

BAM/PFA FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, BERKELEY ART MUSEUM AND PACIFIC FILM ARCHIVE

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Deborah Grant: *Suicide Notes To The Self*, 2008 (detail); oil, archival ink, paper, flashe paint, and enamel on five birch panels; 72 x 240 in.; courtesy of the artist and Steve Turner Contemporary, Los Angeles.

Deborah Grant: Bacon, Egg, Toast in Lard **MATRIX 228** Through October 11, 2009

Berkeley, CA, June 8, 2009—The University of California, Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive (BAM/PFA) presents **Deborah Grant: Bacon, Egg, Toast in Lard**, premiering in its entirety, including several shaped paintings on panel, a sound component created by artist Jennie C. Jones, and a twenty-foot-long centerpiece painting, *Suicide Notes to the Self*. The exhibition is curated by Phyllis Wattis MATRIX

Curator Elizabeth Thomas, and is the artist's first solo museum exhibition, running through October 11, 2009.

Suicide Notes to the Self is a massive work, operating on both a macro and a micro level: graphic silhouettes read crisply from a distance, grounding the nonlinear narrative, while up close, line drawings of symbols, figures, diagrams, machines, and collaged photographic elements signal the underlying themes of psychology, war, sex, and death. Grant conceived the painting to represent a kind of dream in which Jackie "Moms" Mabley, a pioneering comedienne on the African-American Vaudeville circuit, and Francis Bacon, an Irish-born painter known for his grotesque, often violent figurative portrayals, are brought together in a London pub called House of Chantilly by a time-traveling character named Random Select. Although the association of the two historical characters might appear random, their biographies converge: both lived as out gay adults and both experienced traumatically violent events in their youth, exorcising these demons in their creative work by directly confronting issues of racism (Mabley), violence (Bacon), and sexuality (both). For Grant, this imagined conversation prismatically refracts through these individual biographies to signal larger cultural concerns, creating a kind of third space between oppositional ideas—fact and fiction, research and free association, order and chaos, symbolic language and abstraction, internal and external realities, violence and control, imagination and representation.

Deborah Grant's paintings are dense—quite literally loaded with obsessive code-like mark-making, collaged and drawn symbolic representations, and flat silhouettes, and with myriad personal, cultural, and art-historical references. Her work is a kind of hallucinatory exercise, sampling across time and genre to connect ideas based in history and personal experience with political and social issues of the present. Grant's distinctive and highly graphic visual style marries aspects of abstraction and illustration in a restrained palette of black, white, and red. She is influenced as much by pop-culture sources like vintage *Life* magazine photography, comic books, *MAD* magazine, and pulp images as by art-historical referents like Jean-Michel Basquiat, Bill Traylor, and Jacob Lawrence.

Deborah Grant was born in Toronto, Canada in 1968 and is now based in New York. She received her MFA from Tyler School of Art in 1999. Previously, her work has been exhibited in shows at High Museum of Art, Atlanta; Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston; Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, San Francisco; Andy Warhol Museum, Pittsburgh; Ballroom Marfa, Texas; P.S.1, Long Island City; Bronx Museum, New York.

Support

The MATRIX Program at the UC Berkeley Art Museum is made possible by a generous endowment gift from Phyllis C. Wattis.

Additional donors to the MATRIX Program include The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, the UAM Council MATRIX Endowment, Jane and Jeffrey Green, Maryellen and Frank Herringer, Wanda Kownacki and John Holton, Charles and Naomie Kremer, Lenore Pereira and Richard Niles, Paul L. Wattis III and Anne Wattis, and other generous supporters.

About BAM/PFA

The Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive (BAM/PFA) is the visual arts center of the University of California, Berkeley, one of the nation's leading research Universities. BAM/PFA aims to inspire the imagination and ignite critical dialogue through contemporary and historical art and film, engaging audiences from the campus, Bay Area community, and beyond. One of the largest university art museums in the United States in both size and attendance, BAM/PFA presents fifteen art exhibitions and five hundred film programs each year. The museum's collection of more than 15,000 works, distinguished by artistic excellence and innovation, intellectual exploration, and social commentary, includes exceptional examples of mid-twentieth-century painting, including important works by Hans Hofmann, Jackson Pollock, Eva Hesse, and Mark Rothko, as well as historical and contemporary Asian art, early American painting, Conceptual and contemporary international art, and California and Bay Area art. The PFA film and video collection

now includes the largest group of Japanese films outside of Japan, as well as impressive holdings of Soviet silents, West Coast avant-garde cinema, seminal video art, rare animation, Central Asian productions, Eastern European cinema, and international classics.

University of California, Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive

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bampfa.berkeley.edu

Gallery Hours

Wednesday to Sunday, 11 a.m to 5 p.m.

Closed Monday and Tuesday

Admission

General admission is \$8; admission for seniors, disabled persons, non-UC Berkeley students, and young adults (13-17) is \$5; admission for BAM/PFA members, UC Berkeley students, staff and faculty, and children under 12 is free; admission for group tours is \$3 per person (to arrange a group tour, call (510) 642-5188). Admission is free on the first Thursday of each month.

Information

24-hour recorded message (510) 642-0808; fax (510) 642-4889; TDD (510) 642-8734

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