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Artist's *BLK Barbie Project* photos displayed at Laurier

WATERLOO – Wilfrid Laurier University's Robert Langen Art Gallery presents photography by artist Rose-Ann M. Bailey in an exhibition titled *The BLK Barbie Project*, running from March 6 to April 13, 2013.

The BLK Barbie Project visually reconstructs everyday scenarios of black women in a series of glamorous fashion shots by using Barbie dolls as a representational model of "self." The photographic works juxtapose black and white environments with full-colour, haute-couture elegance.

The concept is a direct play on W.E.B. DuBois' theory of double consciousness that he developed out of the need for African Americans to have control of their image in public and in front of white people while they negotiate their own culture and self-representation. This constant negotiation can create an internal conflict between actual identity and perceived identity.

The BLK Barbie Project is a collaborative effort between Bailey and Toronto sculptor Frantz Brent-Harris.

Bailey is a Jamaican-born artist currently living in Toronto. Her artistic focus utilizes photography as a medium to explore alternative images of the black community offered by the mainstream media. Bailey has worked in the digital format for the past six years, but believes in the importance of a historical foundation to enhance the final product. Her art is closely connected to her personal commitment to work with youth and women of colour on issues surrounding body image, sexuality and self-esteem. She received a Bachelor of Fine Arts from York University and is currently pursuing a Master of Education at York University.

The Robert Langen Art Gallery has played a vital role at Wilfrid Laurier University's Waterloo campus since it opened in 1989. As Laurier's visual arts centre, the Robert Langen Art Gallery provides knowledge, stewardship, appreciation and enjoyment of Canadian art and culture to members of the Laurier community and beyond. The gallery's annual programming complements concepts and theories in Laurier's academic curriculum and integrates community outreach initiatives as related to the visual arts.

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