

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE through March 10, 2012

Contact: Edmund Cardoni, 716-812-9237, ed@hallwalls.org

Sarah Baker: Our Time
Saturday, March 10, 2012

8:00–11:00 pm: Exhibition Opening Reception

8:00 pm: Artist Talk

Hallwalls Contemporary Arts Center

341 Delaware Avenue, Buffalo, NY 14202

716-854-1694

Admission is free (cash bar).

Exhibition on view March 10, 2012 through April 27, 2012.

Gallery Hours: Tuesday-Friday, 11-6 pm; Saturday: 11-2 pm

<http://www.hallwalls.org/media-arts/5212.html>

Curated by Carolyn Tennant, Media Arts Director



Artist-in-Residence Sarah Baker to Premiere her Locally-Produced, Buffalo-Themed Soap Opera at Hallwalls Contemporary Arts Center March 10—April 27

BUFFALO, NY — Hallwalls Contemporary Arts Center is pleased to announce the solo art exhibition and video screening, **Sarah Baker: Our Time**, featuring the work of Buffalo-born, London-based Hallwalls Artist-in-Residence, Sarah Baker. The opening reception will be held on **Saturday, March 10th** from **8:00–11:00 pm** at **Hallwalls Contemporary Arts Center**, 341 Delaware Avenue, Buffalo, NY. An artist talk in the Hallwalls Cinema at 8:00 pm will begin the evening. The highlight of the exhibition will be the world premier of *Our Time*—a 40-minute soap opera episode which Baker wrote, cast, directed, produced, filmed, and edited in Buffalo, NY, between January and March 2012, supported by the Hallwalls Artists-in-Residence Project (HARP). Also included in the exhibition will be selections from Baker's recent work in video, performance, and photography relating to *Our Time*. The exhibition and reception are free and open to the public.

What does a living room conversation in Frank Lloyd Wright's Darwin Martin House have to do with a secret elopement in Niagara Falls? How might an exchange of gold coins at the Adam Mickiewicz bar on Fillmore Avenue relate to a tarot reading set in the Artspace Buffalo lofts? Why does a City Honors High School class project about Airport Plaza Jewelers connect with a heated debate in Buffalo Common Council Chambers? These are just some of the elements—physical and conceptual—that make up Sarah Baker's Buffalo-centric, fictional melodrama, *Our Time*.

Our Time features a diverse ensemble of Buffalo-based actors. As the story of *Our Time* unfolds in six Buffalo locations, Baker weaves a traditional soap opera plot complete with love, deception, lust, greed, secrecy and heartbreak, simultaneously celebrating and lampooning the television soap opera genre.

Though day-time soaps may be considered antiquated in today's media market, and are certainly disappearing from broadcast television, Baker uses the genre's nonlinear structure to experiment with repetition and interweaving story lines to reveal connections among characters regardless of time and space.

Jerome (Vincent O'Neill) is a self-made millionaire and a work-a-holic, troubled by the unsettling dream of his devoted wife, Cindy (Kristen Tripp Kelley). Equally worrisome for Jerome is the unexpected return of Joan (Josie DiVincenzo) who has a secret plot to overthrow Jerome's company at the expense of the beloved Elmwood Village—unless she can be stopped by community activist, Brice (Frank Rossi). Cindy's haunting dreams suggest that Missy (Diane Di Bernardo), Tanya (Tilke Hill), and Gina (Jessica Wegrzyn) are about to change their lives forever. Jack (Andrew Kottler) has a plan to save his father, Little Bill (Stewart Roth), but as Kerry (Megan Callahan) can attest, at what cost to Missy and Gina? Levity-infused adolescent drama breaks the tension as Drea (Rasheedah Muhammad), George (VerNia Sharisse Garvin) and Holden (Daniel Henderson) interview Buffalo Airport Plaza Jeweler's Don Hoffman for a class project. Meanwhile, in Niagara Falls, the honeymoon of Caroline (Selina Kaye) and Jim (Paul Spitale) quickly turns from champagne and roses to eavesdropping and deception, and reminds us of Jerome and Cindy's ultimate dilemma.

Our Time, true to the origins of the soap opera program, is complete with actual commercial advertisement breaks, all of them featuring actual Buffalo businesses, and one of them, in a nod to the Alfred Hitchcock cameo, stars Baker herself.

Truly collaborative in her art practice, during her Hallwalls residency Baker partnered with a wide array of local talent for the production: actor/director Tim Newell as Co-Director, cinematographer Chris Santucci as Director of Photography, musician Joe Rozler as Musical Score Composer, psychic and master astrologer Ellen Bourn for character research, architectural historian Dr. Jack Quinan for location research, and Hallwalls Media Arts Director Carolyn Tennant for story development, to name a few.

Feminist Art scholar Kathy Battista sites Baker's work among a new generation of artists including K8 Hardy, Iona Rozeal Brown, Ruby LaToya Frazier and Aurel Schmidt, writing, *"Today's emerging female artists are still concerned with gender and power, but they are also equally fascinated by fashion, glamour, beauty, and popular culture. ... The pastiche of beliefs and debates within the work of this new generation is certainly more subtle and shows a sophistication that was not yet possible for first generation feminists."*

In *Our Time*, as in Baker's other recent work to be shown at Hallwalls, these intersections are evident.

In addition to the looped screenings of *Our Time*, Baker's exhibition will include her recent short film, *Studs* (2009, starring Wes Studi), a 10-minute conceptual homage to Jackie Collin's *The Stud* (1978). Also shown will be photographic portraits from Baker's Hollywood glamour series, *Beauty Spread* (2011) as well as portraits of Baker posing as Twin Peak's Laura Palmer (2011). Lastly, in a section devoted to Baker's interventions with Buffalo's Airport Plaza Jewelers, video and photographs will be exhibited documenting Baker's recent performance in a cash-for-gold commercial and as a guest star on *The Kiosk Presents*.

Accompanying the exhibition and video is a soap opera weekly style magazine, ***Our Time Digest***, created and edited by Sarah Baker and designed by Betsy Frazer of Frazer/Montague Design. The 60-page magazine—part exhibition catalogue, part supermarket tabloid and a work of art, in and of itself—includes essays, splashy photo spreads, horoscopes and more. The publication is free and will be available at the March 10th opening reception.

About Sarah Baker: Sarah Baker was born in San Francisco, CA in 1977 and raised in Buffalo, NY, attending the Bennett Park Montessori and Buffalo Academy for Visual and Performing Arts. She received a BFA from the San Francisco Art Institute (2001) and an MA in Fine Arts from Goldsmiths College, London, UK (2002). She has exhibited, performed, and screened at Carter Presents Gallery, London (solo show, *Le Fan Fan*, 2010), the Mission Cultural Center, San Francisco (*Today*, 2010), the Victoria & Albert Museum, London (*Year of the Ox*, 2009), the Institute of Contemporary Arts, London (*The Bird's Eye View Film Festival*, 2009), the Centre for Contemporary Photography, Melbourne, Australia (*One of Us Cannot Be Wrong*, 2008), DeBond, Belgium (*Boost in the Shell*, 2005), the Museum Dhondt-Dhaenens, Belgium (solo show, *A Portrait of Bill May*, 2005 and *When The Mood Strikes: Collection of Wifried and Yannicke Cooreman*, 2009), and the Northern Gallery for Contemporary Art, UK (*Now is Good*, 2004), among other venues. Baker's 2008 exhibition, *Studs*, was hailed by *The Times of London* as one of the top five recommended exhibitions among Lucian Freud, Andy Warhol, and Francis Bacon. Baker's upcoming endeavors include a solo show at the University of Hertfordshire Gallery, UK where she will work with the University film department to create new work. www.sarahbaker.com

About Hallwalls: Founded in 1974 in Buffalo, New York by artists Cindy Sherman, Robert Longo, and Charles Clough, Hallwalls Contemporary Arts Center supports the creation and presentation of new work in the visual, media, performing, and literary arts. The Hallwalls Artists-in-Residence Project (HARP) is made possible by grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency, and the Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts. Hallwalls media arts program is supported by the New York State Council on the Arts and the Foundation for Contemporary Art. www.hallwalls.org

RELATED EVENT:

Baker will host a second event in conjunction with the Hallwalls Artists-in-Residence Project: **Sarah Baker's Jackie Collins Night**

Saturday, March 24, 2012

7:00–8:00 pm: reception in the Hallwalls Gallery

8:00–9:30 pm: selected readings and video screenings in the Hallwalls Cinema

Hallwalls Contemporary Arts Center, 341 Delaware Avenue, Buffalo, NY 14202

716-854-1694

Admission is \$10 (cash bar).

<http://www.hallwalls.org/media-arts/5214.html>

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Print Images Available on Request. Photos: Chris Santucci.



Sarah Baker



Paul Spitale, Selina
Kaye



Kristen Tripp Kelley,
Vincent O'Neill



Frank Rossi, Josie
DiVincenzo



Tilke Hill, Diane Di Bernardo