

A.I.R.

Sleepwalking Roberta Dorsett

April 20–May 19, 2024

Opening reception: Saturday, April 20, from 6–8pm

GALLERY II

A.I.R. Gallery is pleased to announce *Sleepwalking*, an exhibition of photographs by 2023–2024 Fellow Roberta Dorsett. This is Dorsett’s first solo exhibition in New York City.



Roberta Dorsett, *Sleepwalking*, 2021,
Archival inkjet print, 13 x 19 inches.

Dorsett’s *Sleepwalking* is a series of photographs examining isolation in the suburbs and how a sense of danger often accompanies seemingly idyllic environments. The work depicts three women, Dorsett’s aunt, her cousin, and Dorsett herself, occupying the shared space of a suburban home in Connecticut. Tension arises from the camera’s interaction with the women. The camera acts as an intrusive person, an interloper, and a voyeur as it captures the women in moments of discomfort and vulnerability.

In Dorsett’s previous work, she took on the role of family historian, photographing moments of in-betweenness that result in candid and uncontrived images. Her obsession with taking photographs of her family is driven by their lack of extant family albums or other visual documentation. Because of the family’s socioeconomic status, photography was considered a luxury and only done for special occasions. Moreover, Dorsett’s mother had to leave behind her family’s photographic history when she immigrated from Jamaica to the United States.

Dorsett initially intended *Sleepwalking* to be a straightforward documentation of her aunt and cousin’s experience as first-time Black homeowners. But she found herself drawn into the project’s narrative and began photographing her family in a more constructed and story-driven way, drawing inspiration from slasher and horror films. Dorsett captures the visceral thrills of these types of films by continuing to utilize her family to explore the concepts of voyeurism and anxiety. The single-family home, once a symbol of milestone achievement, now becomes a surreal site of both safety and terror. As she stood behind and in front of the camera, registering the uneasiness and distress of these three women inside their home, Dorsett dreamed up a distorted reality and asked herself, “Am I awake or sleepwalking?”

Roberta Dorsett is an African-American photographer from the South Bronx. She earned her B.A. in Studio Art with a concentration in photography at The City College of New York. Roberta was a 2020 recipient of the En Foco Photography Fellowship. Her work has been in group shows, including En Foco Photography Fellowship Exhibition: *Reflection Memory*, NY, and Analog Film Photography Association Group Exhibition: *Monochrome: Angst, Ambiance, Abstraction*, FL.

A.I.R. Gallery is wheelchair accessible via ramp. There are accessible toilets in the venue. There is comfortable seating with backs. Free tap water is available. The venue is nearest to the F train at York St (0.2 miles) and the A train at High St (0.5 miles). The nearest wheelchair accessible trains is the B, Q, R at Dekalb Av (1.1 miles) and the 2, 3 at Borough Hall (0.8 miles). The roads immediately surrounding the gallery are cobblestone. The nearest accessible parking garage (for an hourly fee) is two blocks away at 100 Jay St. No ID necessary for entry. Please contact info@airgallery.org for more information.



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