

Aker Imaging Gallery presents

## ***In Empathy We Trust***

Elizabeth Kleinveld and Epaul Julien

Aker Imaging Gallery is excited to present “In Empathy We Trust” by the duo of Elizabeth Kleinveld and Epaul Julien. Kleinveld and Julien work collaboratively as e2 to change perceptions, minds and hearts through the power of the images and the belief in the power of empathy. Working together they combine as one the arts of both acting and photography in their current art project of re-imagining the masterpieces of artists such as van Eyck, Rafael, Velazquez, Rembrandt, Vermeer and Fragonard. Using the original paintings to inspire their work they are trying to shock the viewer into questioning their own idea of what the world really is and inviting them to see it anew. The duo does this by changing the paintings subjects with regard to race, age, gender or sexual orientation. These re-makes challenge the viewers own perceptions and ask them to see the world in a whole new light their use of humor, wit and playfulness. In so doing, they hope this will challenge the viewer not to think in stereotypes which often result in prejudice and discrimination.

E2’s collaboration began in 2010 when they were working together on a traveling exhibition and book project: *Before (During) After: Louisiana Photographers Respond to Hurricane Katrina*. It was shown in Houston at Diverse Works. Their observations and discussions about the fate of New Orleans and Hurricane Katrina showed their mutual interest in issues of social justice. “We already knew that we have a mutual interest in issues of social justice and We quickly agreed that the aftermath of Katrina showed, again, that stereotypes – be they ethnic, or with regard to sexual orientation or otherwise - can lead to prejudice and discrimination. For that reason we decided to do a project with stereotypes, not in a deadly serious way, but in a playful manner: we wanted to mock them, make them look silly. We did so, because we prefer humor and beauty to bitterness. We both believe in the power of empathy to change the hearts and minds of our fellow human beings. And we believe in G.K. Chesterton’s famous dictum that “there is a road from the eye to the heart that does not go through the intellect. As visual artists, how could we not agree?”

Their work has been shown in shows at Museums and Galleries in Amsterdam, London, New Orleans, Bologna, Verona and Milan. Their work is represented in the permanent collections of museums including Museum of Fine Art Houston, New Orleans Museum of Art, Benetton Collection (Treviso, Italy) and Trento, Italy Museum of Contemporary and Modern Art.

*In Empathy We Trust* will open on November 7<sup>th</sup> and run until December 2<sup>nd</sup>. The artists will be at the opening on November 7<sup>th</sup> from 6 pm – 8 pm.

Aker Imaging Gallery – 4710 Lillian, Houston, Texas 77007 -713-862-6343

Contact: Joe Aker – Open M-F 8:30-5:30 or by appointment