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CONTRIBUTOR

A still from "The Rape of the Sabine Women" that will be shown at the IFC Center in Greenwich Village this month.

The details

Eve Sussman's "The Rape of the Sabine Women" runs from Feb. 22-27, 2 p.m., 6 p.m. and 9:45 p.m. at the IFC Center, 323 Sixth Ave. at 3rd Street.

Alcazar." She likened the Williamsburg troupe to a dance company or an experimental theater group. "That doesn't happen much in the art world, but that model was always interesting to me," she said.

For the dialogue-less movie, which was shot like a documentary, they collected 200 hours of footage and 6,000 photographs. The actors improvised and the music was played on location.

"When I first saw this project, I said [to Sussman], 'Blow off the museums, you should show this in a theater,'" said Anne Pasternak, president and artistic director of Creative Time, the public arts group presenting Sussman's film. "You can look at every second of every scene as a painting or photograph."

But Sussman was nervous about the venue.

"You walk into a theater and people expect Hollywood," Sussman said. "This is more fluid. I guess we can handle it."

Sabine women come to Village

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GREENWICH VILLAGE. Eve Sussman, a self-described "sculptor who makes video," became an art-world darling at the 2004 Whitney Biennial with "89 Seconds at Alcazar" — the 10-minute piece based on Diego Velasquez's "Las Meninas" painting.

She's worked nearly three years on a new video, this time drawing inspiration from Jacques-Louis David's 1799 painting "The

Rape of the Sabine Women." Instead of showing the 80-minute film in a museum, this time she's taking it to the public with free screenings at the IFC Center next week.

The film transplants the myth about Romulus founding Rome to the 1960s. Sussman turned the Romans into sleek-suited G-men who wander Berlin's Pergamon Museum to a soundtrack of coughing. The Sabines are butchers' daughters walking around Athens' Agora meat market to a score of sharp-

ened knives. The climax — where the Sabine women attempt to intervene in a battle between their men and Roman abductors — was filmed with 700 people in a choreographed



Sussman

clothes-ripping fest at the Herodion amphitheater in Athens.

"We kind of put the idea

of the painting behind us and then looked more at the myth," Sussman explained at a discussion following a recent screening. It plays up "love triangles, longing and desire. The myth is about men and women and gender roles, and to place it within this era where the roles were so clear."

Sussman worked with the Rufus Corporation, an ad hoc group of artists, dancers, actors and musicians she founded who collaborated on "89 Seconds at