

FORT GANSEVOORT



Estate of Aminah Brenda Lynn Robinson, Who Memorialized Everyday Lives and Culture of Black People, is Now Represented by Fort Gansevoort Gallery



By Victoria L. Valentine, Oct 24, 2024

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Aminah Brenda Lynn Robinson, "Dad's Journey," 1995 (watercolor, graphite, pen, ink, and fabric on watercolor paper, 11 x 15 in) © Aminah Brenda Lynn Robinson Trust. Courtesy of the Aminah Brenda Lynn Trust, Columbus Museum of Art, and Fort Gansevoort, New York

THE AMINAH BRENDA LYNN ROBINSON ESTATE is now exclusively represented in the United States by Fort Gansevoort in New York. A multidisciplinary artist, storyteller, and visual historian, Aminah Brenda Lynn Robinson (1940-2015) dedicated her practice to the Black experience, both the universal and personal. She made paintings, drawings, sculpture, puppetry, music boxes, handmade books, textile-based works, and also expressed herself through poetry. In 2004, Robinson was recognized with a McArthur genus grant.

Robinson's work explored the Middle Passage and the Great Migration of African Americans up from the U.S. South to other regions of the country. She was also inspired by her own experiences and local community, memorializing her family history and the quotidian. She was born in Columbus, Ohio, where she grew up in Poindexter Village, a close-knit public housing community in the Bronzeville neighborhood and one of the earliest federally funded public housing developments in the nation.

She was educated at Columbus Art School (now the Columbus College of Art and Design) and eventually purchased a home in the Shepherd neighborhood of Columbus. Over four decades, the house became all about her art- a studio where she worked and stored her art, filled numerous journals with her writings, and kept a growing array of collections, including books, buttons, fabrics, thimbles, dolls, canes, and souvenirs from her travels around the world. Drawing on African and Southern traditions, she made a bottle garden in the front yard.

Upon her death at age 75 in 2015, Robinson left her home studio, artworks, writings and journals, furniture, and personal possessions to the Columbus Museum of Art (CMA). Over the course of her career, she had maintained a close relationship with the museum. In 2002, the museum organized "Symphonic Poem: The Art of Aminah Brenda Lynn Robinson," the first retrospective of the artist, which traveled to the Brooklyn Museum, Tacoma Art Museum, and Toledo Museum of Art.

Entrusted with the artist's estate after her passing, CMA presented "Raggin' On: The Art of Aminah Brenda Lynn Robinson's House and Journals" (2020-21). Spanning seven decades, the exhibition opened up Robinson's world giving viewers the opportunity to get a sense of her home and her creativity. In the introduction to the exhibition, the curators honed in on the intentions of her artistic practice: "to celebrate the everyday lives and culture of Black people and their endurance through centuries of injustice."

Today, CMA is stewarding her legacy through the Aminah Robinson Legacy Project, which engages with her practice and supports new generations of African American artists and writers through fellowship and residency programs providing artists the opportunity to stay and work in Robinson's home.

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Aminah Brenda Lynn Robinson in her home. | Photo by Jeff Bates. © Aminah Brenda Lynn Robinson Trust. Courtesy of the Aminah Brenda Lynn Trust, Columbus Museum of Art, and Fort Gansevoort, New York

The gallery representation with Fort Gansevoort is in collaboration with the museum. Sales of Robinson's work will directly benefit the legacy project, including preservation of her artworks and home studio, as well as museum exhibitions and fellowship, residency, and educational programming.

"We are thrilled to announce this new partnership between CMA and Fort Gansevoort, set to further amplify Aminah's transformative cultural contributions and introduce new audiences to her work," CMA Executive Director and CEO Brooke A. Minto said in a statement.

"Aminah's expansive oeuvre speaks to the widespread resonance of her work throughout her career, and the Aminah Robinson Legacy Project has enabled others to continue drawing inspiration from her practice and further expand upon the ideas she championed during her lifetime. We look forward to collaborating with Fort Gansevoort to continue these efforts in preserving and honoring Aminah's work for future generations."

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“Aminah is a true American master whose vision and achievements deserve far-reaching critical attention and public engagement. We are delighted to embark upon this collaborative mission to share her gifts with the wider world.” — Fort Gansevoort Founder Adam Shopkorn

Fort Gansevoort works with artists who have had limited national exposure and counts about 20 artists on its roster. The majority are African American, including Dawn Williams Boyd, Michelangelo Lovelace (1960-2021), Winifred Rembert (1945-2021), Melvin Smith, and Rose Smith. Willie Birth and vanessa german have also shown at Fort Gansevoort. Many of the gallery's artists are self-taught; work in mediums traditionally considered craft such as quilting, leather tooling, and mixed-media with found objects; or have dedicated their practices to memorializing their communities. Robinson's inaugural exhibition with Fort Gansevoort opens Nov. 15. Focusing on portraiture, "Aminah Brenda Lynn Robinson: Character Studies," will feature drawings and mixed media sculptures.

"It is a tremendous honor and privilege to present our first exhibition of Aminah Brenda Lynn Robinson's art at Fort Gansevoort. We are grateful to the Columbus Museum of Art and its talented, passionate team and for their stewardship of the legacy of an artist we have long admired," Adam Shopkorn, founder of Fort Gansevoort, said in a statement.

"Aminah is a true American master whose vision and achievements deserve far-reaching critical attention and public engagement. We are delighted to embark upon this collaborative mission to share her gifts with the wider world." **CT**

FIND MORE about Aminah Brenda Lynn Robinson at Fort Gansevoort, the artist's legacy project at the Columbus Museum of Art, and her website.