

Alessandro Pessoli: Pluto is my Master

March 9 – April 15, 2023
First and Third Floor Galleries

The title of my show, Pluto Is My Master, connects with the symbology that characterizes Pluto, the god of the underworld and afterlife in Greek mythology. In the Roman translation of the myth, Pluto was also the god of wealth because of the minerals and the seeds that sprout on earth from the underground.

It is interesting to me that Pluto's name originates from Hades, which in Greek meant "the Unseen" or "the invisible".

In my work, the past and art history are the art's underground wealth. It reflects the complexity of human life. Working on a painting or a ceramic essentially means having a constant dialogue with our history of representation in which past and present are fluctuating entities.



Alessandro Pessoli, *Family and Monsters*, 2023, Oil, spray paint, oil pastels, stick oil, colored pencils on canvas

A series of works built through and by this imaginative practice, which sources from history and reflects on the present, is the testimony of my personal experience of reality and my emotionally engaged vision of contemporary life with its conflicts and aspirations. It is a testimony also of the metaphysical atemporality of the cycle of life and death which touches all aspects of our existence, including the sphere of ideas.

In this show, Pluto is a metaphor for painting - both painting and Pluto provide fecundity despite the ambivalent character: at the same time destructive and creative. Art, as Pluto, represents the principle of transformation, the force of regenerating.

It embodies the unconscious, the mystery of death and life, the creative or destructive impulses, and the arcane motivations that germinate the entire project of our existence.

It represents death and rebirth, secrecy, and the profound psychosis that shapes our perception of reality. It represents at the same time light and darkness, the power of what is hidden, the mystic and the occult.

In my view, art describes the way we interpret the magical and the demoniac, our regenerative power, and our ability to react to radical changes; and the sense of an end and of a new beginning.

—Alessandro Pessoli

Pluto is my Master marks the artist's eighth solo exhibition at Anton Kern Gallery. It consists of new paintings, drawings, and ceramic sculptures, and takes place on the first and third floors of the gallery. Populating the first floor is a series of large-scale paintings created over the last two years. The most recent, *Family and Monsters, 2023*, is a portrait of the artist, his wife, children, and dog, surrounded by floating bright skulls and demonic figures.

On the third floor are a series of paintings called *Reborn Skulls*, wherein a skull is the source from which various colorful plants, birds, and worms, among other natural imagery, spring out. Pessoli's rigorous and varied painting techniques are on full display, demonstrating the depth of his art historical (and material) knowledge and understanding. Three colorful ceramics done in the Maiolica tradition, and a series of new drawings, *Reborn Figures*, round out the presentation. In all, the exhibition embodies a celebration of life and the nuances of its cycle, for man and nature alike.

Alessandro Pessoli (b. 1963, Cervia, Italy) is an internationally renowned artist who currently lives and works in Los Angeles. Pessoli studied at the Academy of Fine Arts in Bologna and has been exhibited at institutions worldwide, including the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, Museo d'Arte Contemporanea, Rome, The Drawing Center, New York, Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles and at the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles. His work was also included in the 53rd Biennale di Venezia at the Palazzo Grassi, Venice. Pessoli is known for his evocative drawings, paintings, ceramics, and sculptures that often depict expressive, colorful figures inhabiting indeterminate spaces and in dreamlike narratives. His work is rich in historical references to art, cinema, literature, and theatre, but also in details drawn from everyday life and popular culture.

His film *Autoritratto Petrolini* (2014) is on view in the group exhibition *Full Burn* at the Hammer Museum from March 11 - September 10, 2023.