

The Museum of Modern Art

MoMA ANNOUNCES THE 2022 EXHIBITION *JUST ABOVE MIDTOWN: 1974 TO THE PRESENT*, HIGHLIGHTING ARTISTS AND ARTWORKS CHAMPIONED BY THE NEW YORK CITY GALLERY

NEW YORK, April 30, 2019—The Museum of Modern Art announces *Just Above Midtown: 1974 to the Present*, for fall 2022. It will be the first museum exhibition to focus exclusively on Just Above Midtown (JAM), an art gallery and self-described laboratory for African American artists and artists of color that was led by Linda Goode Bryant from 1974 until 1986.

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 work by abstract, self-taught artists, organizing groundbreaking 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 on in their careers, such as David Hammons, Butch Morris, Senga Nengudi, Lorraine O’Grady and Howardena Pindell. The MoMA exhibition will present 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 expansive exhibition, the project will include 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, Curator, Department of Media and Performance and organizer of the exhibition explains, “This exhibition acknowledges Just Above Midtown as *the* efflorescent space where many of the artists who now are recognized as the most important figures of the second half of the 20th century were first supported. This ambitious project not only historicizes JAM’s importance, but also brings its relevance to the present.”

Press Contact: Maureen Masters, maureen_masters@moma.org
Press Office, pressoffice@moma.org

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