

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Jim Torok: New Portraits and Other Work  
November 14, 2015 – January 9, 2016  
Opening reception: Saturday, November 14, 6–8 pm  
Artist's talk: 7 pm

Lora Reynolds is pleased to announce *Jim Torok: New Portraits and Other Work*. These paintings and drawings comprise the artist's sixth solo exhibition at the gallery.

Jim Torok has always drawn eccentric cartoons. After honing his unique approach to drawing, he eventually came to paint miniature, astonishingly realistic portraits, as well.

The portraits are oil paint on panel, and small—usually five by four inches—but thick: nearly two inches deep. Torok paints from photographs he makes himself, shot like passport photos—head and shoulders, eye contact, neutral expression, plain background. He takes dozens of almost identical pictures so he can paint from a different image every day, spending upwards of a year working on each painting.

Most of the portraits in this exhibition are recent commissions: two families (both with mother, father, and their three young children) and three well-known contemporary artists—Rashid Johnson, Tom Sachs, and Chuck Close. When Torok started making his miniature paintings in 1996, Close's portraits were on his mind—their size, their power, their sincerity.

The new cartoon drawings are mostly on letter-sized copy paper and made with marker, colored pencil, or oil-paint pens. Some are minimal line drawings with captions like “BLACK SNOW,” while others are more realistic, like the drawing of Torok's favorite shoe (a green low-top Converse with a sky-blue insole). Torok's drawings plumb the depths of his imagination and process contemporary culture with his trademark blend of sentimentality, motivational slogans, outlandish tableaux, and dark humor.

The cartoons are introspective (but often universal); they illustrate Torok's worries, fears, pet peeves, guilty pleasures, and wildest dreams. The portraits highlight his keen eye for the subtleties of human emotion and its expression. Together, they reveal his unusual sensitivity to the world, other people, and himself—and move toward answering the question he never stops asking, “How do we know somebody?”

Jim Torok, born in 1954 in Indiana, lives and works in Brooklyn and upstate New York. Torok has had solo exhibitions at the National Portrait Gallery (Washington D.C.), Denver Art Museum, Ulrich Museum of Art (Kansas), Taubman Museum of Art (Virginia), and OMI International Arts Center (New York). He has participated in shows at the Brooklyn Museum of Art, FLAG Art Foundation (New York), Contemporary Arts Center (Cincinnati), and Blanton Museum of Art (Austin). His work is in the collections of the Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York) and Museum of Modern Art (New York).