

MERRY KARNOWSKY GALLERY

For Immediate Release

MERCEDES HELNWEIN: EAST OF EDEN

November 14 – December 19, 2009

Opening Reception Hosted By **Jason Lee**: Saturday, November 14, 8-11pm

Gallery Hours: Tuesday – Saturday 12 – 6pm

Merry Karnowsky Gallery
170 S. La Brea Avenue
(in the ART 170 Building)
Los Angeles, CA 90036
(323) 933-4408



Merry Karnowsky Gallery is proud to present "East of Eden," a solo exhibition by Mercedes Helnwein. In her second solo exhibition at Merry Karnowsky Gallery, the artist unleashes the strange and addictive world that inhabits her drawings.

Known for her obsession with pencil and paper, Helnwein's drawings are shockingly detailed, almost photographic at first glance, and vary from rich, saturated colors to her trademark black pencil. Perhaps more importantly, her work is known for the unusual balance of humor and suspense; the small, impeccably lit dramas play out on the paper as eerie mysteries begging for clues.

The characters in "East of Eden" are as enigmatic as the world they live in: a mixture of perpetrators, instigators and casualties, trapped in cinematic dilemmas, meticulously styled, beautifully staged and seemingly up to no good. The drawings don't explain themselves, leaving the viewer to imagine the disaster that just occurred, based on the ambiguous expressions on the characters' faces.

Accompanying the exhibition is a video projection, which gives the audience a window into the goings-on in the pencil work. With its mesmerizing visuals, thick color and off-kilter rhythm, the video is perhaps best described as a cross between a questionable fairy tale and a Technicolor advertisement. Helnwein herself, glamorous and otherworldly, seems to have come off the page of her own drawing. The artist's brother, composer Ali Helnwein, contributed the music.

The opening reception on November 14th will be hosted by actor **Jason Lee**, who says of the artist: *"Mercedes epitomizes the true pursuance of art, and my hat's off to her for maintaining that thing that too many creative folks either never had, or let go of because they've somehow lost their way. I'm talking about sincerity, and purity. Mercedes has the kind of discipline you might find in a great concert pianist; she never stops working. And with artists like Mercedes, I can always rest assured that there is still in fact a real drive somewhere out there to maintain a tradition of intelligent and sincere artistic progression."*

Helnwein was born in Vienna, Austria and raised in Ireland. She is the daughter of renowned painter and art provocateur Gottfried Helnwein. In 2000, Helnwein added Los Angeles as a second home and began exhibiting her artwork. In 2008, Helnwein published her first novel, *The Potential Hazards of Hester Day*. The artist currently lives in Ireland and Los Angeles.

"East of Eden" is sponsored by WeSC.

For more information, please contact Merry Karnowsky at mkgallery@att.net, 323.933.4408

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