



CHAOS THEORY: Mercedes Helnwein

May 26 – August 6, 2017

Preview and Members' Opening Reception:
Thursday, May 25, 6:30-8:30 PM

Curated by the Edward Hopper House
Artistic Director and Curator, Carole Perry

The Edward Hopper House is pleased to announce the solo exhibition of artist Mercedes Helnwein, showing oil pastels from her series CHAOS THEORY

Mercedes Helnwein will be presenting oil pastels from her series *Chaos Theory* at the Edward Hopper House May 26 - August 6, 2017. Focusing on suburban American adolescence and family life, Helnwein sources her imagery from anonymous photographs or from characters posed in living room sets she creates in her studio. The original scenes are replicated in oil pastel (a medium the artist feels lends itself to “amplifying the disquiet of the seemingly innocuous moments”), laying bare the angst and tension with which family rituals and youthful endeavors are often fraught. From trick-or-treating and family gatherings to school dances and class pictures, she returns to subjects of quotidian adolescent and familial routines over and over to capture the accidental emotions and inherent dramas that she believes these isolated moments betray.

Helnwein's early years were spent far removed from the typically American lifestyle portrayed in her work. Born in Vienna, Austria, in 1979, she is the daughter of the renowned artist Gottfried Helnwein. As a teen she moved with her family to Ireland and she now divides her time between the family's castle in Ireland and her home in Los Angeles. “There has always been that umbilical cord in my work to the U.S. in a way that is probably only possible from a European viewpoint,” says Helnwein.

Also included in the exhibition are two films Helnwein made in 2014 entitled *Cops* and *Nurses*. The films - meant to be shown concurrently and with the same haunting, suspenseful soundtrack composed by her brother, Ali - present enigmatic, disquieting scenes of mundane workplace interactions, or lack thereof. Comprised of 20 nurses and 20 cops, respectively, the films challenge gender stereotypes and associated symbolisms and leave the viewer to decipher meaning.

Helnwein chose not to study art formally, preferring instead to find her own voice. As she says “I didn't want any interference other than inspiration from other works of art that I admire.” One artist Helnwein gives a nod to - consciously or not - is Edward Hopper. The Hopperesque quality of her films and oil pastels, from the ambiguous relationship dynamics to the slice-of-life drama, recalls many of Hopper's iconic masterworks. Her work embraces that influence while bringing a fresh new perspective and goes a step further by animating the scenes in film.

A fully illustrated catalogue will accompany the exhibition.

RELATED PUBLIC PROGRAMS:

- **SECOND SUNDAY FAMILY PROGRAMS** (May 14, 1-3pm): “**Altered Portraits**” - Inspired by the portraiture of Mercedes Helnwein, we will be creating our own altered portraits. *Families are invited to drop in between 1 - 3pm on the Second Sunday of each month. There is a suggested donation of \$5 for participation.*
- **WORKSHOP** (4 Thursdays in June): Hudson Valley artist **Ceora Derow** will teach a class inspired by Mercedes Helnwein's use of oil pastels.
- **ART TALK** (date TBD): **Mercedes Helnwein – Chaos Theory** - Mercedes Helnwein will discuss her working process, what inspires her, cultural connections, and how the materials she uses convey meaning.



Mercedes Helnwein, HALLOWEEN III, 2016, oil pastel on paper, 46x59 in.



Mercedes Helnwein, LUNCH, 2015, oil pastel on paper, 13 x 14 in.



Mercedes Helnwein, PARENTS, 2016, oil pastel on paper, ~ 30 x 40 in.



Mercedes Helnwein, BOB'S FRIENDS, 2015, oil pastel on paper, 16 x 19 in.

THE EDWARD HOPPER HOUSE is the birthplace of artist Edward Hopper (1882-1967) and was his primary residence until 1910. Since 1971 it has been a non-profit with a mission to preserve Edward Hopper's birthplace and to encourage community engagement with the arts. **GALLERY HOURS:** Wed.-Sun., 12-5 PM or by appointment; Open until 8 PM on the first Friday of each month. Public tours Saturdays at 1 PM. Call to arrange tours for groups at other times (for additional fee).

ADMISSION: Free for members and 16 & under; \$2 students 17 & above; \$5 seniors; \$7 adults. Free for all visitors on the First Friday of each month. Additional fee for private tours. Discount packages available at Metro North: mta.info/mnr/html/getaways/outbound_edward_hopper.

CONTACT INFO/SOCIAL MEDIA: info@hopperhouse.org; edwardhopperhouse.org; twitter.com/@hopperhouse; facebook.com/edwardhopperhouse; instagram.com/edwardhopperhouse.

####

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE (NYACK, NY – February 3, 2016) For hi-res images and more information, contact: Charis Carmichael Braun (Publicity & Communications at the Edward Hopper House) 845-358-0774, carmichaelbraun@hopperhouse.org