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Goings On About Town: Louis Draper

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Draper is one of the founding members of the Kamoinge Workshop—a New York collective of African-American photographers—and he exemplifies its activist approach to personal photojournalism. This excellent survey of more than eighty pictures, most of them taken on the streets of Harlem, begins in the late fifties and spans four decades. Draper’s work is most engaging when his subjects are fellow-flâneurs or children seen in passing; his empathy is genuine, and sparks even the most casual shot. But he also channels the subtle power of the inanimate world—the sensual landscape of a rumpled

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bed, the ominous drapery of hanging sheets. Few rediscovered photographers could sustain a retrospective this large, but Draper carries it off with admirable ease.