

The Museum of Modern Art

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART WILL PRESENT *JUST ABOVE MIDTOWN: 1974 TO THE PRESENT*, HIGHLIGHTING ARTISTS AND ARTWORKS CHAMPIONED BY THE NEW YORK CITY GALLERY, OCTOBER 9, 2022, THROUGH FEBRUARY 18, 2023

Just Above Midtown: 1974 to the Present

October 9, 2022–February 18, 2023

Floor 3 South, The Edward Steichen Galleries

NEW YORK, July 26, 2021—The Museum of Modern Art will present ***Just Above Midtown: 1974 to the Present***, on view from October 9, 2022, through February 18, 2023. It will be the first museum exhibition to focus exclusively on Just Above Midtown (JAM), an art gallery and self-described laboratory for artists with a focus on African Americans and people of color, which was led by Linda Goode Bryant from 1974 until 1986. *Just Above Midtown: 1974 to the Present* is organized by Thomas J. Lax, Curator, with Lilia Rocio Taboada, Curatorial Assistant, Department of Media and Performance, in collaboration with Linda Goode Bryant. With thanks to Marielle Ingram and Argyro Nicolaou.

Initially located in the heart of New York’s major commercial gallery district, JAM was founded by Linda Goode Bryant with the explicit purpose of “being in but not of the art world.” By the time JAM closed its doors, it had established itself as one of the most vibrant and influential alternative art spaces in New York, embracing an expansive idea of Black art that included Conceptual art and work by those living outside of New York, organizing path-making exhibitions that thematized the idea of mixture in art and society, and fostering critiques of the commercialization of art.

JAM’s legacy continues today through the work of artists it supported early in their careers, such as David Hammons, Butch Morris, Senga Nengudi, Lorraine O’Grady, and Howarda Pindell, and through the training it provided to anyone who was keen to learn about art. The MoMA exhibition will highlight works previously shown at JAM in a wide range of mediums. Archival material and artist interventions will contextualize the experimental ethos that defined the gallery. In addition to the exhibition, the project will include an exhibition catalogue, performances, screenings, and public programs.

JAM’s founder, Linda Goode Bryant, worked at the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Studio Museum in Harlem before founding Just Above Midtown at age 23. After closing the gallery, Goode Bryant dedicated herself to filmmaking, directing the critically acclaimed documentary *Flag Wars* (2003) with Laura Poitras. In 2009, Goode Bryant started Project Eats, an urban farming initiative for Black and Brown communities in New York City that, like JAM, uses existing resources to provide cultural sustenance.

Thomas J. Lax explains, “This exhibition acknowledges Just Above Midtown as the efflorescent space that modeled how art and the relationships art fosters could respond to a society in crisis. This ambitious project not only historicizes JAM’s importance, but also underscores its relevance in the present.”

MoMA

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