



Lorraine O'Grady, *Untitled (Mlle Bourgeoise Noire celebrates with her friends)*, 1980–83/2009.

Photo: Lorraine O'Grady/Artist Rights Society, New York.
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FRANKLIN SIRMANS TO CURATE FRIEZE SECTION PAYING TRIBUTE TO NEW YORK'S JUST ABOVE MIDTOWN GALLERY

For the upcoming edition of Frieze New York, Franklin Sirmans, the director of the Pérez Art Museum Miami (PAMM), will curate a special section of fair that will highlight artists from Just Above Midtown (JAM). The historic space served as a platform for contemporary African American artists at a time when they were struggling to find representation. Linda Goode Bryant, the then director of education at the Studio Museum in Harlem, founded the gallery in 1974, when she was just twenty-three years old.

In a 1975 interview with Mimi Poser, the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum's then head development officer, that was broadcast on WNYC, New York's Public Radio Station,

Bryant said: “It all came about after going to the west coast, visiting the whole California coast line and talking with artists, and also being in New York for about a year and a half, and realizing that black artists didn’t have a commercial outlet. Like we have museums; we have nonprofit galleries, but we didn’t have a business . . . that could actually promote and sell art on a professional or a mainstream gallery, district kind-of level.”

The nonprofit space championed artists such as David Hammons and Adrian Piper during the early stages of their careers. Sirmans will bring JAM back to New York with seven solo artist presentations—featuring Dawoud Bey, Norman Lewis, Senga Nengudi, Lorraine O’Grady, Howardena Pindell, Lorna Simpson, and Ming Smith—from ten galleries including Michael Rosenfeld Gallery, Alexander Gray Associates, and Jenkins Johnson Gallery.

Commenting on the project, Sirmans said: “Linda Goode Bryant’s gallery and its experiments with art and artists is the stuff of legend. She gave a home to artists now considered to be part of the canon when they had nowhere else to present their work. If she had only showed David Hammons, Adrian Piper, and Lorraine O’Grady that alone would be enough to celebrate, but when considering JAM’s impact in totality, we discover evidence of the great history she created.”

The eighth edition of Frieze New York will run from May 2 through May 5 on Randall’s Island Park. A portion of the fees from the galleries in this section will be donated to Bryant’s current nonprofit initiative Project Eats, a neighborhood-based urban agricultural partnership and social enterprise that creates sustainable food production and equitable distribution of those resources within and between communities.

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