

YOU CAN TEACH DOGS NEW TRICKS BUT NOW CATS AS WELL!



Photographs By Sherry Ryan Barnett

Rock Duo Start Purrr-fect New Endeavor

Elvis is alive, Madonna is vogueing and your cat loves it. Sound out of whack? Perfect. It is this combination of creativity, insatiable “out of the box” thinking and love of animals that creators Sherry Ryan Barnett and Lauren Wood have unearthed with their greeting card company Cat-Tricks.

The concept was born as an opening act in a night club for singer Wood. Cat-Tricks has become not only greeting cards, but t-shirts, magnets and pins. “It happened accidentally,” said Wood. “My cat lets me do anything to him so we did a slide show at the opening of one of my music shows.” Barnett interjects, “It was different and fun. It just made sense.” Wood laughs “And people loved it. They were falling out of their chairs! We looked at each other and said ‘I smell money.’ Barnett adds while chuckling, “I’m trying to get her to stop saying that, it hasn’t worked yet.”

Lacking business savvy in the beginning of their endeavor, Barnett and Wood really didn’t know how or what to do with their brilliant baby. “We went into a card shop,” remembers Barnett “and showed a vendor our card and he asked us what we wanted for them - we said - what do you want to give us for them?” But perseverance and confidence soon paid off. The women, becoming their own reps, successfully sold their Christmas cat cards in a local Los Angeles shop, named, Oz. “Everyone wanted cards and every shoot would spark the flame again, and produced new ideas,” said Barnett.

What makes Cat-Tricks such a unique company, besides the fact that their stars are cats, are the inventive costumes made by designer Helen Wilson. “We couldn’t have done it without her,” said Barnett. Wilson, who did costumes for movies, shared Barnett and Wood’s creative style, making the costumes for such Cat-Tricks hits as the Madonna, Elvis and Rabbi. “What was good about Helen was that she was anti-cutesy,” said Wood affirmingly. “She was clever.”

But both Wood and Barnett stress that their photo shoots, as well as their stance on animals, is purely safe and fun. “We are for animal rights,” they said. “The cats are not forced into any of the shots.” “They aren’t trained models,” said Barnett, “and if a cat doesn’t want to do something - it won’t.” “They are pampered babies,” chimed in Wood. The images are real; there is no post-production.

Both Wood and Barnett, while still immersed in their passions other than animals, (Wood is a multi-platinum recording artist and Barnett is a well-known rock photographer), are in talks for their next Cat-Tricks conquest - a book. “We want to do a book,” said Barnett. “I think that’s our next step.”

Will there be any dog-tricks for the canine aficionado? “Dogs are easier to work with,” said Barnett. “We think it’s a specialty to be able to work with cats.”

- Betsy Vasquez