

HEATHER ACCURSO-ARTIST'S STATEMENT 2014

Since the early nineties, the baby or child figure has been the focus of my iconography; themes and styles evolve through the years.

In the first group of drawings, *Mutants* (1993 – 1998), rebellious female baby figures sport tribal tattoos and fashion...part human, part animal, drawn with precision, they float in blank negative space, as if observed, actual specimens. The images are quite sexual, but not sexy. Many contradictions coalesce. I was contemplating art historical images of the baby Jesus, and cherubs. I was also thinking about the female figure in art, and what was missing, what gaps I could fill.

The busy *Creators* (1998 – 2001), active, with animal companions, in horror vacui interior settings of accoutrements, are multi-disciplinary, multi-cultural, multi-historical, multi-species, multi-perspectival creative girl geniuses. They are liberal arts magicians and symbols of the inner child at work and play.

Cherubic Intervention (2004 – Present), my current series, depicts uni-sex, contemporary cherubic angels protecting humans and nature from today's threats—poised to resist war, terrorism, natural disasters and the exploitation of the earth's resources. For some viewers, the cherub heads represent children...their bliss, and fragility.

I began the series while residing in Cologne, Germany (2002 - 2008). Living in a foreign country, still physically and psychologically affected by World War II's devastation and overwhelmingly opposed to the Iraq war, fuelled my decision to make political work. Meeting fellow immigrants in my intensive German classes, people who had fled oppressive circumstances, inspired the new thematic direction as well. Cologne's conceptual art scene prompted the spare look, and heavy content of *Cherubic Intervention*.

Despite serious motives and artistic evolution, I strive to entertain, presenting harsh but open-ended juxtapositions, wherein humor, hope, the bizarre and current events co-mingle. My figurative surreal style is the product of Chicago Imagist roots. Of late, models and dioramas at the University of Michigan Museum of Natural History sparked the decision to include ominous, yet charming, extinct animal cohorts, hence the Mammoth friend in "For the Drone Children". This piece marks the beginning of the next series—*Fairy Heroes*.