

ARTCAT



Gottfried Helwein, *Epiphany I (Adoration of the Magi 2)*, 2010, Oil & acrylic on canvas. Courtesy of Friedman Benda.

Gottfried Helwein: I Was a Child

Friedman Benda

515 West 26th Street, 212-239-8700

Chelsea

September 16 - October 23, 2010

Opening: Thursday, September 16, 6 - 8 PM

Web Site

Friedman Benda presents *I Was a Child*, the first full-scale exhibition of Gottfried Helwein'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 Helwein 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, Helwein'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.