

**For Immediate Release**

**I Was a Child**

**Gottfried Helnwein**

**September 16 – October 23, 2010**

**NEW YORK-** Friedman Benda is pleased to announce the opening of an exhibition of new paintings by Gottfried Helnwein. The exhibition runs from September 16 through October 23, 2010. The reception for the artist will be on Thursday, September 16 from 6 – 8 pm.

*I Was a Child* is the first full-scale exhibition of Helnwein's work in New York and represents the next generation of some of the artist's classic themes and subjects. The exhibition includes *The Disasters of War*, *Murmur of the Innocents*, *Epiphany* and *Midnight Mickey* as well as an entirely new series devoted to his iconic *Sleep* series.

Gottfried Helnwein has been known for decades as a master of provocation and technique in the visual and performing arts. While his early works are drawn from the horrors witnessed by his own generation and his youth in post-World War II Austria, Helnwein's recent paintings are more enigmatic and open-ended, broadening from specific narrative scenes to paintings with a universal metaphoric resonance.

Helnwein creates hallucinatory images of reverie, and it is with powerful gestures of light and shadow that he seduces the viewer even as he depicts the aftermath of violence, brutality and suffering. His paintings often depict children as victims of unexplained violence, representing them as archetypal characters in a theatre of cruelty perpetrated by unseen forces. Equally mesmerizing are the artist's personifications of Mickey Mouse and anime figures, casting them in his on-going exploration of psychological and sociological anxiety and society's darkest impulses.

Helnwein's work is visually reminiscent of both old master painting and contemporary cinematography. His use of lighting and mis-en-scene often creates an atmosphere of angst or acquiescence. It is the artist's painterly treatment of unspeakable acts that affords the viewer just enough comfort to contemplate the horrors that he depicts and it is his masterful handling of his painted images that re-inforces the quiet, intrinsic beauty of his subjects.

For further information please contact:

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## BIOGRAPHY

Born in 1948 in Vienna, Helnwein was educated at the city's University of Visual Art. He lives and works in Los Angeles and County Tipperary, Ireland.

Helnwein's work is in the permanent collections of museums internationally including in the US: The Los Angeles County Museum of Art, The J. Paul Getty Museum Los Angeles, the Denver Art Museum, The San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, The de Young Museum, San Francisco; The Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C., The Nevada Museum of Art Nevada, The San Jose Museum of Art San Jose, The Crocker Art Museum Sacramento, California Arkansas Arts Center Little Rock, Arkansas Arts Center, Little Rock, Santa Barbara Museum of Art, 21C Museum, International Contemporary Art Foundation Louisville, Kentucky, The National Museum, Beijing and in Europe: Albertina Museum, Vienna, Austria; State Russian Museum, St. Petersburg, Russia; Ludwig Museum Cologne, Ludwig Forum for International Art Aachen, Museum Folkwang Essen, ZKM, Museum für neue Kunst, Center for Art and Media Karlsruhe, Lentos Museum of Modern Art Linz Austria, Rheinisches Landesmuseum Bonn, Josef Albers Museum Bottrop, Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe, Hamburg, Germany; Deutsches Historisches Museum, Berlin, Leopold Hoesch Museum Düren, Wilhelm Busch Museum Hannover, Museum Pfalzgalerie Kaiserslautern, Münchner Stadtmuseum Munich, Germanisches Nationalmuseum Nürnberg; Niederösterreichisches Landesmuseum, Vienna, Essl Collection, Museum for Contemporary Art, Vienna; the Musée de l'Élysée, Lausanne, Switzerland, Kunstmuseum Thun, Switzerland; the Crawford Municipal Art Gallery, Cork, Ireland; Wäinö Aaltonens Museum Turku, Finland, a the National Museum of Photography, Bogota, Colombia. Gottfried Helnwein lives and works in Los Angeles California and County Tipperary, Ireland.