

## FIRST FULL-SCALE MUSEUM EXHIBITION OF ACCLAIMED VIDEO ARTIST SADIE BENNING'S WORK ORGANIZED BY WEXNER CENTER

Columbus, OH—*Sadie Benning: Suspended Animation*, the first full-scale museum exhibition of works by the influential video artist, will be on view **January 26–April 15, 2007** at the Wexner Center. This exhibition, organized by the Wexner Center, will mark the first solo presentation of her 6- to 8-foot-tall “Head” paintings on canvas and paper, and includes the premiere of the large-scale, two-projection video work *Play Pause*, a rhythmic and affectionate portrait of city life. Highlighting Benning’s playful, lo-fi aesthetic, the video and paintings touch on such issues as sexual ambiguity and loneliness, and explore the crucial role that drawing has played throughout her artistic career.



*untitled*, 2001  
81 x 66 in.  
Flashe paint on canvas  
Courtesy Sadie Benning

Benning was a Wexner Center Residency Award artist in media arts in 2003–04, and has been at the center on and off over the past 2½ years to work on her new video and this exhibition, primarily in the center’s Art & Technology facilities.

“For nearly two decades, Sadie has been one of the most innovative video artists of our time and this exhibition seeks to explore the full range of her work,” says the Wexner Center’s associate curator of media arts Jennifer Lange, “We’re thrilled not only to be showing Sadie’s paintings but also her newest video *Play Pause*, which is the result of a three-year residency in our Art & Technology studios.”

Wexner Center Director Sherri Geldin notes, “Given her resolutely cross-disciplinary approach, Sadie Benning is a perfect fit for a place like the Wexner Center. Her extensive artist residency and this culminating exhibition highlight the range of resources we can offer an artist to support the creation of new work.”

A **catalogue** will accompany the exhibition and will feature an introduction by Lange with essays by poet Eileen Myles, writer Aleksandar Hemon, and Wexner Center Chief Curator of Exhibitions Helen Molesworth, as well as an interview between Benning and artist Amy Sillman. Tour dates will be announced.

**Benning will engage in a conversation with catalogue essayist Eileen Myles** on Thursday, **February 8 at 5 pm** at the Wexner Center. Admission is free.

The **opening celebration** for the show is **January 25, 5:30–8:30 pm**.

## **PLAY PAUSE**

The spectacular two-channel, spanning about 16 feet across, video projection piece *Play Pause* (approx. 30 mins.) was created entirely from hundreds of Benning's drawings and shot and edited entirely while in residence in the Wexner Center's Art & Technology studios. In the world of *Play Pause*, Benning imagines an entire city where people—mostly androgynous—from all walks of life coexist, commuting to work, walking dogs, meeting in gay bars, and dancing at nightclubs. Breaking away from the introspective nature of some of her early video work, *Play Pause*—at times whimsical, at times sexually frank—deftly imagines the complexities and melancholy of contemporary, post-9/11 urban life with wit and grace. *Play Pause*, directed by Benning in collaboration with Solveig Nelson, also includes a score produced by Benning.

## **THE PAINTINGS**

Benning's 8-foot-tall "Head" paintings on paper and canvas exude an exuberant, goofily awkward charm that stems from bold color schemes and Benning's eye for the idiosyncratic quirks of the human character. Containing portraits of such characters as a butch golfer, a bespectacled nerd, a beret-wearing bohemian, a blue-haired tough guy, and more, the paintings stem from a personal desire to surround herself with friendly faces of her own creation. These portraits depict ambiguously gendered individuals who are larger-than-life, attesting to the fact that beauty comes in all shapes, colors, and sizes. While the early "Head" portraits were created whole-cloth from her imagination, the later portraits are based on photos from a 1970s-era yearbook that Benning found in the trash.

## **ABOUT SADIE BENNING**

Born in Milwaukee and based in Chicago, Sadie Benning is one of the country's most respected and influential video artists. She began working in the late 1980s, at first using a Fisher-Price Pixelvision 2000 "toy camera" to produce a series of remarkable confessional short tapes about her emotional life as a young lesbian. Benning was discovered by the art world early on (at age 20 she was included in the 1993 Whitney Biennial—the youngest artist to appear in a biennial exhibition at the time), but she has remained faithful to the values of do-it-yourself media production and to the value of video as a vehicle for young people to give form and shape to their experiences. A visual artist as well as a musician, Benning has worked in the Wexner Center's Art & Technology post-production facilities in past years, and she has also performed at the Center with the seminal riot grrl band Le Tigre. The Center presented a retrospective featuring screenings of all of her videos to date in 2004.

## **EXHIBITION SUPPORT**

This exhibition is organized by the Wexner Center for the Arts.

It is presented with support from the Corporate Annual Fund of the Wexner Center Foundation.

Accommodations are provided by The Blackwell Inn.

The preferred airline is American Airlines/American Eagle.

## **VISITOR INFORMATION**

**THE EXHIBITION:** *Sadie Benning: Suspended Animation* is the first full-scale museum exhibition of works by influential video artist Sadie Benning, including paintings and a video installation.

**DATES:** January 26–April 15, 2007. Also on view: *Architecture Interruptus* and *Glenn Ligon: Some Changes*. Opening celebration January 25, 5:30-8:30 pm.

**LOCATION:** Wexner Center for the Arts, 1871 North High Street at 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue at The Ohio State University. Parking in Ohio Union Garage just south.

**GALLERY HOURS:** Tuesday–Wednesday and Sunday 11 am–6 pm; Thursday–Saturday 11 am–8 pm. The galleries are closed on Monday.

**WALK-IN TOURS:** Thursdays at 6 pm & Saturdays at 2 pm.

**ADMISSION:** Free.

**PUBLIC INFORMATION:** [wexarts.org](http://wexarts.org) or 614 292-3535

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