

AYANA V JACKSON

Archival Impulse

DATES // November 13 – December 21, 2014

Opening Reception: Thursday, November 13th from 6 – 8pm

HOURS // Wed – Sun // 11am – 6pm

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

presented by Michael Steinberg Fine Art

Michael Steinberg Fine Art, in conjunction with 33 Orchard, presents *Archival Impulse*, Ayana V Jackson's first solo exhibition in New York. Opening on November 13th, and running through December 21st, 2014, the exhibition features works produced between 2011 and 2013.

Archival Impulse takes its name from art historian Hal Foster's idea that by confronting the archive new systems of knowledge can be created. In this case Jackson confronts late 19th and early 20th century imagery of non-European bodies. To do this, the artist draws on images sourced from the Duggan Cronin collection created in South Africa, the works of unknown photographers practicing throughout the global south at the time, as well as documentation of reconstructed villages and "native" performers that were touring in Europe's Human Zoos.



Does the Brown Paper Bag Test Really Exist? / Will my Father be Proud, 2013, Archival Pigment Print (edition of 6+AP) 54 x 42 ¾ in

The artist's process involves identifying reoccurring motifs in the original images, interrogating them, performing them and reconstructing them. Her primary intervention is in her deliberate choice not to situate the "subjects" in the scenario. The separation of the bodies in the foreground from the background image is done first to bring attention to the fact that these early photographs are theatrical performances written and directed by the photographer and subject alike and as such are fictitious, second to ask questions around the photograph's potential as an agent of propaganda, and last, if not most importantly, to transform this theatre into a space where new narratives might emerge.



Diorama, 2012, Archival Pigment Print (Edition of 6+3AP) 44 x 44 in

"In an essay about Jackson's work, theorist and political scientist Achille Mbembe, Ph.D., a political scientist, states: Exploring archival material is a way of walking through time's thickets in the footprints of the past. And this is where Ayana V Jackson has chosen to begin her audacious journey...Positing herself as the Other, she re-walks the paths of those who have preceded her, and adds her image to theirs.

The artist exhibits her stylized body with immodest reserve; its fine contours radiate beauty and grace. There is no need for metaphor, even when semi-nude or staged with sensuality.

These pictures of a body – a Black body – provoke a logjam of feelings. The viewer is inclined to feel seduced while faced with fundamental ambiguity. Is the person portrayed identical in all respects? She can be viewed in detail but is she truly seen? What does this glistening, black skin of this libidinous body signify? When does this body, simultaneously displayed for all eyes to see and embodying others, stop being a subject and become an object? And how is this object the expression of forbidden pleasure?”

Based between Johannesburg, New York and Paris, Jackson is currently a NYFA Fellow for Photography. Jackson has exhibited her work in association with Gallery MOMO (Johannesburg, RSA), Galerie Baudoin Lebon, (Paris, FR), Galerie Sho Contemporary (Tokyo, Japan), the San Francisco Mexican Museum (USA), Museum of Contemporary African Diaspora Art (MoCADA), USA, and the Philadelphia African American Museum (USA). She has also participated in the 2014 Casablanca Biennale and the Bamako Encounters, African Photography Biennale.

About Michael Steinberg Fine Art:

Michael Steinberg Fine Art is a curatorial, art advisory and publishing company based in New York City. Steinberg is a regular participant in the 33 Orchard exhibition program.

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Gallery hours are Wed to Sun from 11 AM – 6 PM. Closest subway trains are F at East Broadway, B/D at Grand Street, and 4/5/6 at Canal Street.

About 33 Orchard:

33 Orchard, opened January 2014, is a new art gallery located at 33B Orchard Street between Hester and Canal Streets in Lower Manhattan. 33 Orchard is a community of gallerists and curators working towards a new business model of a commercial art space, sharing resources and ideas. The gallery is directed by Jane Kim, who founded Thrust Projects on the Bowery from 2005 to 2010.