

Joyce Pensato

Joyceland

26 March – 10 May 2014
27 Bell Street, London

Joyce Pensato paints exuberant, explosive likenesses of cartoon characters and comic-book heroes. For her debut exhibition at Lisson Gallery, she will be showing new paintings featuring Batman, Donald Duck and various characters from *The Simpsons*. Included among them is a darkened visage of Homer Simpson crossed with Groucho Marx and *Marge from Hell*, Pensato's giant pastel and charcoal drawing. The artist will be present for the month prior to opening, painting a large-scale mural on to the gallery's back wall, a practice she has recently returned to for her major museum presentations in Europe and America.

The New York-based Pensato will also transport the majority of her Brooklyn studio (which she refers to as 'Joyceland') to London, bringing her stuffed animals, talking toys, plastic action figures and collaged ephemera of postcards, found adverts and posters that she refers to and draws inspiration from for her paintings. Her working environment, documented for the first time in a number of new photographs by the artist, will be recreated as installations in the gallery, down to the paint pots, brushes, books and discarded scraps of newspaper that are similarly covered in the spatters, splashes and drips that result from her obsessive painterly method.

Her seemingly frenzied painting technique – actually involving the deliberate accretion of successive layers of bold linear gestures, rapid repainting and frequent erasures – results in alternately humorous and sinister imagery. Pensato paints almost exclusively in shop-bought black and white enamel, while also employing charcoal and pastel for smaller-scale drawings. There are occasional leaps away from the monochrome world she generally inhabits into sporadic bursts of colour, especially silver and gold.

While her prima facie subject matter derives from cartoon characters to famous figures in popular culture, her artistic progenitors include Alberto Giacometti, Willem de Kooning and the Abstract Expressionists, as well as her mentors Philip Guston and Joan Mitchell and contemporary painters such as Christopher Wool, who she shared a studio with at art school in New York.

In addition to excising her floating heads, eyeballs and comically grotesque noses from their original contexts of Gotham, Disneyland, Springfield or South Park, Pensato situates her figures in troubling psychological states and dark, indeterminate spaces. The true source of their meaning is concealed, not only by successive sweeps of paint, but beneath the guileless grin of Felix the Cat or the Caped Crusader's eye-less mask. Lisson Gallery is representing Joyce Pensato in collaboration with Petzel Gallery, New York.

About the artist

Joyce Pensato was born in Brooklyn, New York, where she continues to live and work. Solo exhibitions include Contemporary Art Museum, St Louis (2014); Santa Monica Museum of Art (2013); Petzel Gallery (2012, 2008, 2007) *Corbett vs. Dempsey*, Chicago (2012) and Galerie Anne de Villepoix (2010, 2000, 1998), while she has been included in group shows such as *Empire State*, curated by Alex Gartenfeld and Sir Norman Rosenthal at the Palazzo delle Esposizioni, Rome (2013); *Interior Visions: Selections from the Collection by Alex Katz* at the Colby College Museum of Art, Waterville (2012); *A Painting Show* at The Speed Museum of Art, Louisville (2011) and *The Darker Side of Playland: Childhood Imagery from the Logan Collection* at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (2000). Pensato's work is in the permanent collections of the Museum of Modern Art, New York; SFMoMA, San Francisco; the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles; the Dallas Museum of Art; St Louis Art Museum and the FRAC des Pays de la Loire. She has won numerous awards including the Robert de Niro, Sr. Prize (2013), the Award of Merit Medal for Painting, given by the American Academy of Arts and Letters (2012), the Pollock-Krasner Foundation Award (1997) and the Guggenheim Fellowship (1996).

About Lisson Gallery

Lisson Gallery is one of the most influential and longest-running international contemporary art galleries in the world. Since being founded in 1967 by Nicholas Logsdail, it has championed the careers of artists who have transformed the way art was made and presented. It continues to support the future of its artists, the legacy of historical figures, the evolving practice of established artists and the wide-ranging potential of emerging and new talents.

In addition to two exhibition spaces in London, one in Milan and an office in New York, the *Lisson Presents* programme of off-site exhibitions extends a legacy of curatorial innovation beyond the gallery spaces, working with institutions and artists to present new initiatives around the world. As well as showing and supporting an important array of international artists, such as Marina Abramović, Ai Weiwei, Gerard Byrne, Liu Xiaodong, Tatsuo Miyajima and Santiago Sierra, Lisson Gallery also represents many younger artists of this stature, including Allora & Calzadilla, Nathalie Djurberg & Hans Berg, Ryan Gander and Haroon Mirza.

Exhibition Facts

Opening Hours: Monday-Friday 10am-6pm, Saturday 11am-5pm

Location: 27 Bell Street, London, NW1 5BY

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