

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

*Tom Molloy: Black and White*

April 7 – June 23, 2018

Opening reception: Saturday, April 7, 6–8 pm

Lora Reynolds is pleased to announce *Black and White*, an exhibition of new drawings and found photographs by Tom Molloy—the artist’s sixth presentation at the gallery.

Molloy is an Irish artist who lives in a small town in France and takes the image of American hegemony as his primary subject. The global dominance of the USA’s military, economy, technology, and even music and visual culture penetrates most remote corners of the world—including Molloy’s own—via radio, television, film, and the internet. Being an outsider provides Molloy a unique perspective, free to make artworks that broach difficult questions and point out compelling contradictions. He “deploys images as improvised explosive devices,” curator Joseph Wolin once wrote, “potent little roadside bombs that detonate received notions and familiar pieties about politics, war, history, justice, and current events.”

In his newest body of work, Molloy explores race—the social construct central to much of the injustice and inequality in America. The birth of the Black Lives Matter movement in 2013 brought issues of systemic racism, police brutality, and racial inequality in the criminal justice system to the fore of the national conversation. In *Black and White*, Molloy’s trademark cross-hatched drawings raise questions about problems so deeply ingrained in American life, culture, and history they seem to have no solutions. Not effecting long-overdue and substantive change, however, is one of the greatest moral and ethical failures we face today.

FIELD is a group of nine pencil drawings of baseball diamonds based on images Molloy pulled from Google Earth. (Like most of Molloy’s work, these drawings are delicately and precisely rendered—minimal, restrained, ghostly, and haunting.) Looking closely, one might notice the ballfields are poorly kept and the fences are uncharacteristically continuous—perhaps even oppressive. The title of each drawing reveals the diamonds are all from prison yards. Baseball has been the unofficial national pastime of the USA since the 1850s, but it was not until 1947 that a black man, Jackie Robinson, played in a professional game. On the other hand, blacks are overrepresented in the US prison population—33% in 2016, despite making up only 12% of the adults in the country as a whole. Whites, by comparison, represented 30% of the incarcerated but 64% of the national population in the same year.

On a more personal note, BLACK AND WHITE is a series of drawings of watercolor boxes that belong to Molloy’s young son. Each paint box has two symmetrical sides—one dark, one light—connected by a hinge, and each box is open, offering a look at a well-used, dried-out, splattered set of pigment pans. Because the watercolor sets are rendered in graphite, their full spectrum of colors are simplified into shades of gray. Collapsing a wide and complex range of colors into grayscale is a rhetorical device Molloy often employs in his work to draw attention to common ground between different groups of people. Here he is acknowledging the cultural divide

between black and white Americans, but because both sides of each paint box are nearly identical except in tone, Molloy is also suggesting the difference between the two is immaterial.

Imagining a future free and clear of race-related frictions is impossibly idealistic because the racial injustices of our past can never be erased. But they *can* be acknowledged and compensated for—as we build ourselves a future centered around sincerity, empathy, commonality, and the understanding that everything is more complicated than just black and white.

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