

MERRY KARNOWSKY GALLERY

For Immediate Release

WHISTLING PAST THE GRAVEYARD: NEW WORKS BY MERCEDES HELNWEIN HOSTED BY JASON LEE

August 30 – September 20, 2008

Opening Reception: Saturday, August 30, 8 – 11pm

Gallery Hours Tuesday – Saturday 12-6pm



Merry Karnowsky Gallery is proud to present WHISTLING PAST THE GRAVEYARD, a solo exhibition by Los Angeles-based artist Mercedes Helnwein. Helnwein's drawings have been described as "photo-realistic delicacies," "lucid fairy-tales," "strikingly bizarre," "haunting," "southern Gothic," "evocative" and "unexpected". Her self-portraits have been compared to Cindy Sherman and her sense of quiet drama to Alfred Hitchcock and Edgar Allen Poe.

Helnwein's latest body of work consists of a series of large-scale, meticulously executed drawings – some of them in color, most of them in black pencil – which portray strange "uncompleted" scenes drowned in artificial light – chopped-off moments in time, where accidents teeter on the edge of occurrence, and the minimalistic aftermath of imagined accidents are frozen into permanent existence.

As the title suggests, there is something unsettling that is being choked by the beautiful women that make up the cast of *Whistling Past the Graveyard*. Demurely dressed with glossy hair and expensive shoes, they are engaged in inexplicable activities that involve toy trucks, bars of soap, miniature camels, plastic dinosaurs and strange utensils that look like they might belong into an industrial kitchen from the 30s. Despite the innocence of the props, the women's loaded expressions obliterate any possible simplicity to the scenes.

Also included in the exhibition is a video projection, in which the formerly frozen characters jerk to life for the first time in thick saturated colors. The toys, antlers and masks are carried over from the drawings into the video, creating a strange world powered by the machine-like movements of the women who are the central inhabitants of Mercedes Helnwein's work – the perpetrators and the trouble-makers.

The opening reception on Saturday, August 30th will be hosted by actor Jason Lee.

For More Information, please contact Merry Karnowsky at mkgallery@att.net.

Merry Karnowsky Gallery

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