



## Museums for America

Sample Application MA-256208-OMS-24  
Project Category: Lifelong Learning

### Studio Museum in Harlem

Amount awarded by IMLS:	\$200,853
Amount of cost share:	\$301,300

The Studio Museum in Harlem will install an inaugural exhibition in the new building about the life and artistic achievements of Tom Lloyd, that will address Lloyd's career as an artist, community organizer, and museum leader. The exhibition will include every known extant electronic sculpture Lloyd created, as well as works in metal and paper, and will be traveled to three venues along with an exhibit publication. Project activities at the museum will include free, weekly educational programs, art-viewing and art-making workshops, exhibition tours, and public programs for adults. During the museum's opening year, the exhibition will be featured in free tour programs for all schools in New York's District 5. The project team will partner with institutions focused on underserved populations and addressing needs of their local communities to host the traveling exhibition. The resulting exhibition will be an entry point for arts learning for new audiences and non-traditional museumgoers around the country.

Attached are the following components excerpted from the original application.

- Narrative
- Schedule of Completion

When preparing an application for the next deadline, be sure to follow the instructions in the most recent Notice of Funding Opportunity for the grant program to which you are applying.

## THE STUDIO MUSEUM IN HARLEM NARRATIVE

### ***Which program goal/project category and associated objective(s) of Museums for America will your project address?***

Throughout its history, the Studio Museum in Harlem has focused on empowering artists of African descent and providing accessible learning opportunities for our communities in Harlem and beyond. Toward this effort, the Studio Museum is applying for the IMLS Museums for America grant in support of an inaugural exhibition in our new home about the life and artistic achievements of Tom Lloyd. This request is being made toward the IMLS grant's Goal 1 and Objective 1.2: to champion lifelong learning for all, with a focus on underserved and non-traditional museumgoers, through the Tom Lloyd exhibition, accompanying publication, and traveling exhibition. This project will expand the recognition of and research and learning on a significant yet underrepresented Black artist who is intricately linked to the institution's history, which will benefit its audiences in Harlem and beyond.

### ***How will your project advance your museum's strategic plan?***

The Studio Museum is currently working on a refresh of our 2018 strategic plan, however the Tom Lloyd exhibition, publication, and traveling exhibition directly aligns with the current plan's commitment to "continued curatorial investments as part of our ongoing effort to strengthen and focus the permanent collection." In the refreshed plan that will begin to be implemented in the first quarter of 2024, this will be expanded to include investment in the Studio Museum's history and archives, and the development and dissemination of new scholarship therein. Tom Lloyd is central to our institutional history—his solo presentation was the Museum's first exhibition by which his groundbreaking practice secured the Studio Museum's values and future program.

### ***What need, problem, or challenge will your project address, and how was it identified?***

Tom Lloyd (1929–96) was an innovative artist, community organizer, and museum leader, but his impact on the arts in New York City and nationally has never before been fully explored or widely acknowledged. The Studio Museum first opened in September 1968 with *Electronic Refractions II*, a solo presentation of works by Lloyd featuring sculptures inspired by flashing traffic lights and theater marquees. Opening with an exhibition of Lloyd's sculptures signaled the institution's willingness to be innovative and contemporary. It cemented both the Museum's commitment to supporting the work of living artists and its emphasis on education. By re-opening with a retrospective exhibition of Lloyd, we will showcase our new building as a continuation and expansion of our founders' goals—to champion the presentation and creation of Black art and inspire Black creativity in Harlem.

As the premier visual arts institution in Harlem since its founding in 1968, the Studio Museum has long seen the need to provide our local communities with an accessible and educational space centering Black art. Since before the Museum's establishment, there has been a lack of Black artists in major museum collections across the country, and few that consider the needs of non-traditional museumgoers in the development of their exhibitions. Located on West 125th Street in the Central Harlem district, the Studio Museum represents and focuses the needs of our local communities through deep engagement with public schools, libraries, and other community organizations. The NYU Furman Center<sup>1</sup> reports that as of 2021, 44.2% of Central Harlem's residents are Black, the median household income is \$47,990, and poverty rate is 28.4%, compared to the Census demographics of New York City,<sup>2</sup> in which 23.4% of residents are Black, the median household

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<sup>1</sup> "Central Harlem Neighborhood Profile." *NYU Furman Center*, [furmancenter.org/neighborhoods/view/central-harlem](https://furmancenter.org/neighborhoods/view/central-harlem). Accessed 15 Nov. 2023.

<sup>2</sup> *U.S. Census Bureau Quickfacts: New York City, New York*, [www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/newyorkcitynewyork/HEA775222](https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/newyorkcitynewyork/HEA775222). Accessed 16 Nov. 2023.

income is \$70,663, and 17% of people live in poverty. Historically, Harlem has been a predominately Black neighborhood and its communities have long been underserved by the City's leading art museums and cultural institutions. Considering the Harlem community's socio-economic position and implied lack of interest in art, these non-traditional museum goers are not engaged by museums and their needs and interests in culture and creativity are often overlooked. When the Studio Museum opens its doors, we look forward to reminding our neighbors of our historic relationship through accessible and well-marketed exhibitions, programs, and warmly welcoming all.

The current project will address Lloyd's polyphonic career first with a new solo exhibition at the Studio Museum, followed by a three-venue national tour, and an expansive catalogue. This will be the first time that Lloyd's artistic practice will be considered alongside his activism and community leadership. The exhibition will include every known extant electronically-programmed sculpture, in addition to earlier metal works from the early 1960s and later works on paper from the 1970s to 1980s. The exhibition and catalogue uniquely bring these works together for the first time ever, including during the artist's own lifetime. The artworks will be presented alongside assets drawn from several archives to demonstrate Lloyd's roles as an activist and museum founder and director, with the accompanying publication further delving into Lloyd's work with the Art Workers' Coalition (AWC), a group formed in 1969 to achieve social and economic reform at New York City museums. The public protests and conversations with museum leadership initiated by the AWC led to measures such as free admission days. Lloyd additionally founded his own institution, the Store Front Museum/Paul Robeson Theatre, in 1971, providing arts and other opportunities for the largely Black community of Jamaica, Queens. Store Front served as a cultural hub for fifteen years before being forced to close due to a lack of a permanent facility. Lloyd's fierce championing for access to the arts has never before been fully examined and is one that deserves recognition for the opportunities he created for artists of his time and the impact that it has had in this current moment.

### ***Who is the target group for your project? Who are the ultimate beneficiaries?***

Across the Studio Museum's exhibitions, both in our previous home and during its closure, we have engaged with a wide array of audiences, including traditional and non-traditional art museumgoers, Black culture enthusiasts, national and international tourists, and those from our Harlem neighborhood. These diverse audiences have been central to the Studio Museum's longstanding work to amplify Black emerging and established artists and to make their work more widely accessible. Since our closure, we continued to serve our audiences and residents of Harlem through programs within the neighborhood, including public exhibitions in local parks and partnerships with schools and community organizations. This deepened presence in Harlem and engagement with underserved communities and non-traditional museum goers has been central to our planning for the Tom Lloyd exhibition and will be carried forward in all our work in the new building.

In preparation and through the Studio Museum's opening, we will conduct a comprehensive advertising campaign throughout Harlem to promote the Tom Lloyd exhibition and our new programs. Access Days will be a continuation and expansion of a "Free Sundays" program in our previous home, during which we offered free entry and educational programs that featured art-viewing and art-making workshops for multi-generational families, and exhibition tours and public programs for adults and teens. Families and adults returned week after week for our former program, we've continued to engage them through our current programming in partnership with public schools and libraries. A critical component of the new Access Days will be marketing to our Harlem and uptown communities, via local subway and bus stations, postcards distributed through our partners, and targeted online advertisements. The goal is to reintroduce the Studio Museum to our neighbors and reinforce our accessibility and commitment to providing our communities with high quality visual arts programming.

Critical to our understanding of our local community's needs are the Museum's Learning and Engagement department's relationships with Harlem schools and community organizations. We utilize surveys and talkbacks to assess and help planning future programs, with a focus on our immediate school district 5, one of the lowest performing school districts in New York City and encompasses 28 public schools serving over 8,000

students in grades PK–12. Of those students, 45% identify as Black and 40% as Hispanic, and 82% are economically disadvantaged<sup>3</sup>. In Harlem, and across New York City, students of color receive significantly less access to arts education than their white peers—something we seek to remedy through deepening our ongoing and long-term partnerships while cultivating new relationships with local schools. Upon the Museum’s opening, the Tom Lloyd exhibition will be featured in free tour programs for all schools in district 5 and other offerings for schools and community organizations across the city. Through showing the innerworkings of Lloyd’s forward-thinking electronic artworks, this exhibit will be a unique opportunity to activate students’ Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math (STEAM) learning. As part of our marketing campaign throughout Harlem we will distribute postcards with information about our free Access Days to children visiting the Museum to take home to their families. The Tom Lloyd exhibition will be an opportunity for learning and engagement for audiences across generations and further our lifelong learning goal.

There is research-based evidence for the impact of art organizations showcasing work by artists who represent their communities. The Wallace Foundation’s 2023 report “The Connected Arts Learning Framework”<sup>4</sup> cites the benefit of Culturally Sustaining Arts, in which arts organizations prioritize the culture of their community across their mission and programs. According to the report, these organizations focus on “intergenerational relationships as integral forces for learning and building close connections to families, community, and heritage” and the long-term benefit can be seen in children’s mental health and well-being through their increased knowledge and pride around their cultural heritage. Beneficiaries include the multi-generational residents living in Harlem, who will learn about Lloyd’s work, expand their knowledge of the canon of Black art, and empower their own connection to Black culture. For the traveling exhibition, we will look to partner with institutions similarly focused on authentically deepening engagement with underserved populations and addressing the needs of their communities. Lloyd’s activism and commitment to making art together with community is an entry point for arts learning with new audiences across the country and hopefully will help foster long-term relationships between local residents and their area cultural institutions.

Additional groups this exhibition will target and from whom we have received major contributions are conservators, scholars, artists, and Lloyd’s collaborators, friends, and family. The Museum has worked with experts on Lloyd’s practice including Reinhard Bek, a specialist in time-based media conservation, and catalogue contributor Krista Thompson, Northwestern University professor and art historian, who has been researching Lloyd for several years, focused primarily on his work with the AWC. Artists have also played an important role in the development of this project. Catalogue contributors Paul Stephen Benjamin, Nikita Gale, and Glenn Ligon have introduced the Museum to nineteenth and early twentieth century Black inventors and scientists, adding a historical dimension to understanding Lloyd’s contribution to advancements in technology. Finally, this project would not have been possible without Lloyd’s collaborators, friends, and family including former RCA engineer Alan Sussman who provided crucial information on how Lloyd’s sculptures were constructed. The experts, artists, and family members involved with this project will have their work amplified to wide audiences through the exhibition, catalogue, website, and traveling venues, and they will continue to be key resources to audiences interested in learning more about Lloyd’s legacy and impact in history.

### ***What specific activities will you carry out and in what sequence?***

The Studio Museum will carry out this project with three distinct components including a solo exhibition of Lloyd’s work in the new building, which will then travel to three other museums around the country, and a publication unearthing the history and archives of his work.

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<sup>3</sup> “NYC Geog Dist # 5 - Manhattan: Nysed Data Site.” *Data.Nysed.Gov*, data.nysed.gov/profile.php?instid=800000047161. Accessed 15 Nov. 2023.

<sup>4</sup> Pepper, Kylie, et al. “The Connected Arts Learning Framework: An Expanded View of the Purposes and Possibilities for Arts Learning.” *The Wallace Foundation*, 2023.

Exhibition: In September 2024, we will hire the exhibition designer, paper conservator, craters, shippers, framers, and an electrician for preparatory components toward the exhibition. From September through December 2024, the Curatorial team will work with Bek to conserve the remaining sculptures. During this period, the exhibition designer will conceive the exhibition's layout and specific physical experiential elements for Lloyd's unique light works. Between September and March 2025, the Marketing and Communications department will develop a marketing plan for the exhibition and new building to be widely presented around Harlem, New York City, and online. From November to January, the Learning & Engagement department will be planning the exhibition programming with a focus on accessibility and learning for our Harlem communities. We will begin implementing the marketing plan in February 2025 and throughout both years of the grant period. The exhibition and programs will launch upon the new building's opening in March 2025 and continue through November 2025. After this, the exhibition will close, and art handlers will deinstall and pack the exhibition to go out to the first venue on the tour by January 2026.

Catalogue: Between September 2024 and January 2025, the Museum will finalize proofing and printing of the catalogue. This component will recognize the impact of Lloyd's work on both contemporary visual arts and social activist causes. In February 2025, the printed catalogues will be shipped to the Museum and distributor to be sold to the public. In September 2025, there will be a public program with the publication's contributors, including Bek, Gale, and Thompson.

Traveling Exhibition: In September and October 2024, the Museum will develop the marketing materials to promote the exhibition to potential venues. Marketing will continue through November 2025, at which point we will begin coordinating with the confirmed tour venues to discuss logistics, exhibition layouts, didactics, and more. Once the exhibition closes in November, hired art handlers and shippers will deinstall the exhibition and pack the artworks for shipment to the first touring venue in January 2026. Tom Lloyd's exhibition will remain on tour through the remainder of the grant period's second year, with the exhibition's curator traveling to venues to coordinate installation logistics, and for their openings and related programming.

### ***What are the risks to the project and how will you mitigate them?***

A constant risk in projects that attempt to shed light on an underrecognized artist is the dearth of available information and like many Black artists of his generation, Lloyd passed away without a planned estate or executor. The archival record of his artistic practice and many works themselves have therefore been lost. The Museum is fortunate to have files and interviews on Lloyd that span several decades and research over the past few years has resulted in locating Lloyd's family and several friends and we will continue to seek out Lloyd's contemporaries throughout the period of the project to best understand his life and work. Another risk is that time-based media is inherently unstable, as technology becomes obsolete and production of certain materials ceases. The Museum has therefore been working with Bek to implement best practices to ensure the preservation of Lloyd's works, including digitally archiving the light program and creating digital control boxes. The unknowns that will come with opening the building will also pose risks and there will be an inevitable period of adjustment with a new facility, and the tour venues. We will be working with the building contractors and an electrician to ensure that the electronic sculptures will be safely operable and completing installation several weeks ahead of opening will allow us to test the works under these new conditions and make any changes.

There is also a risk in predicting the impact and reach of this project. We are aiming for the largest reach in Harlem but cannot guarantee their attendance. We will address this risk with a focused marketing campaign in the month prior and throughout the exhibition's duration, which will include physical and digital advertisements throughout central Harlem highlighting the exhibition and our free Access Days for all. In addition, our Learning and Engagement Department will continue their work with school children and community organizations to create programs in conversation with Tom Lloyd's exhibition and draw in these local audiences to the new Studio Museum. While we anticipate a more widespread interest in the tour given recent increased attention to Lloyd, we have not begun reaching out to potential venues yet so are unsure of how a tour will be received in

other parts of the country. The publication and marketing plan will help with this collaboration and ideal venues will have similar goals of reaching local audiences and underserved populations in their communities.

***Who will plan, implement, and manage your project?***

Connie H. Choi, Curator at the Studio Museum, is organizing the exhibition, tour, and accompanying publication and will manage the conservation of Lloyd's works and exhibition design, as well as cross-departmental collaboration on the project, including exhibition logistics, education and public programs, and digital and audio engagement. Sydney Briggs, Director of Collection and Exhibitions at the Studio Museum, will oversee framing and crate and furniture production in advance of the exhibition's opening, facilitate the shipment and installation of the works for the Studio Museum's exhibition, and collaborate with partner venues for the traveling exhibition. Shanta Lawson, Director of Learning and Engagement will lead her team's programming efforts to engage communities of all ages and abilities in Harlem with the exhibition. Isata Yansaneh is the Director of Marketing and Communications and will lead a major ad and marketing campaign for the new building's opening and Tom Lloyd exhibition. Habiba Hopson, Curatorial Assistant at the Studio Museum and contributing writer to the catalogue, will be assisting Choi with the planning and organizing of the exhibition. Meg Whiteford, Managing Editor at the Studio Museum, will oversee the designer, Miko McGinty Inc, in the catalogues final design and will manage printing and delivery of the final publication. A contracted Registrar will be hired to collaborate with the Director of Collection and Exhibitions oversee the administration and logistics around the exhibition and tour, including condition reporting on the works and coordinating with craters, shippers, and venues.

***What time, financial, personnel, and other resources will you need to carry out the activities?***

The Studio Museum is budgeting \$506,300 to support the total costs for this project, including the exhibition, related programming, catalogue, and first leg of the traveling exhibition. We have secured some funding to support the exhibition and publication from the Henry Luce Foundation; additional resources have been provided by Art Bridges to support our weekly Access Days and ensure they are properly programmed and widely marketed. The internal personnel needed to carry out each of this project's components are listed in the previous response and they will collaborate with other Museum staff and hired contractors to oversee the exhibition's design, planning, installation, and programming, as well as publish the catalogue and plan for the traveling exhibition.

***How will you track your progress toward achieving your intended results?***

In the Studio Museum's new building, the Visitor Services team will be tracking attendance for our opening and inaugural exhibitions. The institution recently implemented Tessitura as its new Customer Relationship Management (CRM) for staff across departments, to centralize and manage information surrounding donors, program participants, and visitors. This resource will help the Museum track attendance not only for the Museum building and its exhibitions but aid in designing programs and targeting marketing campaigns. The Museum will use this CRM to measure its goal of serving as wide an audience as possible while ensuring its communities in Harlem are accurately reflected and engaged. Staff across Learning & Engagement also implement their own surveys for program participants that provide overall feedback and takeaways from the Museum's educational and public programs.

The Communications and Marketing team will measure public reception and engagement through seeking earned press surrounding the exhibition, including reviews, features, and interviews as well as tracking its advertising campaign engagement. Interactions with our online ads, and increased pageviews on our website and exhibition pages will inform the effectiveness of the campaign. Attendance from central Harlem audiences, which can be tracked by visitors' zip codes, will also reflect our success in targeting our advertising and programming to local audiences.

Successful partnerships with three museums for the traveling exhibition and catalogue sales will help the Museum measure longer-term how audiences interact with Tom Lloyd's work and serve as barometer for the interest in developing new scholarship and research around underrecognized Black artists. Collaboration and planning with the traveling venues will help the Studio Museum cultivate relationships with other institutions, better understand what interests new audiences, and how they develop programming and measure impact. For the publication, collectors of Lloyd's work, his family, collaborators and friends are being interviewed and their stories documented. An institutional goal is to develop new scholarship on underrecognized Black artists in Studio Museum's history such as Lloyd, and work with scholars, curators, educators, to research and present their stories.

***What are your project's intended results and how will they address the need, problem, or challenge you have identified?***

The Museum's commitment to raising critical attention to Tom Lloyd will bolster existing efforts toward long-overdue recognition of the significant contributions of artists of color to the field. Lloyd's important work with the Art Workers' Coalition and the Store Front Museum resulted in advancing equity in the art world for artists of color and providing crucial exposure to and engagement with the arts and Black history and culture for communities of color. His electronically-programmed works have come to increased attention recently, with scholars and artists working within time-based media acknowledging his pioneering advancements using technology. Given the historic lack of conservation attention to works by artists of color, the Museum understood the importance of a long-term commitment to analyzing, researching, and treating Lloyd's works—including those not in the Museum's collection—and making the outcomes accessible to a wider public through exhibition, publication, and digital and audio resources.

Tom Lloyd's exhibition and the opening of our new home will enable the Museum to deepen our longstanding work with Harlem audiences, through accessible programs for lifelong learners. Our marketing efforts will focus on highlighting the Museum as a home for Black artists and individual creativity through our myriad free programs for students, families, and adults. This exhibition will set a precedent for the Studio Museum's future exhibitions and educational programs and the institution will be seen as a warm and welcoming space to our neighbors. Through the traveling exhibition we seek similar goals and alignment with venues that focus on community engagement and providing accessible art opportunities to undeserved audiences.

***How will the knowledge, skills, behaviors, and/or attitudes of the target group change as a result of your project?***

This project will serve to increase the knowledge of Lloyd to the Museum's current breadth of audiences, new audiences, art scholars, and artists themselves. The art world has had numerous solo exhibitions and catalogues on artists who work with technology and light-based mediums, including Olafur Eliasson, Dan Flavin, Robert Irwin, and James Turrell. Few of these artists have been of color, and Tom Lloyd—who exhibited with Flavin, Irwin, and others in the 1960s—has not had a solo exhibition since the Studio Museum's 1968 inaugural show. With assistance from Alan Sussman, an engineer at the Radio Corporation of America (RCA), Lloyd engaged with electronic technology during a period of intense artistic experimentation and amid larger art world conversations around blackness and abstraction. Lloyd's partnership with Sussman began a year before Robert Rauschenberg and Robert Whitman collaborated with engineers Billy Klüver and Fred Waldhauer in what would become Experiments in Art and Technology (E.A.T.). While E.A.T. has long been acknowledged for its important role in encouraging collaboration between artists and engineers, the relationship between Lloyd and Sussman has never before been investigated. Lloyd's contribution to the field of light art, and the rare partnership between a Black artist and a white engineer, are long overdue for research and scholarship, and this current project will not only advance research for the Studio Museum, but for the field at large. Lloyd's work will also serve to build upon our local audience's considerations and values around art, showcasing Black artistic innovation and creativity, and how artists of color have made not only an indelible mark in on the visual art world but how communities of color impact advancements in other fields.

### ***What products will result from your project?***

Our project will result in an exhibition of Lloyd's work during the Studio Museum's reopening and at three additional venues, and an accompanying publication.

Inaugural Exhibition: As Lloyd largely gave up his artistic practice following his 1968 exhibition at the Museum in order to focus on the Store Front Museum and community activism, little was known or documented about his art career. The Museum's commitment to research and scholarship, particularly into the careers of underrecognized artists, has resulted in the most comprehensive understanding of Lloyd's practice to date, especially his development of the electronically-programmed sculptures, which will be amplified throughout the inaugural exhibition and the companion resources, including an audio guide, interactive exhibition website, interviews, and the Bloomberg Connects Digital Guide App. Via this exhibition, education programs, and the surrounding marketing, the Studio Museum will introduce audiences to Lloyd's oeuvre and his collaborative work with diverse artists, engineers, and communities.

Publication: The collaboration between Lloyd and Sussman will be explored in essays by Choi and Bek, covering both the art historical significance of the partnership and the process of creating and conserving the sculptures. Choi's essay additionally outlines Lloyd's thirty-year artistic practice, including his deep ties to the Studio Museum. Responses from the artists Benjamin, Gale, and Ligon highlight Lloyd's continued importance and resonance with audiences today. Thompson's text focuses on Lloyd's activism in the AWC and contributions toward advancing equity in art spaces. The Store Front Museum, Queens's first art museum, will be the subject of Hopson's essay. These latter two essays will feature archival material to illustrate Lloyd's involvement in and leadership of both organizations.

Traveling Exhibition: During the grant period, the Museum will set forth planning with institutions around the country to travel Lloyd's exhibition and promote widespread knowledge of and engagement with his works. Venue locations being considered include Chicago, given Thompson's work on Lloyd and her contribution to the catalogue; California, as the Light and Space movement developed in Southern California at the same time that Lloyd created his electronically-programmed works in New York; and possibly a venue in either the South, Southwest or Northwest for geographic diversity.

### ***How will you sustain the benefit(s) of your project beyond the conclusion of the period of performance?***

The exhibition and catalogue will be both the culmination of eight years of concentrated study and the beginning of further research inquiries due to what we anticipate will be discoveries resulting from this project. This work is the first time that the Museum has embarked on a long-term conservation study of any artist. The partnership with Bek has been extremely fruitful, not just in providing valuable insight into Lloyd's practice but also in bringing awareness of conservation needs for the Museum's collection. The institution will soon begin a similar in-depth conservation study of another underrecognized artist's work and will continue to invest in researching and conserving the work of artists of African descent.

Bringing this in-depth study and retrospective of Lloyd's life to our audiences in Harlem will amplify the Studio Museum's own mission and dedication to Black artists. Lloyd's innovative practice and dedication to activism for artists of color helped cement the Studio Museum's commitment to its artists and audiences upon our opening in 1968, and this new inaugural exhibition will bring our founder's purpose to the forefront of our new home. The exhibition, publication, and traveling exhibition will mark a new historical moment for the Studio Museum and encourage visitors from our local communities, traditional museum audiences nationally and abroad, art and cultural scholars, and many more, to visit the Studio Museum and support Black art far into the future.





