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SEATTLE, March 13, 2017 - **Mariane Ibrahim Gallery** is very pleased to announce *Dear Sarah* an exhibition dedicated to artist Ayana V. Jackson. The exhibition opens on April 6 and will run until May 20, 2017.

Dear Sarah is inspired by the story of Sarah Bonetta Forbes, an African woman of Yoruba origin presented as a gift to the English Queen Victoria by the Dahomey King Ghezo. This series is a marked departure from Jackson's previous works, which deconstruct the way in which the non-Western body has been photographed. In *Dear Sarah*, Jackson reconstructs the narrative of Sarah Forbes Bonetta throwing off the trope of Bonetta as property of monarchs, and considers what the life of a young woman of royal lineage, and privileged upbringing would have been in 19th century England. Similar to previous bodies of work, Jackson continues her investigation into the photographic archive of the late 19th century. In stark contrast to previous bodies of work, namely *Archival Impulse* and *Poverty Pornography*, Jackson's interest in Forbes Bonetta presented an opportunity for the artist to move away from, the visceral intellectual impact of examining how the non-European body has been framed literally and figuratively through out history. In the present day where incessant violence is disproportionately heaped upon non-Western people, Jackson's reading of Forbes Bonetta reconstructs the young woman's short life in nine images that offer the viewer luminous portraits of a woman unfettered and acutely aware of the possibilities her life has offered her.

The historical archive suggests that Forbes employed several names, many of which were versions of her own. Jackson's interpretations of Forbes are named accordingly. Jackson dons a white dress, which shoots out light simulating the buoyancy of the boat Forbes was named after. Forbes, whose birth name was Aina, is depicted as an ascending angel. Eyes closed and focused, the implication is freedom and flight. In another, Jackson presents Forbes seated in royal blue, a reminder that this young woman was not simply a gift passed between royals, but was herself, of royal lineage.

By reconsidering and reconstructing the narrative of Sarah Bonetta Forbes, Jackson once again offers a reading of history that centers beings generally treated as inanimate objects, as active conscientious individuals. Through resurrecting the Forbes narrative, Jackson ruminates on how this young African woman may have understood and navigated the new world she encountered upon arriving to England. Jackson's reconstructing of Forbes as the active agent driving her life, offers new readings into little known histories offering respite and endless possibilities for reinvention.

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