

# MARY BOONE GALLERY

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## KATI HECK

From 10 January through 1 March 2008, the Mary Boone Gallery will exhibit at its 745 Fifth Avenue location "Gsuffa, der eiserne Pomoment", new paintings and drawings by the Antwerp-based German artist KATI HECK. Please contact Ron Warren at the Gallery if we can be of further assistance, or visit our website [www.maryboonegallery.com](http://www.maryboonegallery.com).

With "Gsuffa, der eiserne Pomoment", Kati Heck presents a new series of paintings and works on paper commenting on the world as it is, correcting how it should or could be. Sometimes the subjects are disturbing. Sometimes they are burlesque. Burlesque operating in the same spirit as artists' groups reacting to the world they found during the European inter bellum period, and with the same subversive potential and undeniable quality. Heck's world is over the top, farcical and above all caricatural. But never stupid. The artist looks with a childlike gaze at the world, with amusement, translating what she sees in masterfully, even classical paintings.

Let's start with the most spectacular painting, "Keine zeit für Meisterwerke : Himelfahrtskommando" ("No Time for Masterpieces: Ascension Commando", oil on canvas, 2007). The title itself reads like an instruction for use: "Be aware of earnestness"! Although totally different, the painting is almost composed like a mediaeval painting or a storyboard: one starts with the left corner and gets automatically led to the very end at the right of the scene. Every part of the painting, and anyone on it, adds something to the overall picture. In the left corner of this gigantic painting, a man with an axe is depicted. A man and a woman look at this man as if he was God himself: a mixture of idolization and being terrified. Then the artist herself appears as some kind of mount. And why does this young man next to her hold in one hand a beer mug while his other arm ends in the shape of a hoof. But the most absurd sting is in the tail. The last depicted couple consists of a woman who can be best described as a Linda Blair-variant in her role in the "The Exorcist", and a man staring at heaven, not with an expression of despair nor crying out for help, more with lack of interest, trying to figure out how

he got in this tableau in the first place. And, of course, it is not a coincidence that the floor is painted in the colors of the German flag. Besides the totality of the image, and here-and-there a weird prosthesis, it all looks utterly theatrical, even a bit silly, and yet extremely real. As if the figures could at any moment simply walk off the canvas.

It is tempting to read “That’s not how we do things around here” (oil on canvas, 2007) as a direct reference to Kati Heck’s USA debut. And indeed: what we see is not how the average American spends his weekends... who does? Like in other paintings, Heck likes to portray her “characters” in a clumsy position or situation. There are more appropriate ways to grill a sausage - to say the least. And the word “Brot” (bread) is more a graphical intervention than a logical word to describe what we see, or can be taken in a Magrittean sense: “This is not a bread”. We can see another Magritte reference in “Neue Tafelrunde” (oil on canvas, 2007), but now in a more literal way. A fairy-like character holds a pipe in her hand, one which we all recognize as the famous object of Magritte’s iconic painting. Fortunately, Heck does not merely appropriate the image – to do so in this context would be no more than a gimmick. It is more a tongue-in-cheek reference, maybe a mark of honor.

The hilarious “Popo Moment” (oil on canvas, 2007) depicts a man who looks like the typical intellectual, but again Heck trips up the seriousness by putting this man in front of a pile of shit - as if he is going to say something in regard to this subject. Sometimes Heck’s references are obvious, yet cleverly embedded in the image: it isn’t very difficult to see in the green brushstrokes on “Popo Moment” a direct link with Van Gogh’s style. In fact, it’s fascinating to see how easy it seems for Heck to incorporate a range of influences and subjects, as if doing so off the cuff, and yet succeeds to turn it into one style. Her style.

Only the greatest artists are able to invent and reinvent something that we recognize as ‘a particular style’. It is refreshing to see that, once in a while, this still can happen.

Jos Van den Bergh