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Tim Rollins and K.O.S.

22 January – 25 February 2010

Xavier Hufkens is pleased to announce the first exhibition of American artists Tim Rollins and K.O.S. at the gallery. The artists will be showing new drawings, photographs and paintings on canvas and paper.

Tim Rollins and K.O.S. started working together in 1984 after meeting during workshops Rollins gave to Latino high school students from the South Bronx. The K.O.S. (Kids Of Survival) come from a difficult social and economic background. Their working method is to study important literary works together, such as Shakespeare, Kafka or Aristophanes, and then the K.O.S. transfer their visual associations onto paper. Tim Rollins and K.O.S. work with a wide range of media. They have established a reputation in the art world with their collages of pages of text or musical scores, chosen by Rollins, over which K.O.S. members then apply words, images or prints. The result is a forceful representation of text and image. The artists employ a minimal and imaginative visual language. Literary and historical-social motives create dialogues in their work with artistic themes like dehumanisation and collectivity.

The exhibition at Xavier Hufkens comprises new works on canvas including *Invisible Man* (after Ralph Ellison) and *By Any Means Necessary* (after Malcolm X) and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (after Shakespeare and Mendelssohn) and new works on paper from the series *Study for the Metamorphosen* (after R. Strauss). These works resonate with references to individual spiritual metamorphoses and social change. The letters IM on the *Invisible Man* piece refer simultaneously to the book of Ellison, to the biblical 'I'm the Lord your God...', to the last letters of 'victim' and to the first letters of Martin Luther King's speech 'I'm a man'. The *Pinocchio* (after Carlo Collodi) sculpture speaks of the pedagogical relationship between Rollins and K.O.S. This work from 1992 is adorned by a replica of the eyes of one of the members of the K.O.S.

The work of Tim Rollins and K.O.S. combines general and individual experiences in a communal and democratic manner. It strikes a bridge between art, history and spirituality that makes sense. By connecting these fields a greater understanding is reached of visual culture and of the possibilities of contemporary, socially engaged art.

Recent solo exhibitions of Tim Rollins and K.O.S. were held at the Institute of Contemporary Art in Philadelphia, the National Academy of Science in Washington and the Museum of Contemporary Art in Atlanta. The artists also participated at the Whitney Biennale 2006. The work of Tim Rollins and K.O.S. has been included in the collections of more than eighty museums, including the MoMA in New York, the Art Institute in Chicago and the Tate Gallery in London. A solo exhibition is planned at the Frye Art Museum in Seattle in 2010.

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