

HIONAS GALLERY

For Immediate Release

MR. KAVES

NEW YORK, NEW YORK: BIG CITY OF DREAMS

July 15 - August 13, 2011

Opening reception: July 14, 6:00-8:00 PM



New York New York Big City of Dreams (2010), acrylic on wood panel

New York, NY (June 22, 2011) - Hionas Gallery is pleased to present *New York, New York: Big City of Dreams*, an exhibition of new paintings and drawings from **Mr. Kaves**, the famed painter, graffitist, tattoo artist, musician, hip-hop mogul, producer, actor and community activist from Bay Ridge, Brooklyn. The opening reception will take place on Thursday, July 14, from 6:00 to 8:00 PM, and is open to the public. This is Mr. Kaves' first solo exhibition in New York City.

New York, New York: Big City of Dreams will include four new large-scale acrylic paintings and ten mixed-media drawings from one of the city's most celebrated, prolific and diverse artists, in this or any other era. Throughout his career, Kaves has played the role of storyteller - via music, film, design and art - and with these new works he once

again conveys a storied, sometimes bittersweet tale of New York City life. The exhibition's namesake portrays a weeping angel in the foreground of an abstruse, graffitied streetscape. In his other paintings, Kaves finds inspiration in some of New York's most iconic figures, beginning with *Biggie*, a portrait of the late Christopher Wallace, aka Biggie Smalls; *Baby It's Cold Outside*, a skewed cityscape of the Chrysler Building, viewed from street level; and *That's Life*, a collage portrait of Frank Sinatra.

Accompanying the new paintings are ten new drawings on paper. Using ink, pencil and charcoal, Kaves refers to these works as a "return to basics" and a "tribute to growing up in Brooklyn." Done in the free-style spirit of his earlier graffiti work, the drawings feature much of the imagery that has made his art so recognizable over the years: lampposts, fire escapes, street scenes - all what Kaves calls "the Brooklyn textures" that help make New York the big city of dreams.

"This exhibition is such a joy to put on," says gallery co-owner Peter Hionas. "Mr. Kaves is a New York institution. His graffiti art, his music, his designs and paintings and everything else he has produced have really helped shape the recent history and culture of this city, so it's a pleasure and an honor to be having his first solo NYC show in our space."

About the Artist:

Michael McLeer (b.1969), aka Mr. Kaves, began practicing art at the age of 10, wandering through New York City's subway tunnels with cans of spray paint in hand. These early forays into graffiti art were documented in Henry Chalfant and James Prigoff's seminal book on the topic, *Spraycan Art* (1987). In the early 1990s Kaves became a founding member of the hip-hop group Lordz of Brooklyn. In tandem with the group's - now known as The Lordz - most recent album, "The Brooklyn Way" (2006), Kaves co-created and produced a television reality series of the same name about the group and his growing up in Bay Ridge, which premiered to rave reviews in 2008. The Lordz's music has been featured on such programs as *Late Night with Conan O'Brien* (performance), *The Ellen DeGeneres Show*, *Good Day New York*, *CSI: New York*, and MTV's *The Real World: Brooklyn*, among others.

Mr. Kaves' graffiti art has been published in numerous books, including *Spraycan Art*, *Burning New York*, *Mascots and Mugs: The Characters and Cartoons of Subway Graffiti*, and *Piecebook: The Secret Drawings of Graffiti Writers*, and many others. He has designed logos and graphic materials for brands such as Adidas, Nike, Rockstar Games, Atari, WWE, PONY, MTV, and the Vans Warped Tour; and artists such as The Beastie Boys and Everlast. More recently, Kaves' paintings were commissioned for *The Real World: Brooklyn* loft, and his work is included in the permanent collections of the Gunter Sachs Museum of Fine Arts in Leipzig, Germany, The Blackstone Hotel in Chicago, IL, and The Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in Cleveland, OH.

Mr. Kaves owns and operates Brooklyn Made Tattoo, an art, apparel and tattoo shop in Bay Ridge. He lives and works in Brooklyn.

About Hionas Gallery:

Hionas Gallery is a 500 sf. exhibition space located at 89 Franklin Street, in a classic TriBeCa storefront. The gallery invites contemporary and emerging artists, working in all variety of media, to participate in monthly solo exhibitions to showcase their latest work and artistic vision. The gallery space doubles as the storefront for the personal fitness studio, Peter Anthony Fitness, owned and operated by Peter Hionas. Over the years, Hionas has personally trained hundreds of celebrities and other high profile figures, including a number of artists and art world luminaries. This list includes the artists Marina Abramović, Terry Winters and Dan Colen, collector Adam Sender, architect David Rockwell, and P.S.1 founder Alanna Heiss, among many others.

Owners Peter and Maria Hionas officially opened the gallery in June 2011. “We have been avid collectors of contemporary art since 1991,” says Peter Hionas. “It’s a modest storefront we have here, but also really spacious and versatile. I see us as operating in the tradition of the old Betty Parsons Gallery in midtown, or the original White Cube in St. James’s; small spaces that just show great art.”

###

For more information e-mail Maria Hionas at mariahionas@gmail.com or visit www.hionasgallery.com

Media Contact:

Justin R. Wolf

M: [617-416-7908](tel:617-416-7908)

E: justinrwolf@gmail.com