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WEXNER CENTER SHOWCASES WORK OF VIDEO ARTIST SADIE BENNING IN FEBRUARY RETROSPECTIVE

*SERIES INCLUDES VISIT BY THE ARTIST AND SCREENINGS OF
WORKS-IN-PROGRESS DEVELOPED DURING RESIDENCY*

“Sadie Benning has made some of the best pure cinema of the past ten years.”—*Film Comment*

Columbus—Video artist **Sadie Benning** is the recipient of the 2004 **Wexner Center Residency Award** in media arts and the focus of a **retrospective** at the Wexner Center in February 2004, culminating in an appearance by the artist. Benning, a Chicago-based artist known for her confessional short video works that reveal a do-it-yourself aesthetic, has worked on several projects in past years in the Wexner Center’s Art & Technology studios. The three-night retrospective in February will feature all of her short videos from 1989 to the present, including such titles as *Me and Rubyfruit*, *The Judy Spots*, and *A Place Called Lovely*, as well as two screenings of the longer work *Flat is Beautiful*, praised by *Film Comment*’s Gavin Smith as “filmmaking of the highest order, the equal of anything I’ve seen at the movies this year.” In the **onstage conversation February 28**, she will share examples from new video work created during her residency as well as her seldom-seen work in painting and drawing.

A 44-page commemorative booklet that will accompany the series will include a new interview with Benning, a full filmography, and an introductory essay by Bill Horrigan, the Wexner Center’s curator of media arts.

Benning is the latest recipient of a Residency Award in media arts, joining the following past recipients: Paper Tiger Television, Robert and Donald Kinney, William Wegman, Steve Fagin, Daniel Minahan, Tom Kalin, Chris Marker, Judith Barry, Todd Haynes, Julie Dash, Isaac Julien, Tacita Dean, Steven Bognar, Helen DiMichiel, Iñigo Manglano-Ovalle, Tom Poole, Miranda July, Cheryl Dunn, and Rineke Dijkstra.

The Benning retrospective is part of an ongoing series of filmmakers' retrospectives at the Wexner Center. Each retrospective features a public presentation by the filmmaker and a commemorative booklet. Past participants have included Richard Linklater, Todd Haynes, Allison Anders, Philip Kaufman, Jim Jarmusch, Guy Maddin, Gus Van Sant, and Olivier Assayas.

ABOUT SADIE BENNING

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), 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.

RETROSPECTIVE SCHEDULE

Tickets for each evening are \$6 for general public and \$4 for members, OSU students, and senior citizens. Tickets available at the Wexner Center Ticket Office/Information Desk, or by calling 614 292-3535.

Friday, February 13 / 7 pm

Living Inside (1989), ***If Every Girl Had a Diary*** (1990), ***Me and Rubyfruit*** (1990), ***Jollies*** (1990), ***A New Year*** (1989), ***A Place Called Lovely*** (1991), ***It Wasn't Love*** (1992), ***Aerobicide—Julie Ruin*** (1998)

Benning's breakthrough early videos centered on her attempts to imagine a positive lesbian identity in the midst of teenage doubts and anxieties. Using the camera as a surrogate diary, Benning documents her crushes and kisses, all the while playing with gender stereotypes and embracing emotional extremes. The program's final piece, *Aerobicide—Julie Ruin* is the music video Benning created with Bikini Kill's Kathleen Hanna, just before they became Le Tigre. (Program approx. 73 mins.)

Friday, February 20 / 7 pm

Girl Power (1992), ***The Judy Spots*** (1995), ***German Song*** (1995), ***Flat Is Beautiful*** (1998)

Bikini Kill provides the sound of *Girl Power*, a raucous vision of what it means to be a girl in the 1990s. *The Judy Spots* focus on a hapless puppet named Judy, and *German*

Song is an evocative music video for the Boston band Come. *Flat Is Beautiful*, Benning's most ambitious project to date, combines live action, animation, and dramatic scenes to examine the inner life of an androgynous 11-year-old girl raised by a single mother and her gay roommate. (Program approx. 85 mins.)

Saturday, February 28 / 7 pm

A Conversation with Sadie Benning

A repeat screening of *Flat Is Beautiful* is included in this onstage conversation with Benning. She'll discuss previous works and share clips of the videos she's developing during her residency at the Wexner Center's Art & Technology facility.

Digital images for the series available upon request; call 614 688-3261 or e-mail epepple@wexarts.org.

SERIES SUPPORT

Support for the 2003–04 film/video season provided by the Rohauer Collection Foundation and the Corporate Annual Fund of the Wexner Center Foundation.

Contemporary films, international films, and visiting filmmakers presentations presented with support from the Ohio Arts Council.

WEXNER CENTER FOR THE ARTS

The Wexner Center for the Arts is The Ohio State University's multidisciplinary, international laboratory for the exploration and advancement of contemporary art. Through exhibitions, screenings, performances, artist residencies, and educational programs, the Wexner Center acts as a forum where established and emerging artists can test ideas and where diverse audiences can participate in cultural experiences that enhance understanding of the art of our time. In its programs, the Wexner Center balances a commitment to experimentation with a commitment to traditions of innovation and affirms the university's mission of education, research, and community service.

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