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Sadie Benning “Excuse Me Ma’am” at kaufmann repetto, Milan

by [mousse](#)

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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?

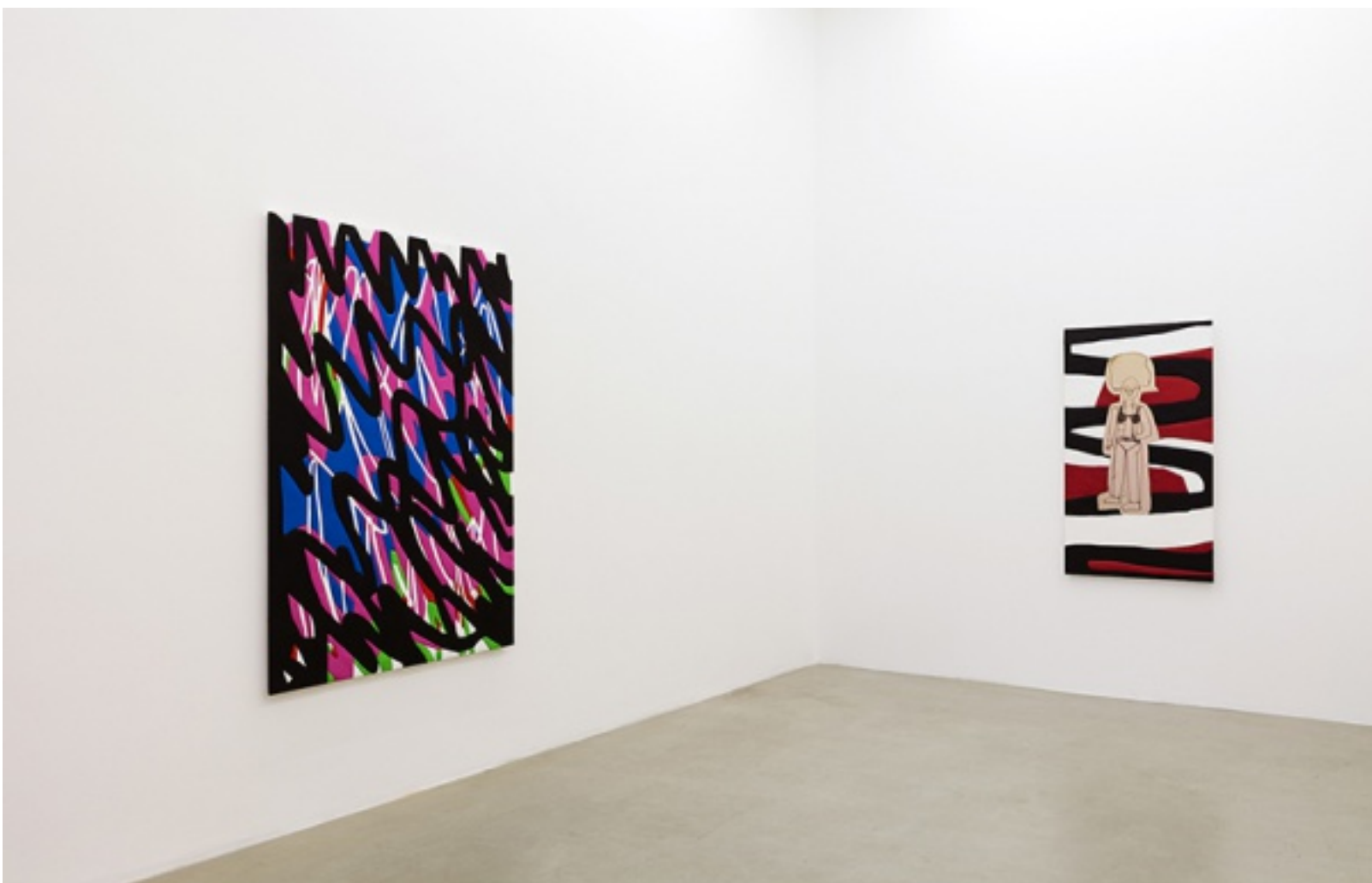
Benning urges us to approach gender in this same manner, broadening the categories to the point of shattering them.

[at kaufmann repetto, Milan](#)
until 5 November 2016











Sadie Benning "Excuse Me Ma'am" installation views at kaufmann repetto, Milan, 2016

Courtesy: the artist and kaufmann repetto, Milan / New York. Photo: Andrea Rossetti