

FORT GANSEVOORT



Sadie Barnette

Compland

Opening On:

Thursday, September 14, 6 - 8 PM

September 14 - October 28, 2017.

Fort Gansevoort is pleased to announce Sadie Barnette: *Compland* opening September 14, 2017. Barnette's inaugural exhibition with the gallery features a mergence of photography,

drawing and installation to create a dynamic exploration of the abstraction of urban space and the transcendence of the mundane to the imaginative. The title *Compland* suggests a mythical cultural space, though geographically impossible, blending the California cities of Compton and Oakland. For the artist, these cities each hold equal parts biographical significance and importance as iconic places defining west coast culture, from Black Power to hip hop. Family photographs and ephemera punctuate Barnette's imagined space with evidence of the real. California 1970's living rooms, stacks of money and coins, sidewalk cracks and fences, stucco buildings and hello kitty toys are viewed alongside splashes of glitter and otherworldly holographic iridescence.

The show features a new print series in the artist's ongoing project that uses as primary source material the 500-page FBI surveillance file on Barnette's father, Rodney Barnette, who founded the Compton, California, chapter of the Black Panther Party in 1968. The set of five enlarged FBI pages expose the unjust firing of the elder Barnette from the United States Post Office at the hands of the FBI. Spanning the opposing wall is a custom vinyl wallpaper of a tessellating image depicting a small child in footie pajamas sitting in what is often referred to as a "Huey Newton chair." This glimpse of black domestic space honors the familial ties that are caught in this web of state surveillance.

The second floor of the three-tiered exhibition presents a measured and exacting composition, with four large scale photographs and adjoining graphite wall drawings occupying the entire wall. These wall drawings, a scaled-up sequel to Barnette's highly detailed drawings on paper, assume space, perhaps referencing graffiti, signage and place marking. A two foot high cursive font reads, "From Here," and is both literal and expansive in its grounding and as a point of departure. The photographs capture transient moments of life in what the artist has conceived as *Compland* - in one, an elder woman sits in regal repose outside of a building whose door the artist has replaced with a glittering and transportive vinyl surface; in another, a chain-link fence is adorned with Swarovski crystals.

The third floor surprises with shifts in size and volume, engaging a hybrid aesthetic of minimalism and density. A staccato constellation of collages, drawings and found objects delivers rainbow ordered punches. Contemporary figures are cut away from their earthly environment and transcend into holographic and glittering expanses that place these characters into galactic, heavenly, ennobled spaces. *Compland* imagines a black city beyond gentrification and state surveillance. As the artists says, "This is abstraction and poetry in service of everyday magic and survival in America".

Sadie Barnette is from Oakland, California. She earned her BFA from CalArts and her MFA from the University of California, San Diego. Her work has been exhibited throughout the United States and internationally at venues including The Studio Museum in Harlem (where she was Artist in Residence), the California African American Museum, the Oakland Museum of California, The Mistake Room, Self Help Graphics, Charlie James Gallery, Ever Gold Projects, Papillion Gallery, Jenkins-Johnson Gallery, and Goodman Gallery in Johannesburg, South Africa. Named as one of the "Black Artists: 30 Contemporary Art Makers Under 40 You Should Know" by the Huffington Post, Barnette has been featured in The New York Times, The Los Angeles Times, The Guardian UK, Artforum, Vogue, and Fader magazine, among other publications. Her work is in the permanent collections of museums such as The Pérez Art Museum in Miami, the California African American Museum, and The Studio Museum in Harlem. She lives and works in Oakland, CA and Compton, CA and is represented by Charlie James Gallery in Los Angeles.