation from Ghanatta in 1996, James has participated in numerous highly successful national group and solo exhibitions, and his work sells fast off gallery walls. James’ palette captures landscapes, cityscapes, and people at work and leisure.

For more information about James Cudjoe, contact: African Encounters; e-mail: info@african-encounters.com; website: www.african-encounters.com.

African Encounters ORIGINAL FINE ART

Looking for something unique?
African Encounters brings you world-class fine art produced by the best contemporary African artists. Through art, we embark our clients on a journey to explore contemporary African culture.

PHONE | 858.271.1797
EMAIL | info@african-encounters.com
WWW.AFRICAN-ENCOUNTERS.COM