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For Immediate Release

Streichelzoo

Solo Exhibition by Herakut

Opening Reception: Saturday, April 12, 8 PM – Midnight

Exhibition Dates: April 12 – May 4, 2008

(West Hollywood, CA March 10, 2008) - **Carmichael Gallery of Contemporary Art** is proud to present ***Streichelzoo***, a solo exhibition featuring the artwork of German street art duo, Herakut. The occasion will mark Herakut's first solo show in the United States. Artwork featured will include a combination of spray paint with charcoal, watercolors, and other paints on a variety of media, including wood, canvas, and paper. The gallery will be transformed into a work of art in itself, as Hera and Akut run wild and create a large-scale installation in the space. ***Streichelzoo*** will be on view **April 12 through May 4, 2008**, with an **opening reception** held on **April 12, from 8 PM to Midnight**.

Streichelzoo ('strAlkel, zu:) means "petting zoo" in German, an apt label for a showcase of the quirky cast of creatures about to enter **Carmichael Gallery**. The artwork in the show embraces a brand new phase in Herakut's artistic evolution, as they continue to take risks and blend their signature styles into one unique, refreshing urban voice. "We have started to create little Frankenstein creatures," says Hera of their masterfully offbeat character paintings, which consist of two essential ingredients: Akut's painstaking photorealism and her own raw, nimble brushstrokes. "We usually combine these two elements in a freestyle way, and do it right at the wall, right in the gallery." Ideas flow organically in this manner; nothing can be predicted when Herakut enter an empty space, armed with spray cans, brushes, and body parts ranging from arms and legs to dog heads sprayed on canvas – "there is no telling what will come out of this pile of limbs in the end." The fluidity of their inspired unions of ill-fitting extremities is impressive – heavy muscular arms protrude comfortably from the torsos of slender, sensual girls. Having contributed so much to each and every one of their pieces, "we feel like Mommy and Daddy to all of these little odd and ugly kids."

Herakut follow a rather idiosyncratic process of creating their works of art, communicating only intermittently in a private dialogue until they collectively feel they have contributed all they possibly can to the wall or canvas. Their process of "shift work" – Akut will paint a head in one area while Hera creates a background or begins a body – allows for both autonomy and synchronization. The artists draw upon their understanding of the balance between compromise and individuality, learned as members of larger graffiti crews, to overcome potential conflicts of opinion in this precarious form of painting. "I think for people, and especially for artists, it's a great way of therapy," muses Hera. "We tend to be self-centered control-freaks, don't we?"

Conceptually, Herakut's work has followed a trajectory that echoes their own relationship, as they approach their fourth year working together and persist in exploring novel modes of expression. The artists flavor their pieces with natural, earthy tones, professing an affinity with these hues that makes them feel safe and empowered. Generally avoiding political themes in their work, Herakut prefer to paint what they genuinely know and feel. Dogs frequently recur in their pieces, often with sly grins painted on their faces. To quote Akut's analogy as to why they do so, "Street artists are dogs. They leave their shit everywhere."

MORE



ABOUT HERAKUT

Of Frankfurt and Erfurt, Germany, respectively, Hera and Akut have fast emerged as two of the strongest young voices on the contemporary street art scene. Prior to 2004, they only knew of each other's work through graffiti magazines. This changed when both were invited to appear as featured artists at the Urban Art Festival in Sevilla. Though their techniques could hardly have been more different, they soon began to work together under the collaborative name, Herakut, a synthesis of their oddly complementary styles.

Hera and Akut come from very different artistic backgrounds. Diligent, self-taught Akut was painting on the streets by the age of fourteen with graffiti crew Maclaim. Passionate Hera, on the other hand, pursued years of structured art school education before emancipating herself from such stifling boundaries. Together, however, the pair have achieved an inimitable artistic resonance and share similar inspiration for their work, citing Vice magazine, Atmosphere albums, and the poems of Jeffrey McDaniel, all mixed up with their unique brand of humor.

Herakut recently enjoyed a successful show at the Leonard Street Gallery in London. They spent time in Osnabrueck earlier this year working on an exhibition with artists such as Os Gemeos, Vitché, Mark Jenkins, and Swoon. As well as preparing for her first US solo show at Carmichael Gallery, Hera is particularly excited to be exhibiting for the first time in California, having spent a year at Venice High School as an exchange student.

ABOUT CARMICHAEL GALLERY

Carmichael Gallery of Contemporary Art exhibits international, emerging artists, with an emphasis on underground, pop, outsider, lowbrow, street art and graffiti inspired work. After moving to Los Angeles in September 2006, husband and wife team Seth and Elisa Carmichael began to curate shows in various locations around the city, frequently converting raw retail spaces, high-end luxury lofts, and other non-traditional spaces into alternative galleries. In August 2007, the co-curators secured a permanent space on La Brea Avenue in West Hollywood, CA, and opened Carmichael Gallery of Contemporary Art as an exhibition space for presenting emerging art from around the world. Carmichael Gallery is located at 1257 N. La Brea Avenue, on the SW corner of La Brea and Fountain, West Hollywood, CA 90038. Gallery hours are Tuesday through Sunday, 2 p.m. to 7 p.m., and by appointment. For more information, please visit our website www.carmichaelgallery.com, email art@carmichaelgallery.com, or call 323.969.0600.

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