

# E2 – KLEINVELD & JULIEN

## *The Changing Face of Portraiture*

30 October – 15 December 2018

### PRESS RELEASE

30 October 2018 (New Orleans, LA) **JONATHAN FERRARA GALLERY** proudly presents *The Changing Face of Portraiture*, the premier solo exhibition of photography by artistic duo **E2 – Kleinveld & Julien**. Following their debut at the gallery in the group show *Art Hysterical* in the summer of 2016, their work has since been featured in eight different art fairs across the U.S. over the past two years including a solo-presentation of their ongoing series, entitled, *In Empathy We Trust*, at VOLTA New York in 2017. This exhibition not only unveils the fifteen newest works by the artists, but also, for the very first time joins the entire body of work comprised of sixty different images. In the artists' characteristic revisionist-art historical style produced over the past five years, the new work shifts focus from strictly European Old Master works. These new images continue to draw from the old masters while also including references to modernists and new-world artists alike, ranging from Vermeer and Caravaggio to Frida Kahlo and Norman Rockwell.

The exhibition will be on view from 30 October to 15 December 2018 with Arts District New Orleans' (ADNO) **First Saturday Gallery Openings** with an opening reception Saturday 3 November and a second reception on 1 December from 5 - 9pm. Additionally, in conjunction with the New Orleans Photo Alliance's annual event **PhotoNOLA**, the gallery will host an artist talk and luncheon with Epaul Julien on Friday 14 December from 12 – 1 pm (open to the public).

The artists further discuss the inspiration and purpose for their work . . .

*E2 – Kleinveld & Julien, a collaboration between Amsterdam-based Elizabeth Kleinveld and New Orleans-based Epaul Julien, re-imagines iconic images from the history of art to challenge the insularity of the Western art canon. Kleinveld and Julien share a mutual interest in issues of social justice and a belief in the power of empathy and of images to change perceptions, minds, and hearts. Together they re-envision the work of old master painters beginning with the Flemish Primitives and spanning nearly 600 years through the 20th century. Their latest work, *The Changing Face of Portraiture*, adds iconic modern images to E2's *In Empathy We Trust* series, which serves to ground the collection firmly in the present time and place.*

*E2's re-envisioned "Odes" replace the figures from their corresponding originals with individuals of varying race, age, gender, and sexual orientation. The images are created meticulously, with costumes and staging that are as accurate as possible, while small anachronisms create a palpable tension between past and present. Although many of these images are notable for their wit and playfulness, they address difficult questions of race, gender, and sexuality. E2 hopes that viewers will examine their own stereotypes and implicit biases to re-evaluate what does and does not align with their expectations of how a work of art – and by extension, a culture – should look.*

*E2's images serve as a corrective to the whitewashing of history through visual art, reminding viewers that the depth and diversity of our past is rarely represented in our visual and artistic histories. In a moment where America's continuous struggles with race and gender have been pushed into the limelight, these images serve as a timely and urgent reminder of how much work is yet to be done to stop discrimination and inequality. It is imperative that we not only work to correct the wrongs of history, but also that we refuse to perpetuate those wrongs today.*

Photography and acting are kindred spirits in this ongoing series by **E2 - Kleinveld & Julien**. They



invite viewers to see these images, and indeed the world anew, using humor, wit and playfulness. The collaboration began in 2010, after completing work on the traveling exhibition and book project, *Before (During) After: Louisiana Photographers Respond to Hurricane Katrina*. This natural and man-made disaster brought social inequities in Louisiana into vivid focus. Conversations between Kleinveld and Julien revealed their mutual interest in issues of social justice.

The journey from the original germination of an idea to a completed E2 photograph is long and complex, often taking six months to a year. Both pre-production and the shoots themselves take place on two continents, as Julien lives in New Orleans while Kleinveld resides in Amsterdam. As such, the planning and execution of their shoots involve months of collaboration, with countless emails and phone calls exchanged. Kleinveld and Julien begin their process with online research and by visiting museums throughout the United States and Europe, searching for compelling images that resonate with our contemporary experience. They then seek to change the context of these images, replacing the original figures with contemporary stand-ins from all races and backgrounds, to more accurately reflect the diversity of the world around them.

Once an image is selected to be “remade with a twist,” they begin to find sitters (preferring artists, actors, and friends rather than models) representing a wide range of marginalized groups – African-American, Asian-American, LGBT – who have not seen themselves equally represented in media and art. After sitters have been selected, E2 begins the work of sourcing costumes. Their European shoots have involved costumes from the Dutch National Theatre in Amsterdam, Dutch costume maker, Bert Nuhaan and Studio Pietro Longhi in Venice, while their hometown shoots in New Orleans are a bit less glamorous, seeing them employ sources varying from thrift stores to friends’ closets.

The photographs themselves are the product of careful planning and production rather than chance – more Gregory Crewdson than Diane Arbus. Each shoot is a carefully orchestrated production, featuring up to a dozen sitters, as well as lighting, costume, staging and more. Kleinveld and Julien’s work as E2 sees them each taking on a myriad of roles, from auteur to producer to subject. The finished product is a result of intense collaboration and teamwork, with both Julien and Kleinveld taking turns behind the camera. After the shoots are completed, the work of post-production begins, where extensive digital collaging of subjects and background is often required. They often employ artists such as Italian painter Marco Ventura to hand-paint the backgrounds of their images, further blurring the lines between both photography and painting, and present and past.

E2 has been exhibited internationally in institutions such as: Royal Academy of Art (London), Photoville (New York), Gemeentemuseum (The Hague), Palazzo Fortuny (Venice), Museum Castelvecchio (Verona), Galerie SIRIUS (Tokyo), New Orleans Museum of Art and Ogden Museum of Southern Art (New Orleans). The duo is represented by JONATHAN FERRARA GALLERY, New Orleans and their work appears in numerous public and private collections, including: Benetton Collection (Treviso, Italy), Museum of Fine Arts (Houston), Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art (Trento, Italy), Hilliard University Art Museum (Lafayette, LA) and The Marks Collection (Houston).

**For more information, press or sales inquiries please contact the gallery director Matthew Weldon Showman at 504.343.6827 or [matthew@jonathanferraragallery.com](mailto:matthew@jonathanferraragallery.com). Please join the conversation with JFG on Facebook (@JonathanFerraraGallery), Twitter (@JFerraraGallery), and Instagram (@JonathanFerraraGallery) via the hashtags: #E2, #JonathanFerraraGallery and #ArtsDistrictNewOrleans.**

