

# JAMES HARRIS GALLERY

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## PRESS RELEASE



### Akio Takamori

#### *Europeans*

November 19 to December 22, 2009

#### Opening Reception

Thursday November 19, 6 – 8 pm

Gallery hours are Tues. - Sat. 11:00am -  
5:00pm & Monday by appointment

Additional images are available upon request

James Harris Gallery is pleased to present an exhibition of new work by Akio Takamori. The artist has been a seminal figure working in ceramics for more than twenty five years. Takamori's sculpture has always been figurative, based on the human body and expressive of human emotion and sensuality. The show will consist of twelve small scale porcelain figures paired with an accompanying photograph and five large scale stoneware figures. The porcelain works were conceived during a residency at the International Ceramic Research Center in Denmark. Upon his return from Northern Europe, the artist created the stoneware pieces in his Seattle studio. The exhibition explores both contemporary and Renaissance portraiture as a psychological crossroads between past and present.

Takamori's freestanding figurative sculptures are an investigation of cultural identity. During his residency, the artist came across the work of Danish photographer Rigmor Mydtskov. Her photographs became the source material for nine of the small porcelain figures. Takamori was struck by the gesture and nuance of Mydtskov's photographic portraits which captured the inner psychology of her subject; an underlying theme found in his work too. Takamori has paired each small sculpture with a large scale photographic portrait of itself. Thus, each work has gone from two dimensions to three dimensions and back again. The enlarged photo intensifies the gesture of the subject and illustrates Takamori's masterful painterly handling of glaze. This dichotomy between flatness and volume, painting and photography sets up a discourse that conceptually pushes the boundaries of craft.

Five large scale stoneware freestanding figurative sculptures of Renaissance women will act as a foil to the small scale work. Monumental not only in scale but also in personality, the sculpture functions as both a mirror and a lens investigating the interplay between history, tradition and modern life.

Museum collections include the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Tacoma Art Museum, the Museum of Arts and Design in New York, and the Victoria and Albert Museum in London. A mid-career survey exhibition of Takamori's work, organized by Arizona State University's ceramics Research Center, toured the United States during 2006.