

The Museum of Modern Art

MoMA ANNOUNCES THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE JUST ABOVE MIDTOWN ARCHIVES

Generous Grant From Mellon Foundation Makes Transformational Gift Possible

NEW YORK, February 22, 2023—MoMA announces the establishment of the Just Above Midtown Archives in the Museum’s Archives, Library, and Research collections, following the Museum’s recent exhibition *Just Above Midtown: Changing Spaces*. Started by Linda Goode Bryant in 1974, Just Above Midtown (JAM) was an exhibition and creative space started by Black artists and curators that welcomed people of many generations and races in New York City until 1986. A hub for Conceptual art, abstraction, performance, and video, JAM proposed an expansive idea of Black art and encouraged thinking beyond its commercialization. The exhibition used archival photos, videos, and other contextual historical material from the JAM Archives to give visitors a sense of the alternative model of art it championed to respond to a society in need. As a part of MoMA’s collection, the JAM Archives will be available for activation in the Museum’s galleries and for consultation and research at MoMA by curators, art historians, artists, journalists, researchers, students, and the public.

“The establishment of the JAM Archives at MoMA, made with the generous support of the Mellon Foundation, recognizes the immensity of Linda Goode Bryant’s vision and reflects JAM’s wideranging impact and tremendous legacy across the art world,” said Glenn D. Lowry, MoMA’s David Rockefeller Director. “Bringing the JAM Archives into the Archives, Library, and Research collections will preserve these critical cultural artifacts and create opportunities for future generations of artists and thinkers as we continue MoMA’s work to reflect the many histories of the art of our time.”

“JAM was a vital space not only for Black artists in the city and the vivid, ever-evolving work they created, but also for the dynamism of New York’s arts community as a whole,” said Elizabeth Alexander, President of the Mellon Foundation. “We at Mellon are honored to support these archives in partnership with MoMA, ensuring that JAM’s transformational history is documented, conveyed, and made accessible to all.”

“Artists’ imaginations and creativity shaped and made JAM what it was and what it continues to be today, fresh and alive,” said Linda Goode Bryant, President, Project EATS. After 50 years in storage, the JAM archive has a home at MoMA where it can continue to energize, challenge, and inspire current and future generations of artists and those of us who are fortunate to engage and experience their work.”

The Just Above Midtown Archives, created and stewarded through the years by Linda Goode Bryant, is comprised of a diverse set of materials, including artist files and slides;

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correspondence; invitations, posters, and press releases; documentation of time-based works such as drawings, photographs, and scripts; issues of JAM's books and broadsheets; and administrative files, including exhibition checklists, press releases, and financial records. In addition to the paper materials, the Just Above Midtown Archives include unique audiovisual materials documenting activities at JAM and the related art world. The generous grant from the Mellon Foundation will also support a dedicated archivist to work exclusively on the Just Above Midtown Archives for a one-year term.

ABOUT THE ANDREW W. MELLON FOUNDATION:

The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation is the nation's largest supporter of the arts and humanities. Since 1969, the Foundation has been guided by its core belief that the humanities and arts are essential to human understanding. The Foundation believes that the arts and humanities are where we express our complex humanity, and that everyone deserves the beauty, transcendence, and freedom that can be found there. Through our grants, we seek to build just communities enriched by meaning and empowered by critical thinking, where ideas and imagination can thrive. Learn more at mellon.org.

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