

Capitain Petzel

JOYCE PENSATO

Capitain Petzel, Berlin September 21 - October 24, 2009

Capitain Petzel is pleased to present the first solo exhibition in Berlin by the New York-based artist Joyce Pensato. For her first solo show in Germany, Pensato has created a series of new large-scale paintings in the main gallery and in the lower-ground floor gallery a major new wall-drawing surrounded by an installation of the artist's source materials - stuffed animals, children's toys, photographs, plastic and rubber figurines, books and pamphlets.

For many years, Pensato has mined the field of cartoon imagery as the subject matter of her paintings and drawings. Working in a palette of predominantly black and white, the artist alters and deconstructs these iconic popular figures, such as Mickey Mouse, Donald Duck, and Homer Simpson, until they are no longer universally recognizable characters, but are irrevocably and brutally changed into amalgamations of Abstract Expressionism mixed with the remnants of Pop. It is a collision of „high“ and „low“ art; as the writer Marcella Durand wrote of Pensato's work in BOMB Magazine: „... [the] cartoon is wrenched into the realm of de Kooning, Pollock, Mitchell, Guston.“ Moreover, at times the artist morphs one character with another, thereby making a kind of tragicomic grotesque - for example, a „Mickey Mouse“ merges with a „Donald Duck“ to become a „duck-mouse“, a debased, strange and haunting creature.

There is a palpable rawness to Pensato's work which belies the precise and exacting method of painting she employs. The artist paints in a rapid-fire yet controlled manner. The bold lines and splashes of thick enamel paint, as seen in the eight new paintings on view in the gallery, are in fact immaculately considered and one image can change many times before the artist considers the work finished. Similarly, Pensato spends considerable time preparing the surface for her large-scale wall-drawings. The wall becomes a palette as the drawing upon it takes shape: areas are sanded down and gauged out, the charcoal and pastels she uses are combined, erased and re-combined multiple times until the surface and image she reveals find a precarious, off-kilter harmony. Additionally, the surfaces of Pensato's works on paper are given a battered, aged patina, with areas sometimes rubbed bare, others torn, which are integral as the backdrop to the final reading of the image of the artist's gestural lines on the surface.

Finally, in this exhibition, the viewer is offered a rare glimpse into the materials from which the artists takes her inspiration in the lower-floor gallery. Pensato has transferred over 100 of her studio sources, predominantly comprised of children's toys, stuffed animals, figurines, and photographs, from Brooklyn to Berlin. Approximately half have been used as a models for drawing or paintings, sometimes multiple sources are drawn upon for one work alone.

Joyce Pensato was born and raised in Brooklyn, New York. She has exhibited widely, including exhibitions at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art and the St. Louis Art Museum (with Mike Kelley and Raymond Pettibon). Her work is included in the collections of the Museum of Modern Art, New York, the FRAC des Pays de la Loire, and the Dallas Museum of Art, among others. She lives and works in Brooklyn.