

## Stephen Friedman Gallery

CultureMap San Antonio

Dazzling San Antonio art museum adds landmark Texas artist to collection

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Image: One of Texas' most important living artists is now part of Ruby City's collection. Photo courtesy of Ruby City.

Ruby City has added a very important acquisition to its already impressive permanent collection. On February 26, the San Antonio art destination announced it has added Deborah Roberts' *Cock-a-doodle-doo* (2020) to its list of artistic treasures.

In *Cock-a-doodle-doo*, Roberts uses her trademark collage-and-paint style to examine the adult roles often forced upon Black boys in American society. In the piece, a young boy stands with his arms puffed out, his slender frame exaggerated in its posture. "He stands with clenched fists, defiantly confronting the viewer with his confident — perhaps cocky — posture," the museum writes.

The image also questions the double standard faced by young Black boys and their white counterparts, and why Black children are often viewed as adults long before their peers. According to a release, Roberts specifically found inspiration for her piece in the story of Tamir Rice, a 12-year-old boy shot dead by police while holding a toy gun.

Roberts, who is based in Austin, has long been one of Texas' top living artists, but her career has reached a sort of fevered pitch in recent years. Though much of her work examines the role of Black girls in America, she has recently begun to examine the role of boys using that same framework.

If you'd like to see *Cock-a-doodle-doo* before it becomes part of the Ruby City collection, the piece is on display now through August 15 at The Contemporary Austin. Deborah Roberts: I'm — the artist's first solo show in her home city — includes the broad look at Roberts' body of work, with pieces including mixed-media, video, and a giant mural on the outside of the museum.