

Robb Report

BEST OF THE BEST

From Leonardo at the Louvre to the Rise of Jordan Casteel: The Best of the Art World This Year

As museums and galleries make way for more diverse voices, the work on view only grows more compelling.

BY JULIE BELCOVE ON JUNE 16, 2020

Performance: Pope.L, Conquest, with the Public Art Fund



As part of a three-venue tribute to Pope.L, the Public Art Fund produced *Conquest*, the latest installment of the artist's long-running "Crawls" series, in which he dragged himself facedown through urban environments in a potent metaphor for struggle against a backdrop of homelessness. Pope.L made his first "Crawl" in 1978 and over the years did versions carrying a small potted flower or wearing a Superman costume.

One hot Saturday in September, more than 140 volunteers gathered in New York's West Village and, in relay, traversed a mile-and-a-half course to Union Square Park, squirming on their bellies, crawling on all fours or shimmying on their derrieres along the sidewalks—while blindfolded and carrying flashlights. Each wore knee and elbow pads, but only one shoe. One woman also wore her baby in a carrier. There were old and young, able-bodied and disabled, and people of every race and from every borough, representing every stratum of the city. The grueling

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physicality and atypical unity among strangers were affecting, as was the route, which passed the AIDS Memorial and areas once farmed by Lenape Indians and inhabited by colonial-era slaves—now among the city’s most affluent addresses. That irony was not lost, nor was the collective reaction of random passersby, which ranged from bewildered and amused to shocked, even empathetic.