



Museum of Contemporary Art Santa Barbara (MCASB) is pleased to announce the upcoming solo exhibition of independent American filmmaker James Benning, *James Benning: Quilts, Cigarettes & Dirt (Portraits of America)*. For more than 40 years exploring the film medium, Benning has engaged with history, memory, and documentary traditions, often encompassing a rigorous treatment of the American landscape. Benning's exhibition at MCASB will present some of the filmmaker's most recent works, including the films *Twenty Cigarettes*, and *READERS*, put in dialogue with a selection of photographs and objects from his *Portraits* series.

### **About the Artist**

**James Benning** (b.1942, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, USA) lives and works in Val Verde, California, USA. Benning is a major figure of American cinema. In the late 1960s, he directed his first short films in the experimental-cinema tradition, retaining its formal rigor and taste for conceptual constraints while pioneering the notion of "figurative narrative." His films rest on an experience of time and perception and its relationship to space. They also approach the notion of place from autobiographical, cultural, political, and historical viewpoints. In 2014, his film, *13 Lakes*, was added to the National Film Registry. Benning has been teaching at the California Institute of the Arts since 1987.

Benning's work has been featured in solo exhibitions at Kunstverein in Hamburg, Hamburg, Germany (2015); Naturhistorisches Museum Wien, Vienna, Austria (2014); VOX Centre de l'image contemporaine, Montreal, Canada (2014); and Kunsthaus Graz, Graz, Austria (2014), among numerous others. Group exhibitions and screenings include Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, USA (2018); National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC, USA (2017); Akademie der Künste, Berlin, Germany (2017); Kunsthalle Wien, Vienna, Austria (2016); Centre d'art de L'Onde, Vélizy-Villacoublay, France (2016); MAK Center for Art and Architecture, Los Angeles, USA (2015); De Cordova Sculpture Park and Museum, Lincoln, Massachusetts, USA (2014); Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, USA (2014, 2006, 1981, 1979); and Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, USA (2013, 2003, 1979, 1978).