

## CRAIG NORTON



*My Only Friend*, 2010.

Ballpoint pen and watercolor collage on board. 15 x 20", 29 x 5 1/2".

"I wield a cheap, disposable pen (BIC) to make my drawings. From my first marks, I start creating contour and shading, building up patches of color that define facial characteristics until a realistic face emerges. Close inspection reveals the highly detailed repertory of individual marks which express an almost obsessive energy: stipples to create contour, tiny curves to create hair, and tight hatching to create tone. Because of the techniques I employ, one drawing of one face might take as many as 10-15 hours to render. Many of my vignettes contain 10 or more individual figures, and one show might have five or six of these vignettes.

My subjects are exclusively figurative. I often draw people I know. I take 15-20 snapshots of potential subjects for reference. I make socially concerned work. In the past I have grappled with such issues as the holocaust and other genocides, lynching in America, and most recently gun violence in the U.S. I live close to this violence. In South City (St. Louis) I can hear gunshots. About 2 years ago, six people were killed within a 5 block radius of my house. I mentor several teenage boys in my neighborhood. Every one of them has lost someone to gun violence. A woman at church approached me after our morning service and asked me to do a portrait of her son, who was murdered 2 blocks from my house. After talking to her for more than an hour, I knew I needed to tackle this subject. I make art about mankind. Lots of people care only about their own identity groups. Lynching, gun violence, refugees from other countries...they're all problems of mankind, and I'm not going to sit back and do nothing because the victims are different from me. It's a human issue. Refugees at my church have exposed me to many human issues that need to be addressed. There are people from the Congo, Nepal, Myanmar, Sierra Leone, Liberia, and more. I always ask them questions, and from them I've learned a lot. Art is the way I bring about awareness and dialogue — and hopefully inspire change."

–Craig Norton

## **ABBREVIATED CV**

### **BORN**

1972

### **SOLO EXHIBITIONS**

- 2014 *Nineteen Very Old Drawings and a Coffin*, Jim Kempner Fine Art, New York, NY
- 2013 *Dropping Mom Off At The Old Folks Home*, Carl Hammer Gallery, Chicago, IL
- 2012 *Tim Came Home From War and Isn't Timmy Anymore*, Jim Kempner Fine Art, New York, NY
- 2010 *Civil Rights and The Lynching*, Jim Kempner Fine Art, New York, NY
- 2009 *Shot and Killed*, William Shearburn Gallery, St. Louis, MO
- 2008 Holocaust Museum (12 paintings depicting genocide throughout history), St. Louis, MO
- 2008 OKOK Gallery (100 drawings depicting the history of lynching in America), Seattle, WA
- 2007 White Flag Projects (127 drawings depicting racism in America), St. Louis, MO

### **SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS**

- 2013 *Spring Group Show on Paper*, Heather James Gallery, Palm Springs, CA
- 2012 *Summer Group Show*, Carl Hammer Gallery, Chicago, IL
- 2012 *EXPO*, Carl Hammer Gallery, Chicago, IL
- 2012 *Morbid Curiosity*, Chicago Cultural Center, Chicago, IL
- 2011 *American Chambers*, Gyeongnam Art Museum, Changwon, South Korea
- 2011 *Art Miami*, Jim Kempner Fine Art, Miami, FL
- 2010 *Anecdotes...*, Adam Baumgold Gallery, New York, NY
- 2009 *Vancouver Biennial*, Vancouver International Airport, Vancouver, Canada
- 2009 *Art Miami*, William Shearburn Gallery, Miami Beach, FL
- 2009 *Ink*, Jim Kempner Fine Art, Miami Beach, FL
- 2009 *Defense Mechanisms*, PS 122 Gallery, New York, NY
- 2009 *BUILT*, Laumeier Sculpture Park, St. Louis, MO
- 2008 *Art Miami*, William Shearburn Gallery, Miami Beach, FL
- 2008 *Outsider Art Fair*, New York, NY
- 2007 *Intuit Show of Folk & Outsider Art*, Chicago, IL
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### **SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY**

- The New York Times*, "Art in Review: Craig Norton," Roberta Smith, March 2010, photo
- ARTnews*, "Reviews: New York," Mona Molarsky, May 2010, photo
- St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, "Pen is Mightier than the Gun," David Bonetti, June 2007, photos

### **COLLECTIONS**

- Mark Parker, CEO Nike
- de Young Fine Art Museum, San Francisco, CA
- Richard Harris, IL
- Guy and Nora Barron, Detroit, MI
- Ken and Nancy Kranzberg, St. Louis, MO