

Stephen Friedman Gallery

Culture Type

'Deborah Roberts: The Evolution of Mimi' Exhibition Catalog Wins Publication Award

Victoria L. Valentine

15 December 2020



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Published to document her solo exhibition at the Spelman College Museum of Fine Art in Atlanta, "Deborah Roberts: The Evolution of Mimi" is the first major publication to explore the work of artist Deborah Roberts. It's an exceptional volume and an award winner.



Image: "Deborah Roberts: The Evolution of Mimi"

"Deborah Roberts: The Evolution of Mimi" received a 2020 Mary Ellen LoPresti Art Publication Award. The news was announced today. The 36th annual award from the Southeast Chapter of the Art Libraries Society of North America (ARLIS/NA) recognizes excellence in art publishing.

Austin, Texas-based Roberts works in figurative collage. Her subjects are Black youth, both boys and girls. She captures their strength, vulnerability, determination, and individuality and explores the perceptions and assumptions society casts upon them. Tracing the evolution of her practice, the 2018 exhibition featured more than 80 works by Roberts made between 2007 and 2017.

Fully illustrated, the exhibition catalog includes a foreword by Spelman President Mary Schmidt Campbell; an introduction by then-Spelman museum director Andrea Barnwell Brownlee, who curated the exhibition; thoughtful essays by Kirsten Pai Buick, Erin J. Gilbert, Beverly Guy-Sheftall, Antwaun Sargent, and Franklin Sirmans; and an interview with the artist conducted by Valerie Cassel Oliver.

The catalog was co-published by the Georgia Museum of Art at the University of Georgia and Spelman College Museum of Fine Art.

The publication awards are named in honor of Mary Ellen LoPresti. She served as the design librarian at the Harrye B. Lyons Design Library at North Carolina State University, from 1977 until her death in 1985. The awards were established the same year. For the copyright year 2019, three volumes were selected for 2020 awards.

"Dusti Bongé, Art and Life, Biloxi, New Orleans, New York" by J. Richard Gruber won in the scholarly publication category and "Material Georgia 1733-1900: Two Decades of Scholarship" edited by Dale L. Couch," which was also co-published by the Georgia Museum of Art and Spelman Museum, was recognized in the exhibition catalog category.

Ordinarily there is one winner in each category for the LoPresti Art Publication Award. The Roberts and "Material Culture" exhibition catalogs tied this year. The winning publications are added to the archives of ARLIS/NA Southeast Chapter at Duke University.

A three-judge panel reviewed 13 submissions from 10 publishers. Patricia Gimenez (Research and Instruction Librarian, Jen Library, Savannah College of Art and Design), Ann Holderfield (Art/Reference and Instruction

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Librarian, University of South Carolina Beaufort), and Souda Mitchell (Archive and Special Collection Librarian, Savannah College of Art and Design) served as jurors.

The jury described the Roberts volume as a “beautiful, unique, and timely catalog” with exceptional design and contributions “relevant to current areas of African American scholarship.”

“Deborah Roberts: I’m” opens Jan. 23 at The Contemporary Austin. Featuring all new work, the show is a milestone for Roberts—her first solo museum exhibition in her home state of Texas. CT