

Colette Robbins

(American, b. 1980, lives in New York, NY)

Robbins' work emerges from her interest in human psychology, memory, and The Rorschach test (created by Hermann Rorschach in 1921), which contains imagery of inkblots has become a common symbol of psychology. These particular inkblots for the past nine decades have been imbued with the power to assess someone's psychological state. Although they are not commonly used anymore, they are still occasionally used for Psychological training and assessments. It is no wonder these tests were so popular. Our brains respond immediately to the Rorschach's symmetry because we are hardwired to notice symmetry as an evolutionary adaptation. In order to survive in the wild, we needed to have the ability to instantly recognize any potential mammalian threats.

In addition to having an immediate connection with the symmetry of the Rorschach, it also inspires one to free associate its shapes with imagery from various memories. This free association process that occurs when viewing the ink blot happens whenever we view anything, including art. When we see a cloud, we pick out forms that remind us of other more concrete things. When we view a mountain or a cliff, we might see indentations that look like eyes or mouths.

The Rorschach project is a series with in my greater body of work, Archaeological Fiction. The first series with in this body of work incorporated Janus like double headed monoliths in remote oceans or cliffs. The further the series developed, the more the head forms became harder to separate from the landscape. I became more interested in the archetypal symbols in my work, such as islands, the ocean, sprays of water, mountains, and caves. Using the Rorschach inspired inkblot shapes as a format for these universal landscapes, opens up the connection between a psychological state and the specific landscape. Since the landscapes are cropped with in this abstract form of the Rorschach, the pattern recognition that already happens when we look at a landscape is magnified and multiplied by the free association within the ink blot's symmetrical abstraction. A rock texture becomes a pelvic bone, or sprays of water seem to morph into brain matter.

Because our brains want to recognize patterns in whatever we see, this pairing of subject matter will start to create the process which author Michael Shermer (the Believing Brain 2011) refers to as patternicity. Patternicity in his words is "the tendency to infuse patterns with meaning, intention, and agency", which Shermer calls "agenticity". When we need to ignite our curiosity and imagination, our brain's need for patternicity and agenticity can be quite helpful. Conversely, our meaning making brains can make the wrong associations which can lead to personal and cultural disasters.

Robbins earned her MFA in from Parsons The New School of Design in 2007 and her BFA from the Maryland Institute College of Art.

Education

MFA Parsons, the New School for Design, NYC

BFA Maryland Institute College of Art, Baltimore, MD Center for Art and Culture at the Institute for American Universities, Aix En Provence, France

Selected Exhibitions

2017 *Past Continuous*, Curated by Norm Paris and Jackie Hoving at Tiger Strikes Asteroid, NYC

2016 *Archaeological Fiction*, Solo exhibiton with 101/EXHIBIT LA, CA

2015 Art on Paper, with SOME/TIME/SALON, Miami, FL

The Devil Within And The Devil Without, Kirk Hopper Gallery, Dallas, TX

Solo Project with SOME/TIME/SALON, San Francisco, CA

2014 *NEW/IDOLS*, The Varsity, Studio 301, NYC

Wanderers above a sea of smog, Katrina Van Tassel Projects, NYC

For the Time Being, curated by Dexter Wimberly, Koki Arts, Tokyo, Japan

Exquisite Corpse, Curated by Amir H. Fallah, MASS, Austin, TX

Koi No Yokan II, 101/EXHIBIT, LA, CA

Relic, a three person exhibition, curated by Ginger Shulick Porcella, ISE Cultural Foundation, NYC

The Human Extension, curated by Amy Berger, the Lodge Gallery, NYC

2013 *Location, Location*, curated by Sun You, Brooklyn, NYC

Thanks, Curated By Adam Parker Smith, Lu Magnus Gallery, NYC

Two Person Pop Up, Keri Oldham and Colette Robbins, Field Projects, NYC

Desaturated Rainbow, Field Projects Gallery, NYC

Dead in August on the LILAC, Organized by Site 95, NYC

Desaturated Rainbow, Kopeikin Gallery, LA

Strange Landscapes, One Mile Gallery, Kingston, NY

MICA Pairs, curated by Seth Cohen and Courtney Puckett, 92Y Tribeca, NYC

2012 *Fools Gold*, RH Gallery, NYC

Earth Works: Ten artists on Land and Industry, curated by Anneliis Beadnell and Stuart Morrison at P.P.O.W. Gallery, NYC

Portrait of a Generation, organized by Kathy Grayson, The Hole, NYC

Fine Line, curated by Leslie Rosa, Workshop Arte Contemporanea, Venice, Italy

We Have Relocated to Our New Location, Organized by Kayrock, Picture Farm, NYC

2011 *The Living Room*, curated by Keri Oldham and Colette Robbins, Field Projects, NYC

Collapse, curated by Micah Ganske and Colette Robbins, RH Gallery, NYC

Liminal Step, Curated by Emet Sosna, Art Connects, NYC

What Works, organized by ArtStar, NYC

A Dessert in the Ocean, A View from Cill Rialaig, Leslie Heller Workspace, NYC

Fe sad, Curated by Michael Meadors, Kleio Projects, NYC

Discrete Power, organized by Vizkult, Judson Memorial Church, NYC

Single Fare, Organized by Jean Pierre Roy, Michael Kagen, and Alix Sloan, Sloan Fine Art, NYC

Hybrid Life Forms, curated by Jiyon Lee-Lodge, Brooklyn, NYC

2010 *Parlour #19*, Curated by Leslie Rosa and Ciara Gilmarten, Sienna, Italy

Fools Gold Farm, Organized by Fools Gold Arts and RH Gallery, RH Gallery, NYC

- Nice to Meet You*, Sloan Fine Art, NYC
Single Fare, Organized by Jean Pierre Roy and Michael Kagen, Brooklyn, NYC
Two's Company, Curated by Leslie Rosa and Ciara Gilmarten, Parlour #13, NYC
- 2009 *Inferno*, Curated by Leslie Rosa, Yaupetec, Mexico City, Mexico
Two Person: Colette Robbins and Dean Goelz, Organized by Like the Spice, 92 Y, NYC
Forever Summer, Curated by Scott Malbourn, Platform Space at Denise Bibro Gallery, NYC
First Friday Silent Auction, Like the Spice, Brooklyn, NY
Watery Grave, Curated by Leslie Rosa and Ciara Gilmarten, Parlour #6, NYC
- 2008 *Conceptual Figures*, Deitch Projects, NYC
Some Friends of Mine, curated by Melanie Jalacic, Fort Gondo, St. Louis, MO
- 2008-05 *Oranges on Toothpicks*, The Bobble Head Collective, the Art Parade Deitch Projects, NYC
- 2007 MFA Thesis Show, Caelum Gallery, Organized by Brian Sholis, NYC
Slow Dance, Curated by Marilyn Rosenberg, Heidi Cho Gallery, NYC
- 2006 *Triple Exposure*, Platform Gallery, Manitoba, Canada
Drawing Show, Curated by Thomas Butter, MFA Gallery Space, NYC
- 2003 *Buff Group Show*, Buff Space, Dumbo, Brooklyn, NY
Hot Picks, curated by Colette Robbins, Bank Gallery, Baltimore, MD
Group Exhibition, H.Lewis Gallery, Baltimore, MD
- 2002 *CAC*, organized by Ken Tisa, Center for Art and Culture, Aix En Provence, France

Awards/Residencies

- 2013 Austevollportalen, Bergen, Norway Featured in Pierogi Online Flat Files
2010 Cill Rialaig Project, Ireland
2008 The Vermont Studio Center
2006-07 LCU Grant, Parsons, The New School for Design
2005 Graduate Dean's Scholarship Parsons, The New School for Design