

## ANTON KERN GALLERY

### Alessandro Pessoli

#### *Fired People*

September 14 — October 20, 2012

For his fifth solo show at Anton Kern Gallery, Italian artist Alessandro Pessoli has put together a group of painted ceramic sculptures of varying sizes and scale. Largely figurative and richly colored, often combined with bronze or canvas elements, the work radiates with high saturation and glazed brilliance. The sculptures are arranged in relationship to each other while representing portraits of sorts, individual figures, or, set in box-like constructions, groupings of figures and objects reminiscent of the teatrini (small theaters) known from mid-century Italian artists such as Martini, Melotti, and Fontana. Pessoli's illustrious personnel ranges from the Emperor Vespasian to Pier Paolo Pasolini, from Don Quixote and Sancho Panza to Arthur Rimbaud and Paul Verlaine, but also includes Petunia the duck trailed by Chimney Nose and Sandrino the cat. This is Pessoli's first show in New York after moving from Milan to Los Angeles, and the influence of the City of Flower and Sunshine is clearly noticeable.



Fired People doesn't have a theme; it's an anarchic show, like people meeting in a square without apparent reason. The work is the attempt to find the hidden vitality of imagination by abandoning stylistic coherence and the compactness of a dominant narrative in favor of the freedom to cross from one imagery and aesthetic to another. Working without precise lines of reference empties the figures' rhetoric and produces a sense of nostalgia, somehow mirroring a Western culture that is at its sunset, just the reflex of itself.

Known for his fluid and luminous painting technique, as evident in his watercolor drawings, Pessoli transforms the brightly colored ceramic sculptures into extensions of his painted scenes articulated in three-dimensional form. There's a dynamic balance between the malleable clay and the fluidity of the watercolor-like or airbrushed paint application and sense of coloration. Pessoli combines familiar elements such as the chimney and a range of sexual symbols with new ideas such as the separation of colors into rainbow-like bands, the decorated bronze casts, and mixing such disparate modes of representation as a descriptive and detailed naturalism with child-like abstraction and expressiveness. Yet Pessoli's essentially humanist language always speaks with the love for the poetry of the material.

This exhibition will coincide with Alessandro's solo exhibition at SFMOMA.

Since the artist's seminal New York debut at the Drawing Center in 1997, Pessoli's work has been shown in numerous exhibitions, including solo presentations at the Collezione Maramotti, Reggio Emilia, Italy (2011), MACRO Museo d'Arte Contemporanea Roma, Rome, Italy (2009), and Chisenhale Gallery, London (2005), as well as group shows at the Hessel Museum of Art & Center for Curatorial Studies Galleries at Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson, NY (2006), the Philadelphia Museum of Art (2004), the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles (2003), and the Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo, Turin, Italy (2002). Pessoli's work was prominently featured in *Italics: Italian Art between Tradition and Revolution, 1968-2008* at the Palazzo Grassi, Venice (2008) and the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago (2009). A set of 30 drawings was included in the Venice Biennale as part of the Making Worlds section curated by Daniel Birnbaum (2009). Opening September 28, SFMOMA is presenting Pessoli's first US museum solo-exhibition.

The exhibition will open on Friday, September 14 and runs through Saturday, October 20, 2012. The gallery is open Tuesday through Saturday, 10 am - 6 pm. For further information and images, please contact the gallery at (t) 212.367.9663 or email: [info@antonkern-gallery.com](mailto:info@antonkern-gallery.com).

**Upcoming exhibition: Eberhard Havekost (October 25 – December 15, 2012)**

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