

Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Herakut and the Art of the Collective

Chiwan Choi · Wednesday, November 28th, 2012

Last week, I picked up a clean used copy of *Herakut: the Perfect Merge* at The Last Bookstore. Since then, I've browsed through the pages at least twice a day, everyday. Herakut is a collaborative duo, Hera and Akut, both street influenced artists with crazy spray paint skills who were introduced to each other and, well, the rest is history.

I was first exposed to their work at a friend's living room. No, really. This friend is an avid art collector, with a taste for street art. In her living room, in between a huge JR piece that always leaves me speechless and a stunning Tobias Keene painting was this skinny and tall piece, a colorful yet muted painting of a small child-like character. She told me it was Herakut.

Reading the book and learning more about Herakut, what really impresses me (other than the paintings themselves, which are spectacular) is their ability to merge their individual talents, their choice to bring their individual strengths into the collaborative effort, be fully in the group without losing the souls of the individuals.

JR himself recently collaborated with another high profile artist, Liu Bolin. It was earlier this year in NYC. Seeing what they created, you see how similar their work has been and how this led to the collaboration to blend so smoothly. But the teaming up between JR and Liu Bolin is more of a one-off (I'm hoping they do it again...in LA), whereas what Hera and Akut have done seems to be a lifetime commitment to become a single unit called Herakut.



I feel like Writ Large Press has always embraced this spirit. We have been more inclined to find writers with unfinished manuscripts so we can be part of the process of creating it. We have reached out to artists to pair up with each author to help shape the look and design of the book. We have helped in creating spaces and events for local writers and publishers and artists of all types.

In the past few months, I've been talking with Eric Nelson who, along with Mike Lala, hosts and curates Fireside Follies in Bushwick, Brooklyn. I've read with both of them before at the KGB Bar in NYC and they've been gracious enough to invite me to read at their venue. I instantly connected with what they do and how they do it. They have a strong group of writers and artists, like Robin Gearson whose writing I love, that constantly work together and individually. I knew I wanted to work with them on...something. So earlier this year, I reached out to Eric and we've been trying to figure out a collaborative project. This is one project in our overall plan to merge with musicians and artists and writers and makers from all over the world.

There are many things that I get a rush from while running a small press—finding writers, the smell of new books, the release parties, trying to hustle literature like it's so much intellectual

crack, all the problem solving and connecting dots and celebratory whiskeys. But above all else, I realize there is one thing that inspires me the most, the one thing that drives me in all things I do, the way I live: those chances to be part of an international collective of creative misfits that will push and pull and mesh and create work that both contains each of us and carries the individuals beyond anything we could imagined on our own.

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