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Picnic (Girl Eating Watermelon), 2013. Wood, paint, industrial foam. 13 x 11".

**CRAIG NORTON:
*NINETEEN VERY OLD DRAWINGS AND A COFFIN***

April 3rd –May 17th, 2014

**JIM KEMPNER FINE ART
501 West 23rd Street
New York, NY 10011**

Jim Kempner Fine Art is pleased to announce *Nineteen Very Old Drawings and a Coffin*, a new installation by Craig Norton, which will open on Thursday, April 3rd and continues through May 17th, 2014. This will be Norton's third solo show at the gallery. The artist will be present on the opening reception on Thursday, April 3rd from 6-8pm.

Known for his sociopolitical themed installation work, Norton's recent series grapples with the evanescence of aging and the presence of the elderly in modern day society. Using his signature stippling and collage techniques to create realistically drawn faces and hands and garments from wallpaper, Norton presents new figurative vignettes that penetrate societal views toward the elderly. The exhibit's inception began four years ago when the artist befriended two ninety-year-old gentlemen in his community. They played checkers together, took walks, told jokes and gave advice. Norton was immersed in their stories, ranging from WWII to family exploits. As these relationships prospered, Norton was inspired by the beauty and power of his interactions with these men.

Nineteen Very Old Drawings and a Coffin features expressive figures arranged in panoramic compositions throughout the gallery space. Each vignette tells a story, showcasing imagery of jovial times, such as birthdays and picnics with Grandma, as

well as morose moments, like Grandma surrounded by boxes, moving out of her home. Each episode has dimensionality ranging from the free standing *Grandma Plays a Tune* to the wall relief of *The Old Folks Home*. Norton impacts the viewer with this dimensionality and uses unconventional materials such as trees, paint, scrapbooks, a walker and most notably, a hundred-year-old coffin. *The Old Folks Home* was constructed using parts of the coffin, a seemingly abstract structure, used to represent a nursing home. Detailed portraits of the elderly are placed throughout the structure and cascade below to depict the moment Grandma is left at the nursing home by her children.

This narrative frieze depicts the various challenges faced in old age, and how one's relationships evolve and change when coming into later stages of life. The artist hopes to imbue viewers with veneration for the elderly, and that the desire to visit and spend time with one's elders will follow organically. Norton states, "I don't know many people who are fighting for the elderly, but I do know we all will be older someday."

Craig Norton's work is in the collections of the deYoung Fine Art Museum in San Francisco, CA; Holocaust Museum in St. Louis, MO; Richard Harris in Illinois; Mark Parker CEO of NIKE; among others. Norton was the recipient of the Fountainhead Residency in 2010.

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