

WHITNEY

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Press Release

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Sadie Benning, drawing for *Play Pause*, 2001-06. Gouache on paper, dimensions variable; installation: two-channel video projection with sound, black-and-white and color; 29 1/2 min. Copyright Sadie Benning. Collection of the artist.

SADIE BENNING'S PLAY PAUSE OPENS APRIL 22 AT THE WHITNEY

NEW YORK, March 31, 2009 – First shown at the Whitney in the 1993 Biennial, Sadie Benning now presents her latest video installation *Play Pause* (2006) as part of the Whitney's Contemporary Series. Recognized for her experimental narrative videos, which she started making in the late 1980s, Benning's two-channel, thirty-minute video departs from her earlier work, cutting together hundreds of the artist's gouache drawings of urban landscapes, figures, and abstractions. This is Benning's first solo museum exhibition in New York. *Play Pause* opens April 22 and runs through summer in the Anne & Joel Ehrenkranz Lobby Gallery.

Play Pause is arranged alongside an original score comprised of ambient field recordings as well as Benning's own drumbeats and electronic percussion. Directed in collaboration with Solveig Nelson, *Play Pause* chronicles experiences of city life, building on scenes devoid of dialogue but rich with nuances of both personal and political interconnectivity. With its fragmented split-screen perspective, durational takes of still drawings, and occasional use of monochrome color filters, *Play Pause* speaks to the heightening of perception that accompanies periods of loss. Scrolls of dashes and floating shapes paired with the video's sex sequences consider how fantasy and abstraction mediate everyday realities. *Play Pause* premiered as part of the solo exhibition *Sadie Benning: Suspended Animation* at Wexner Center for the Arts (2007).

Tina Kukielski, senior curatorial assistant at the Whitney and organizer of the exhibition, notes: "Since the videos of Sadie Benning first screened when the artist was still a teenager, Benning's work has been prefaced by her biography. Known for her performative and experimental narrative videos, like *It Wasn't Love* (1992) and *Flat is Beautiful* (1998) shown respectively in the 1993 and 2000 Biennials, Benning has emerged as an artist whose work wrestles with complex questions about human identity as it unfolds across both a personal and collective terrain. However, her latest video installation, *Play Pause* (2006), complicates previous *a priori* autobiographical readings of her work, opening up new ways to consider the artist's subjectivity, and by extension our own."

About the Artist

Sadie Benning (b. 1973) was born in Madison, Wisconsin, grew up in Milwaukee, and now divides her time between New York, Chicago, and Los Angeles. Benning has been the recipient of a Rockefeller Grant (1992), a Wexner Center Media Arts Residency Award (2003-4), and a Guggenheim Fellowship (2005). She is a graduate of Bard College where she now is Co-Chair of Film/Video in the MFA program. Benning's work has screened internationally at museums, film festivals, and universities, including the Museum of Modern Art, Walker Art Center, and Dia Foundation for the Arts. Her work was included in the 1993 and 2000 Biennial

Exhibitions as well as The American Century exhibitions at the Whitney. Recent solo exhibitions have been organized by Orchard Gallery (2007) and Wexner Center for the Arts (2007). Benning is also a former member and co-founder, with Kathleen Hanna and Johanna Fateman, of the electronic music group Le Tigre.

About the Whitney

The Whitney Museum of American Art is the leading advocate of 20th- and 21st-century American art. Founded in 1930, the Museum is regarded as the preeminent collection of American art and includes major works and materials from the estate of Edward Hopper, the largest public collection of works by Alexander Calder, as well as significant works by Jasper Johns, Donald Judd, Agnes Martin, Bruce Nauman, Georgia O'Keeffe, Claes Oldenburg, Kiki Smith, and Andy Warhol, among other artists. With its history of exhibiting the most promising and influential American artists and provoking intense critical and public debate, the Whitney's signature show, the Biennial, has become the most important survey of the state of contemporary art in America today. First housed on West 8th Street, the Whitney relocated in 1954 to West 54th Street and in 1966 inaugurated its present home at 945 Madison Avenue, designed by Marcel Breuer. The Whitney is currently moving ahead with plans to build a second facility, designed by Renzo Piano, located in downtown New York at the entrance to the High Line in the Meatpacking District.

Current and Upcoming Exhibitions at the Whitney Museum of American Art:

Alex Bag	Through April 12, 2009
Synthetic Sites	Through April 19, 2009
Claes Oldenburg: Early Sculpture, Drawings, and Happenings Films	Through May 3, 2009
Claes Oldenburg and Coosje van Bruggen: The Music Room	Opens May 7, 2009
Artists Making Photographs	Opens May 7, 2009
Photoconceptualism, 1966-73	Through May 17, 2009
Jenny Holzer	Opens May 22, 2009
Dan Graham: Beyond	Through May 31, 2009
Georgia O'Keeffe: Abstraction	Opens June 25, 2009
Roni Horn AKA Roni Horn	September 17, 2009-January 17, 2010
Alice Guy Blaché: Cinema Pioneer	November 6, 2009-January 24, 2010
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The Whitney Museum is located at 945 Madison Avenue, New York City. Museum hours are: Wednesday, Thursday, Saturday, and Sunday from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m., Friday from 1 p.m. to 9 p.m., closed Monday and Tuesday. Admission is \$15 for adults; Members, children (ages 11 and under), and New York City public high school students free. Senior citizens (62 and over) and students with valid ID: \$10. There is a \$6 admission fee for a pass to the Kaufman Astoria Studios Film & Video Gallery only. Admission is pay-what-you-wish on Fridays, 6-9 pm. For information, please call 212-570-3600 or visit whitney.org