

# JAMES HARRIS GALLERY

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## PRESS RELEASE



Akio Takamori: *To Be Human*

May 2—June 8, 2019

Opening Reception: May 2, 6:00-8:00 pm

Left: Akio Takamori  
“Man and Woman” 1992  
Color Lithograph  
Edition of 12  
15” x 18”

Gallery hours:  
Wednesday - Saturday 11:00am - 5:00pm  
Images are available upon request

James Harris Gallery is pleased to announce the seventh exhibition of works by Akio Takamori. The show will focus on the printmaking portion of his career, presenting a collection of works from some of his earliest prints to the last print he made before his passing in 2017. Also included are two early porcelain sculptures as well as two sleeper sculptures made at his residency at the Museum of Glass in Tacoma. Comprised of both prints and sculptural work, this exhibition highlights the range of Takamori’s creativity and mastery of various media, and gives viewers the opportunity to see the robust conversation between his two and three-dimensional work.

For over 30 years, printmaking was an integral piece of Takamori’s practice. His prints reflect the line and design quality which is so quintessential of his style, and his subject matter also allowed another view of the themes he explored throughout his lifetime. For Takamori, sexuality played a key role in his artistic practice and his interest in the cycle of life. It was the subject of his final print, entitled, “Fuck,” which bluntly and beautifully confronts his own terminal diagnosis with a depiction of the most physical celebration of being alive.

Takamori was a seminal figure in ceramic art, whose work over the past thirty years has left an enduring international impact and on the Pacific Northwest arts. His work is often autobiographical, drawing on his life in Japan, his family, and mythological themes. He is known for his coil-built figurative sculptures in which the narrative painting defines the form. Takamori explored themes of cultural identity by engaging the history of Eastern and Western aesthetics. Bold form and color defined his body of work, which is highly expressive of human emotion and sensuality.

Akio Takamori was born and raised in Japan. He has been exhibiting in the United States, Europe and Asia since the mid 1980s. Takamori received his BFA from the Kansas City Art Institute in 1976 and his MFA from the New York State College of Ceramics, Alfred University in 1978. Takamori’s work is included in numerous collections including the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art in Kansas City, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Victoria & Albert Museum in London, Ariana Museum in Geneva, the Seattle Art Museum, and the Museum of Arts and Design in New York City. He is the recipient of numerous awards, including three National Endowment for the Arts Visual Artists Fellowship Grants (1986, 1988, 1992), the Joan Mitchell Foundation Painters and Sculptors Grant (2006), and the USA Ford Fellowship (2011). Takamori was a professor of art at the University of Washington. He lived and worked in Seattle.