

Inman Gallery at Untitled, Houston

Booth A39, September 19-21, 2025

Jamal Cyrus



Jamal Cyrus' expansive practice draws on the languages of collage and assemblage to explore the evolution of African American identity within Black political movements and the African diaspora. He is engaged with an aesthetic practice that aims to transform the most mundane materials into objects with rich, densely packed networks of meaning and purpose.

While Cyrus had been working with textiles more broadly since 2016, he began utilizing denim as a raw material in 2019, when he saw a “work clothes” Gees Bend quilt made of denim at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. He began researching denim and found a rich conceptual history to pull from. Despite its modern ubiquity in American culture, denim originated as a principally working-class textile. Once relegated to Black Americans in the American South, denim was one of a handful of fabrics referred to as “negro cloth.” Utilizing denim as a raw material, the artist transforms old jeans and their cotton thread into rich painterly abstractions. In the artist’s words, he is attempting “to use the materials and format of the quilt to document aspects of black political history.” Whether mining FBI files of Black activists and artists, or exposing underknown corners of the Black American experience, Cyrus’ project acknowledges how loss, failure, tragedy, and hardship function to fuel hope, resistance, and progress within Black American culture, presenting the viewer with an expanded understanding of American history.



Most recently, the artist has been referencing free jazz, especially the music of Texas icons such as Ornette Coleman, Julius Hemphill and more broadly issues of metaphysics within Black sound production..

Pulse, Portal meditates on the musician's phrase 'in the pocket'—that ineffable moment when a current within the performance binds the players together, carrying them into a shared state of unity within multiplicity.

Jamal Cyrus
Pulse, Portal, 2025
denim, burlap, cotton, cotton batting
41 x 31 1/2 in (104.1 x 80 cm) approx

(full piece illustrated on previous page)



Bop is a Spaceship Melody borrows its title from a composition by the late pianist and composer Sun Ra. In the work, we encounter a cryptic text—at once resembling the transliteration of an ancient tongue and the onomatopoeic utterance of an instrument. In keeping with Sun Ra's conceptual leanings, it could be both.

Jamal Cyrus
Bop is a Spaceship Melody, 2025
denim, burlap, cotton batting
39 x 29 1/2 in (99.1 x 74.9 cm) approx





Jamal Cyrus
A Golden Echo for Yusef, 2025
 denim, burlap, cotton batting
 22 ¹/₄ x 15 ³/₄ in (56.5 x 40 cm)



Jamal Cyrus
Let's Take it to the Stage, 2025
 denim, burlap, cotton batting
 15 ¹/₂ x 22 in (39.4 x 55.9 cm)

At Untitled, Cyrus introduces three new sculptures, all conceived as percussion instruments. He positions them as extensions of the proposition that Black American music functions as a sensorial archive of the Black experience. In creating these works, the artist embeds history into their very material and form, drawing on symbolic, spiritual, and political references.

Taking the form of shakers and rattles, the sculptures operate as instruments for undisclosed rituals. Across cultures and histories, rattles have served as sacred tools—from Native American and Indigenous Mexican traditions to those of Ancient Egypt and the Celts. Their pulsating sound, produced through the simple act of shaking, has long been believed to open sacred space, guide meditative states, and release emotional or spiritual blockages.

Jamal Cyrus
Bone to Bone, 2025
found resin cast, kenari seeds, rope, plastic beads
7 1/2 x 7 x 6 1/2 in (19.1 x 17.8 x 16.5 cm)

(detail on the following slide)







Jamal Cyrus/Leslie Hewitt
Rhombus or Humming Song (2-5-1), 2025
bronze, wood, tambourine zills
12 x 12 x 2 1/2 in (30.5 x 30.5 x 6.4 cm)



Jamal Cyrus
Artemisia Vulgaris, 2025
 patinated bronze, bells, wire
 11 ³/₄ x 7 ¹/₂ x 4 ¹/₂ in (29.8 x 19.1 x 11.4 cm)



Jamal Cyrus (born 1973, Houston, TX) received his BFA from the University of Houston in 2004 and his MFA from the University of Pennsylvania in 2008. Cyrus has won several prestigious awards, most recently the Guggenheim Fellowship (2023) and the Driskell Prize, awarded by the High Museum of Art, Atlanta, GA (2020). Cyrus' mid-career survey, *The End of My Beginning*, initiated at the Blaffer Art Museum, Houston (June – September 2021), traveled to the Institute of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, (February – May 2022), and completed its tour at the Mississippi Museum of Art (October 2022 – March 2023). A body of related work was the subject of a solo show at the Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth, titled *FOCUS: Jamal Cyrus*, on view from April – June 2022.

Cyrus has also participated in numerous group exhibitions, including *Alice Coltrane: Monument Eternal*, Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, CA (2025); *Like Water*, Contemporary Art Museum, St. Louis (2025), *Soundwaves: Experimental Strategies in Art + Music*, The Moody Center for the Arts, Houston (2022); *This Tender, Fragile Thing*, The School, Kinderhook, NY (2022); *The Dirty South: Contemporary Art, Material Culture and the Sonic Impulse*, Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston (2021); *Slowed and Thrown: Records of the City Through Mutated Lenses*, Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston (2020); *Front International: Cleveland Triennial for Contemporary Art*, Akron Art Museum, Akron, OH (2018); *Direct Message: Art, Language and Power*, the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, IL (2019); and *The Freedom Principle: Experiments in Art and Music, 1965 - Now*, Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, Chicago, IL (2016).

Cyrus was a member of the artist collective Otabenga Jones & Associates which was active from 2002 – 2017. As a member of the collective, he exhibited at the High Museum of Art, Atlanta (2008); the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture, Washington, DC (2008); the Menil Collection, Houston (2007); and the 2006 Whitney Biennial.



For more information, please contact Kerry Inman

kerry@inmangallery.com

Or call 713-412-5730

For a listing of work in this presentation and pricing

[Click here for a viewing room](#)

Inman Gallery is currently moving into a new space and we are open by appointment until further notice.

Our new address is

1502 Alabama St

Houston, TX 77004

Office phone number – 713-526-7800