

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tom Molloy: *NATIVE*
March 22 - May 10, 2014
Opening reception: Saturday, March 22, 6-8 pm
Artist's talk will begin at 7 pm

Lora Reynolds is pleased to announce *NATIVE*, an exhibition of drawings, photographs, and a sculpture by Tom Molloy. This is the artist's fifth solo presentation at Lora Reynolds Gallery.

NATIVE is a delicate inquiry into the ways Americans perceive and treat the Other. The two groups Molloy is considering for this exhibition are Native Americans during the mid-1800s and people of Middle-Eastern descent after 2001. Although Molloy's works are often unflinching accounts of current and historical events, their only bias is for empathy and mutualism.

Native, Molloy's series of nine graphite drawings, comprises crosshatched recreations of paintings of Native Americans by Henry Farny. The figures, horses, and teepees in the original paintings, however, are conspicuously absent from the drawings. Molloy has removed the indigenous Americans from the compositions, leaving their empty silhouettes to punctuate idyllic landscapes and recall Andrew Jackson's Indian Removal Act and the Trail of Tears.

Molloy presents two additional series, *Postcard* and *Citizen*, that offer an opportunity for a tenuous connection between US ethnic cleansing in the 19th century and the unease, fear, and prejudice in America following 9/11.

Postcard is a group of twelve drawings of the empty backs of single, unsent postcards. The front of each postcard, invisible in Molloy's drawings, featured a picture of the World Trade Center.

Citizen is a series of four photographs of the artist. In each picture, Molloy is wearing a rudimentary paper mask that transforms him into one of four men who appear to be of Middle-Eastern descent. Molloy made the masks from photos of American citizens killed by recent US drone attacks in the Middle East. All four victims are smiling and seem at ease. Only one—wearing a thick beard and a nondescript head-covering—seems like a stereotypical target of racial profiling.

Postcard and *Citizen* evoke the void left by the fallen Twin Towers, the subsequent deterioration of Americans' sense of safety and security at home, and all manner of subtle/overt or intentional/unconscious racial profiling and discrimination.

Edge and *Base*, then, take Molloy's examination of cross-cultural tensions from a personal scale to a geopolitical one. *Edge* is a Mercator world map resting on a pedestal. Molloy made a vertical fold in the map through the Atlantic Ocean. The Old World rests flat on top of the pedestal, Molloy's fold lines up with the edge of the pedestal, and the New World dangles over the edge.

Base is a group of about 600 aerial photos of US military bases from around the globe. Each picture is pinned to the wall according to its approximate location on an implied wall-sized world map.

But regardless of whether Molloy is looking at power struggles on a local or global scale, *Gun* is the piece that illuminates the nonpartisan intent consistent throughout all of his work. *Gun* is a drawing of the source photograph for Vija Celmins's painting *Gun with Hand #1*. Celmins made this painting in the 1960s amidst an onslaught of imagery depicting the horrors of the Vietnam War but insisted "it's a painting of an object that happens to be a revolver." The title of Celmins's painting—*Gun with Hand*—reinforces her objective interest in the gun rather than in the way it might be used—which the title *Hand with Gun* might have implied.

Similarly to Celmins impartially examining objects mired in subjectivity, Tom Molloy presents imagery about conflict, imperialism, and intolerance in a somber, neutral tone. He gives us facts (e.g., the US has military bases in these locations, Native Americans were removed from their land, these four Americans were killed by US drone attacks) and leaves us to consider for ourselves their implications. Tom Molloy allows no room for indifference or willful ignorance; instead, *NATIVE* is his quiet appeal for coexistence.

Tom Molloy was born in Ireland in 1964 and lives and works in France. He has had solo exhibitions at institutions including the Aldrich Museum (Connecticut) and the FLAG Art Foundation (New York). He was included in the 2013 Moscow Biennale and the 2011 Sharjah Biennial (United Arab Emirates) and his work is in the permanent collections of the Irish Museum of Art (Dublin); the National Self-Portrait Collection (Limerick, Ireland); and the Blanton Museum of Art (Austin).