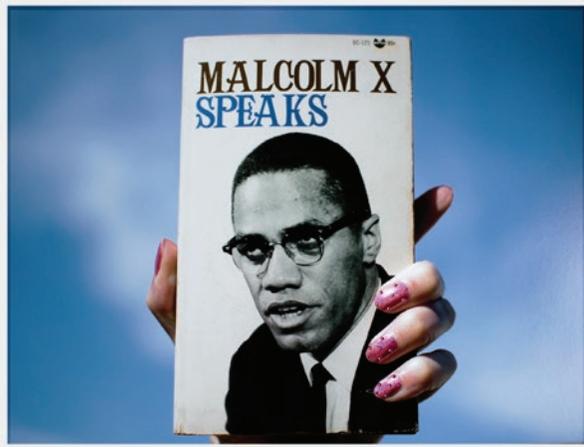


Now Representing: Sadie Barnette



Malcolm X Speaks, 2018, archival pigment print and Swarovski crystals, 30 x 40 inches.

Jessica Silverman is delighted to announce representation of Sadie Barnette, an artist whose work reveals quintessential American truths through exploration of her own family history. Working in photography, drawing, sculpture and installation, Barnette's work makes a unique contribution to California social history and global discourses about race, sex and love.

Born and raised in Oakland, Barnette is the only child of a single working mother. Her father, the youngest of eleven children, was the founder of a Black Panther chapter and, later, the first Black owner of a gay bar in San Francisco. In contrast to a solitary school year, Barnette spent childhood holidays in Compton, CA, with her half-brother, doting aunts and approximately fifty cousins. The last born of the last born and hence the youngest of her generation, Barnette has a long and deep fascination with the personal and political value of kin.

A maverick student, Barnette was in the independent study program at Berkeley High School. With no classes to attend, she spent eight-hour days in the dark room, developing and printing photos taken with a vintage SLR Nikon F, given to her by a teacher met through the Destiny Arts Center. "I discovered a way to focus," says Barnette, "and a magic meditateness in the sanctuary of the dark room."

Barnette went on to CalArts where she met artists Charles Gaines and then Andrea Bowers, in whose studios she eventually worked. While CalArts was all about ideas, the studios were about "being alive to making things," as she puts it. After that, Barnette did the three-year MFA at UC San Diego, uncoincidentally the alma mater of Lorna Simpson.

In 2015, Barnette landed a coveted residency at the Studio Museum in Harlem, NY, where she realized that the hopeful blue skies in her photographs were a Californian trope and began making text drawings that explored her family tree. With a godfather who was once her father's boyfriend, Barnette understands the bonds and liberation that come into play when a larger sense of community supersedes "a white picket fence version of family."

Four years after applying for her father's FBI files through the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), Barnette received 500 pages of documents. Debuting at the Oakland Museum in 2016, the first related works toyed with how the FBI archive was an invasion of privacy so detailed that it acts as an odd, external memory of her father's life.

Since then, "1968" has become a rich signifier in Barnette's work, evoking a time of turmoil and change in the nation, but also the year that her father founded the Compton Black Panthers and the birth of her late brother. "1984," by contrast, is the artist's birth year and one designated by George Orwell as a symbol of a future without freedom. Gesturing toward the works of both On Kawara and Felix González-Torres, the dates are symptomatic of Barnette's larger investigation of the way time and place intersect with romance and realism.

Barnette has gone from one accolade to another, with many solo shows and museum acquisitions. Her work is in dialogue with writers such as Toni Morrison and Angela Davis as much as artists like Adrian Piper, Outkast and Prince.

Jessica Silverman will open an online solo exhibition with Art Basel, titled "Gentle People," next Wednesday, September 23, and a solo show in the new gallery space on Grant Avenue, San Francisco, in 2021.

Sadie Barnette (b. 1984, Oakland, CA) has a BFA from CalArts and an MFA from University of California, San Diego. She has been awarded grants and residencies by the Studio Museum in Harlem, Artadia, Art Matters, Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture, the Headlands Center for the Arts, and the Carmago Foundation in France. She has enjoyed solo shows in the following public institutions: ICA Los Angeles, The Lab and the Museum of the African Diaspora, San Francisco; MCA San Diego, CA; Cantor Fitzgerald Gallery, Haverford College, PA; and the Manetti Shrem Museum, UC Davis. Her work is in the permanent collections of: the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA); Brooklyn Museum, NY; Pérez Art Museum, Miami; Guggenheim Museum, NY; JP Morgan Chase Collection; Blanton Museum at UT Austin, TX; Cornell Fine Arts Museum; and the Berkeley Art Museum, CA. Barnette lives and works in Oakland, CA. She is represented by Charlie James Gallery and Jessica Silverman.



The Last Black Man in San Francisco, 2020, powdered graphite on paper, 45 x 36 inches.

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