

RUSSO ▲ LEE GALLERY

Lisa Jarrett – Artist Statement

Migration Studies, Beauty Supply Collection

Migration Studies, Beauty Supply connects my interest in tracing lost histories and homelands to the Beauty Supply store as a critical space of Black culture. In all of my work the value of Black sites are places assumed to be worthy of artistic research. The locations, aesthetics, layout, products, customers, and business owners set the Beauty Supply apart as a model while also offering its own set of complications.

With the exception of franchises like Sally's Beauty Supply, beauty supply stores are primarily independently owned businesses located in Black urban spaces although they are rarely owned by Black people. The geographic implications/expectations of the Beauty Supply are similar to those of streets across the US named after Martin Luther King Jr. In both of these geographies you would be correct in thinking that Black people either were here, are here, or will be here soon.

For me there is a similar kinship question at the Beauty Supply. Who is the store's primary audience and how do you know? That question opened up a whole world for me in the context of this project. I hope the sense of joy, color, pattern, scale, and smell that is the Beauty Supply sits up in these object-based biographic portraits. They are made with objects I purchased in Beauty Supply stores over the years. I combine and arrange the objects into compositions that point back to their places of origin and scale them UP. I want the work to give the same senses of awe, overwhelm, imagination, and memory that I always feel when I go into the Beauty Supply store.

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