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james benning
 measuring change
 february 2 - 27, 2016

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We are pleased to announce James Benning's (b. 1942) fourth solo exhibition at the gallery, which will comprise two new film installations and be on view from February 2 to 27.

Since the late 1970s, James Benning has been celebrated for his groundbreaking filmic work, which bridges the often disparate disciplines of filmmaking and fine art. Employing tactics of duration, Benning's work explores landscape in real time and pays homage to fellow creative minds while also charting the history of Benning's own production.

For his exhibition at neugerriemschneider, Benning returns to a familiar motif in his visual repertoire: the great American West. Upon entering the main exhibition space, the viewer observes two signs shown from behind, their posts and girding set against a vivid blue sky and seemingly barren stretch of land. The scene finds its inverse on the other side of the freestanding screen onto which it is projected, where the viewer discovers the front of the signs against the same, ever-extending landscape. Filmed successively at 1:00pm and 2:00pm respectively, the two channels of *Levee Road* (2016) show a small farm road in California's Great Central Valley that runs along two major irrigation canals. Harkening back to the artist's earlier films *El Valley Centro* (1999) and *Tulare Road* (2010) (both filmed in the region), the arid location seems at odds with the widely productive agricultural output of the Valley, which feeds nearly one quarter of America. Across both single-shot spans of 35 minutes, the light and shadows shift to the sounds of chirping of birds and gusting wind, while the low rumble of irrigation equipment provides a foreboding cue to more sinister associations: the legacies of convicted murderers Charles Manson and Sirhan Sirhan, who are both incarcerated in nearby Corcoran, California.

In the adjacent exhibition space, Benning presents the single-channel film *measuring change* (2016), which features the winding coil and expansive landscape of Robert Smithson's *Spiral Jetty* (1970). Mirroring the basic structural premise of *Levee Road*, *measuring change* charts a longer temporal interval, consisting of two thirty-minute takes that begin at 8:57am and 3:12pm respectively. Calling to mind Benning's earlier work *Castling a Glimpse* (2007), this newest film becomes a painting in motion, projected as a compact image on the gallery's wall. Here, figures appear as a part of the landscape, walking atop (in the morning shot) and alongside (in the afternoon shot) the jetty's curling form in a dynamic depiction of one of the most iconic works of art to date.

James Benning's work has been the subject of film retrospectives at Jeu de Paume, Paris (2009); the Austrian Film Museum, Vienna (2007); Whitechapel Art Gallery, London (2005); Anthology Film Archives, New York (1999); and the Whitney Museum of Art, New York (1986), among others. Past group exhibitions include the Whitney Biennial (2014, 2006, 1987, 1983, 1981, 1979) and documenta (2007), as well as presentations at Kunstmuseum Basel (2013); Walker Art Center, Minneapolis (2002, 1993, 1986, 1979); Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles (2001); Museum of Modern Art, New York (1996, 1993, 1980); and Artpark, New York (1978). The artist's installations, drawings and silkscreens were the subject of a comprehensive solo exhibition organized by the Kunsthhaus Graz in 2014, which traveled to the Kunstverein Hamburg in 2015.

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