

Sadie Benning

*Excuse Me Ma'am*

opening September 22, 7 pm

Sadie Benning started making experimental videos as a teenager in 1988. The low-fi, black and white videos explored aspects of identity, language and memory. Improvising with materials that were immediately available at the time, Benning fragmentally constructed moving images from found objects, drawings, text, performance and personally shot footage. The form, content and poetics explored in the earlier video works has expanded over the past two decades, continuing to wrestle with evolving political, conceptual and material questions.

The body of work comprised in *Excuse Me Ma'am* features paintings which include digital photographs of intimately scaled notebook drawings. These quick pencil sketches have been upscaled in size, accentuating the noise and color spectrum of its original while retaining a kind of directness and fragility.

The phrase *Excuse Me Ma'am* encapsulates the moment of being signified within a binary gender narrative, a moment experienced many times within a single day. These works explore the complicated relationship between the body and how it is named within the culture, and the interminable desire to exist outside of the constructed polarities of male and female.

The form of these works is not easy to categorize. Combining painting, photography, drawing and sculpture, we ask ourselves: What is this thing, what is it made of? How is a painting a painting and also not a painting? What goes unseen? What is distorted by the eye?

Benning urges us to approach gender in this same manner, broadening the categories to the point of shattering them.

Sadie Benning was born in Madison, Wisconsin in 1973 and currently lives in Brooklyn, NY. Her work has been exhibited internationally since 1990 and is in many permanent collections, including those of the Museum of Modern Art, New York; The Centre Pompidou, Paris; The Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; The Hammer Museum, Los Angeles; The Fogg Art Museum, Cambridge; and The Walker Art Center, Minneapolis.

Recently Benning's work was included in *Greater New York*, MoMA PS1 (2015); *Painting 2.0: Expression in the Information Age*, Museum Brandhorst, Munich and MuMOK, Vienna (2015); *The Carnegie International*, Carnegie Museum of Art (2013) and *Tell It To My Heart: Collected by Julie Ault*, Kunstmuseum Basel (2013). Benning's work has also been included in *Annual Report: 7th Gwangju Biennale* (2008), Whitney Biennial (2000 and 1993); *American Century*, Whitney Museum; and the Venice Biennale (1993).

Forthcoming solo exhibitions of her work are scheduled at Renaissance Society, Chicago (2016) and Kunsthalle Basel (2017). In October 2016 she will participate in a group show at Maramotti Collection, Reggio Emilia, curated by Bob Nickas.