

The Museum of Modern Art

For Immediate Release
January 1990

TINA BARNEY

January 18 - April 10, 1990

Large-scale color photographs by Tina Barney, depicting her family and friends engaged in domestic and leisure activities, are the subject of an exhibition opening at The Museum of Modern Art on January 18, 1990. Organized by Catherine Evans, assistant curator, Department of Photography, TINA BARNEY includes approximately twelve works made since 1982, many of which have never before been exhibited. The exhibition remains on view through April 10, 1990.

Despite their size--up to four-by-five feet--Barney's photographs manage a wealth of detail from picture edge to picture edge. Lush, often offbeat hues infuse commonplace objects with importance and surprising content. "The things that entice me are light, and then the textures and the colors--the things that Vuillard was interested in--and the patterns," Barney has said. "I think the idea of making the pictures big had to do with my love of detail, and feeling that every single object counts and is important."

Barney's pictures are moving because they describe ordinary daily rituals in intimate familial settings on a grand and elegant scale, transforming private activities into public events. She views her

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subjects with a detached perceptiveness, yielding a psychologically vivid portrait of her own life.

Using a four-by-five-inch view camera on a tripod, she makes photographs that could only be taken by someone on the "inside." The subjects seem distracted or bored, ready to walk off camera, an element which charges her work with a familial edginess. The viewer does not know the identity of these people--only first names; at the same time that the pictures invite intimacy, they push the viewer away. In her works of the last year, Barney has reduced the cast of characters, minimized detail, and opened up the compressed interiors of her earlier pictures to concentrate on individual portraits.

Born in New York City in 1945, Barney lived in Manhattan until moving to Idaho, where she studied at The Sun Valley Center of the Arts and Humanities from 1976 to 1979. Recent one-person exhibitions were held at The Denver Art Museum (1989), Janet Borden, Inc., New York (1989), and the Tatistcheff Gallery, Los Angeles (1988). Her work has been included in numerous group exhibitions including The Whitney Biennial (1987); Yale University, New Haven (1989); The Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.; and George Eastman House, Rochester.

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For further information or photographic materials, contact the Department of Public Information, 212/708-9750.