

JESSICA SILVERMAN

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Sadie Barnette: Inheritance

Opens Saturday, November 20, 2021



Jessica Silverman is pleased to announce "Sadie Barnette: Inheritance," the artist's first solo exhibition with the gallery, on view from November 20, 2021 to January 8, 2022. This new body of work uses installation, sculpture, photography, wallpaper and large-scale drawing to examine the artist's familial legacy. Employing archival material—such as the 500-page dossier compiled by the FBI surveilling her father, Rodney Barnette, during his time in the Black Panther Party—the artist wields the personal nature of generational inheritance to inflect international political struggle with urgency, collapsing temporal distinctions of past and present. The solo presentation at the gallery runs simultaneously with the two-venue exhibition, Sadie Barnette: Legacy and Legend, at Benton Museum of Art at Pomona College and Pitzer College Art Galleries, on view until December 18, 2021. It also coincides with the announcement of Barnette's commission by Los Angeles International Airport and the L.A. Department of Cultural Affairs to design a permanent site-specific artwork for a new plaza to be completed in 2024, which will display the message "Sister You Are Welcome Here" in brightly colored terrazzo lettering.

Upon entering the exhibition, the initial site-line wall of the gallery is a sculptural depiction of The New Eagle Creek Saloon, founded by Barnette's father in the early 1990s as the first black-owned gay bar in San Francisco. The work is adorned with neon lights, and a photograph of Sammy, a beloved patron and guest bartender, floats in a field of pink glitter. High-femme aesthetics permeate the works throughout the show; signifiers such as the color pink and glitter are used to re-energize archival material, escaping a binary vision of gender and sexuality while celebrating the extant legacy and ongoing resistance of the Black radical tradition.

The exhibition also continues Barnette's *FBI Drawings* series, examining the FBI's targeting of her father's involvement in the Black Panther Party when he founded the Compton chapter in California in 1968. This series takes scans of her father's FBI file and re-engineers individual pages, enlarging them to five by four feet and overlaying them with exuberant, playful symbols such as flowers and the character Hello Kitty to denigrate modes of empire, surveillance and power. Here, Barnette's practice throws the bracketing of a collective political past into crisis, shining a light on continued racial injustice. The slow, labor-intensive act of making these drawings gives Barnette the time to meditate on the bravery, politics, and the real lives of people who dared to change the world.

Barnette's activation of everyday objects such as speakers, couches and domestic interiors reveals their socio-political essence. In *Home Good* the artist references the showy paint jobs of Bay Area car culture from her upbringing. Barnette uses these cars as source material to conceptually address the generative act of creating something grand and monolithic out of something ordinary. Similarly, the exhibition depicts a couch covered in holographic vinyl against a wallpaper that repeats the word "sister" in a patterned, geometric form. This repetition simultaneously creates a domestic space of care while multiplying revolutionary acts and familial protection beyond any spatial limitations. Though the artist's personal history and experiences are directly referenced, the political concepts of the works shimmer and leap beyond geography, time and space.

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 Camargo Foundation in France. She has enjoyed solo shows in the following public institutions: ICA Los Angeles, CA; The Lab and the Museum of the African Diaspora, San Francisco, CA; MCA San Diego, CA; Cantor Fitzgerald Gallery, Haverford College, PA; and the Manetti Shrem Museum, UC Davis, CA. Her work is in the permanent collections of: the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, CA; Brooklyn Museum, NY; Pérez Art Museum, Miami, FL; Guggenheim Museum, NY; JP Morgan Chase Collection; Blanton Museum at UT Austin, TX; Cornell Fine Arts Museum, Orlando, FL; San José Museum of Art, CA; Oakland Museum of California, CA; and the Berkeley Art Museum, CA. Barnette lives and works in Oakland, CA.

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Images—**Top:** *Together, Together, Together*, 2021, detail. **Bottom:** *Untitled (For Sammy)*, 2021.

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