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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 6 – January 4, 2006

Reception: Thursday, December 8, 2005, 6-8 PM

ASUKA OHSAWA

"On the Street Where We Live"

Freight + Volume is pleased to present our first solo exhibition by Los Angeles-based artist Asuka Ohsawa. "Asuka Ohsawa: "On the Street Where We Live"," opening on December 6 and running through January 2, features recent gouaches that examine familiar dilemmas through the cultural looking glass of fables and comic books. Her richly imagined set pieces are rhythmic, deftly linear and concise, and refer to everything from Orwell to Roger Shimomura to the Three Little Pigs.

Drawing from the Japanese *giga* tradition (*giga* simply means "humorous pictures"), as well as artists such as Toba Sojo (1053-1140) and Kuyinoshi Utagawa (1797-1861), Ohsawa peoples her stunning allegories with rabbits, wolves, fish and birds that quietly reveal internecine, factional tensions. Investigating present-day realities, Ohsawa universalizes the sadness of many of our current social practices by projecting them, with mock poignance, onto the animal kingdom.

Her meticulous paintings call to mind the eighteenth century woodcuts of Hokusai, while simultaneously employing the contemporary visual lexicon of *manga* (Japanese graphic novels). Her work is thus both familiar and under-stated in tone. Yet even as its line is smooth and its composition untroubled, Ohsawa's art simmers with a sense of psychological unease. Though the pieces operate as self-contained stories, their tight cropping gives the viewer the sense that something is happening just outside the frame, that life is speeding by out there, stopping for only a moment to whisper a social contradiction that feels more like a riddle.

Accordingly, the narrative is never direct and always tinged by absurdity. This is the subversive aspect of Ohsawa's work. Its magic is that even as it permeates our awareness, as a *manga* reader's is seduced and slightly unhinged, it also consoles. Its measured tone seems to say that though the order of things is neither rational nor acceptable, there is an order, even if it is knowable only as an intuition.

Asuka Ohsawa's work has been seen in San Francisco, Boston, Los Angeles, and at the Asian American Arts Center. Her work will be included in the Traveling Scholars exhibition in 2006 at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. She holds a MFA from the School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, and lives and works in Los Angeles.

In the project space: Erik Moskowitz (former member of The Wooster Group) presents his operatic video *A Bit of Dirt*, which draws a correlation between the ethical bankruptcy depicted in Stanislaw Witkiewicz's 1930 novel, *Insatiability*, and that of contemporary society.

For more information, please visit the gallery's website or contact C. Sean Horton (Director) at 212-989-8700 or sean@freightandvolume.com.

