

News Release
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AUG 1, 2026–JAN 3, 2027

SADIE BARNETTE

Artist talk and exhibition preview Thu, Jul 30; exhibition public opening Aug 1

Omaha, NE—The exhibition *Sadie Barnette* opens in the Joslyn Art Museum's Riley Contemporary Artists Project (CAP) Gallery August 1.

Working across drawing, sculpture, photography, and installation, Sadie Barnette mines both personal narratives and collective histories, exploring how the two intersect and diverge over the course of one's life. Her exhibition in the CAP Gallery centers on a recording she discovered on a doorbell security camera. In the short black-and-white video, the artist's father is seen removing helium balloons from the trunk of a car. As he wrangles the inflatables—a gift for the artist's mother—a single heart-shaped balloon floats away without his notice, prompting a bewildered search of the vehicle. Upon reviewing the footage, Barnette recognized that an easily overlooked episode had many stories to tell—about gestures of affection, about bearing witness to everyday life, and about the transformation of a fleeting moment into the stuff of family lore.

The doorbell camera footage—presented here as a video titled *I DIDN'T MAKE ART ABOUT YOU BECAUSE YOU WERE A BLACK PANTHER I MADE ART ABOUT YOU BECAUSE YOU ARE MY DAD*—serves as the foundation for a small group of new works across media. Comprising machined and hand-sanded ash wood, the sculpture *Mom* calls attention to a figure who is unseen in the video, but whose presence is fundamental to Barnette's family story. Measuring just over five feet in height, the sculpture expands the artist's ongoing practice of fabricating words and phrases in three dimensions, endowing them with a literal weight and volume that matches the heft of their meaning. *Gentle People's Bench* invites visitors to rest and reflect. Barnette also incorporates text into this work, engraving the wood surface with words that reference family, as well as hearts and other ornamental flourishes. The final component, a drawing titled *Dots*, is so meticulously rendered it could be mistaken for a mechanically-produced image. Less illustrative than the sculpture and bench, *Dots* takes advantage of the opportunity for free association that abstraction provides; in the context of this exhibition, the dots might read as festive, conjuring confetti or cake decorations. In prying open



Sadie Barnette (American, b. 1984), *I DIDN'T MAKE ART ABOUT YOU BECAUSE YOU WERE A BLACK PANTHER I MADE ART ABOUT YOU BECAUSE YOU ARE MY DAD* (still), 2026, single-channel digital video projection, 2 min. 38 sec., © Sadie Barnette, Courtesy the artist and Jessica Silverman, San Francisco

Exhibition sponsors: Sara M. Foxley



Sadie Barnette Artist Talk & Exhibition Preview Thu, Jul 30, 6 pm

The Museum is delighted to host this conversation with artist Sadie Barnette and Karin Campbell, Phil Willson Curator of Contemporary Art at The Joslyn.

Pre-program: 5 pm

Enjoy early access to the exhibition *Sadie Barnette*; drinks will be available for purchase in The Cafe.

Artist Talk & Exhibition Preview: \$10 for general public; free for Joslyn members; registration required at joslyn.org; walk-ins accepted as space allows.

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multiple entry points into the tale of the missing balloon, Barnette encourages visitors to acknowledge the profundity of the seemingly unremarkable moments in their own lives.

About the Artist

Raised in Oakland, California, Sadie Barnette (American, born 1984) received her Bachelor of Fine Arts from California Institute of the Arts, Valencia, and her Master of Fine Arts from the University of California, San Diego. Her work has recently been featured in exhibitions at the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Walker Art Center, Minneapolis; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; Institute of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; The Studio Museum in Harlem, and Museum of Contemporary Art Denver, among many others. Barnette is a 2026 recipient of a prestigious Creative Capital Award, which provides grants to artists working across disciplines.

Sadie Barnette at the Joslyn Art Museum (Aug 1, 2026–Jan 3, 2027) is included in free general Museum admission. Learn more at joslyn.org

Museum Hours: Tue–Sun, 10 am to 4 pm; late until 8 pm on Thu; closed Mon & major holidays.