

Susanne Vielmetter Los Angeles Projects is pleased to present *Blinded by the Light*, an exhibition of new work by Sadie Benning in all four galleries.

Upon entering the gallery, the viewer encounters a large installation of eighteen painted sunsets, rendered at the same scale and using a similar drawing as a template, each representing the end of a day. Despite their similarities, each painting is decidedly unique, subtle variations appear in the reflections on the water, in the shape of the sun, and in the rays of color employed in the fractured details. This wall of setting suns combines two major themes in Benning's newest body of work - how we experience time and how we can understand the imperatives of the collective while bound to our individuated experiences. "*Sunset 1*" – "*Sunset 18*" suggest an experience of simultaneous time that is inaccessible in our daily lives: The ability to witness past events alongside the events of the present, and to experience change this way - by seeing evidence of it, sunset by sunset. Benning contends that history does not repeat itself, even if the actions of those in power produce similar results throughout time. In seeing the progression of these eighteen sunsets, the artist invites us to reflect on the myriad ways we are capable of altering the course of time through empathy, awareness and action.

In *Blinded by the Light*, Benning presents a dual, seemingly paradoxical reality in which the fear of neo-fascist doom collides with an urgent will to live. These oppositional attitudes are highlighted in several figurative works depicting powerful, actualized individuals whose enhanced powers of perception are suggested by their dark, protective eyewear. Many of these characters seem larger than life, like the diva, MJ in her wrap-around sunglasses and lipstick red top. It is her ability to see through capitalist machinations that poses a threat to the Green Zombie, a bug-eyed character whose desire for power and profit has turned his skin a noxious neon green. The zombie reflects the basest and most corrosive qualities of our culture—the complacency, greed, and willingness to trample on one's fellow citizens in order to secure wealth. Benning maintains that these tragic figures are quite literally blinded by the beauty of a diverse and thriving collective and thus moved to destroy it.

*Blinded by the Light* includes both Benning's intensely hand-worked aqua-resin paintings and mixed media works that incorporate found objects and photographs into the sculptural drawing-paintings. In the final room of the exhibition, Benning plays these two modes of work off of each other in a series of panels that highlight how essential the stakes of our current political climate are: clean air, safe spaces to gather, thriving natural ecologies. The juxtaposition of life and death, a generative vs. a destructive paradigm, figures heavily into the show, encapsulating the choice we are all born with: to honor life or to destroy it.

Sadie Benning (b. 1973) currently lives in Brooklyn, NY. Benning received an M.F.A. from Bard College in 1997. In November 2016, Benning's solo exhibition *Shared Eye* opened at the Renaissance Society in Chicago, IL; a second, expanded iteration of the exhibition opened at the Kunsthalle Basel in February 2017. Benning's work in painting and video was included in the 2013 Carnegie International, Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh, PA; and in *Tell It To My Heart: Collected by Julie Ault*, Kunstmuseum Basel, Switzerland and Artists Space, New York, NY. Benning's work has also been included in: *Annual Report: 7th Gwangju Biennale* (2008); the Whitney Biennial (2000 and 1993); American Century, Whitney Museum of Modern Art (2000); and the Venice Biennale (1993). Solo exhibitions include Kaufmann Repetto, Milan; Air de Paris, Paris; Mary Boone Gallery, New York; Callicoon Fine Arts, New York; Participant, INC., New York; Wexner Center for the Arts, Columbus, OH; Dia: Chelsea, New York and The Power Plant, Toronto. Benning is also a former member and co-founder of the music group Le Tigre.

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