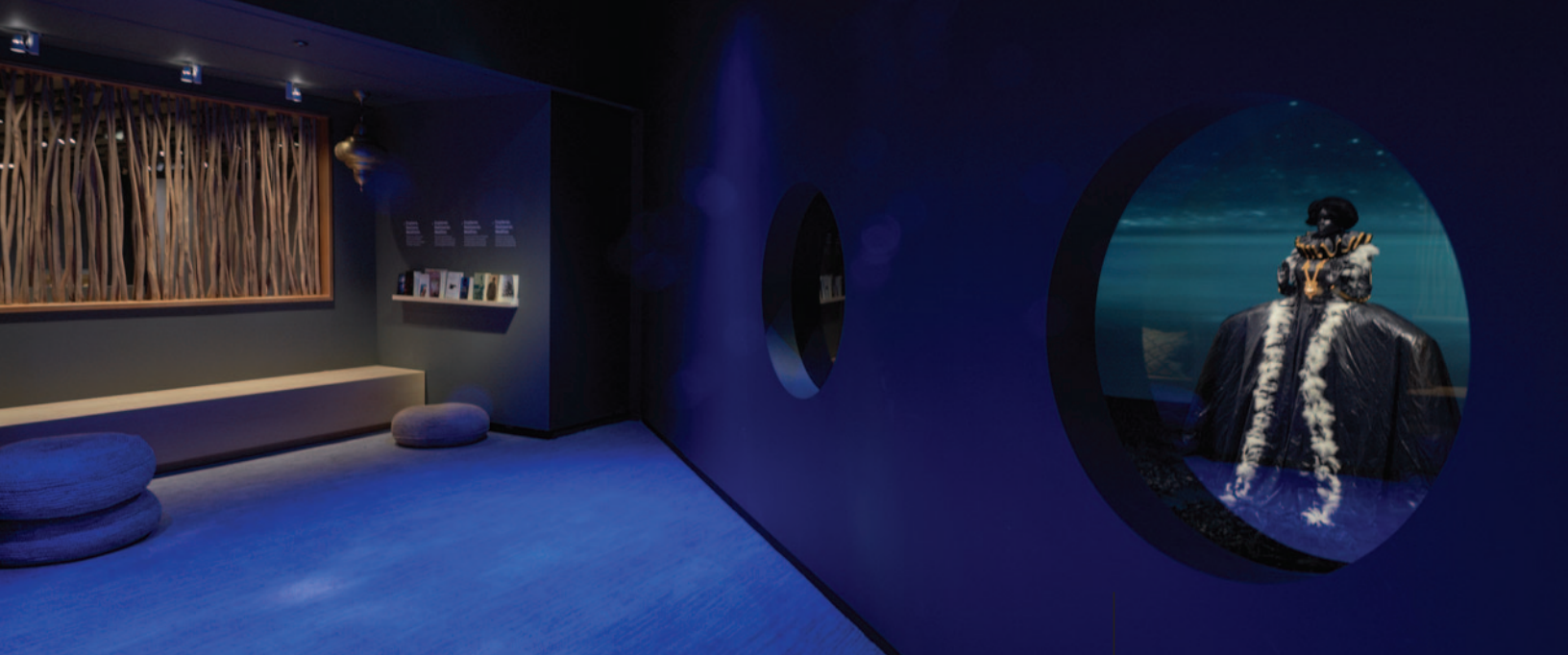


Exhibition Prospectus

FROM THE DEEP

IN THE WAKE OF
DREXCIYA WITH
AYANA V. JACKSON





You Must Face the Power of the Black Wave
with nearby meditation/listening/reading
spaces, and scent installation

ABOUT THE EXHIBITION

F*rom the Deep*, the first monographic exhibition of photographer and artist Ayana V. Jackson, showcases the artist's first forays into immersive video, animation, costume design, and installation. Departing from her past practice of renting costumes for the re-creation of historic images, Jackson enters a new frontier of speculative futures.

Jackson was inspired by the Detroit-based techno band Drexciya—a duo made up of musicians James Stinson and Gerald Donald whose albums in the 1990s featured a mythical kingdom in the Atlantic Ocean populated by babies of enslaved African women who were thrown or jumped overboard during the Middle Passage. Stinson and Donald envisioned a masculine, militarized world of empowered Africans. In contrast, Jackson creates a feminist, sacred aquatopia in which the presence of water spirits akin to Mame Coumba Bang of Senegal,

Yemanya of Benin, Nigeria, and the Americas, Kianda of Angola, Dogon *nommo* of Mali, and others prompts a reckoning with our collective past. To do this, she collaborated with fashion designers in Saint Louis, Senegal; Accra, Ghana; Luanda, Angola; and Trinidad—all sites deeply implicated in the trafficking of enslaved Africans. As a certified master diver, Jackson filmed at depths of 90 or more feet and partnered with video, animation, and sound specialists in South Africa and Zimbabwe.



*Journey of the Deep Sea Dweller:
Who Among Us Has Killed an Albatross*
4-channel projection

The multimedia exhibition is envisioned as a series of encounters. In the first of these, we are introduced to the music of Drexciya and a one-on-one engagement with *You Must Face the Power of the Black Wave*, a figural installation viewed through a series of portholes as if visitors are on board a ship crossing the Atlantic. Photographs of each of Jackson's Drexciyans and spirits encircle another gallery, surrounding visitors like a tribunal. The next gallery operates as a space of extraction, with bodices, a crown, and other costume components displayed (in vitrines) as if washed ashore from Drexciya and placed in a museum. These are joined by three costumes displayed on custom-designed mannequins

and a series of animations with soundscape. *From the Deep* culminates with two time-based works of art—*Take Me to the Water: Baptism by Waters Both Sweet and Salty*, a single-channel video focused on the journey from freshwater to the sea, and Jackson's immersive 4-channel projection *Journey of the Deep-Sea Dweller: Who Among Us Has Killed an Albatross*.

Exhibition didactics are available in four languages. The full-color catalogue includes interviews between artist and curator Karen E. Milbourne, and essays by N'Goné Fall, Marta Moreno Vega, Ingrid LaFleur, and the late Greg Tate. The exhibition was organized by/originated at the Smithsonian's National Museum of African Art in Washington, DC.

About the Artist

Ayana V. Jackson
Photo by Mariane Ibrahim

Ayana V. Jackson (b. 1977, East Orange, NJ; based in Brooklyn and Johannesburg) is a photographer whose work critiques the colonial gaze and reimagines historical narratives of the Black diaspora. By restaging 19th- and early 20th-century portraiture—often casting herself in historical roles—she challenges photography’s role in shaping racial and gendered identities.



Jackson’s art explores the ethical dynamics between photographer, subject, and viewer, and is held in major collections including the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; the Studio Museum in Harlem; and the National Gallery of Victoria. A 2014 NYFA Fellow and 2018 Smithsonian Fellow, she founded the STILL Art residency in Johannesburg in 2021. Her first major institutional show, *From the Deep*, opened at the Smithsonian National Museum of African Art in 2023.

About the Curator

Dr. Karen E. Milbourne is the J. Sanford Miller Family Director of the Fralin Museum of Art at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville, VA. Prior to this, she was Senior Curator and Acting Head of Knowledge production at the Smithsonian National Museum of African Art in Washington, DC; Associate Curator of African Art and Department Head for the Arts of Africa, the Americas, Asia and the Pacific Islands at The Baltimore Museum of Art; and Assistant Professor of Art History at the University of Kentucky in Lexington.

Dr. Milbourne is the recipient of numerous awards and fellowships, including a prestigious Fulbright Fellowship, ACASA Award for Curatorial Excellence, AAMC Award for Curatorial Excellence, Smithsonian Secretary’s Award for Excellence, and two Smithsonian Secretary’s Research Prizes. She is the author of four books and her publications appear in edited volumes and such journals as *African Arts*, *Nka: Journal of Contemporary African Art*, *Art Papers*, *ARS*, and *Collections*. She currently serves on the Scientific Committee for AWARE (Archives of Women Artists, Research, and Exhibitions), the advisory board for the Lusaka Contemporary Art Center, and is the former Chair of the Smithsonian Artist Research Fellowships.



Fee Includes

33 WORKS OF ART, INCLUDING

- 17 framed photographs
- 1 stop motion video production
- 1-channel video on monitor
- 4-channel immersive video
- 4 computer-generated imaging using motion capture
- 5 costumes and mannequins
- 5 costume components (to be installed in cases)
- Exhibition installation manual
- Reading list and related materials

Fee Excludes

- 1 IA&A Courier for 5 days on-site (est. \$1,450)
- 1 A/V Technician for 3 days on-site (est. \$2,500, plus 275/day accommodations)
- Optional remote consultation with A/V technician (\$350-500/day)
- A/V equipment, including 7 laser projectors, 5 monitors, and audio speakers
- 3 elevated platforms and 3 display cases
- Scent installation (optional)
- Catalog copies
- Outgoing shipping (cost estimate to be provided)

Ayana V. Jackson

b. 1977, East Orange, N.J.

Cascading Celestial Giant I, II, III
2018–22

Archival pigment print on German
Etching paper

187.8 x 150.8 cm (73 15/16 x 59 3/8 in.),

188 x 150.8 cm (74 x 59 3/8 in.),

187.8 x 150.7 cm (73 15/16 x 59 5/16 in.)

Collection of the artist, courtesy

Mariane Ibrahim Gallery

Availability

Fall 2026-Winter 2030

Space Requirements

4,500 to 7,000 square feet



left

Ayana V. Jackson
b. 1977, Livingston, N.J.
*Reliquary: The Sea Has Nothing to Offer
but a Well-Executed Grave*
Wallpaper
2018–22
Collection of the artist, courtesy
Mariane Ibrahim Gallery

CONTACT

Isabelle Baldwin
Sales Associate

International Arts & Artists
9 Hillyer Ct. NW Washington,
DC 20008

front cover

Ayana V. Jackson
b. 1977, Livingston, N.J.
*When the Spirit of Kalunda Comes So
Does Kianda*
2018–22
Archival pigment print on German
Etching paper
187.3 x 161.3 cm (73 3/4 x 63 1/2)
Collection of the artist, courtesy
Mariane Ibrahim Gallery

Isabelleb@artsandartists.org
O: +1.202.338.0680
M: +1.828.734.8496

Exhibition gallery with costumes on platforms
and objects in cases



IA&A

INTERNATIONAL
ARTS AND ARTISTS



Ayana V. Jackson

b. 1977, Livingston, N.J.

*It Is Only When You Lose Your Mother That
She Becomes Myth*

2020

Archival pigment print on German

Etching paper

187 x 161.3 cm (73 5/8 x 63 1/2 in.)

National Museum of African Art,

Smithsonian Institution, museum purchase
through the American Women's History

Initiative Acquisitions Pool, administered by
the Smithsonian American Women's History

Initiative, 2021-8-2